

The Workshop for Community + Collaboration

Connecting, Listening, and Responding

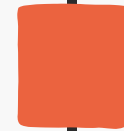
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student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling



The Participatory *Journey* of The Workshop



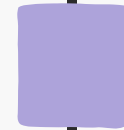
Early Visioning



Building Relationships in Community



First Initiatives



Voices of our Partners



Promoting Equity in the Community



Early Visioning

January 17, 2023 First meeting between Dean Ryan Gildersleeve and Dr. Chris Robbins to discuss the idea that would become The Workshop

February 23, 2023 First "Vision Quest" meeting of twelve participants from EMU



First

GATHERING

April 4, 2023 In-person visioning lunch brought together 24 members of the university community to develop the vision for the emerging project and begin to collectively brainstorm for hosting our first event with community partners



Cultivating community flourishing
through radical love, joy, democratic
interdependencies.

2

Vision
Statement

- The EMU Collaborative is a
deep local movement, infusing trust
cultivating
- We are ~~the~~ your community

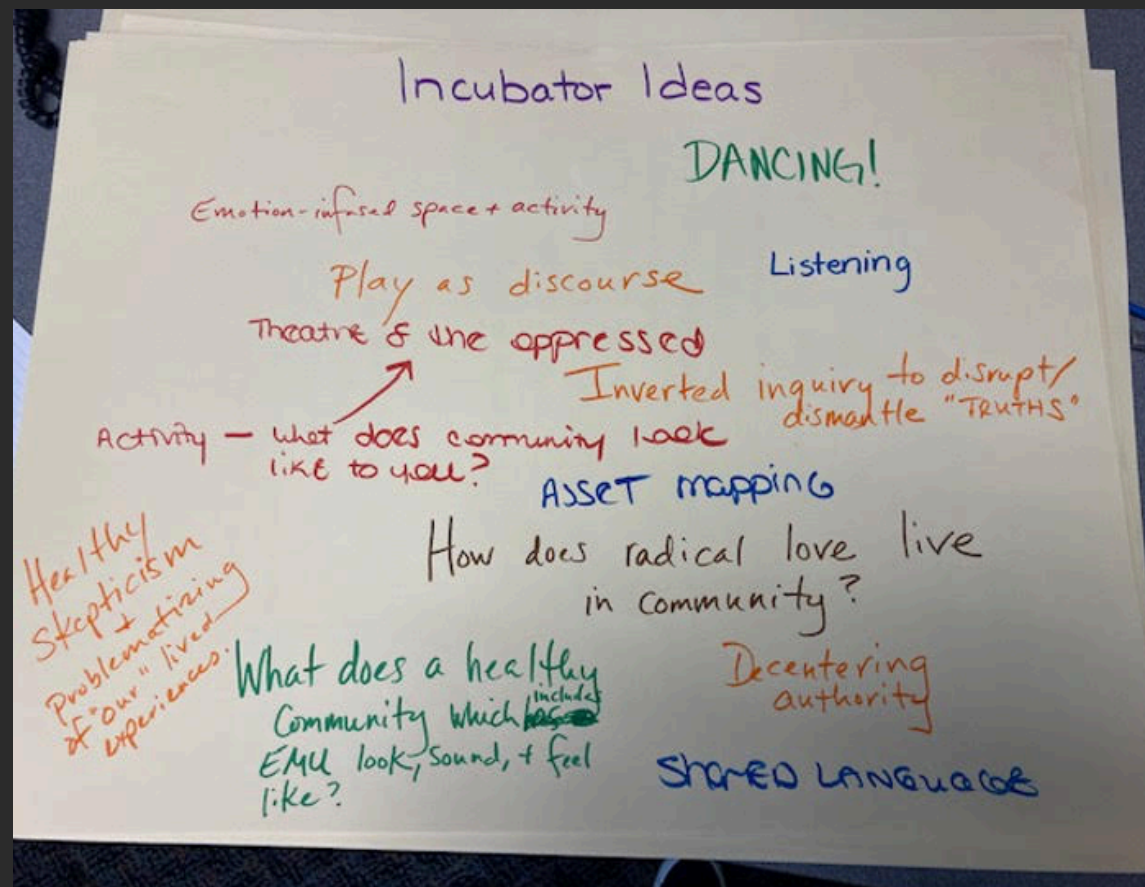
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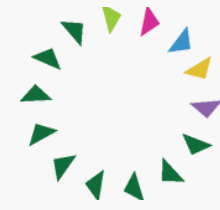
Vision
Statement

