

Using communications to “Travel Europe on \$5 A Day”

How a no-budget communications project achieved media mileage

Why – *There is more than one way to get where you want to go*



- **Barrier:** We want the media to get our story to the public, *but the media ignores us.* ☹️
- **Breakthrough idea:** We can get their attention another way! 😊

What – *It’s about the journey not the destination*



- **Did not** submit a story to the media about the SHIP work we were doing.
- **Set the stage for a story related to SHIP work.**
 - Received local newspaper coverage twice ★★★★★
 - Received Metro newspaper mention twice ★★★★★
 - Gained public recognition ★☆☆☆☆
 - Increased subscribers ★☆☆☆☆

How – *Take time to plan the trip (and then just let it happen)*



- **Planned and implemented a guessing game to “tell the story.”** Invited public to guess the weight of fresh produce the local food shelf would collect, including from our work with community gardens and farmers markets.
 - **Objectives, methods and evaluation methods** for the game plan, e.g., media stories, produce donated and responses (Few hours of time)
 - **Logistics, instructions, rules and rewards** (Rewards were items previously purchased for other incentives but never used. Rewards also included attractive certificates and public recognition.) (Less than one day of time)
 - **Set up online response collection form:** Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) is not just for surveys! It is a useful tool for collecting guesses, but we also collected information about respondents, such as if they knew about SHIP and if they wanted to subscribe to eNews. (About an hour of time)
- **Promoted** the game using everyday communications tools, mostly electronic (webpage, Facebook, E-subscribe, press release, direct communication with partners and PDF’s) (Less than one day of time)
- **Write the “story”:** “What do 20 elephants, a monster truck and VEAP have in common?”

Lessons – *It’s not important how many people you reach if you reach the right people*

- Relying on electronic communications limits participation but not media attention if you play your cards right, and there is value in that.
- Fun gets attention.
- One person can take responsibility for this, but there is potential for greater outcomes with more involvement.

VEAP Garden Donation Campaign

Objectives

- Objective 1: Increase garden and farmers market produce donations for VEAP to 3,000 pounds by October 15, 2013.
- Objective 2: Increase awareness in BER community that SHIP-funded gardens and farmers market collaboration are effective and sustainable solutions to creating a healthier community and thereby lowering health care costs.
- Objective 3: Increase BER community member engagement in efforts to improve healthy eating.
- Objective 4: Create media buzz for and a positive spin on SHIP community garden initiatives.
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Method

Engage BER community members in a game to guess the weight in pounds of garden and farmers market produce donations to the VEAP food shelf in 2013.

In all three cities, promote the contest and inform community about sustainability of garden and farmers market food donations to improve community health:

- Through city government media channels, including **city websites, Facebook, Twitter**, cable TV, print publications (e.g. Briefing) (**Government media channels were confirmed in Bloomington only.**)
- In print and electronic community news periodicals, including **Star Tribune, Sun Current**, Patch, Bloomington Crow, KSTP.com and any others
- On local television and radio stations, including **WCCO, FOX, KSTP and KARE**
- Through **community partners**, including churches, block clubs, CERT members and any others we can identify (**VEAP and SHIP staff sent notification**)

VEAP will keep track of farmers market and garden produce donations by weight.

BER community members submit guesses online via Survey Monkey. Participants are asked about their awareness of SHIP-funded gardens to improve community health. Participants will have the OPTION to respond to additional questions regarding interest in SHIP initiatives, willingness to participate and to sign-up for the eNewsletter. Survey Monkey creates a data base of responses.

When contest ends, compare guesses in Survey Monkey data base with VEAP garden and farmers market donation amount. Select and notify prize winners; send press release.

Timeline/Task

By July 12	Write contest rules: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Who is eligible (<i>anyone living or working in BER by responding “yes” or “no” to the question on Survey Monkey</i>)How many guesses are allowed (<i>multiple, but not at the same time</i>)How prizes are awarded (<i>pick them up at Public Health Building, obtain photo release and take picture</i>) and how many prizes are awarded (<i>I suggest prize(s) for the closest without going over, multiple prizes for the same guess and random drawing for additional prizes</i>)Contest period (<i>August 1-October 15</i>)
By July 24	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Write press releaseCreate other identified print communication needs such as flyers, cards, letters and etc.
July 25	Submit press release to Sun Current
By July 26	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Secure prizes for contest (<i>gift cards, maybe some gift donations like free community ed class, free club membership</i>)Create Survey Monkey to collect guesses and responsesCreate web page dedicated to contest information
July 31	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Activate Survey Money and Web pageSubmit press release to all MediaDistribute other communications to community partners
August 1- October 15	Run contest
October 16	Review contest entries; select and notify winners (contact info must be on Survey Monkey submission form)
By October 20	Write and submit press release
By October 20	Complete evaluation

Evaluation

Objective 1: By October 15, 2013, garden and farmers market donations to VEAP reach at least 3,000 pounds.

