

# Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

February 2017



*See page 3-4 to read about the Columbus Jewish Day School and their unique Farm to School activities.*

## Contents:

Farm to School Update.....	Page 2
Success Story.....	Page 3
Events & Webinars.....	Page 4
News and Resources .....	Page 5
USDA Resources.....	Page 6
Contact Information.....	Page 7

We joined Columbus City Schools in celebrating their first “Ohio Days: My Plate, My State” They received some great media coverage for their efforts (page 2). This month we have featured a private school that gives back to its community as our success story, don’t miss their hands on approaches for the students to provide fresh vegetables to their neighbors in need.

# Monthly Locally-Sourced Meals to be served in Ohio's Largest School District!

By Carol Smathers and Amy Fovargue

On January 25, Columbus City Schools kicked off a monthly effort to serve an entire meal of Ohio grown, raised or processed foods. Branded as "Ohio Days: My Plate, My State," school cafeterias served more than 52,000 Columbus schoolchildren with a meal option that included turkey from Bowman and Landes family farm in New Carlisle, gravy and dressing from Sandridge Foods in Medina, apples from Bauman Orchards in Rittman, milk from United Dairy in Martins Ferry, and a salad mix from Waterfields, a hydroponic facility in Cincinnati.

As Farm to School supporters, we're so excited about this effort because it will bring Ohio's local food to the 110 school cafeterias in Columbus every month. It will also demonstrate to other Ohio school districts ways that buying and serving local foods can be done.

We look forward to working with Columbus City Schools to promote students' interest in and awareness of local foods. We're developing a variety of resources and activities, including games, contests, worksheets, announcements, stickers, and taste testing events to coincide with Ohio Days: My Plate, My State. Research has shown that students at schools offering Farm to School meals and learning activities make healthier food choices and are more willing to try new foods—both at school and at home!



Ohio Days is a joint project of the City of Columbus, OSU Extension's Farm to School program, and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. The Ohio Days group has identified more than 20 companies with the capacity to meet Columbus City Schools' needs for local products including apples, turkey, chicken and beef products, shredded cheese, milk, corn tortillas, whole grain tortilla chips, lettuce, beans, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers, squash and peaches. For a list of the producers that have been identified and for other ideas about local sourcing for schools in Ohio, please contact Amy Fovargue at [fovargue.1@osu.edu](mailto:fovargue.1@osu.edu).



*Pictured are Starling elementary school principal - William Doermann; Joe Brown- Food Service Director; Cheryl Graffagnino, Healthy Food Access Program Manager; Priscilla Tyson, Columbus City Council President Pro Tem; Brian Williams of MORPC; Autumn Trombetta of Columbus Public Health and Carol Smathers Ohio Farm to School State Lead.*



## Ohio Success Story

### *Jewish School Learns the Benefits of Service Learning* by Amy Fovargue

Students at Columbus Jewish Day School (CJDS) are learning to grow food and seeing how it relates to their faith by sharing the produce with homeless teens and elders living in poverty. The school located in New Albany covers K-6 grades and has 69 students enrolled.

In 2016 with help from a local organic farm, the students shared 1,400 pounds of produce with people in a nearby senior apartment building. "We eat a little, but we share a lot," said Dr. Gina Freeman, the Dean of Students at the school.

"We want the children to learn about the environment to complement Judaic curriculum," Freeman said. The curriculum reflects on the origins of food and the connection with the Torah, and infusing food with cultural flavors of Jewish communities around the world. Connections made through environmental education have the potential to touch every subject at CJDS. All teachers actively incorporate activities in the CJDS gardens and nature preserve or extend lessons in one of the outdoor classroom spaces to encourage students to explore our natural world," Freeman explained.

Fifth graders are responsible for composting food after lunch. They maintain the three community compost bins. They collect food scraps after lunch each day. This turns into rich organic soil which is then utilized in the vegetable garden that feeds the hungry.

Sixth graders take a course about service learning that incorporates environmental sustainable practices, learning how our food connects us to Judaism, and cares for the CJDS vegetable garden which allows them to share harvest. They also manage the Teracycling Program with the help of the *Tzedakah* Club. In the past, numerous worldwide agencies have benefitted from the recycling efforts of our families.

Meanwhile, all of the students are learning the importance of eating locally for their health and the economy. Whether the topic is focused around earth and space science, physical science or life science our teachers incorporate experiential learning opportunities to help a child understand the world in which they live. "During recess in the warmer months, students are picking bugs off the cabbage plants and using sustainable gardening methods," Freeman said.