Braiding Community for
Collective thriving.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS *In Community*

June 13, 2023 Hosted representatives from 19 community partner organizations to engage in continued visioning together



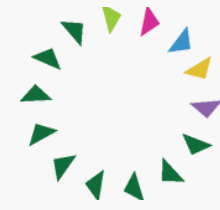


WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY + COLLABORATION
AT EMU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Can you introduce yourself and your
organizations / affiliations?

¿Puedes presentarte a ti mismo y a
tus organizaciones/afiliaciones?



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What was your invitation to The Workshop like? What was your initial reaction?

¿Cómo fue tu invitación al The Workshop? ¿Cuál fue tu reacción inicial?



Visioning TOGETHER

Weekly visioning meetings focused on developing a draft of a vision statement.

Thematic analysis of the notes from the first two months of meetings highlighted themes of **centering community**, **innovating to break the box**, and **deepening our roots through collaboration**.



PARTICIPATING *In Community*

**Artwork, discussion, cooperative
problem solving, and thought-
provoking theatre games**

What is one thing you will take away from
today's event?

What is one thing you hope partners at
EMU will take away from today's event?



1 Thing That EMU Partners Should Take Away

Thank you for this community dialogue, challenge, and safe space.

Thanks for attending to our whole selves.

Space

Some time to plan and consult and brainstorm on identified needs.

Please allow time for personal reflection and/or centering with heavy conversations.

Just a reminder to continue to focus on relationship and be in community.

EMU (The Workshop) needs resources and advocates to speak up for them.

Don't recreate the wheel or violate expectations, goals, and expansive possibilities.

Create opportunities for everyone in the room to know who everyone else is to connect as needed.

Time

Don't forget us...Mentor2Youth.

There are amazing community organization working with our young people. These organizations are passionate and have the trust of the community.

Action

One thing I hope that you will take away: Collaboration and creativity is great, but doesn't mean much without substantive action to effect change.

Community and educational collaboration go hand-in-hand. We must first have community, which means relationship...in order to foster collaboration.

Please keep this in person. It matters.

Results

Storytelling matters.

I'm not alone.

Collective Empowerment that 'Values Voice'

Vulnerability makes us stronger.

Look what happens when you play with meanings!

There are beautiful opportunities to work collaboratively.

I enjoyed meeting people who share a vision for cultivating community.

One thing that I'm taking away: it's important to specifically define a problem to solve it with a team.

My take away: Feeling heard, feeling connected, feeling inspired and lifted; grateful; taking specific quotes.

...to the local community. This gives me hope for the future of the underserved.

Cultivating community collaborations is powerful!

I'm taking away a greater sense of community and the encouragement that has come with engaging with people with similar goals and dreams.

Center the why and for whom...how might we try to insulation our own biases/assumptions.

I've learned that EMU is serious about building relationships with people who live and work near EMU.

Lead from where we stand!!!!Thank you for the opportunity.

Very inspirational. A lot of great people. Let's work on the community.

Although our work is very intentional, others may interpret our ability for impact in a variety of ways.

One thing I'm taking away from today: The worst parts of American history always seem to repeat itself...I think we need to continue to find out-of-the-box ways to stop America's vicious cycle.

EMU has a bridge/Requires Ongoing Reflection

My take away: This time together to build understanding and relationships is critical and being with peers outside my own org means a lot.

Can individuals be connected to other who have or need resources?

I received hoped. Gratitude.

...the moment to do the work. Loving action that is in community and [supports] individual need. Operationalized hope.

Shared Resources/Practical Alliances

My table was a great group—such experience, thoughtfulness, synergy, even.

Community is possible here.

There are programs that I could be pouring into with the same care and concern.

Educate myself more. Educate more agencies/people with this type of meeting.

Community resources.

I am taking away new resources.

