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ENVIRONMENT

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MINI GRANT PROJECT SUMMARY

Please complete the project summary and return the completed form to April Snyder, Associate Administrator for the Institute on the Environment at aprilsnyder@umn.edu. Paper copies will not be accepted. Please also attach any photos, publications, brochures, event agendas or other materials that were a result of the mini grant summary.

Date of Report Submission:	7/17/2015
Project PI & Dept/School	Peter Tiffin, Department of Plant Biology
Project Title:	MS-0012-14, "STEM Project" Science Chat's at the Market
Grant Amount \$:	\$ 1500

Project Context & Purpose Scientific Communication Outreach

Please include the original project purpose statement and revise for any changes that occurred in the project after the start date with a short explanation of the changes.

Abstract (from original proposal, no substantive changes were made):

STEM based research is primarily performed away from the public eye, and research results are usually disseminated only within the circle of STEM academics and professionals. While communication among researchers is vital to the scientific process, it does little to inform the general public about how scientific research is done or who scientists are. This leaves the general public largely unfamiliar and skeptical about scientific research. Our proposal is to interact with a local community with activities and discussions about the role of science in their everyday lives as consumers at the Midtown Farmers Market (MFM) during summer 2014 to promote direct and informal conversations between University researchers and the general public. The MFM, located on E. Lake St. in Minneapolis, is surrounded by an ethnically, socially, and economically diverse community, and it is this community that comprises the 55,000 annual visitors to the market. The regular presence of research scientists at public events can help narrow the gap between what science is and how the general public perceives it.

Work Completed

Please provide a summary of the work that was completed for the mini grant project.

During the summer of 2014 the Market-Science group, led by graduate students Mohammed Yakub and Allyson Center, and with support of this mini grant established a STEM-outreach presence at the Saturday morning Minneapolis Midtown Farmers Market. This presence was centered around a booth with interactive activities located near the location where the majority of market visitors enter the market. Each week the booth featured a theme (soil, crop breeding, chemistry) that had interactive activities designed to draw people in. The “Market Science” booth also provided a valuable forum for UMN graduate students, from a variety of graduate programs including Plant Biology, EEB, APS, and Horticulture to practice communicating scientific ideas and research to a broad audience including many young children.

Partnerships & Collaborations

Please provide a summary of the project personnel, partnerships and collaborations that worked directly on the project or were started as a direct result of the mini grant project.

The following graduate students and post-docs, all affiliated with UMN worked directly on the project:

Mohammed Yakub, Derek Nedveck, Ryan Briscoe, Erik Runquist, John Benning, Mandy Waters, Erin Treiber, Beth Fallon, Alyson Center, Jessica Biever, Christina Smith, Diana Truillo, Allison Haaning.

Project Outcomes & Impacts

Please provide a summary of the outcomes and /or impacts of the mini grant project including future plans for the project.

The most substantive concrete outcome of the mini-grant is that it established “Market Science” (marketsci.org/, [@_MarketSci](https://twitter.com/MarketSci)) which is an ongoing scientific outreach effort led by graduate students and post-docs affiliated with the Department of Plant Biology and the Plant Biological Sciences Graduate Program. This group continues with the efforts this mini-grant first supported and they are now a weekly presence at the Minneapolis Midtown Farmers Market.