

MEATLESS MONDAY MCGILL – SPF FINAL REPORT

Russell Vinegar – November 22, 2010

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SUMMARY

Meatless Monday McGill (MMM) has greatly benefited from support by the young Sustainability Projects Fund. The relatively small contribution of the SPF (compared to other projects) enabled effective and timely development of MMM, resulting in a successful start to what will hopefully be a multi-year program to promote sustainable and healthy food choices.

DELIVERABLES

The results of MMM, in line with the initial goals of the project, are both material and slightly intangible. The **regular Meatless Monday events** now taking place on the first Monday of each month in all the residence dining halls are the primary result of MMM. These events feature the **promotional and educational materials** I created, to inform students about the impacts of eating meat, as well as more vegetarian and vegan options on the menu to make it easier for students choose to forgo meat. We hope to make these events weekly, as there currently are in Carrefour Sherbrooke and were in RVC, BMH, and Douglas Hall through the month of September. The promotional materials have received a lot of positive feedback for attractive and innovative design, and effective presentation of information.

A **website** (<http://meatlessmcgill.tk>) has been created and serves as a resource base for individuals looking to learn more about the impacts of dietary choices and MMM in general. Also a **promotional video** for the SPF was made.

Hundreds of students made **personal pledges** to eat meatless on Monday or completed our survey (both available online) and many more stopped to discuss food choices with our **student**

volunteers present on the first MMM event in each dining hall. How much eating patterns have actually shifted has not been examined, but potential ways of doing so will be discussed at our upcoming meeting. Given the presence of educational table tents on each table in the dining halls on Meatless Mondays, and the other promotional materials about, it is inevitable that the MMM message has entered student discussions.

Deliverables are detailed more fully in the “Goals and Outcomes” section.

SPF ROLE

The SPF provided the funding required to plan and execute the events, design and print high quality print materials, create a comprehensive website, and produce the SPF video. Since I took care of all tasks personally, with the exception of printing, **most of the budget was for a stipend for my work**. Instead of finding full-time work for May and June, working on MMM was one of my part-time jobs. **Almost all tasks for the project were completed on time and as planned, and I do not believe this would have been possible without the funding for my time.**

Lilith Wyatt, SPF Coordinator, supplied a lot of advice and helped with decision making throughout the project. The SPF working group didn’t provide any major recommendations for my project, but I appreciate the external review process. The degree of accounting necessary for my project was manageable and didn’t seem excessive.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Other parties were essential to the success of MMM. **McGill Food and Dining Services (MFDS)** staff have provided **in-kind support** throughout the project, making changes to the menu, handling the regular distribution of promotional materials, using their own methods of promotion (MMM pumpkin!?), and offering ideas for improvement. The 15 or so **volunteers** who tabled on the launch days allowed us to connect with many students. **Friends and collaborators** (especially members of the McGill Food Systems Project) helped with the production of many elements of MMM.

Finally, I must mention the role of my **independent study course**. In Winter 2010, I did an independent study which resulted in the fundamental planning of a Meatless Monday campaign for McGill, and culminated with a two-week trial campaign in RVC, through collaboration with MFDS. This work greatly simplified the SPF application process; in fact, most of my application was lifted directly from my independent project. This was not planned, but students interested in creating a SPF proposal but reluctant to commit the time should consider an independent study.

TASKS AND HOURS

I personally put at least 150 hours into the project. Minor tasks all add up. Approximate times spent on some bigger tasks are listed in the table.

