



# SUMMARY REPORT:

First Annual Fresh Food Retail Summit

NOVEMBER 2013

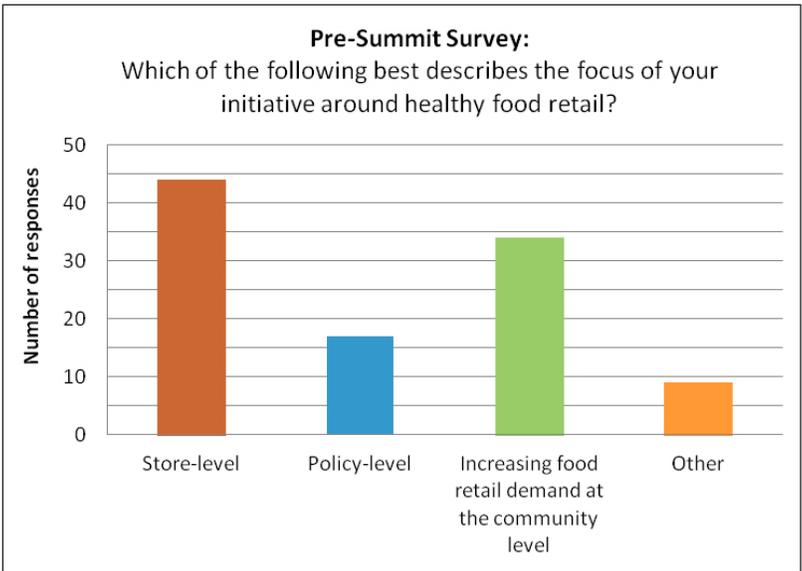
# INTRODUCTION

In New York City there are tens of thousands of corner stores, green grocers, supermarkets, and other brick and mortar food retail venues, many competing for customers on the same block. Despite this high number, it can be difficult to find fresh, affordable, high-quality fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods in many parts of the city. Increasing access to healthy and affordable foods both in existing retail operations and also to areas without access is paramount to improving nutrition and reducing chronic diseases among all New Yorkers.

NYC is home to many nonprofits, businesses, community groups, academic centers, entrepreneurs, and individuals who are actively engaged in addressing these issues. As a result, various programs and initiatives have developed in support of increased access to and promotion of healthy and affordable foods throughout the city. In 2013, a group of organizations convened to plan and coordinate a one day event to bring together like-minded individuals and groups to discuss how to best collaborate and ensure citywide access to healthy foods.

The Fresh Food Retail Summit, hosted by the Food Policy Center at the CUNY School of Public Health on November 15, 2013, brought together more than 100 people from organizations actively working in food retail across NYC to participate in a daylong event of interactive learning through insightful presentations, a panel discussion, a robust poster session, and afternoon break-out session discussions. Attendees left the Summit armed with new tools, resources, and fresh lenses with which to approach the current and future landscape of fresh food retail in New York City.

ROADMAP OF THE DAY	
10:15 – 11:00AM	<b>Keynote Address:</b> Kathy Means Vice President Government Relations & Public Affairs, Produce Marketing Association
11:00 – 12:30PM	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Rache Brand, Cornell Food and Brand Lab Tanya Fields, BLK ProjeK Sajan Philip, Low Income Investment Fund James Johnson-Piatt, Urbane Development Frank Pimentel, Fine Fare Supermarket
1:30 – 3:00PM	<b>Breakout Sessions:</b> Evaluation Engage the Owner Engage Customers Revamp the Store



## INTRODUCTION

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**Sabrina Baronberg**, Senior Director, Food and Nutrition Programs at Public Health Solutions, led a devoted planning team of food retail strategists to organize this first annual Summit. Sabrina joined PHS from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she was the Director of Food Access and Community Health Programs. In this capacity, she developed and implemented initiatives to increase access to healthy foods in the areas of the City that need them.

### WELCOME ADDRESS

**Janet Poppendieck**, Policy Director, NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College, served as Director of the Hunter College Center for the Study of Family Policy (from 1988 until 2001), where she helped to start the Welfare Rights Initiative, the Community Interpreter Project, and the Language Diversity Initiative. Her primary concerns, as a scholar and activist, are poverty, hunger, and food assistance in the United States.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Kathy Means**, Vice President Government Relations & Public Affairs Produce Marketing Association (PMA). PMA represents more than 2,500 companies throughout the supply chain, including supermarket retailers, growers, importers, exporters, foodservice companies, and suppliers to the industry. Kathy serves as an association and produce industry spokesperson, with expertise in the fresh fruit and vegetable industry as well as knowledge on both industry trends and consumer behavior related to produce production and consumption.

