CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Annie LePere, Rockbridge Area YMCA
Rebecca Wilder, Virginia Cooperative Extension

#gooutside  #eatyourveggies
Meet the Rockbridge Area

- Rockbridge County and the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista
- Approximately 610 square miles, 36,000 people, and 37,000 cows
- 64,000 acres of National Forest lands
  - 2 rivers
  - Blue Ridge Parkway & Appalachian Trail
  - Natural Bridge State Park
- 3 school districts
  - 4 out of 7 elementary schools at 50% or more FRE lunch
  - 6 out of 7 above 45%, 2 out of 7 above 75%
- 3 Universities
- 1 Hospital
- Multiple community coalitions
Why do we partner?

- Funding
- Capacity Building
  - Volunteers
  - Knowledge
  - In kind resources
- Identity
Live Healthy Rockbridge Kids Partners

- Rockbridge Area Community Services
- Rockbridge County Schools
- Rockbridge Area Prevention Coalition
- Campus Kitchen at Washington and Lee
- Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital
- Rockbridge Area YMCA
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Boxerwood Nature Center
- Natural Bridge State Park
- Rockbridge Area Health Center
- Rockbridge Area Chamber of Commerce
- Parent and Community Representatives
#GOOUTSIDE
Project Development

- HCAT Grant for 2017-18: Recreational Resource Mapping
- National Park Service Grant or 2016-17: Outdoor Recreation Plan and Implementation Strategy (led by tourism)
- Shifted the HCAT project to take the tourism research and put it into a family friendly format
- HCAT: Funding, Organization, and Distribution
- Tourism: Information and Graphic Design
Results

- 2,500 guides were printed and distributed to elementary students in Rockbridge County and Buena Vista City, summer campers, and health organizations
- 3,000 MORE guides were printed and distributed to area businesses and employers
- Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership was formed and expanded to include health organizations
Next Steps

YMCA Hiking
Girls hiking club
Community Trail Walks
Rockbridge Rangers
Walking Rx & Park Rx
Updated, non-dated guide
#EATYOURVEGGIES
Project Development

- Multistage Food Mapping Project 2015-2017
- Packed Lunch Study 2017
- Community-Academic Research Alliance (CARA) Board 2017
- Community-Engaged Learning Cohort 2017-2018
- Community-Based Learning Fellows Grant 2018-Present
- Nutrition Education Projects 2018-Present
- Shop Smart Eat Smart Healthy Retail Project 2019-Present
Community-Based Learning
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

Washington and Lee University & Virginia Cooperative Extension

This Memorandum of Understanding (the “MOU”) is between Washington and Lee University (W&L), and Virginia Cooperative Extension (the “Community Organization” or “Organization”), hereinafter referred to individually as a “Party” or collectively as the “Parties.”

W&L aims to prepare its students for, among other things, responsible leadership, service to others, and engaged citizenship. In furtherance of this goal, W&L is committed to facilitating opportunities for students that enhance their educational experience through participation in hands-on work, research, and learning in community-based settings that can also be meaningful to community agencies. W&L recognizes that the success of its initiatives in this area depends, in part, on the cultivation of strong, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with community-based organizations working at the local, regional, national, and global levels. Washington and Lee University and the Community Organization understand that these interests can be advanced through collaboration.

In furtherance of the Parties’ shared interest in facilitating community-based learning and research opportunities that simultaneously enhance students’ education and enrich and strengthen community life, the Parties agree as follows:
Next Steps

Smarter Lunchroom Project

Pantry Awareness Project

Sustainable Nutrition Education
WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
Asset-Based Community Development

- Communities have challenges AND resources
- John McKnight and Jody Kretzman
- Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Towards Finding and Mobilizing a Neighborhood’s Assets

“What have neighbors who live here done, together, that made the neighborhood better?”
6 common resources across communities

1. Talents and capabilities of local residents
2. Voluntary clubs, groups, and associations
3. Local institutions—business, not for profit, government
4. Land and other physical assets
5. Exchange between neighbors—sharing, bartering, trading, buying, and selling
6. Stories
What are the gifts of local residents?