The school has seven acres of forest, prairie and wetlands (pond and stream). They have received a Wild Site School designation from Ohio Department of Natural Resources and enjoy their five distinct areas; a butterfly garden, green house, raised vegetable beds with a low tunnel, a meadow garden and a tea/herb garden.

*Yarok Together* project, started in August of 2015 which encourages collaboration, caring and serving, teaches about life lessons that embrace "ma'achil re'eivim" – feeding the hungry. The fifth and sixth graders at Columbus Jewish Day School (CJDS) and Columbus Torah Academy (CTA) have been working together since late August 2015 to create and renovate gardens on their school grounds. *Yarok Together* was funded by the Jewish Education and Literacy Fund of the Columbus Jewish Foundation.

Those benefitting from the gardens are residents of government subsidized living or presently homeless. During the first 9 months of the project, volunteer staff, students, alumni, and parents have contributed over 450 hours of community service to the Greater Columbus community through *Yarok Together*. In addition, the students delivered a fresh salad made from the garden greens to the OSU Star House, a homeless youth drop-in center operated by OSU, serving 14-24 years. Jewish Family Services, Atid, Wexner Heritage Village, OSU Star House, White Barn Organic Farm, Greater Columbus Garden Association, OSU 4-H Extension Office, Strader's Garden Center, Franklin Park Conservatory and Oakland Nursery are just a few of the agencies that have collaborated to make this project a success.

"The impact of *Yarok Together* has been remarkable," said Freeman. One resident residing at the Towers at Wexner Heritage Village summed up her perspective by writing a beautiful thank you note and donating to this project. Her gesture was something that really touched the students given her socioeconomic status. Another resident shared the following note on our last visit in December: "We seniors at the Heritage Tower want to thank the two schools for your service to the Columbus area. We had some of your produce earlier this season and enjoyed such freshness. Continue your good work - we are all so proud of you. Thank you again and enjoy your education and family. Blessings to you all, (the)Residents." **story continues on P4**



## Events & Webinars

### Want to help guide a state food policy agenda?

The Ohio Food Policy Network is hosting a series of regional meetings to connect the visions, values, activities, needs, and priorities of Ohio's key food system members and organizations. These meetings are the foundation for the development of a shared agenda for Ohio's food system.

Please note there is a meeting at Columbus Public Health on January 30th! The other meetings are located at a variety of times and days and in locations throughout the state so as to ensure all aspects of our food system are represented. The meetings will involve mapping, visioning and prioritization activities. All are welcome to attend - visit <http://www.glenn.osu.edu/food/> to register and to learn more about this project and share this within your own networks.

#### **CENTRAL**

Monday, January 30, 4 – 6pm  
Columbus Public Health Auditorium, 240 Parsons Avenue, Columbus

#### **SOUTHWEST**

Saturday, February 11, 1:30-3pm  
OEFFA Conference\*, Dayton Convention Center, 22 East 5th Street, Dayton  
*\*please note separate registration to the OEFFA conference is required to participate in this session*

#### **NORTHEAST**

Wednesday, February 15, 9-11am  
Akron Summit County Public Main Library, 60 S. High Street, Akron

#### **NORTHWEST**

Week of 2/20 TBA  
Lucas County Location TBA

#### **SOUTH**

Wednesday, March 1, 4-6pm  
OSU South Centers, 1864 Shyville Road, Piketon

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Baskes - [amybaskes@gmail.com](mailto:amybaskes@gmail.com).

The OSU Extension Direct Marketing Team brings you easy access to direct marketing resources thanks to the contributions of numerous collaborators . The Direct Marketing team will be hosting monthly webinars on various topics. All of the webinars will start at 12 noon and be **FREE!**

<https://southcenters.osu.edu/marketing/direct-marketing-webinars>

### Jewish School continued from Page 3–

One mother, Maggie Sarachek, shared the following in an email, "Yarok Together gives my son the sense of connectedness and joy to manage his other challenges in school, it is fuel for the hard stuff."

One hundred percent of the students surveyed, claimed that the best part of the Fall 2015 program was delivering the produce to residents' doors. A fifth grader was quoted saying, "Doing the deliveries is the best...well, I like the gardening too...I just love everything about what we do. We get to make a difference in other people's lives."

In the future, Freeman says their school is striving toward serving more of the food from the local organic farm in their school cafeteria. The challenge is to keep the food kosher as they currently have a caterer providing their meals.

### Action for Healthy Kids has Breakfast in the Classroom Start-up Funds Available

Did you start Breakfast in the Classroom this year or plan to start after the holiday break? Need funds and technical assistance to ensure success? We have start-up grants available for the 2016-2017 school year. Contact [edillon@actionforhealthykids.org](mailto:edillon@actionforhealthykids.org) today.