1 Thing Community Partners Will Take Away

LISTENING TO *Our Partners*

October 25, 2023 First public event, a panel discussion in recognition of International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



Wednesday at the
Workshop for Community+Collaboration



Life in the Other Washtenaw County: Poverty, Advocacy, and Dignity

Join us for a panel discussion highlighting work being done to eliminate poverty and promote dignity for children and families in Washtenaw County.

FEATURING

Betre Getahun, Jewish Family Services
Celeste Hawkins, Ypsilanti Community School Board
Andrew Paniagua, Food Gatherers

October 25, 2023, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

202 Porter Building

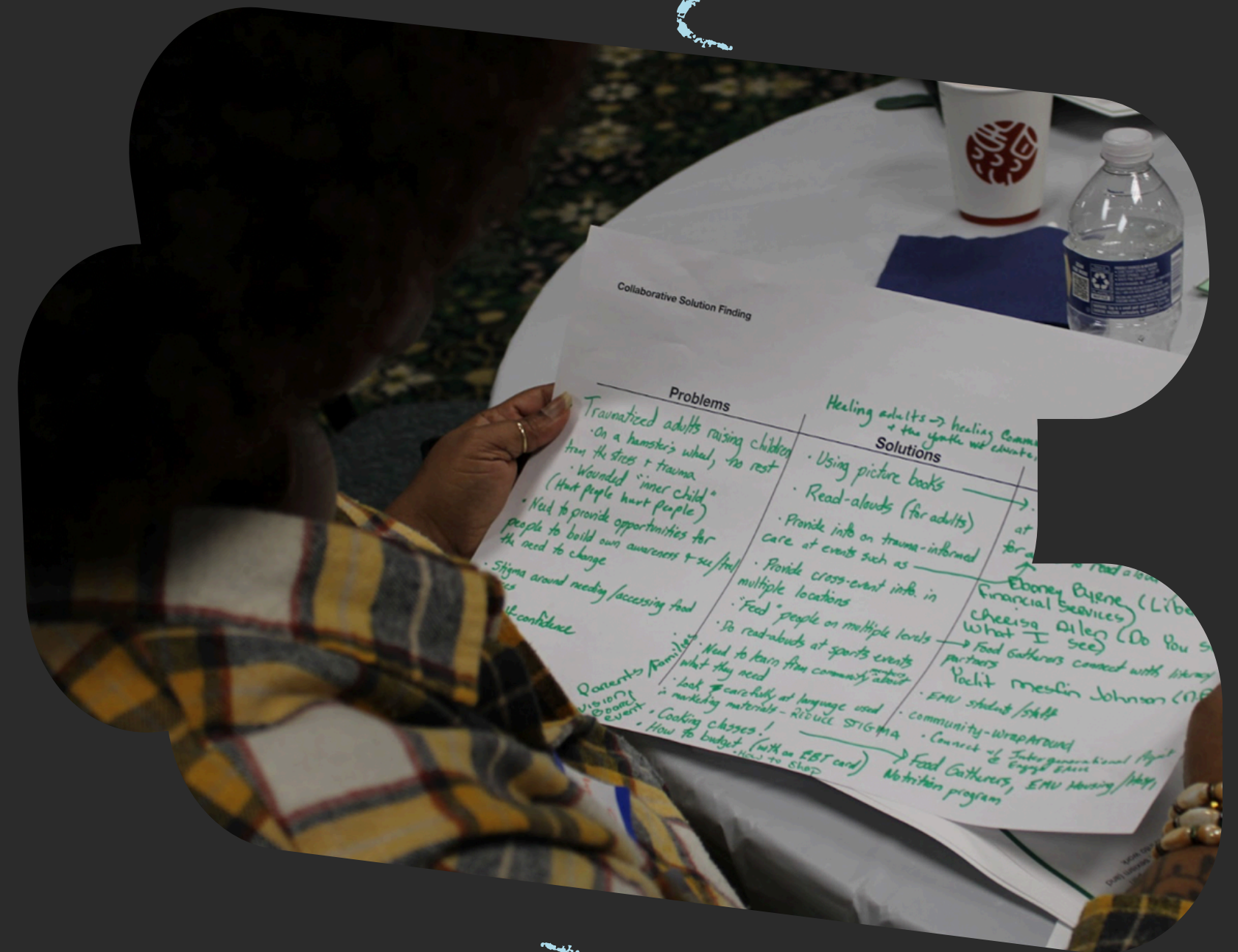
Please email questions to Dr. Chris Robbins at
crobbin2@emich.edu.

