IFSN News: IFSN partners with Illinois State Board of Education sharing Farm to School education for new summer feeding sites.

The Illinois Farm to School Network is partnering with the Illinois State Board of Education to share farm to school and IL Harvest of the Month programming with new sponsor summer feeding sites.

During the months of March and April IFSN Programs Manager, Diane Chapeta, will be presenting during new sponsor summer feeding site training in Illinois.

"Any size feeding site can incorporate farm to school programming utilizing a community or school garden or by sourcing locally from Farmers Markets and local area growers. Participation in farm to school programming is easy during the height of the growing season when fresh, local vegetables are readily available."

The IFSN Summer Feeding Sponsor presentation schedule is as follows:
April 11th 1191 E Woodfield Rd Schaumburg, IL 12:15 pm
April 25th- 201 SW Jefferson Ave. Peoria, IL 12:15 pm
You can find the Summer Food Service Program website here.
News: Fairbury Agriculture Camp Wins Illinois Stewardship Alliance Award

There is a lot more to Illinois farming than corn and soybeans. Every day, farmers are finding new ways to innovate their techniques. The Illinois Stewardship Alliance seeks to discover these innovators and award them with a Golden Beet award.

ISA Communications Director Molly Gleason said the awards "highlight the most innovative farmers, restaurants, businesses and organizations in the state leading the charge for a sustainable local food and farm system."

The Spence Farm Foundation in Fairbury, 35 miles northeast of Bloomington-Normal, won 2018's Scaling Up award for its effort to help farmers grow their business with its annual summer Bread Camp. The Bread Camp recruits bakers, medical professionals and culinary artists to discover the process in which their food is developed. There is a strong emphasis in the farm-to-table growth process.

Read more here.

News: Giving Children the Opportunity to Choose

How one school district has empowered children to make healthy choices through salad bars.

Excerpt:

Ms. Bodnar says she draws inspiration from the philosophy of food guru and Registered Dietitian, Ellyn Satter. Satter stresses the division of responsibility when it comes to feeding children. Adults are responsible for providing options, and children are given the responsibility and freedom to choose from what has been provided. Ms. Bodnar explains, "It's really about providing kids with healthy choices and letting them choose. They surprise you when there's healthy foods available." She noted that the district has found great success in the practice of students self-serving. Rather than dictating what their food and vegetable choices are, the students are empowered to make their own choices and are, in turn, more excited about what is on their plate.

Read more here.
Resource: 2018 Summer Meals Webinars are scheduled!

Wholesome summer meals are critical to the health and well-being of our children. Join us for our 2018 Summer Meals Webinars to learn more about this important USDA program.

Click on each link to register for the specific webinar that interests you.

April 17, Tuesday, 1:00 pm - [What Cities Can Teach Us About Summer Meals](#)
May 15, Tuesday, 1:00 pm - [Boosting Your Budget - Summer Meals Financial Planning](#)
June 14, Thursday, 1:00 pm - [Middle of Summer Strategies](#)

Resource: Every Kid Healthy Week is coming to a lunchroom near you!

Every Kid Healthy™ Week is an annual observance created to celebrate school health and wellness achievements and recognized on the calendar of National Health Observances.

Observed during April 23-27, 2018, this special week shines a spotlight on the great efforts our school partners are making to improve the health and wellness of their students and the link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning - because healthy kids are better prepared to learn! Anyone can get involved and be a part of the celebration to help support sound nutrition, regular physical activity and health-promoting programs in schools. Schools are invited to host an event during Every Kid Healthy Week or anytime in April. Consider making your field day or other school-wide event health focused. Keep reading to learn how to host an event!
Grant: Project Produce Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

Who should apply: Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and have more than 50% Free and Reduced Meal eligibility.

Timeline: Applications due by May 4, 2018

Project Produce, a program of Chef Ann Foundation, provides schools funds to spend on fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole ingredients used in scratch-cooked recipes.