Task	Date	Details	Time	Project member responsible	Status
Any purchase, activity, communication, event, deliverable, etc.		Goods, vendor, support needed, special considerations, etc.			
Communicate with potential volunteers	May			Russell Vinegar	DONE
Create/develop new website	Early June	Online now at http://meatlessmcgill.tk or http://mmm.comuv.com , needs a couple finishing touches	(25hrs)		DONE (updates are ongoing)
Identify print material numbers, costs, and formats and printer/supplier (for table stands)	Week of June 7	TerraSkin for table tents– free material, ½ price printing	(3 hrs)		DONE (150 tents + 10 posters)
Design new print materials	Begin week of June 7, complete by June 18	Getting help from experienced friend Sammy	(30hrs)		DONE
Get materials printed, put together table tents	Week of June 21	McGill Printing Services and TerraSkin; for all cafs, including Aramark Folding and applying magnets to table tents takes time	4 hrs		DONE
Produce video and blurb	After print materials design, complete by June 27	(must correct text for 'There is one decisions we all make')	(15 hrs)		DONE
Produce handout for MFDS staff	By June 25	This will be distributed to MFDS staff around the same time I run short info sessions for them	(1 hr)		DONE
Begin communication with volunteers for launch day (Sept 13)	August 25	Send out email, tabling scheduling doodle			DONE
Distribute promotional materials, table in BMH, RVC, DH	Sept 13	Student volunteers and I will manage this	7 hrs		DONE
Distribute promotional materials in BMH, RVC, DH	Sept 21	MFDS staff will handle this responsibility each week after Sept 13		MFDS staff (supervisors in each caf)	DONE
Begin communication with volunteers for 2 nd	Sept 17	Send out email, tabling scheduling doodle			DONE

launch day (Sept 13)					
Meet with Aramark admin or supervisors	Week of Sept 20	To arrange			DONE
Distribute promotional materials, table in NR, CS	Oct 4	Student volunteers and I will manage this	7 hrs		DONE
Distribute promotional materials in NR, CS	Oct 11	MFDS staff will handle this responsibility			DONE
Arrange info sessions for MFDS staff	Sept 13	Suzana Bubic has a brief I produced to distribute within MFDS; supervisors at BMH, RVC, DH, NR, and CS have been informed thru her or me. I have not sat down formally with most MFDS floor staff			IN PROGRESS
Gauge campaign success and decide with MFDS staff about the future of the campaign	Late Sept/Early Oct/Dec	Survey and pledge results are in and tabulated, meeting with MFDS staff is scheduled for Dec 6th			IN PROGRESS
Transfer winter coordinator/supervisor responsibilities to another student	Oct/Nov/Dec	I am going to be studying in Panama in winter. I have found 3 volunteers to take over management of the project through winter semester. 2 of the 3 will likely continue next fall.			IN PROGRESS
General coordination duties		Planning and organizing events, volunteers, replying to random emails to the wbesite	??? a lot of time		

EXPENSES

Expense Description	Estimated Cost
<u>Promotional materials</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large posters (10 posters on styrene, 18"x24") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Printing (McGill Printing Services) ○ Velcro tape (Bureau en Gros) • Table tents (150 six panel triangles on TerraSkin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paper (Mitzart) ○ Printing (JG Production) ○ Magnet tape (Bureau en Gros) 	Subtotal = \$455 = \$320 = \$26/ea * 10 + tx = \$300 <\$20 = \$135 = free = \$125 (free labour + 50% discount + no tax) < \$8
<u>Stipends</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promo materials design ○ Website design and administration • MFDS staff stipends (organizational) 	Subtotal = \$1270 = \$10/hr * 127 hrs = \$1270 (gross pay) N/A
<u>Staff training</u>	N/A
TOTAL	\$1725 (all of SPF grant money)

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

These were our initial goals, as stated on the SPF app. Outcomes are given in sub-points

- Goal: reduce student meat consumption by 15%, by encouraging students to choose to replace meat and animal products with healthy, less environmentally-costly, vegetarian options.
 - MMM event the first Monday of each month in all 5 residence dining halls (now every Monday in Carrefour; also every Monday in BMH, RVC, and DH thru September)
 - More vegetarian and vegan offerings on the menu
 - MMM promotional posters up
 - MMM informational table tents on each table
- Goal: promote and contribute to the food discussion, which has already begun on campus as a result of various other efforts.
 - Regular MMM events and educational materials
 - Students tabling on launch days
 - Engaged students in real discussion, active learning
 - Promote MMM
- Goal: engage residence students by encouraging their involvement and feedback.
 - Pledge promoted on launch days, computer and paper forms:
 - Almost 205 pledges made by students to eat meatless every Monday
 - Another 53 pledges to try going meatless the coming Monday
 - 14 pledges to disregard MMM and keep eating meat

