

**“Northern Appalachian Foodways:  
Sustainability and a Seat at the Table”**

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**FINAL REPORT NARRATIVE**

**Title of Project: Northern Appalachian Foodways: Sustainability and a Seat at the Table**

**Grant Period: January 1, 2017-June 30, 2018**

**Grantee Name: Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**Project Director: Dr. Abigail Adams**

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

With support from the ARC through the Appalachian Teaching Project, students from IUP's Anthropology of Food Class (ANTH 430) engaged in The Northern Appalachian Foodways Project (NAFP). This project was a collaboration between IUP students and two community partners, Downtown Indiana Business Improvement District (DI) and the recently established Food Co-Op of Indiana County. The objective of the project was to gather local recipes from the Northern Appalachian region for posterity and to publish a cookbook that supports food justice initiatives in our community from its proceeds.

### **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

- On September 10, 2017 Dr. Adams, students from the Anthropology of Food class, representatives from community partners, and interested community members met for the formal launch of the NAFP at the Coney Island Restaurant in Downtown Indiana. This was a workshop sponsored by the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival on Appalachian foodways and Appalachian culture presented by Dr. Adams. There were approximately 25 people in attendance.
- During a class session on September 27, 2017 students walked to visit the Indiana Food Co-Op and meet some local farmers and purveyors who sell their agrarian products, including duck eggs and organic vegetables, at the Indiana Food Co-Op. The manager of the Food Co-Op presented a brief discussion of the agrarian rich history of Indiana County and students were able to sample some local produce.
- Throughout the fall 2017 semester, IUP students identified local foods that they wanted to research and each student interviewed two to three community members about the food, what it meant to them culturally and symbolically, when and with what the food is served, etc. They also collected recipes from local community members to include in the cookbook.
- The first weekend of December, Dr. Brandon Vick and I accompanied nine IUP students (Monica Buzzard, Kaitlyn Cline, Shelbe Ferry, Dakota Kanzic, Hannah Morris, Jasmine Oates, Katrina Shoemaker, Samantha Soto, and Jackie Sutton) to Washington, D.C. for the ATP conference. The group designed and presented a poster of their research at the conference (see attached PDF). The group also highlighted their project during a formal presentation. They performed well, with 83% of conference participants agreeing (mid, mid-high or high) that the IUP group engaged its community partners and addressed questions of sustainability well. Ninety-six percent of conference participants also agreed that the group was prepared and communicated their research well.

- Student Hannah Morris presented her research on sustainable foodways and food justice on IUP's campus and was awarded "Dean's Choice for Best Poster" during the IUP Undergraduate Scholars Forum (see <https://www.iup.edu/news-item.aspx?id=252301&blogid=1331>). She also presented her research at the Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.
- Finally, on June 15<sup>th</sup>, we will meet for a final time with our community partner, the Indiana Food Co-Op, to present our final product of the Northern Appalachian Foodways Cookbook.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

The NAFP directly addressed three of the goals established in the ARC Strategic Plan: investing in business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy, strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets, and by building leadership and community capacity.<sup>1</sup>

- Students from ANTH 430 worked with The Food Co-Op of Indiana and Downtown Indiana to create a Northern Appalachian foodways cookbook, titled "The Appalachian Kitchen" that highlights local cuisine. The NAFP serves to promote local knowledge about Indiana and encourage connection to community through promoting local food justice activities that appeal to diverse citizenry and visitors.
- Students increased their experience and knowledge of research methods related to historical archives and oral histories by engaging the foodways of Northern Appalachia through academic and individual research. Students interviewed community members as food "memory-keepers." Students identified, researched, and documented the recipe for 35 "boomerang" foods, or foods that bring one back to the region in which you grew up, i.e., Northern Appalachia. These foods include deer stew, apple butter, and peperoni rolls (created for easy eating in the mines).
- NAFP enabled the development of shared objectives and scholarly linkages between the Indiana Community and IUP students and faculty. Significantly, four students from ANTH 430 are currently volunteering at the Food Co-Op of Indiana and this creates important linkages between the IUP campus community and our town of Indiana.
- NAFP was successful in building community through fostering a sense of pride and belonging in the local town on behalf of IUP students. Local people are very excited about the cookbook and there are plans for adding more recipes in the future.
- NAFP contributed to enhancing community assets in Indiana — student research

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<sup>1</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission. "Investing in Appalachia's Future: The Appalachian Regional Commissions Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities, 2016-2017." <https://www.arc.gov/images/newsroom/publications/sp/InvestinginAppalachiasFutureARCs2016-2020StrategicPlan.pdf> (accessed 6/10/2017).

helped local organizations build on existing initiatives and expand efforts to promote healthful living to local populations. We worked with the Food and Nutrition Department at IUP to include healthy food recommendations in the cookbook. For instance, a traditional deer stew recipe also included a vegetarian version called “dear stew.”