Food service staff, often with support from other school personnel, host tastings and food literacy events in the cafeteria in order to increase student exposure and acceptability of fresh fruits, vegetables, and new recipes. Favorite fruits, vegetables, and new recipes are incorporated into school meals and are promoted through peer-to-peer marketing strategies. These activities help to expand kids' palates and encourage healthy eating habits in school and out.

If awarded the grant you will receive a one-time check of $2,000 per school site. Selected schools will be notified and receive grant funds in summer 2018. Grant activities must be implemented in August, September, October, and November 2018 with all grant funds spent by December 2018. Schools must complete an evaluation (which includes providing receipts or invoices for all items purchased with grant funds) by December 31, 2018.

Read more here.

Grant: Aetna Foundation 2018 Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program

Who should apply: This grant program is open to nonprofit organizations exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, federally recognized Indian tribes, and state/local government agencies.

Timeline: Stage 1 applications must be received by April 18, 2018 at 3PM ET.

We are pleased to announce the launch of our 2018 Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program. We recognize that health is local: it begins in our homes, schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. By creating more chances to make healthy choices in
these places, we can empower whole communities to lead healthier lives.

Over the past three years, we have expanded our programming beyond its past focus on physical activity, urban farms, and local food. We're still committed to these areas, and they'll be considered under this RFP. But our program as a whole aims to have broader impact and reach more spaces in the community. That's why we are inviting projects that address issues in the following domains: Built Environment, Community Safety, Environmental Exposures, Healthy Behaviors, and Social/Economic Factors. We are especially interested in projects that advance resident- or youth-led initiatives, and projects that seek to influence and strengthen local policies that impact residents' health.

Information for Producers

**Resource: Urban Ag Land for Lease + Resources Financing**

The City of Chicago Dept of Planning & Development has land available for agricultural purposes in close proximity to established ag hubs in the Englewood Agricultural District. If you are interested in growing in Greater Englewood or a surrounding south side community, there are opportunities available. The city is offering long term tenancy for the land, with various options available. See the map here: AUACHICAGOMAP

For more information, please contact:
Micheal Newman-Brooks
Project Manager of Urban Agriculture, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development
Micheal.newman-brooks@cityofchicago.org
312-744-5204

Are you a Large Lot owner or urban grower looking to extend the growing season with a hoop house? Get your hoop house paid for by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Chicago applicants are also eligible to receive application assistance and educational resources to construct and maintain a hoop house.

For more information, contact:
Micheal Newman-Brooks
Project Manager of Urban Agriculture, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development
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OR

Laura Calvert
Executive Director, Advocates for Urban Agriculture
director@auachicago.org
Grant: 2018 Local Food Promotion Program Grant

Who should apply: Eligible entities may apply if they support local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products.


The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grant funds with a 25% match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets. There are two types of project applications are accepted under LFPP—planning grants and implementation grants. Applicants can apply for either but will receive only one type of grant in the same grant cycle.

- LFPP Planning Grants are used in the planning stages of establishing or expanding a local and regional food business enterprise. Activities can include but are not limited to market research, feasibility studies, and business planning.

- LFPP Implementation Grants are used to establish a new local and regional food business enterprise, or to improve or expand an existing local or regional food business enterprise. Activities can include but are not limited to training and technical assistance for the business enterprise and/or for producers working with the business enterprise; outreach and marketing to buyers and consumers; and non-construction infrastructure improvements to business enterprise facilities or information technology systems.

News: Following the roots: A profile of Lisa Bralts of Illinois Public Media

As the Director of Content and Strategic Communications at Illinois Public Media (WILL), Bralts’ goal is for an "empowered" listening base—one "where people can feel like they are able to participate in some way."

She produced a show called Backyard Industry (BYI), in which she explored her community and discovered what people are passionate about, then collaborated with them in their work.

