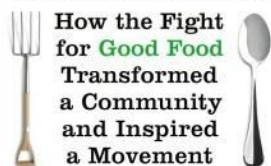




Discussion Guide

The STOP



NICK SAUL AND
ANDREA CURTIS

"The Stop is an inspiring true story about how a low-income neighborhood used good food to take charge of its community—it's a great lesson for all of us."
—JAMIE OLIVER

About the Book

Book Title: *The Stop: How the Fight for Good Food Transformed a Community and Inspired a Movement*

Author: Nick Saul and Andrea Curtis

Published by Melville House, London

Andrea Curtis Website: <http://andreacurtis.ca/>

The Stop Website: <http://www.thestop.org/>

Nick Saul's organization website: <http://cfccanada.ca/staff>

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of the book?
2. What do you think Nick Saul and Andrea Curtis were trying to accomplish in writing the book?
3. Have you had experiences with food banks? If so, what experiences have you had? Could you see any ways that The Stop's innovations could be incorporated into the food banks in your town?
4. Nick Saul did not think it was a good idea to take old and unhealthy food to give to the hungry. He refused food and worked to get only healthy food. Did you agree with his concerns about how food banks function? Why or why not?
5. In what ways did Nick Saul expand the mission of The STOP? What resistance(s) did he encounter? Did you think the changes he implanted were positive?
6. Part of The STOP's plan involved making money through the Green Barn project, a form of "social enterprise." A new generation of social change activists suggest using a business model to address social problems. Saul says they did this of necessity, because the government isn't addressing the problem, but others say this is the best way to combat the many problems facing society. What are your thoughts on this approach?
7. What plan do you recommend to overcome the hunger problems in our nation and world?
8. Read over the MAMs comments. Which of the MAMs do you most agree with and why?
9. Would you recommend this book for other Book Clubs? Why or why not?
10. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

Nancy and the MAMs share their favorite quotes and discuss the book...



"But the most important, overarching point of all the changes we've been making is to move The Stop away from the old charitable model, where one group of privileged people helps the underprivileged, perpetuating an us- and them atmosphere. (Excerpt from The STOP, Location 652, Kindle Version).

Nancy: Thank you, Nick and Angela for your life work and this book. You tell an amazing story of a non-for-profit organization which has gone above and beyond, crafting a way to build community and dignity around food. The transformation that you describe astounds me both for its vision and for its practical change. You give me hope that we can move forward together in new ways in the future. You teach us that the old system of food banking is inherently flawed, and yet we know so many hungry people need food. You have forged the path for us to follow.

The MAMs are currently working to build community and help traumatized women reclaim their lives. I think you and the MAMs share much in common as they launch an organic FARM in my new book *Revelation at the Labyrinth*. Stay tuned!

"It was a year that changed me in ways I'm still sorting out. I know I came back a very different kid than I left... Parts of that seminal experience returned to me when I began working in The Stop's food bank..." (Location 332, Kindle version)



SALLIE: Nick writes about the year his parents took him to South Africa during the fight to end apartheid. Good genes in this guy Nick. You can see what happens when parents raise their children in the midst of lives of service. He grew up in Africa, and then winds up in Toronto, on his feet serving, trying so hard to make a better world. And what an amazing job he does!

"There are people from some forty different countries in our programs. More than half were born outside of Canada." (Location 2232, Kindle Version)



MOLLY: I really appreciated the diversity of their community, and the way they incorporated the food knowledge of people growing up in Italy, Africa, India and other places around the world. Whether it was farming knowledge or how to put spices together to please the palate, they found ways to celebrate and incorporate diversity in delicious ways. Food is an intimate business, involving our homes and families.



PRISCILLA: I'd like to go visit the Stop. Do you think we could organize a trip for the MAMs? We went to Niagara Falls. This isn't too much farther. I'd like to attend some cooking classes there and learn from their Chef.

"I told him... that big food companies are privatizing profit and socializing cost— reaping the monetary rewards of cheap, processed, fuel-intensive food and passing the cost of the health and environmental fallout on to the public purse." (Location 3468, Kindle Version)



KATHARINE: I appreciate the way he continues to organize and his critique of the modern food corporation. We do have such a major problem with processed food and the food industry which is not very concerned with the health of the people. He never gives in and continues to challenge this.

"In 1993, our budget was \$250,000 and we had four staff; today the budget pushes \$4.5 million and we employ 40 people with 300 volunteers." (Location 3814, Kindle version)



JANE: I'm all for this social entrepreneurship. It's what we Republicans have been doing all along. A business model is the way to go. The Stop never would have thrived without the plan to make money to support itself. Although he keeps talking about government needing to do a better job of feeding the hungry, I think The Stops shows us the way with self-sufficiency.

"What we're trying to accomplish at The Stop is...(is) more of a way of being in the world. Listening to people – whether it's in the garden, kitchen, food bank or classroom is the root... It begins with from the premise that people are the experts on their own lives and, given the right support, have wise and intelligent ideas about how to improve them." (Location 566 Kindle version).



ABIGAIL: Wow. What an activist. Building a good place for people, trying to lift people out of the despair of poverty by providing dignity and good experiences around food, while organizing for change. So impressive, Nick Saul, and the food movement he spawned in California. He challenges the food bank idea, and I think his point is well made.