- With the publication of “The Appalachian Kitchen,” we preserved and shared personal histories and foodways that may otherwise have been lost for posterity as a cultural asset.

### **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

- Staffing changes in community partners: During the timeframe of NAFFP, both of our community partners had changes in their personnel which created some difficulties in the continuity of our endeavor. Both the manager of the Co-Op and the director of Downtown Indiana Business Improvement District were “laid-off” because of financial reasons. It was difficult to engage the community partners when the internal structures of the organization were in massive flux. This was an unforeseeable problem.
- Student Investment: Like the ATP project in 2016, I encountered the problem of maintaining student investment in the project when they were no longer in my course. This issue was significantly less than the previous year as I designed the project to be mostly completed during the fall semester.
- Defining Appalachian Food: During the process of identifying local foodways and recipes, some students found it difficult to decide which foodways and cultural practices were “truly” Appalachian. This is not surprising because the Appalachian region has been influenced by many different waves of immigration to the region. This is an issue that our region has long dealt with: Who belongs?

### **PROGRAM CONTINUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

In the short-term, the goal of this project was to produce a foodways cookbook that would record local recipes and food practices for posterity. Additionally, the sale of the cookbook serves to financially support the Food Co-Op. Both goals have been met.

#### **Continuation and Sustainability in the Community:**

The NAFFP is a project that has provided an opportunity for IUP students to gain invaluable research experience at the university level and the citizenry of Indiana now has a cookbook that documents the unique foodways of our region. This project can be built upon to create a deeper engagement with our traditional foodways and promote economic growth through in our Northern Appalachian community. For instance, the Food Co-Op has served several of the recipes from the cookbook for their fundraising farm-to-table event to highlight our food culture (see photo).

#### **Continuation and Sustainability at IUP:**

Several students involved in the NAFFP have joined a group on campus called “The Food Recovery Network” which is a national organization that aims to reduce food waste on college campuses. They collect food from IUP’s dining halls that would have gone into the dumpster and deliver it to our local food pantry. Additionally, several

students are working on other food justice initiatives on campus including the creation of a food pantry where students who are struggling to afford food can find a healthy meal.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2017-2018 ATP was an incredibly successful experience for our students and our community. IUP students are often isolated on campus and don't have substantive engagement with the community around them, the ALT gave anthropology students the opportunity to forge significant and long-lasting relationships with community members and become invested in Indiana, the town. I view the ATP as an incredibly valuable opportunity for students to learn and Appalachian communities to be positively impacted by their work.

Through the NAFFP, students and our community have a strengthened awareness of the rich food history of Northern Appalachia. Students and community members came together to create a new tool (a cookbook) to pass Appalachia's rich food history to future generations. "The Appalachian Kitchen" cookbook is a cultural resource that is helping make the downtown business district an engine of economic growth by assisting the Co-Op in its sustainability through financial support generated through the sales of the cookbook. We are uncertain exactly how much financial support sales from the cookbook will generate for the Food Co-Op of Indiana, but it is a renewable resource for the organization. Printing the spiral-bound cookbook costs approximately \$2.40 each and they will be sold for \$12 each. Through "The Appalachian Kitchen," both students and the Food Co-Op have been able to capitalize on the rich food history of Indiana County.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Supporting items include the following:

- Workshop by Dr. Abigail Adams at the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival on 9/10/2017
- Student created Foodways Poster for ATP conference in Washington, DC
- Award winning poster by student Hannah Morris based on the research she conducted through the NAFFP
- Photo of the farm-to-table fundraising dinner held by the Food Co-Op in our downtown
- Cover of the "Appalachian Kitchen" Cookbook designed by a graphic artist