

FARM TO SCHOOL MEETING, 14 Jan 2008, 3:30-5:00 PM, DeNier Youth Services Center

ATTENDING: Krista Garand, Darrin Parmenter, Katy Pepinsky, Julie Hudak, Katrina Blair, Linda Herz, Amy Foster, Marye Jackson, Beth LaShell, Jenny Wrenn, Wendy Rice, Jaynee Fontecchio-Spradling, Joelle Riddle, Michelle Olguin, Lisa Wilk, Cristina McMunn, Linda Illsley, Jim Dyer

DENIER OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION: Cristina McMunn and Lisa Wilk of DeNier explained the DeNier program and especially the school garden plots. Rite of Passage, a private company, has the contract from Corrections to run DeNier, except for the education program which is contracted to Durango 9R.

Several small garden plots were constructed and the popular gardening activities have been well integrated into the curriculum. Students come and go from the program on an irregular basis, but students are there year-round which helps with summer garden care.

Rite of Passage, not 9R, provides food service and there is no federal free and reduced lunch program restrictions or subsidy. A variety of crops from the garden are routinely included in the meals, and they would be open to additional products from the area.

Cristina said that garden books, a source of manure for the garden plots, and tour sites are among their needs. Master gardeners could be a resource.

We appreciate the hospitality of DeNier in hosting our meeting, and commend them on their efforts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Julie and Darrin reported meeting with Robert Ortiz of DHS about students growing starts for the Manna Soup Kitchen garden.

Joelle reported that she is developing her work plan for the year and exploring what county lands might be available for agriculture is one of her priorities. She introduced Michelle Olguin of the Southern Ute Tribal Council.

Jim reported that there will be several workshops on Farm to School and related topics at the SW Marketing Network Conference at the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe on 5-7 May. Check the website www.swmarketingnetwork.org to sign up for a registration brochure which will be ready in late Feb. Scholarships are available.

9R REPORT: Krista reported that they are sourcing more local tortillas and looking into local tamales. Plans are underway for National School Breakfast Week on 3-7 March. She is hoping to have a special local offering each day of the week. Joelle said that the Commissioners can do proclamations (such as School Breakfast Week) whenever that is appropriate.

A “Love your Veggies” grant proposal was submitted by 9R for Animas Valley, and would include garden, education, and fresh produce components.

REPORT ON 10 JAN MEETING AT NEEDHAM: A special meeting was held at Needham on 10 January to help introduce the Farm to School concept to staff and parents. Roughly 30 people attended (Needham reps will be compiling the list of attendees from the sign-up sheet). After Krista, Linda, Jaynee, Shari, Julie, and Jim explained the Farm to School program generally, we heard from food service, teachers, admin, community reps, and parents about what’s happening at Needham in particular.

Gardening is the main focus for now. Earth boxes and the need for an outdoor garden were discussed. Principal Pete Harter cautioned that in some cases, when special projects are started, community support then shifts to other projects. Shari indicated that the Garden Project recommends that garden projects establish an exit strategy for this very reason. Interest was expressed in having a community garden at the school involving more than just the students.

Needs expressed were more expertise in gardening and help with grant writing. Julie Beekmann will be developing follow-up plans from the meeting.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES COALITION (HLC) FOOD COMMITTEE WORK:

HLC reps gave an update on current activities including the Buy Local campaign, restaurants, and grocery stores.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for 12 February, and we are checking to see if it can be held at Ft Lewis Mesa School.

Remember — all FTS minutes and other FTS and local food info is at www.sustainableSWcolorado.org

Thanks to you all

Jim Dyer