Sponsored by
The Workshop for Community+Collaboration and
the Civil Rights and Social Justice Center
at Eastern Michigan University.

Seeking solutions TOGETHER

November 17, 2023 Fall incubator with community partners focused on relationships and collaboratively considering solutions to community challenges

Empowering our partners to build the relationships that support their needs means listening and providing time for everyone to be together, talk, and share ideas.





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How have your experiences of
networking within The Workshop
gone thus far?

¿Cómo han sido hasta ahora tus
experiencias de networking dentro
de The Workshop?

FIRST *Initiatives*

January 18, 2024 Research collaboration between The Workshop and Swoop's Food Pantry begins

- A phenomenological study exploring the experiences and perspectives of food-pantry shoppers
- Research collaboration and mentoring between graduate students
- Sharing findings with the university community and state officials

YOUR STORY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**LOOKING FOR SWOOP'S
SHOPPERS TO COMPLETE A
SURVEY FOCUSED ON
EXPERIENCES OF SHOPPING
AT A FOOD PANTRY**

I'm a doctoral student conducting research for The Workshop for Community + Collaboration at the EMU College of Education in collaboration with Swoop's Pantry. The goal of this study is to increase understanding about the experiences of food pantry shoppers and the importance of access to food pantries on campus. Participants can receive a \$5 e-gift card for Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea as a thank you for sharing your story. Use the QR code to access the survey, and email Jennifer Bennett at jvance@emich.edu if you have any questions.



COMMUNITY *In Action*

January 25, 2024 Community Impact Fair with nine community partner organizations

April 4, 2024 Partner luncheon

Next: July 20, 2024 Block Party for Community+Collaboration to expand The Workshop community for a day of relationship building, resource sharing, and collective dreaming

A graphic showing four hands of different skin tones (brown, light skin, dark skin, and light skin) holding red hearts. The hands are arranged in a circle, and there are blue starburst shapes around them. The text "WORKSHOP FOR COMMUNITY+COLLABORATION" is written in blue, and "COMMUNITY IMPACT FAIR" is written in green below it.

**WORKSHOP FOR
COMMUNITY+COLLABORATION**

**COMMUNITY
IMPACT FAIR**

Join us to learn about opportunities for involvement this semester and find the organization that matches your skills and interests.

Meet community partners from Jewish Family Services, Work & Play Special Needs Resource Center, Washtenaw Area Council for Children, Garrett's Space, and others.

January 25, 2024 | 4 pm - 6 pm

Porter Building- 2nd Floor near the Student Lounge

QUESTIONS?

✉ Email Dr. Chris Robbins at crobbin2@emich.edu or Jennifer Bennett at jvance@emich.edu



WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY + COLLABORATION
AT EMU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

What has your participation been like
in The Workshop thus far?

¿Cómo ha sido tu participación en
The Workshop hasta ahora?

The Workshop

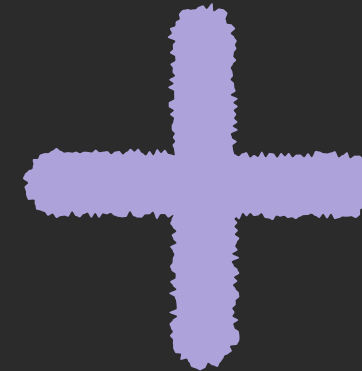
- Participatory from the start
- Focused on building collaborative solutions faced by our communities
- Starting from listening to find ways to leverage knowledge and resources
- Passionate about helping children and families thrive



FOOD PANTRY USE IN A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Community focused collaboration between The Workshop for Community+ Collaboration and Swoop's Food Pantry as well as a collaboration between Jennifer Bennett and Cassidy Cartwright

Created in response to a request from a community partner who discussed the need for first-person narratives from individuals who shop at food pantries so that policies makers might better understand the lived experiences of people experiencing food insecurity



