**Gelli’s Community Fridge Action Plan**

**Timeline:** We started our community fridge project at the beginning of June 2023. Our team plans to meet weekly, and our goal is to have an outdoor, publicly accessible community fridge and pantry open and available for use by the end of August 2023. We plan to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the fridge location within a month after it is launched.

**Budget:** The refrigerator, as well as construction and materials for the fridge shelter and pantry, have been donated. Our fridge host is donating the electricity. We are building a group of volunteers who will transport food donations, restock the fridge and pantry daily, log fridge temperatures, ensure that the fridge and pantry are clean, and ensure that expired/rotted food or inappropriate food donations are removed. We are working to secure a consistent flow of food donations from local farmer’s markets, community gardens, restaurants, businesses, schools, churches, and community organizations. However, until we’re able to establish a reliable network of food donors, we will be allocating a majority of the seed money to purchase food for the community fridge and pantry. We may also need to spend a portion of the seed money on liability insurance coverage for the fridge.

**Impact:** One in three (33%) of Coloradoans lack reliable access to nutritious foods. Our community fridge and pantry will be outdoors and publicly accessible to anyone who needs food, to take as much as they need, anytime. Traditional avenues for obtaining food donations, like sourcing from food rescue organizations or nonprofits that distribute food to pantries, is not a viable option as demand has far outpaced supply due to rising food costs and the end of pandemic-era expanded public benefits. Our model of instead sourcing donations from restaurants, farmer’s markets, and community gardens will both reduce food waste and avoid reliance on resources that are already overextended. Additionally, a recent survey showed that 90% of people want to volunteer to help those in their community – but 85% of those respondents never did so, with the biggest reason given being that they didn’t know what to do to help. Issuing a call to action for support from neighborhood schools, churches, businesses, community groups, and residents provides an opportunity for those who want to help to see the impact of their support in a very tangible way, right in their own neighborhood.

We plan to market Gelli’s Community Fridge via a website and social media marketing campaign (services which are being donated). Our goal is to spread knowledge about food insecurity in the Denver Metro area, educate about food waste, and strengthen connection with and support for the underserved and unseen in our community. We’ll gauge our impact by measuring the number of volunteers and food donation partners supporting our project, as well as the quantity of food distributed through the fridge and pantry and saved from landfills.

**Location:** Our outdoor community fridge and pantry will sit in front of Ruby’s Market in Denver, Colorado (1569 S Pearl Street). Ruby’s Market is located in Denver’s Platt Park neighborhood, which is a unique location as there are unhoused, low income, and food insecure residents *as well as* residents with affluence, strong community involvement, restaurants, a farmer’s market, and churches. Ruby’s Market itself is very involved in the refugee and immigrant community and operates a food pantry for refugee and immigrant families out of the back of the store. The owner of Ruby’s Market has secured permission to host a Gelli’s Community Fridge refrigerator and pantry from the building’s landlord; no permits are needed.

**Our kid leaders:** Ava (age 8), Eden (age 7), and Charlotte (age 6) are our kid team leaders and are super excited to help with this project! They joined our kick-off meeting and gave great input and feedback on how they’d like to contribute. Ideas offered were to spearhead food drives at their schools and in their neighborhoods, designing a flyer to spread the word about the fridge and pantry, and helping with designing the artwork for the fridge and pantry.