Donations totaled 20,050 pounds by October 15, 2013.

Objective 2: By October 15, 2013, 20 percent of contest participants who indicated in the contest entry they were previously unaware that SHIP-funded community gardens and the farmers market collaboration are a sustainable solution to a healthier community and lowering health care costs will also indicate that they are now aware.

All participants answered. Fifty percent (23) of participants did not previously know.

By October 15, 2013, At least one media communication from each of Bloomington, Edina and Richfield will highlight that SHIP-funded gardens and the farmers market collaboration are effective and sustainable solutions to creating a healthier community and thereby lowering health care costs.

Bloomington Sun Current – August 14

Star Tribune – August 14

Objective 3: By October 15, 2013, contest participants will total at least 1,000.

Participants totaled 46. Guesses totaled 64.

By October 15, 2013, three percent of contest participants will either express interest in SHIP initiatives, willingness to participate or sign-up for the eNewsletter.

Fifty-nine percent (27) expressed willingness to participate and/or sign up for the eNewsletter. Twenty wanted to receive eNews (2 were already on our list), and 14 were willing to be contacted for participation.

Objective 4: By October 15, 2013, we will have received at least one media request about the contest.

News release going out.



1. **Game period:** The game runs from August 1, 12:00 a.m. to midnight, October 15, 2013 – central daylight time.
2. **Game eligibility:** Persons of any age who live or work in Bloomington, Edina or Richfield are eligible to play. People who work directly with the VEAP food shelf and Statewide Health Improvement Program in Bloomington are not eligible for prizes.
3. **Entries allowed per person:** Each participant is allowed to enter one guess per day during the game run (from August 1 to October 15, 2013); there is no limit to the number of guesses each participant may enter. Only online entries made via game web pages will be accepted.
4. **Prize awards:** Winners will be notified on October 16. Prizes will be awarded for best guess(es) and from a random drawing. The number of prizes distributed will depend upon the number of prizes available when the game closes. Game organizer will accept health-related prize donations throughout the game run and will list donors on game web page.

"Guess" winner(s) will be selected based upon the entry (or entries if there are duplicate winning entries) closest to the total weight, but without going over, of produce donations to VEAP when VEAP takes its last weight measurement on October 15, 2013. "Guess" winners have priority to choose their prize on a first come first serve basis from October 17-25, 2013, at the Bloomington Public Health Center during normal business hours. "Guess" winner(s) will be asked to sign a photo release and have their picture taken for media publication.

"Random drawing" winners and remaining "guess" winners will have from October 28-November 8, 2013 to choose their prize on a first come first serve basis at the Bloomington Public Health Center during normal business hours.



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Maria Regan Gonzalez
Phone: 952-563-8995
Email: mrgonzalez@ci.bloomington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guess the weight of garden donations to VEAP and you could win! Guessing game promotes garden donations to VEAP and highlights SHIP efforts

Bloomington, Edina and Richfield – The VEAP food shelf reaped bountiful produce donations in the last two years with support from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). Join the community fun in guessing the total weight of produce donations the VEAP food shelf receives this season by playing *Growing to Give*. Prizes will be awarded for best guess and by random draw. People of any age who live or work in Bloomington, Edina or Richfield are eligible. To play the game, make a guess online between August 1 and October 15, 2013, at www.surveymonkey.com/s/growingtogive.

To help you guess, SHIP-funded gardens donated 1,919 pounds of produce in 2011 and 2,515 pounds in 2012. This year SHIP also worked with the Bloomington Farmers Market to provide a produce donation system. The system includes green bins identified by a VEAP donation banner. Everyone is encouraged to donate as produce donations from all sources will figure into the total donation amount in 2013.

With money, resources and training through SHIP, enthusiastic and dedicated individuals from churches, schools and the community have made garden and farmers market donations a sustainable means for increasing healthy food availability. Frances Lubecke, VEAP program director, explained why these produce donations are so important: “The food shelf serves over 6,500 people monthly – many for whom fresh produce makes a difference. We can never have enough (fresh produce). It keeps the community healthy.” And when the community is healthy, we all benefit in a number of ways including lowered health care costs.

Grow the fun! If you are a business or organization that would like to donate a prize and be listed on the game web page, please call game organizer at 952-563-8904.

For more information about this game, visit the game web page on Bloomington’s website: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, search keywords: *growing to give*.

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The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), an integral part of Minnesota’s nation-leading 2008 health reform law, strives to help Minnesotans lead longer, healthier lives by preventing the chronic disease risk factors of tobacco use and exposure, poor nutrition and physical inactivity. For more information, visit <http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship>



fun guessing game for all*

See back for how to play and prize information.

With a Growing list of **PRIZES!**

VEAP, a SHIP partner, has taken great strides to increase produce donations from gardens and farmers markets, so . . .

How many pounds of produce donations would YOU guess the VEAP food shelf will receive this season ?

