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Food Recovery Network’s Regional Summits: Local Events with National Impact

COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND — March 29, 2019 — Food Recovery Network (FRN) and the nine 2019 Regional Outreach Coordinators (ROCs) are hosting five regional summits in the DC metro area, St. Petersburg, FL, Minneapolis, MN, Denver, CO, and Los Angeles County, CA. ROCs are student and alumni leaders who organize regional summits, which are spaces for community involvement. There will be a plethora of workshops, breakout sessions, and keynote speakers, all centered on food waste issues. These regional summits will be held every Saturday starting on March 30th and running to April 27th.

This year, there are multiple ROCs collaborating in three of the cities: Elena Kapp and Lizzie Massey in the DC metro area summit; Skyler Adams, Tatum Flowers, and Roni Gabaldon in St. Petersburg, Florida; and Grace Liao and Will Bergstrom in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Amanda Martinez is the ROC for Denver and Nicole Pozzo is the ROC for Los Angeles County. The goals for these summits are to host hundreds of people and to invite numerous new schools to the Network.

Kapp, an alumnus who started her school’s chapter, articulates her goal for community involvement; “creating more opportunities for engagement at the local level will strengthen an already passionate community and inspire growth. There are many people and organizations whose mission aligns with FRN’s and by working together we can make a bigger difference, fighting more waste and feeding more people.”

ROCs emerge as leaders equipped with in-demand skills like project management, time prioritization, and community organization. The summits themselves are ideal places for student-to-student networking, idea generation, and community dialogue. Like ripples in a pond, one conversation during a breakout session can lead to the establishment of a new FRN chapter, thus continuing the national movement against food waste. For example, at the Spring 2018 Los Angeles County regional summit, a student from CSU Dominguez Hills was inspired to start an FRN Chapter at their school after attending. Cather explains, “When you share space with others who care about food waste and food insecurity, you realize your power in contributing to the solution. These summits offer an inspiring outlet and keep the movement thriving.”

In 2018, ten ROCs planned nine summits in Tampa, FL, Nashville, TN, LA County, CA, Houston, TX, San Diego, CA, Baltimore, MD, Biddeford, ME, Cabrini, PA, and Twin Cities, MN. These summits brought a total of more than 150 people together who are dedicated to changing our country’s food narrative. The attendees were energized and motivated as they
connected with peers in the Network. Allie Sklarew, a Spring 2018 Baltimore ROC, relays, “It is one thing to be involved extensively with your chapter, but it is another thing to work and meet others from other chapters. I had the opportunity to bring people together over a common interest we all shared: being part of FRN.”

FRN is proud to support this budding program. Jennifer Schmitt, a member of FRN’s Board of Directors, is eagerly awaiting the April 6th regional summit in Minneapolis. “This is the second year that a University of Minnesota student is serving as a ROC. As a research scientist here, I am invested in this leadership opportunity to further the movement. It’s a culmination of student effort and community involvement on an issue I am passionate about,” she said.

Sixteen weeks of planning, nine ROCs, five regional summits, one national movement: as the leading student movement against food waste, our power is generated from on-the-ground effort. Information on event details and registration is available on our website and get to know the ROCs hosting the summits. If you have any questions about the summits, please email Hannah Cather.

About Food Recovery Network
Food Recovery Network (FRN) unites and supports college student leaders in the fight against food waste and hunger in America. Since 2011, FRN students have recovered more than 3 million pounds of surplus food, that would otherwise go to waste, from their campus cafeterias and local restaurants to donate to hungry Americans. Food Recovery Network has more than 200 college campus chapters in 44 states and the District of Columbia. For more information about Food Recovery Network, visit www.foodrecoverynetwork.org. Follow us on Twitter @FoodRecovery and Instagram @FoodRecovery and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FoodRecoveryNetwork.

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