Swoop's Food Pantry

- **Donation-based choice food pantry on Eastern Michigan University's campus**
- **Intended to provide the EMU community with food assistance and additional resources to positively impact well-being and success**
- **1,375 people have completed the intake form for the 2023-2024 academic year**

SWOOP'S
STUDENT FOOD PANTRY



Research Goal

Explore the experiences of food-pantry shoppers to amplify their voices, to increase understanding among community members and decision makers

YOUR STORY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

LOOKING FOR SWOOP'S SHOPPERS TO COMPLETE A SURVEY FOCUSED ON EXPERIENCES OF SHOPPING AT A FOOD PANTRY

I'm a doctoral student conducting research for The Workshop for Community + Collaboration at the EMU College of Education in collaboration with Swoop's Pantry. **The goal of this study is to increase understanding about the experiences of food pantry shoppers and the importance of access to food pantries on campus.** Participants can receive a \$5 e-gift card for Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea as a thank you for sharing your story. Use the QR code to access the survey, and email Jennifer Bennett at jvance@emich.edu if you have any questions.





METHODS



Anonymous open-ended online surveys

Survey focused on the experiences of shoppers, what motivated them to shop at the pantry, the impact of the pantry on their lives, and what they wish policymakers knew about food insecurity and food pantries


Community members (students, staff, or faculty) who are at least 18 years old and who got at least some of their groceries from Swoop's Pantry during this academic year

Analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis, a process of developing themes, meaning-based patterns that demonstrate a "recurring perspective," to tell the stories of participants' experiences and perspectives (Terry & Hayfield, 2021; Peterson, 2019, pp. 18, 155).



Mentoring Elements



 This project afforded growth opportunities from Jennifer's knowledge of research and analysis