- Surveys promoted on launch days:
 - Students provided comments and requests which will go to MFDS staff at meeting
- Increased discussion of vegetarian options and student preferences with chefs is helping provide more enjoyable and nutritious vegetarian options throughout the month
- Additional outcomes (not listed as goals at outset):
 - Exposure outside of McGill
 - Website has received significant traffic
 - Good knowledgebase for impacts of meat consumption
 - Mention in some small media sources
 - Connections with MM partners
 - Strengthen connections with administration
 - MFDS staff have included me in decision making process on non-MMM topics
 - Also they really like the tabletents and want to use the format or style
 - SPF video

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

GOOD STUFF AND NICE SURPRISES

- **INDEPENDENT/APPLEID COURSEWORK**
 - Can't say enough about this – made is easy to commit the time req'd to organize project and make SPF application
 - Often students have good ideas but they either don't try and execute them or execute poorly due to a lack of commitment
- **Follow up potential opportunities**, even if you aren't sure
 - TerraSkin
 - resulted in free material and ½ price printing (in return for putting their logos on tabletents)
 - beautiful final product, caught students and faculty attention
 - Chefs at CS expressed enthusiasm about MMM on the launch day
 - Followed up and now we have MMM every week there
 - **I had to follow up** but then they did the rest
- **Build useful partnerships**
 - Especially useful having some **reliable contacts within admin**
 - New and young staff often helpful
 - ie. Lilith, Aviva (Aramark), Maria, Laura
- **People go to websites**, content helps
 - Not necessarily students, hard to say
 - 718 real human visitors since launch in June
- Many students are ready to engage in legitimate conversation
 - Also many not willing to talk
 - Depends on social environment, some residences better than others
 - **Freshman are just getting settled (and hammered) at the beginning of the school year** (first launch day was on Sept 13th)
 - Can be harder to break through at this time

- **Free meals help get volunteers**

ADAPTATION: LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND SOME THINGS YOU JUST GOTTA DEAL WITH

- Students are much more ready to do something on paper in the cafeterias
 - More pledges garnered with paper sign up than the simple computer form (even when we had the computers in the cafs)
 - But paper means annoying data entry later
- Institutional bureaucracy can be a pain but is best to just accept it
 - (Couldn't have corner of starbucks logo in poster, needed RezLife tabling permit, various changes to message content)
- Get feedback from friends (and others) throughout
 - Feedback on posters and table tents was very useful to create clear coherent messages

HEADACHES / OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEEPER LEARNING

- **Work directly with stakeholders whenever possible**
 - TerraSkin: material was first mentioned by Dennis, had to communicate through him with material supplier; also could have skipped a couple issues by dealing directly with printer later in process
 - turned out printing format was different from stated (twice) which required tweaking and redesign
 - pricing was unclear and initially misrepresented
- **Students steal table tents**
 - I just received word of this from Aramark staff and have yet to investigate
 - Issue of having easily deployable/removable materials
 - Why are they stealing them?!

FUTURE

- Will continue with monthly (or weekly at CS) events thru the academic year
 - Pushing for weekly everywhere
- 3 students (Hannah Downing, Robin Reid-Fraser, and Kat Blackwood) will manage MMM on the student side, beginning Winter 2010
 - Kat and Robin will likely continue into Fall 2010
- Things to be determined at upcoming meeting (December 6th) w/ new leaders and MFDS + Aramark chefs
 - plan for rest of year
 - why not MMM every week
 - menu (recipe ideas, student feedback, 'real vegetarian/vegan option')
 - possibility of looking at sales records
- Moving into other parts of campus?
 - Mac campus?
- Special events?
 - Guest chefs, interactive events

FINAL REMARKS

Some personal musings:

Would this project or something similar have happened without SPF funding?

Would it have been more cost effective to have outsourced the desktop publishing and web design work?

Is part of the SPF's goal to give young people practical leadership or technical skills?

"Here's why I really like MMM [...] as consumers, we are blinded by convenience and affordability, especially when it comes to food. More than just encouraging students to take a closer look at their meat consumption, I hope that MMM will make folks pause and think about the countless consumer decisions we make each day. Food is too beautiful to be taken for granted."