

Case Study: Bubbly Dynamics' "Bring a Thing" Initiative

Lead Organization: Bubbly Dynamics LLC

Organization Type: Small business

Location: The Plant, 1400 W 46th St., Back of the Yards

Date: Started in Spring 2021



The Challenge and Opportunity

Bubbly Dynamics operates out of The Plant, a sustainable business hub and vertical farm that attracts hundreds of visitors for various events. The company recognized an opportunity to leverage this foot traffic for a social good initiative. They identified a need to provide accessible food for community members and partnered with The Love Fridge, a community-led mutual aid organization that provides free food. The challenge was finding a way to get a consistent and diverse supply of food donations for the fridge. Often, large food drives result in a huge donation of just one item—like a fridge full of only celery—which isn't ideal for those in need. The opportunity was to use the large number of visitors to The Plant to create a steady stream of smaller, more varied donations.

Strategy and Recipe for Success

The strategy is centered on a simple, low-effort request: the "Bring a Thing" campaign. Instead of asking for a large donation, Bubbly Dynamics asks each event registrant to bring just one item to contribute to The Love Fridge.

- **Specific Ask:** The "Bring a Thing" request is clear and easy to fulfill, making it simple for anyone to participate.
- **Leveraging High Traffic:** By using their events as a collection point, they tap into the large number of visitors, knowing that a small contribution from hundreds of people adds up to a significant and diverse supply of food.
- **Enhanced Dignity:** A greater number of small, varied donations ensures that people who use the fridge have a choice, which enhances their dignity and allows them to take what they actually need. This creates a fuller fridge with more diverse products, which is a key measure of success.

The need for The Love Fridge is constant. Neighbors are consistently facing food insecurity, making it a critical priority to ensure the fridge is always well-stocked with nutritious and accessible food options for everyone in the community. Bubbly Dynamics does their best to

stock the fridge with the basic necessities they have on hand but this DIY “bring a thing” approach helps to bridge any gaps.

Partners and Supporting Roles

- **The Love Fridge:** The key partner in the initiative, as they provide and maintain the community fridge.
- **Event Hosts:** Bubbly Dynamics works with the various event hosts at The Plant to promote the "Bring a Thing" initiative to their registrants.
- **Port Ministries:** This partner brings lunch packs, often 100 of the same items, which provides a valuable but uniform supply. This highlights the importance of the "Bring a Thing" strategy to fill the gaps and provide more variety.
- **Greater Chicago Food Repository (GCFR):** Bubbly Dynamics supports GCFR's broader mission by providing flyers for GCFR-supported pantries nearby and posting a QR code for easy access to information.



Recent photo illustrating a variety of donations: lunch packs with sandwiches as well as pantry staples.

The Takeaway

The "Bring a Thing" initiative by Bubbly Dynamics at The Plant demonstrates an effective and replicable model for community-led food insecurity solutions. By transforming routine event attendance into an opportunity for collective action, Bubbly Dynamics has successfully addressed the challenge of providing diverse and consistent food donations for The Love Fridge. This strategy not only helps provide a well-stocked fridge with varied options, but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility within the community. The collaboration with partners like The Love Fridge, event hosts, and Port Ministries, alongside the broader support for Greater Chicago Food Depository, illustrates the power of a multi-faceted approach to mutual aid. The "Bring a Thing" initiative stands as a testament to how simple, low-barrier participation can make a significant difference in combating food insecurity, transforming the "fridge full of celery" problem into a pantry-like assortment of necessities for neighbors.

Want to get more involved with Bubbly Dynamics at The Plant?

We occasionally hold work days to support the businesses at The Plant, prep the outdoor farms for the season, maintain the indoor wetland, etc. Contact us at info@bubblydynamics.com!

Want to get more involved with The Love Fridge? Check out their interactive map!

The Love Fridge maintains an interactive map on their website, allowing community members to easily locate nearby fridges. This valuable resource empowers individuals to find accessible food options or to contribute donations to a fridge in their local area, fostering a wider network of mutual aid. **Find your local fridge here:** <https://www.thelovefridge.com/find-a-fridge>
