



## Quote of the Month

"The signage in our café is beautiful and provides identification for our unique produce items. Customers are now trying kohlrabi, rutabagas, parsnips and eggplant as first time users. Produce is flying at the Haven in both the Food Shelf and the café."

- Food Shelf Manager,  
Upper Valley Haven

**Are you interested in becoming a VT Fresh partner?**  
Please contact us!

Michelle Wallace  
Director of Community Health and  
Fresh Food Initiatives  
802-477-4125  
mwallace@vtfoodbank.org

Sara Whitehair  
VT Fresh Coordinator

VT FRESH is a Vermont Foodbank program that celebrates fresh food and helps to transform community food shelves with beautiful displays and cooking demos.

## Strategy: Encouraging shoppers to choose fresh produce

Research has shown that if you improve the food pantry environment with some simple strategies AND increase the availability and access to fresh produce, it will likely encourage people to choose healthier foods like fruits and vegetables. This may ultimately impact an individual's dietary behavior and overall health.

Gentle "nudges" such as **signage**, **produce banners** and **shelf labels** can be utilized to encourage people to choose more fruits and vegetables. Displays that are prominent, highly visible, centrally located and easy to get to are one strategy. Focus on front and center placement of produce at eye level, and give produce preferential treatment in your space.

**Beautiful, attractive and well organized displays** is another strategy used to encourage shoppers to choose fresh produce. This idea, combined with signage, can influence shoppers to choose more produce. Making your displays feel like a farmers market display promotes a fun, festive atmosphere and increases shoppers' comfort levels. There are a number of beautiful wooden bins, baskets, or free standing containers available in which to house your produce.

**Tip:** do you have wooden bins that tend to get dirty and/or wet after displaying produce? One way the **BROC Food Shelf in Rutland** handled this problem was to purchase a roll of vinyl tablecloth material to line the wooden shelves with. They are able to easily clean the bins and keep them looking new.

**Signage** plays a large role in helping people choose more fruits and vegetables. A simple sign with a reminder such as "Don't forget Fruits and Veggies" can be placed anywhere in your food shelf. Many food shelves have included these signs on shopping carts and/or baskets, or even as cheerful signs spread throughout the space.



**Shelf labels** can also increase produce distribution. Recently the **Upper Valley Haven Food Shelf in White River Junction** began using the VT Fresh labels. Produce that was difficult to distribute is now flying off the shelves.

Use some of these basic concepts as a guide. Have fun with it and get as creative as you want in designing your displays!



**Capstone Community Action, Barre**



**NEKCA Food Shelf, Newport**



**Shelf Labels and Display**