**Gifts of the Head**
Things I know something about and would enjoy talking about

**Gifts of the Hands**
Things I know how to do and would like to share

**Gifts of the Heart**
Things I care deeply about
What are local Voluntary Associations?

- Addiction Prevention and Recovery Groups
- Animal Care Groups
- Book Clubs
- Business Organizations
- Civic Events Groups
- Disability Special Needs Groups
- Education Groups
- Environmental Groups
- Health Advocacy & Fitness Groups
- Mentoring Groups
- Neighborhood Improvement Groups
- Recreation Groups
- Religious Groups
- Service Clubs
- Social Cause/Advocacy Issues Groups
- Youth Groups
What are Local Institutions?

- Schools
- Libraries
- Law Enforcement
- Colleges, Universities, Trade Schools
- Health and Human Services Agencies
- Non-Profits
- Private Businesses
What about your physical space?

- Farms
- Gardens
- Lighting
- Moderate climate
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Sidewalks
- Trails
- Waterways
Let’s play Community Assets Scattegories!

1. Pick a community in your service area (large or small area)
2. Pick a community issue
3. You’ll have 2 minutes per category to write down as many assets as you can
4. We’ll compare answers and the person with the most non-duplicated answers will receive a prize

You should be THIS excited!
Local Gifts

- Knowledge
- Volunteerism
- Concern for Nutrition
- College Sports Teams
- Retirees
- Bikers
- Canoeing Enthusiasts
- Kayaking Enthusiasts
- Hikers
- Young Mothers
- Walkers
- Healthy People
- Health Center
- Project Horizon
- Carrie
- Boxwood Nature Center
- YWCA
- Horse Center
- Rockbridge Area Relief Association
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Community Table
- Washington & Lee University
- Tidewater River Family Medicine
- Southern Virginia University
- Farmer's Market
- Virginia Military Institute
- Police Departments
- Local Restaurants
- Danvay Lancaster Community College
- City Governments
- Rockbridge Schools
- Chamber of Commerce
- Blue Ridge Schools
- Nursing Homes
- Shepherd Poverty Program
- Lexington Schools
- High Country Outfitters
- Rockbridge Area Community Services
- G3 Fitness Boot Camp

Voluntary Associations

- Kiwanis
- United Way
- Banner Scholars
- YMCA
- RARO
- Live Healthy Rockbridge
- Rockbridge Area Prevention Coalition
- Moose Lodge
- Interact
- 4H
- Moose Club
- Rockbridge Area Retired Teachers
- Rotary
- Master Gardeners
- Friends of the Chessie Trail
- Master Food Volunteers
- Hospital Auxiliary
- PTOS
- Women's Club
- Youth Organizations
- Habitat
- Campus Kitchen
- Friends of Natural Bridge State Park
- College Student Groups
- Fraternities/Sororities
- Omega Club

Community Name: Rockbridge

Community Issue: Nutrition & Physical Activity

Physical Space

- Landscapes
- Rivers
- Mountains
- Trails
- Fitness Facilities
Let’s Go!

- Pssttt... don’t cheat! Work on one section at a time!
- Local Gifts—what skills and talents do residents have?
- Voluntary Associations—what voluntary groups are present in your community?
- Local Institutions—what businesses and organizations exist in your community?
- Physical Space—what is your environment like?
3 steps to implementation

1. Identify
   Identify local assets

2. Connect
   Connect the unconnected assets

3. Empower
   Empower a group or individual to serve as the initiating connector
Make the connections

Listen to the stories!
Join/visit associations
Learn the community
Offer to share resources (exchanges)
Introduce unlikely partners
Your Challenge

Pick three groups from your brainstorming list

How can they contribute to your community issue?

How can you reach out to them in the next month?
Thank you!

Annie LePere  
Childcare Director  
Rockbridge Area YMCA  
elepere@ymcarockbridge.org

Rebecca Wilder  
Extension Agent, FCS, SNAP-Ed  
Virginia Cooperative Extension  
rmarlatt@vt.edu