Research methods



Reflexive thematic analysis

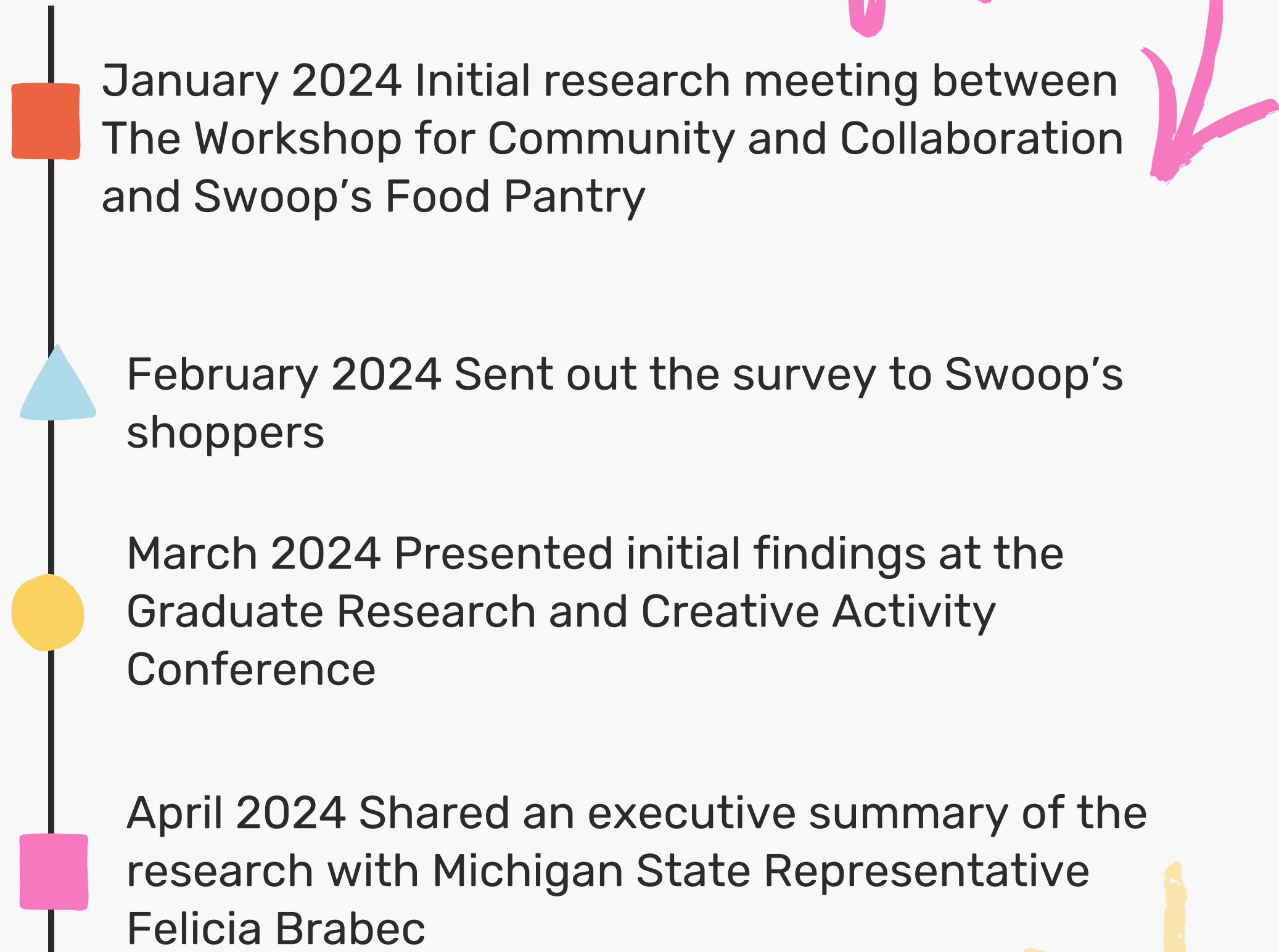


Presenting research findings



Research Process

TIMELINE





PARTICIPATORY SHOPPER INVOLVEMENT



- All participants were invited to select a pseudonym, and each person chose how to describe themselves
- Participants shared their stories in an effort to help share how important food pantries are to our community
- Participants shared details that spoke to the community, inclusion, impact and value that food pantries can have on individuals


Messages to Policymakers



MARTEN

Studying
environmental
biology and
works on
campus.

"I hope policymakers recognize that supporting these initiatives is not just about addressing immediate hunger but also promoting stability and resilience in the community. Adequate funding and policies that prioritize accessible and sustainable food assistance programs can make a significant difference in the lives of people experiencing food insecurity"




Messages of Impact on College Students



JV

A Bachelors and
Masters student
studying
diethetics

"I wish they would know actually how many students are struggling but don't want to admit it. Campus food pantries add so much value to universities because it takes the burden of worrying about where a student will eat next. Food insecurity is a real thing, not everyone that goes to college has two parents to support them the whole way through...Food pantries are vital to support emu's community"



Messages of Benefits to Community

EMILY

A single mother
of 3 on fixed
income.

"This pantry helped thousands of students get by, this pantry has helped me and many others. I know of personally 32 people that go to this place weekly, that's 32 people that are going to be able to graduate have a better life..."



Messages of Reducing Stigma

JAN

A 20 year old,
Asian junior at
EMU.

"I wish the stigma around it was addressed. I think if people understood how much this helps people, and the donations are food that would otherwise be wasted, they'd be more likely to fund these initiatives. "



Messages of Accessibility

JENNY


A 25 year old woman.

“Having a food pantry on campus makes it very accessible. It also allows myself and other students to eat healthier, because it takes price out of the equation. If not for the food pantry, I would probably eat more cheap unhealthy foods (e.g. instant ramen). ”




Initial

KEY FINDINGS




Shoppers want policymakers to know that, while **food insecurity** is a much more **prevalent problem** than many people realize, the impact of having reliable access to food goes **beyond reducing hunger**.



Food-pantry shoppers said they benefit from shopping at the pantry by having a **reliable** source of nutritious food, **improving their mental health** and **reducing stress**, and managing the demands of life including time and finances.



Food pantries can **promote stability** and **resilience**, reduce food waste, and provide meaningful employment and **community interaction**.





Next Steps



Finalize analysis



Write a research paper on the findings



Share findings with government officials and others
to help benefit food pantries around the state





What recommendations might you have for those who are interested in building a coalition like The Workshop?

¿Qué recomendaciones podría tener para aquellos que estén interesados en construir una coalición como The Workshop?