

Farm to School Outreach & Planning Committee

Minutes

3 – 4:30 p.m., 20 July 2006, Healthy Fusion Restaurant

In attendance: Jim Dyer, Shari Fitzgerald, Katie Pepinsky, Sherri Wormser, Marcus Renner

A. Marcus began the meeting by suggesting an event for winter or spring that would focus on local food and farm to school issues. He said that such an event would do three things:

- outline opportunities for people to get involved
- get them to participate in crafting an action agenda encouraging buy-in
- make the outreach work of the committee one branch of broader strategy for change

Marcus said that this means taking more of a community organizing approach, at least in the short term, in order to build up energy and participation among the group. The committee as it stands just doesn't have the capacity to organize and carry out a concerted outreach effort. The idea received a good deal of support. Katie said that Growing Partners was planning on doing a final event at the end of January or February to present their results to the community and that this could all dovetail together.

B. Marcus suggested that it would be good to identify some more specific outcomes for the broad farm to school goals that the committee has outlined in the past. Listing achievable outcomes over the next 1 to 3 years would help show people who come to such an event what they could work on if they joined the Farm to School committee.

The group then brainstormed the following list of outcomes that would demonstrate success for each of the broad goals listed below.

1. Increased understanding about healthy food, sustainable food production, and local agriculture among students, their parents, and the public at large (by providing curricular materials, farm tours, producer visits to the classroom, and public education).

- Provide resources to teachers such as curricular tool kits that make it easier for teachers to integrate local food into their lessons
- Demonstrate to teachers how to use local food issues and information to fulfill the state standards for their grade level and/or subject
- Ensure that whenever local food is served at an event or in a school it comes with a bit of education – through signage, presentation, or poster.

2. Increased acceptance of high quality, culturally appropriate, sustainably produced, local foods by students, their families, and the general public (through school gardens, cooking classes, tasting events, special event meals, and similar participatory activities).

- Encourage parent participation in the salad bar program.
- Encourage other large institutions such as Fort Lewis College and possibly the hospital to purchase local food.
- Initiate a consumer co-op focused on local food. This would be like “reverse CSA” that would be organized by consumers that local farms could buy into.
- Develop alternative venues besides the farmer’s market for producers to get their products to the public.
- Initiate a “buy local” campaign. Katie mentioned that there are “off the shelf” kits that can help you organize this.
- Development of community and school gardens wherever appropriate.

3. Increased production of these foods in our area coupled with local value-added processing and an appropriate distribution system.

- Initiate a “Beginning Farmer” program that teaches people about farming.
- Initiate a “Land Link” program that matches land for lease with people interested in putting into production
- Do a study based on local demand that provides current and potential farmers information on how to capture the local (La Plata County & SW Colorado) market (i.e. what products have the greatest revenue potential).
- Push the county to give priority to the production of local food as they look for tools to preserve farmland and open space.
- Work with local land trusts to identify priority areas with prime farmland in need of protection.
- Do a study of the effects of increasing local food production on the labor market – both documented and undocumented.

4. Increased consumption of these foods in our schools to the greatest extent possible given current state and federal policies.

- Decide on targets for school consumption based on the amount of local food (lbs.), the amount of money spent on local food, the number of days local food is served, number of students eating local food (i.e. schools involved with the farm to school).
- Steadily increase the number of local products in the 9-R salad bar program
- Steadily reduce the amount of waste associated with the 9-R salad bar program

5. Partnerships with other groups to change state and federal policies to allow greater inclusion of these foods in our schools.

- Get the districts to adopt more specific criteria and standards in their wellness policies of what “inclusion of local food,” “academic lessons on food,” and “hands-on activities” related to what local food means at the basic, advanced, and exemplary levels.

6. Increased participation in farm to school programs on the part of students, their parents, school administrators, community leaders, and the general public through increased understanding of the importance of farm to school programs, the obstacles involved, and what can be done by community members to promote these programs.

- Increase involvement of the number of individuals involved in the larger Farm to School committee and the outreach committee
- Establish other committees as necessary to carry-out projects as needed.

C. The group then developed a calendar of upcoming Farm to School outreach opportunities.

- Marcus said that he would use this to develop a workplan for the committee over the next several months.
- Shari and Katie committed to talk with Karla at the Herald about her desired timing for a sequence of food articles this fall.
- Jim committed to send events related to Farm to School to Karla to get into her events listing.

D. The group ended discussing the potential use of presentation to the Green Business Roundtable. Marcus committed to touch base with Kent Ford about the timing and possible angle to give the presentation.

E. Next Meeting – Tuesday, August 29th 3:00 to 4:30. Location: TBD

(See attached calendar)

Draft Farm to School Outreach Calendar

| Month | Activities, Event, Meetings |
|--|---|
| <p>August</p> <p>FTS Outreach Meeting</p> | <p>Early August – Growing Partners Interviews of young farmers at the County Fair and outreach about food assessment</p> <p>August 16 – 9-R All Local Food Staff Breakfast. Include outreach materials with menu and poster at serving table</p> <p>August 23 – COPAN meeting/retreat</p> <p>August 29 – Next FTS Outreach Meeting 3:00 – 4:30. Location: TBD</p> <p>August 30 – Growing Partners Food Assessment Forum in Hesperus</p> <p><i>Agenda:</i> Finalize timing of Herald articles, GBR presentation, and winter/spring conference/forum; goals, outcomes & structure of conference; finalize outreach associated with September FTS events</p> |
| <p>September</p> <p>FTS Outreach Meeting</p> | <p>September 12 – Colorado Proud Day for 9-R schools</p> <p>Mid-September - Beginning of 9-R salad bar program</p> <p><i>Agenda:</i> Develop a draft schedule of activities and presenters/facilitators for conference; brainstorm on long-term outreach strategies; finalize outreach associated with October FTS events</p> |
| <p>October</p> <p>FTS Outreach Meeting</p> | <p><i>Agenda:</i> Review preliminary results of food assessment and discuss implications for local FTS initiatives, conference and media messages; finalize outreach associated with November FTS events</p> |
| <p>November</p> <p>FTS Outreach Meeting</p> | <p>Late November – Community Food Assessment Done</p> <p><i>Agenda:</i> Conference planning; brainstorm on long-term outreach strategies; finalize outreach associated with December FTS events</p> |
| <p>December</p> | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| FTS Outreach Meeting | <i>Agenda:</i> Develop outreach plan for conference; brainstorm on long-term outreach strategies |
| January | |
| FTS Outreach Meeting | <i>Agenda:</i> Discussion of outreach components for the Community Food Security Grant Application; conference planning |
| February | Farm to School/Local Food Conference (at Fort Lewis??) |
| FTS Outreach Meeting | Community Food Security Grant Application <i>Agenda:</i> Conference planning and preparation |
| March | |
| FTS Outreach Meeting | <i>Agenda:</i> Conference debrief and planning for next steps |