### PANELISTS

**Rache Brand**, Retail Branding Consultant, Cornell Food and Brand Lab, uses her experience and skills as a brander to seek opportunities to create change and bring healthy, fresh food to the mass market. She works in affordable food, often for convenience, contract catering, quick service dining, and grocery. Rache has knowledge on low-cost or no-cost solutions through education, training and simple design techniques to foster incremental change in food retail environments.

**Tanya Fields**, Founder & Executive Director of The BLK ProjeK, an organization promoting women and youth owned enterprises that provide access to affordable good food, promote green space, and support public and mental health. Tanya founded the BLK ProjeK in 2009 as a response to sexist institutional policies, structurally reinforced cycles of poverty, and harsh inequities in wealth and access to capital that result in too many women being unable to rise out of poverty and sustain their families. Currently, the BLK ProjeK is working on launching The South Bronx Mobile Market, a former school bus converted into a clean energy vehicle supply-ing the South Bronx with local fresh and prepared food.

**Sajan Philip**, Loan Officer at Low Income Investment Fund and Program Manager for the New York Healthy Food and Healthy Communities Fund (HFHC Fund) at the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), is responsible for management of LIIF's Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) and HFHC Fund capital deployment. As the fund manager of the HFHC, Sajan brings a broad experience in assisting community-based organizations in actualizing food projects by leveraging partnerships and using financing and grants effectively.

**James Johnson-Piatt**, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Urbane Development, provides technical assistance, program development, and thought leadership to a wide range of clients and partners working to generate financial security in underserved communities throughout North America.

**Frank Pimentel**, President, Fine Fare Supermarket, has over 20 years of supermarket industry experience. He currently owns and operates a Fine Fare Supermarket on Morris Avenue in the South Bronx and is a leading healthy retailer in the community. Working directly with City Harvest, the FRESH program, The Low Income Investment Fund, SoBro, and The Greater Universal Baptist Church, Frank has taken advantage of multiple resources from the micro (healthy shopping tours) to the macro (healthy retail financing through the FRESH Program) and has created a win/win proposition that benefits the community he services and the stores he operates.

## MORNING SESSION

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Summarized below are the major concepts and themes raised by the keynote speaker and panelists.

### KNOW MARKET TRENDS

- People are eating more fruit and fewer vegetables.
- More than two thirds of people say local is important when buying fresh fruits and vegetables.
- People like convenience, for example, grab and go salads or cut up fruit.
- Produce can provide the highest profit margin if retailers buy and sell at an affordable price.

*"In the U.S., overall the trend for fruits and vegetables is not good. Fruit is up and down, veggies are in decline."*

– Kathy Means

*"The most important thing to know about produce in a supermarket is that it can be one of the most profitable centers in a supermarket. For me, it is only second to meat."*

– Frank Pimentel

### MARKET IT TO WORK

- Use positive language to promote sales; for example, use the phrase "Bonus quantities!" instead of "discount."
- Market fruits and vegetables as enjoyable, delicious, convenient, and versatile, and not just healthy.
- Build brand trust according to community preference and use it as a leveraging point.

*"Focus on building brand trust - knowing your community ... and what they will react to."*

– Rache Brand

### CONSIDER THE STORE AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY

- Leverage community relationships.
- Help the store understand their community, for example, gather useful data about customer preference.
- Encourage co-programming for community education opportunities, for example, local partners coming into a supermarket to teach community members to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make health choices and cook delicious, affordable meals.

*"A sign that a small store will be successful [in this work] is if they have pictures of kids in the community in their store. That means the community is invested in that store. Leverage that relationship. Engage with the owner every time you walk into the store, they can be your best "pusher" [of healthy food purchasing]. Retail owners have the opportunity to be a game changer."*

– James Johnson - Piatt

*"We need to be conscious of the fact that bodega retailers could be the front line of getting people to eat healthier."*

– Tanya Fields

## AFTERNOON SESSION

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The afternoon session was a time for community retail strategists to come together, share success stories and brainstorm opportunities to increase access to healthy food. The following subjects were discussed as important concepts to consider when designing, implementing and evaluating community food retail projects:

KEY AREA	STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT
<b>Evaluation: Brainstorming Options</b>  <i>Ensure evaluation is part of project design and implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have the foresight to design programs with an evaluation plan.</li><li>• Create open internal and external communication channels with partners.</li><li>• Share tools and resources across organizations i.e. Dropbox, Cloud.</li><li>• Standardize metrics to measure impact.</li><li>• Use traceable currency (e.g. EBT, Health Bucks).</li><li>• Convene a Healthy Food Retail Evaluation workgroup.</li></ul>
<b>Engage the Owner: Recruitment and Retention</b>  <i>Provide technical support and ensure owner engagement in and awareness of healthy food retail projects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build trust and relationships with retailers by helping with various aspects of their business (e.g. training staff, incorporating healthy foods).</li><li>• Understand the owner's business model to make it a core part of their strategy.</li><li>• Assess owner's readiness to support selling healthier options in their stores.</li><li>• Aid in developing strategies to create affordable pricing for healthy food options (e.g. streamlining distribution, facilitating bulk purchasing by multiple stores).</li></ul>
<b>Engage Customers: Strategies to Increase Demand</b>  <i>Ensure community engagement in and awareness of healthy food retail projects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflect the needs and desires of community residents in strategy design.</li><li>• Identify residents with cultural and community ties to engage and recruit retailers in health-related initiatives.</li><li>• Create peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities for nutrition education (e.g. grocery store tours).</li><li>• Promote the use of food assistance programs (e.g. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infant, and Children's Program (WIC)) at healthy food retailers.</li><li>• Increase food assistance participant purchasing power by providing incentives for the purchase of healthy food (e.g., Double Up Food Bucks program).</li></ul>
<b>Revamp the Store: Products, Design &amp; Merchandising</b>  <i>Provide support to help stores sell healthier options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about store profit as well as health.</li><li>• Encourage business owners to adopt healthy practices by helping them with promotional efforts (e.g. point-of-purchase signs) and advertising (e.g. radio or newspaper ads).</li><li>• Find avenues for stores to have quick successes in adopting healthy options (e.g. trial periods) for moving produce to the front of the store.</li><li>• Provide support to increase demand of healthy options (e.g., assist with marketing and displaying food) and reduce food waste due to spoilage (e.g., offer ways to store and refrigerate foods).</li></ul>

# SUMMIT DIRECTORY AND MAP

In preparation for the summit, information was collected from each organization about their work to increase healthy food options in brick and mortar retail stores and where they do this work in NYC. This information was used to create a directory (excerpt to the right) of groups working on healthy food retail initiatives as well as a map to show where this work is happening across the boroughs.



### Fresh Food Retail Summit Directory

Who's Doing What and Where in NYC

**Albert Einstein College of Medicine: Montefiore's Office of Community Health**  
**Bronx CATCH (Collective Action to Transform Community Health)**  
 Improves physical activity and nutritional habits using Montefiore Family Medicine Clinics as a hub.  
 Contact: Ross Kristal, ross.kristal@medinstitute.yu.edu  
<http://www.montefiore.org/catch>  
 Map Zones: 3, 5, 6, 7

**Asociacion de Mujeres Progresistas**  
 AMP collaborates with CHALK and Vive tu Vida to recruit local supermarkets to display healthy food options and educate consumers on our 10 Healthy Habits. AMP helps families, particularly those headed by single working mothers, to assist with referrals related to education, housing, domestic violence, immigration, and health issues.  
 Contact: Carmen Acosta, amujeres@gmail.com  
<https://www.facebook.com/MujeresProgresistasNYC/info>  
 Map Zones: 4, 5

**Bronx Health REACH/Institute for Family Health Healthy Bodega Initiative**  
 The initiative aims to increase access to healthy, affordable ready-to-eat foods in Bronx bodegas.  
 Contact: Emma Rodgers, erodgers@institute2000.org  
[www.bronxhealthreach.org](http://www.bronxhealthreach.org)  
 Map Zones: 4, 5

**Bronx District Public Health Office Sugary Beverage Campaign (SBC): Child Marketing Campaign (CMC)**  
 Educates and brings awareness to the importance of decreasing soda intake and the proliferation of marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children at supermarkets and other retail venues.  
 Contact: Deborah Lomax, delomax@health.nyc.gov  
 Map Zones: 5, 6, 7