After moving to Urbana-Champaign, she found her passion for the Urbana Market at the Square. Using "sheer will-power," she found herself in the center of the sustainable food scene, and in 2008 she became the director of the Urbana Farmer's Market. There, she was an incubator, experimenting with programs such as food trucks, which helped inform Backyard Industry. She developed "Sprouts at the Market," a program to encourage little kids to
try new vegetables. "To me the farmers market was this thing to be
developed and supported to support farmers and bring people closer to food," she said. To her surprise, it was at the market as the director that she found herself handed a mic and recorder, along with an offer—a chance to podcast about local food in radio form.

Read more here.

Information for School Gardens

**News: Whitefish Twp. Students Use Old Food, Recycled Supplies to Grow Veggies for Lunch**

Students at this Upper Peninsula school are getting their hands dirty and helping the school save money while eating healthier! Students at Whitefish Township Community School in Chippewa County have been taking their old food as compost and cultivating soil in their own greenhouse. Inside they grow fruits and vegetables that are already having a huge impact on the small community.

"They had plants and stuff growing and I was very impressed in fact that's one of the reasons that drew me to Whitefish Township was the greenhouse," Science Teacher Peggy Imhoff, said.

Read more here.

**News: Central greenhouse - Cultivating an interest in gardening**

Thanks to a growing interest in gardening and the availability of a greenhouse, Central students have been able to stock the school salad bar with leaf lettuce and cherry tomatoes during the winter months. According to Central science instructor Ann Gritzner, growing fresh produce was designed as a way to utilize the fertilizer produced by the school's vermiculture project. That project, which was launched last year, uses worms to increase the efficiency of the school's composting effort. Central students have been composting school lunch waste for about three years.

"We've also given plants to students, staff and the food shelf," Gritzner said. The Decorah-based Pepperfield Project, a non-profit organization that promotes gardening, as well as Norby's, Elkader True Value, Elkader Greenhouse and Turkey River Farms have donated
News: Indoor garden flourishes at Billerica's Marshall Middle School

Amid the hustle and bustle in the hallways at Marshall Middle School, a treasure sits inside Sue Laferriere’s classroom. Tucked in the back of the room rests an indoor vegetable garden, overflowing with lettuce and basil grown by her middle school students. "It's a life lesson," Laferriere said, pointing at the plants before looking at her students.

The indoor garden was first launched at the Marshall in January after Laferriere received a $500 grant to purchase equipment. Her life skills students filled the three growing beds with soil and seeds, watering routinely, and letting the artificial light do its magic. The opportunity made perfect sense for Laferriere, as the students were already learning about plants and photosynthesis. "You don't just read about it, you see it. It's a daily thing with them and they see it," she said.

After their first harvest, the students took samples through the school cafeteria for their classmates to taste. Since then, they've already had two more harvests and are embarking on a fourth. In the Marshall Middle School classroom on March 22, students had mixed-reviews on the taste of the vegetables of their labor. Some enjoyed the taste, while others weren't so enthused by the green vegetables.

Resource: Slow Food USA: Plant a Seed Kit

Slow Food's spring campaign brings together schools, chapters and individuals across the world who are champions of Food for Change.

The Plant a Seed kit contains the Three Sisters - beans, corn and squash - that,
when planted together, help one another thrive and survive. These aren't just any seeds. These particular seeds are on the Slow Food Ark of Taste, a living library of delicious and distinctive foods facing extinction: Stowell's Evergreen Sweet Corn, Long Island Cheese Pumpkin, and beautiful Christmas Lima Beans.

Help teach kids about climate change and the wonderful new flavors of biodiversity! For every kit purchased, one kit will be sent to a school garden in need, up to the first 300 schools who apply. Once those run out, or if you have the budget to pay, you can use "plantschoolhalf" code for a 50% discount.

Read more here

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STAY CONNECTED AND JOIN THE CONVERSATION:

BECOME A NETWORK MEMBER!

Join our growing movement. Click here to join the network, and then spread the word. Receive the monthly IFSN newsletter and stay informed! Forward this email and invite anyone you know who cares about Farm to School to join the conversation.