



NJ Farm to School Conference

April 18, 2009

Lawrenceville School

Speaker Notes

Session 2: Connecting to the Classroom: Curriculum Tie-ins

Facilitator Amy Jolin (amyjolin@optonline.net):

General Information regarding questions, name badges, speaker contact information and handouts.

Welcome: Member of the Board of Directors of Eat Local (non-profit) who presented to school district ideas for better and healthier food services.

Ringwood Program: Powered by volunteers who provide mini-lessons in the classroom through positive relationships with teachers. Kindergarten students harvest pumpkins, plant lettuce and radishes which are left to seed to show the relationship between seeds and food. Companion planting is done with 3 classes. Themes change from 1st through 3rd grade covering topics on a global and local level including food trade through a pizza garden. Content directly ties in to pre-existing science and social studies lessons, possibly math as well. The hope is teachers will take ownership over this program and adopt it into their classroom culture and curriculum. (Three Sisters Garden)

Speaker Introduction: Eric, Fernbrook Farms in Chesterfield, NJ

Eric Tadlock (eric@fernbrookfarms.com):

Introduction of the Vanderveer Schools Kindergarten program with a brief mention of Maschio's Food Service.

There are many resources out there for farm to school curriculum, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The important thing is to build your own wheel. Take the pre-existing concepts and works and individualize them to meet your school's needs, make your own wheel. In order for a program to be sustainable the program needs to involve all members of your school community.

Introduction to Fernbrook Farms (FF): FF is not a venue for agritourism. Their desire is to provide hands on, farm based learning opportunities for anyone who comes to Fernbrook. FF consists of a 250 member CSA program,

wholesale nursery, a bed & Breakfast and a not for profit education center which provides home school classes, spring/summer/winter camp, and scouting programs. Several years ago FF Education Center received a grant through The Crosswicks Foundation which allowed them to partnership with the Chesterfield school to create a program that introduced the agrarian heritage of the community into the curriculum. FF modeled their approach after Vermont Feed which is a coalition of 3 organizations: NOFA, Shellburne Farms and 2 Rivers. Vermont Feed offers technical assistance and workshops for teachers and schools participating in farm to school. FF provided a week long workshop for any teacher in the Chesterfield school who was interested in participating. The goal of the program was to sort through Chesterfield's curriculum and pull out what was old and out dated with new place-based agriculture based materials. From here Fernbrook and the Chesterfield teachers worked to create a farm to school curriculum and a school garden that would enhance the learning experience of all of the children served. Eric recommends reading a work by David Sobel on place-based education.

The Kindergarten Initiative: Developed by The Food Trust, the KI is a snack program that is integrating nutrition and agriculture education to health eating in school. Students, through the use of snack cards, engage in a dialogue of the food experience including anticipatory conversations regarding the taste and smells associated with the different foods being presented. The curriculum includes family cooking events and other programs to tie what is happening in the cafeteria to the home. Many parent can't believe that their children are even eating vegetables. This experience Parents can also order produce from local farms through the school and the school/children sort and distribute it.

Handout: Brief frameworks of the different curricula that are out there. Information regarding scope and sequence and specific lessons are included as well.

Bradley White (Bradley.white@ridgeandvalley.org):

Bradley teaches in a NJ Charter School with mission based standards for sustainability. Bradley is from northern NJ which has undergone a suburbanization throughout his lifetime. Bradley spent a great deal of time studying plants and nature which inspired him to contribute to the sustainable

Charter school is on a 22 acre farm that focuses on integration of subjects. The school garden is the perfect place to integrate all content areas. Garden education is place based and hand-on. Time for a school garden can be found through creative integration, resulting in the garden curriculum. Topics included are: rocks, minerals, geologic history, soil, pH, acids, bases, the Periodic

Table of Elements, composting, predator/prey relationships, food chain, energy transfer, nitrogen and carbon cycles.

Teaching Chemistry, Biology, Ecology all through the garden includes investigations, sample collection and system analysis. Math can also be incorporated by measuring plant growth, finding seed germination rates and ratios, calculate garden area perimeters, determine how many plants can be grown based on garden size. Students can explore world language by exploring the cultural origins of their food. History can be explored by investigating foods that were traditionally grown by Native Americans which also includes symbiotic relationships. European farming styles and the relationship between settlers and Native Americans can easily be explored. Students can investigate how the industrial revolution changed farming practices. Civics can be explored by drafting laws for garden care and researching government regulations on gardening and farming. Many lessons will just naturally evolve from planting. Additional topics are health/physical education and home economics/culinary arts. Children can develop gardening as a life long recreational activity. Children can write about experiences in the garden, use words from gardening as spelling and vocabulary words, teachers can read garden related stories to their classes. Let the garden become the classroom! If you can't have a garden in your school partner with a farm. You can extend the growing season through the use of a greenhouse, cold frame (which can be built from recycled materials and is easy to do), or bring the garden into your classroom. Helpful hints are to use crops with short growing times that are tolerant of the cold. Edible schoolyards are possible but have issues that may make them difficult for some schools (associated issues: food allergies, pesticides etc.)

Frank Montesana (fmentesana@stphilipsacademy.org):

Frank works with St. Phillips Academy is an independent K-8 school with an environmental mission, additionally St. Phillips is certified as a silver lead school. He is a freelance food consultant who helped to create ECOSPACES which has made possible the expanded use of a 405 sq ft roof top garden, At St. Phillips the dining room becomes part of the classroom encouraging a dialogue about where food comes from whether it be from the roof top garden or a local farm. St. Phillips has several learning environments including a teaching kitchen, rooftop garden and many more. The kitchen at St. Phillips is an open kitchen which serves a family style lunch, made from scratch, to foster a sense of community. Tables are comprised of students from varying grades to further foster community. St. Phillips curriculum teaches children to be stewards of the earth, it fosters a curiosity of the natural environment. Students, because of an increased knowledge of their environment, have developed an interest about health and eating which they have shared with their families. An integral part of the success of a school program is getting everyone on board, educating people,

and making them care. The staff at St. Phillips took the approach of looking at the curriculum through new lenses. Learning goals were created using pieces of curriculum that were already in place. From here a garden based theme was created based on these goals which helped to determine what was going to be planted in the garden. Expectations of staff were developed which included: using an interdisciplinary approach, good documentation of lessons, creation of benchmarks, and participating at least once per week. A sensory garden was developed with every grade level, the thematic approach was developed, a plan for logistics was created, and a cross curriculum method was developed. Frank suggests to his teachers that they start small and keep working, most importantly use the support of those who are there to support you.

Questions & Answers:

- 1) How do you get the teachers on board: (Frank) His program was top down, there was some resistance, but, the best thing you can do is to from an administrative perspective make it as easy as possible for the teachers to participate in it. (Amy) Her program came in from the grassroots and it eventually became apparent to teachers that the topics being covered are part of the curriculum.
- 2) How do you get middle school students involved? Cross grade mentoring and empower them to take ownership
- 3) Any advice for secondary education? Get in touch with VT Feed