**Brownsville Partnership, an initiative of Community Solutions**  
 Creating Healthy Places Community Transformation Grant: Part of the "Steps to A Healthier Brownsville" Campaign. Works to increase access to fresh produce with GrowNYC via two Youthmarkets and facilitates produce deliveries to 8 corner stores and supermarkets in Brownsville.  
 Contact: Nupur Chaudhury, nchaudury@cmisolutions.org  
 Map Zone: 10

**CHALK (Choosing Healthy & Active Lifestyles for Kids) / NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Ambulatory Care Network "Vive tu Vida/Live your Life, Energy, Balance, Action"**  
 The Vive tu Vida campaign works with businesses and retail food establishments in Northern Manhattan to disseminate a social marketing message that promotes healthy lifestyles.  
 Contact: Andrea Hausel, Hector Carrasco, chalk@nyp.org  
[chalkcenter.org](http://chalkcenter.org)  
 Map Zone: 19

**The Children's Aid Society**  
 Galkis Educates parents of children ages 3-5 and staff working with them to make healthy choices at local bodegas and supermarkets and to visit and shop at local farmer's markets. CAS is a campaign participant of CHALK's Vive tu Vida program working with businesses to promote the initiative's 10 healthy habits.  
 Contact: Juan Carlos Gonzalez, juancarlosg@childrensaidsociety.org  
<http://childrensaidsociety.org/gohealthy/galkis>

**City Harvest**  
**Healthy Neighborhoods**  
 Healthy Neighborhoods is a multi-pronged approach to improving the food environment of 5 neighborhoods: North Staten Island, Washington Heights, Bed Stuy, Morningside, and Northwest Queens, incorporating community mobilization, retail engagement and nutrition education.  
 Contact: Sally Cooper, scooper@cityharvest.org  
[www.cityharvest.org](http://www.cityharvest.org)  
 Map Zones: 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19, 29, 30, 39, 40, 41

**Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford Stuyvesant (CBS)**  
**Bodega Transformation Grants Brooklyn Commonwealth**  
 Provides comprehensive technical assistance and microgrants to bodegas and a suite of 4 services to local food manufacturers.  
 Contact: Taneeka Tilard, tt@cbstbedstuy.org  
[www.cbstbedstuy.org](http://www.cbstbedstuy.org) / [www.brooklyncommonwealth.org](http://www.brooklyncommonwealth.org)  
 Map Zone: 10

