

fresh from the farm

A Farm-to-School program of Seven Generations Ahead



Apple Expert Kicks Off Fall Curriculum of Fresh from the Farm



To begin the fall semester, Fresh from the Farm joined forces with Susan Taylor, a local apple enthusiast and contributing food critic for the Chicago Tribune. Students explored four different varieties of Michigan apples, learning about their texture, aroma, and taste. One student declared that biting into a sour Golden Delicious apple “makes my cheeks giggle!” After tasting each variety, students from McAuliffe, McCormick, and St. Ann elementary schools used ballots to vote for their favorite apple. Results showed a close race between Golden Delicious and Honeycrisp! After evaluating the qualities of each apple as a true food critic would, students were given the chance to create an apple slinky using their favorite variety. The sweet spirals were a hit! Students were thrilled to see apples in a new way and investigate the unique qualities of this everyday fruit. In addition, each student was given a coupon for a free three-pound bag of Michigan apples from Strack and Van Til grocery store. This gracious donation allowed students to bridge their classroom experience with healthy-eating habits at home. With her newly founded organization, The Good Food Project, Susan Taylor planted seeds of apple appreciation for both students and teachers alike.

Local Produce Featured in Oak Park/River Forest School Lunches

New items appeared on the lunch menu at Oak Park’s elementary schools and OPRF High School this fall including locally grown apples, potatoes and peppers. Working to bridge farms to schools, Seven Generations Ahead connected the organic produce of Nichols Farm & Orchard in Marengo, IL to Oak Park students. The partnership was made possible by the USDA and other private funders. With hopes to increase local food procurement next year, SGA is working with additional school districts and farmers.



The Fresh from the Farm program is made possible through the support of the USDA, the Chicago Community Trust, Farm Aid, the Philancon Fund, the Mander Foundation and the Lumpkin Family Foundation.

Students from McAuliffe Elementary School walk through rows of broccoli, cabbage and bell peppers with Farmer Steve as their guide.



After harvesting and washing their carrots from the farm, students were able to enjoy the sweet crunch of a fresh carrot.

Naperville Farm Provides a Magical Farm Experience for Students

While chanting "ALA-KAZAM, ALA-KAZOIL, TURN THIS MIXTURE INTO SOIL!", McAuliffe Elementary students learned that soil can not be formed in a few magical seconds. Kelly Joslin, educator from the Green Earth Institute, instructed students that with the right ingredients, healthy soil is formed over a period of 50-100 years. It takes more than magic to create this rich foundation for plants. Farmer Steve Tiwald extended this important lesson by giving students a tour of the crops grown in the organic soil of the farm. Students identified the different parts of plants that we eat and were exposed to new fruits and vegetables. It was a surprise for many to learn that because peppers have seeds, they are technically a fruit! Broccoli heads in bloom, brussels sprouts on the stem, and funny-looking patty pan squash were all new sights to see. After learning the value of organic farming, students recognized that carrots don't just appear on the grocery store shelves, but instead require hard work and care to harvest. The young, new farmers left the Green Earth Institute with fresh carrots in hand and valuable lessons about where our food comes from.

Purple Asparagus Brings Parents Back to the Table

Melissa Graham, executive director of the Chicago nonprofit Purple Asparagus, has dedicated her work to "bringing families back to the table by promoting and enjoying all things associated with good eating." She shared this powerful message with parents at McCormick Elementary in October. During her demonstration, she encouraged parents to involve their children in the buying, preparing, and mealtime process. With a food industry geared toward convenience and super-size portions, family traditions and recipes are at risk of being forgotten. Graham gave parents a hands-on demonstration of three quick, healthy snacks that are kid-friendly. Lettuce wraps, papaya salsa, and apples with almond butter were approved for their great taste and minimal preparation time by the parents in attendance. Taking time to enjoy the experience of healthy cooking with children creates sweet bonds, as well as food traditions that are carried out of the kitchen for years to come.



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All About Carrots!



Almost everyone needs to get more vegetables in their diet. It's recommended to get at least 2 1/2 cups per day for a 2,000 calorie diet. Choose a colorful assortment of veggies to get a variety of your vitamin needs. Carrots, which are available all year round, are an excellent source of vitamin A. Their bright orange color indicates they contain beta-carotene which is a form of vitamin A. It helps keep eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.

Carrots come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes. Make sure to look for firm, plump carrots with a smooth surface and no rootlets growing. Baby carrots, which are a bit sweeter, are already peeled and packaged. Choose packages with little water and check the sell by date for freshness. Carrots will keep for weeks in the refrigerator so keep them on hand as an easy way to add some color, crunch and nutrition to your diet.

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