### GrowNextGen

Focuses on modern agriculture education, GrowNextGen helps connect students to different career fields in the thriving ag industry. Teachers wanting to introduce science and agriculture curriculum in their classrooms need trusted resources and connections, and that's where we can help. The Ohio soybean farmers and their checkoff provide a free a web site with lots of resources for teachers, parents and students go to <http://grownextgen.org/>.

### Wellness Policy Kit

New USDA resources are now available to help school districts engage parents and school staff in Local School Wellness Policy efforts. A Local School Wellness Policy is a written document that guides school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being and ability to learn. It's important for parents and school staff to be a part of this process so the wellness policy is representative of both the community and student's needs.

The Food and Nutrition Service's Team Nutrition initiative has developed a free Local Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit that school districts and schools can customize to communicate information about their Local School Wellness Policy to parents and staff. The kit includes:

- A letter to the wellness coordinator;
- Sample letter to school principals;
- Informational flyers, in English and Spanish;
- Presentations for parents and school staff;
- Sample newsletter article; and
- Social media posts and graphics.

The free Local Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit is available for download at: <http://TeamNutrition.usda.gov>.

### On-going resources:

- Finding local farms, buyers, or restaurants that purchase/ serve local foods, visit **Ohio MarketMaker**: [www.ohiomarketmaker.com](http://www.ohiomarketmaker.com)*
- Finding farms in and around Ohio that sell directly to the public through local farmers' markets, CSA's, and on-farm sales, visit **OEFFA's Good Earth Guide** [OEFFA's searchable on-line directory](#).*
- Farm to School Webinars: National Good Food Network Website:**  
<http://www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls/farm-to-school>  
*NGFN offers four recorded webinars on the topic of Farm to School at this time: "Food Hubs and Farm to School", "Market-Based Models for Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Defining What Works", "School Food FOCUS", and "National Farm to School Network". You can also sign up from their website to receive notice of upcoming webinars.*
- GroundWorks Community** URL: [www.edweb.net/schoolgardens](http://www.edweb.net/schoolgardens)
- Ohio Proud** is a resource for identifying local farms and food producers: <http://www.ohioproud.org/>

# USDA Resources

## Dig in to USDA Team Nutrition resources!

Team Nutrition offers a variety of materials that can enhance your farm to school program, including curriculum, event ideas, posters, and stickers. All Team Nutrition materials are available for download on the website and print copies can be provided for free to any school operating the National School Lunch Program. Go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

Here are a few of our favorites:

- **Dig In! Standards-Based Nutrition Education from the Ground Up:** Explore a world of possibilities in the garden and on your plate using ten inquiry-based lessons to engage 5th and 6th graders in growing, harvesting, tasting, and learning about fruits and vegetables.
- **The Great Garden Detective Adventure:** Discover what fruits and vegetables are sweetest, crunchiest, and juiciest through a series of investigations and fun experiences connecting the school garden to the classroom, cafeteria, and home with this eleven-lesson curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders.
- **Popular Events Idea Booklet:** Discover fun ways to promote nutrition and physical activity at your elementary or middle school with ideas for 20 themed events, from scavenger hunts to try-day Fridays!
- **Make Today a Try-Day! Stickers:** Use these fun stickers as part of your taste-testing event and order posters to match!

**Tools for Schools** is an online toolkit where you can find all of USDA's best resources on school meal topics (e.g., fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and reducing sodium) and implementing Smart Snacks. In the toolkit, you will find policy documents, nutrition education materials, Smarter Lunchroom strategies, kid-friendly recipes, and success stories from other schools. Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools>

## USDA Local Food Directories

Local and regional food systems, including farmers markets, are one of USDA's four key pillars to revitalize rural economies and improve access to fresh, healthy food for millions of Americans. Four USDA Local Food Directories are now available online to give potential customers, business partners and community planners easy, one-stop access to the most current information about sources of local foods. The four directories are: National Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Enterprise Directory, National Food Hub Directory, National On-Farm Market Directory, and National Farmers Market Directory. For more information on the launch: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2014/09/30/the-easy-way-to-find-local-food-usda-launches-new-local-food-directories/>

## The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit

Just getting started with farm to school? The USDA has a comprehensive, easy to understand guide for how to begin a farm to school project. The Farm to School Planning Toolkit guides you through questions to consider and helpful resources to reference when starting or growing a farm to school program. It is designed for use by schools, school districts, and community partners. The toolkit is filled with tips and examples, insights from others, and lists of resources for further research. Each school district is unique, so browse the topics to find the resources most relevant to you and your implementation team! Visit [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S\\_Planning\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S_Planning_Kit.pdf)

# Thank you to all of our partners and supporters!



## Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

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