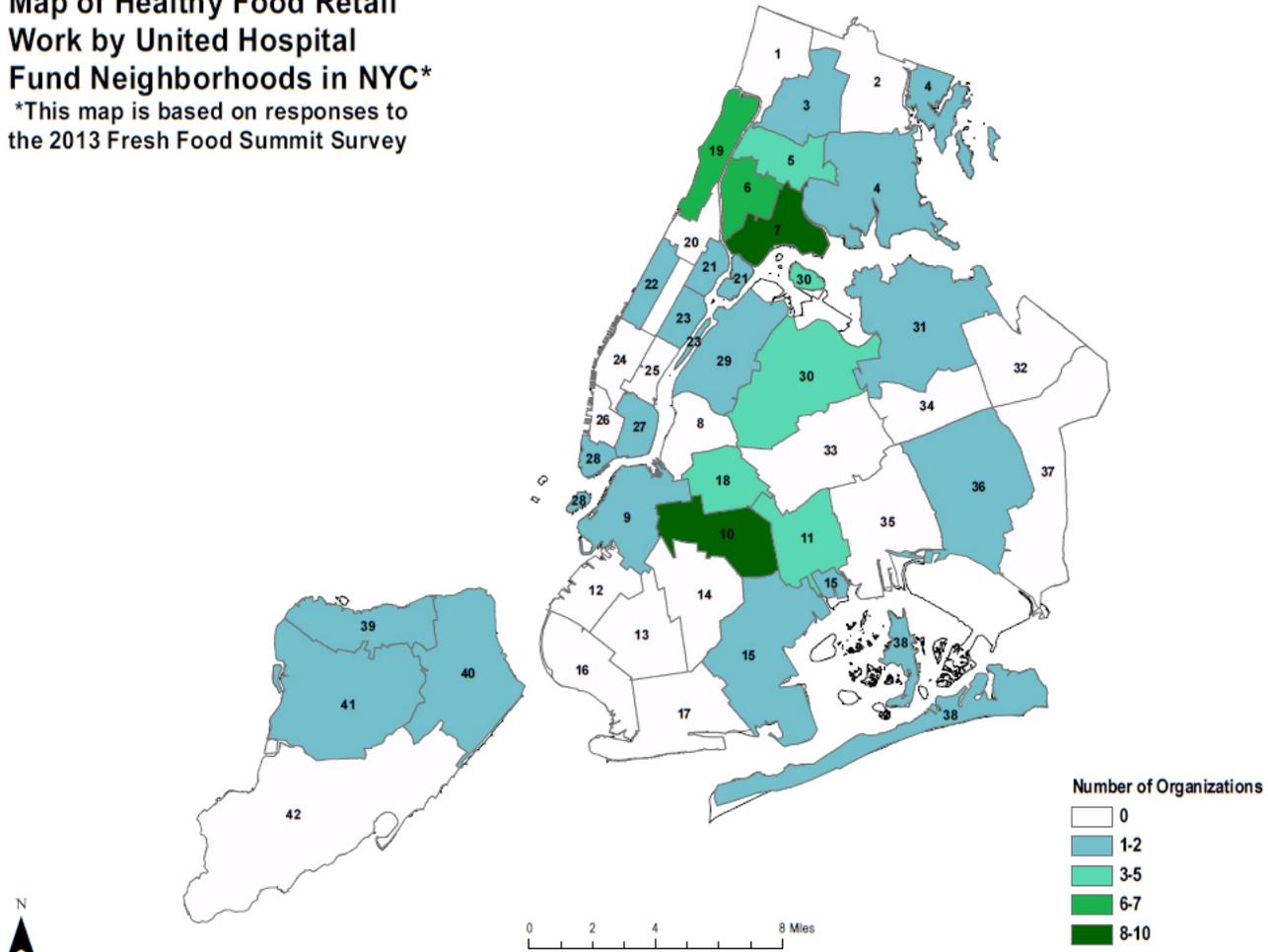
**Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation**  
**VERDE initiative and Communities for Healthy Food NYC**  
 The VERDE initiative focuses on improving four aspects of everyday life: living, learning, eating, and working. The community-wide sustainability VERDE initiative works with deli and grocery owners to suggest new inventory and help merchandise and promote healthy food options in their stores.  
 Contact: Yalena Pena, Cassandra Flechsig, yalmap@cypresshills.org, cossandraf@cypresshills.org  
[www.cypresshills.org](http://www.cypresshills.org)  
 Map Zone: 11

**Faoundo Design Studio Green Urban Planning**  
**Green Bodegas and supermarkets initiative leading to zero energy for small business**  
 Program captures conservation technologies and retrofitting support to existing and new business in urban settings.  
 Contact: Luis Faoundo, lfaoundo@aol.com  
 Map Zone: 19

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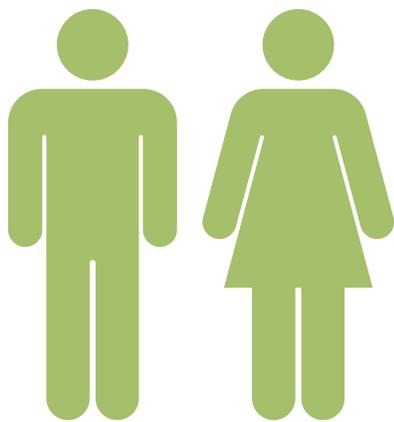
Directory 1

**Map of Healthy Food Retail Work by United Hospital Fund Neighborhoods in NYC\***  
 \*This map is based on responses to the 2013 Fresh Food Summit Survey



# SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

While New York City is considered by some to be the food capital of the world, access to healthy and affordable food varies significantly across the five boroughs. This gathering was envisioned as a first step – an opportunity for healthy food retail advocates to meet, share, learn and also identify areas for collaboration and investment. As a result of this successful Summit, participants have decided to create a Healthy Food Retail Steering Committee with the mission to improve New York City’s food landscape by facilitating collaboration and streamlining efforts among stakeholders to support equal access to and the economic sustainability of selling healthy and affordable food. Steering Committee priorities and goals will be set during the first “Healthy Food Retail Steering Committee” meeting in spring 2014.



**Participant Feedback**

“The panel was phenomenal. Each expert brought a unique & interesting perspective and they were great speakers.”

“My breakout session had excellent structure, content, and participants. The results were great and I got some good ideas from it!”

“Great networking, very informative, overall excellent.”

Thank You!