* Game is open to people of all ages who live or work in Bloomington, Edina or Richfield. People who work directly with the VEAP food shelf and Statewide Health Improvement Program in Bloomington are not eligible for prizes.

Supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Program, Minnesota Department of Health



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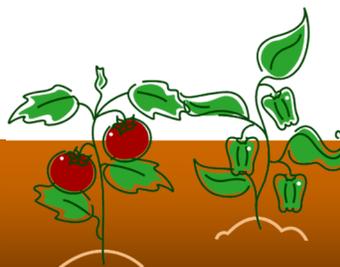
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- Game participants win prizes for best guess(es) AND from a random drawing.
- Each participant is allowed to enter one guess per day during the game period.
- Game period is from August 1, 2013 to October 15, 2013.
- Guesses must be made online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/growingtogive
- More information is at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us (search keyword "growing to give")

Grow the FUN!

If you are a business or organization that would like to GROW THE FUN in the Growing to Give guessing game. We welcome your health-related prize donation and will add your name to our GROWING list of prizes. We will also thank you from our the bottom of our roots!



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Jeffrey Loso

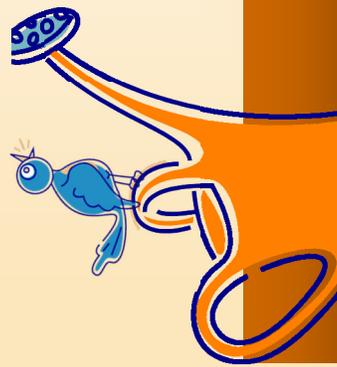
is **AWESOME**



For making a guess in **Growing to Give**

for the weight of produce donations the VEAP food shelf received this season

Thank you!



PRESS RELEASE

Contacts:
Nathan Rust, Food Program Manager, VEAP
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 24, 2013

Ruth Tripp, SHIP Coordinator,
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rtripp@ci.bloomington.mn.us, 952-563-8742

WINNER GUESSED THE WEIGHT OF PRODUCE DONATIONS TO VEAP

Guessing game called attention to a community need

Bloomington, Edina and Richfield – What do 20 elephants, a monster truck and VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People) all have in common? The answer is 20,000 pounds. That is the guess City of Bloomington employee, Barbara Pederson, made to be declared winner in the *Growing to Give* game to guess the weight of produce donations to VEAP.

Bloomington Public Health's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) held the guessing game as a fun way to draw attention to its work with VEAP to "grow" produce donations for VEAP's food shelf. For VEAP, the matter of growing produce donations is important to prevent hunger in those lacking resources. For SHIP, it matters to make good health easy for everyone.

SHIP asked folks who live or work in Bloomington, Edina or Richfield to guess the total weight of produce donations to VEAP by October 15. The official weight of produce donations reported by VEAP at the end of the day was 20,050 pounds. This amount was 5 to 6 times greater than most guesses. Only one other person came close with a guess that exceeded the weight. The game's winner, Barb, said, "I saw the donations and I knew they had a lot, so I just took a stab at (guessing) it."

Nathan Rust, VEAP food program manager, explained an exact comparison with last year isn't possible, but he knows the amount of produce donations increased greatly this year. The Bloomington Farmers Market contributed about 2,000 pounds of produce last year. This year the Market donated over 6,000 pounds. For the first time, the Richfield and Edina farmers markets also collected produce for VEAP. Combined, their produce donations came close to 6,000 pounds.

Increasing the amount of produce at the food shelf is greatly needed because the number of people using the VEAP food shelf that serves Bloomington, Richfield and Edina has increased. “We have had record demand over the last five years,” said Mr. Rust. “Over 8,000 community members use our food shelf each month. Most of these community members want to eat healthy, but they have barriers that prevent it.”

Mr. Rust made the point that this situation exists even though the economy in our community is improving. He said, “Many who need to use the food shelf are from working families with minimum-wage jobs. They survive day by day. They tell us they don’t have enough money to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. Some don’t have transportation to get where fresh fruits and vegetables are available.”

SHIP first supported produce donations with start-up money and technical assistance for community gardens. SHIP stipulated a portion of the harvest must be donated. As a result, enthusiastic church, school and community members contributed close to one ton of produce in 2011 and over one ton in 2012. When SHIP joined with VEAP this year, it supported VEAP’s plan for a produce donation system at farmers markets.

A plan is helpful, but ultimately it is people who donate. Mr. Rust said, “We are truly grateful to the community for the increase in produce donations. It is going a long way to help us provide healthy food for people who live here and need our help.”

This year SHIP will continue working on making vegetables and fruits easier to obtain where location, transportation and cost make it difficult. Ruth Tripp, who is the SHIP coordinator for Bloomington’s Health Division, said, “SHIP will be working within Bloomington, Edina and Richfield to promote recommendations from our Community Food Assessment. Enacting the recommendations will do more to make health easier for everyone, and that is our goal.”

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