

# HEALTHY KIDS, THRIVING FARMS

Investing in children, community, and economy



**groundwork**  
CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



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*Disclosure: Please note that reprinted articles sharing some of this story date back to when our name was the Michigan Land Use Institute, from 1995-2015. We have changed references to our organization name to Groundwork Center in all cases, to reduce confusion with our present identity. Please also note that all references to time and titles within the articles are relative to the date of publication, which can be found near the article heading.*

\*Complete versions of all stories, as well as a digital file of this report, are available at [groundworkcenter.org](http://groundworkcenter.org)

COVER PHOTO: Jill Johnson, former kitchen leader at Traverse Heights Elementary School in Traverse City.

Published September 2017

Design by [Chelseabaydesign.com](http://Chelseabaydesign.com)

## CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF FARM TO SCHOOL

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, a non-profit in Traverse City, Michigan, working to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build community, is pleased to share this 15-year anniversary report about our farm to school work in northwest Michigan and beyond. It is not just our story, but the story of countless people who have built robust connections between farm and school to the benefit of kids' health and local economies.

### THREE C'S: CAFETERIA, CLASSROOM, COMMUNITY.

Groundwork does a substantial part of its work by being solutions-oriented and sharing positive models for community resilience. The best model we found for structuring farm to school programs was the Three C's: Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community.

We also have a keen eye for policy, an ear for communications, and a heart for collaboration.

Policy based on successful models can make a lasting difference. Compelling communications elevate ideas into the conversation, for action and inspiration. And collaboration is key for making changes so deep and widespread that at some point you can say you've catalyzed change, and see that others are carrying it forward and multiplying the effect in ways you could never do on your own.

As a result, we've organized this report largely around Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community. We are letting our communications history tell the story itself. You will see how farm to school unfolded in our region, what we learned, and where we are today through condensed versions\* of the stories that we shared in our publications, website, and other venues. We hope you enjoy the journey as much as we have!



## GROUNDWORK'S FOOD & FARMING TEAM

### DIANE CONNERS

*Senior Policy Specialist*

Diane has largely led our farm to school work from the beginning. She is an award-winning journalist and volunteered with Groundwork to discuss the farm to school idea with area schools before coordinating the work and its on-the-ground launch when she came on staff in 2004. Diane was a member of an early Great Lakes steering committee of the National Farm to School Network, a founding member of the Michigan Farm to Institution Network, and an original supervisor for FoodCorps in Michigan. She coordinated Groundwork's *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms* policy initiative, which has now become a state program.



### MEGHAN MCDERMOTT

*Food & Farming Program Director*

Meghan joined the team in 2013 as a service member with FoodCorps, a national non-profit affiliated with AmeriCorps that specializes in connecting kids to healthy food in school. Her extensive background in food systems work has taken her around the country and across the globe, including her nomination as a U.S. delegate to the Slow Food International Congress in 2012. From 2013-2015, Meghan carried out farm to school classroom and garden activities in northwest Michigan schools. Today she oversees all of Groundwork's food and farming projects, including farm to school.



### JEN SCHAAP

*Local Food Policy Specialist*

Jen came on board in April of 2017 and is staffing our new office in Petoskey, supporting our Food & Farming projects in Emmet, Charlevoix, and Antrim counties. Jen's work is helping to bring decades of Groundwork's resources, hard-learned lessons, and strategies to the "Northern Farms Foodshed" with the help of local groups including the Local Food Alliance of Northern Michigan. Jen has been a community advocate for local food systems in the Petoskey area for nearly a decade, a period that has seen the local food movement grow from only a handful to a healthy crop of small farms and local food businesses.



# RAW POTATOES TO STATE POLICY

Every fall morning, Chef Nathan Bates snips lettuce, washes leafy greens, and dices tomatoes plucked from a hoophouse garden behind his school cafeteria. Bates, a trained chef, is the Food Service Director for Boyne Falls Public Schools.

In a salad bar, he displays fresh cucumbers, spinach, squash, and apples delivered directly to his door by the local farms that grew them—Spirit of Walloon Market Garden, Bear Creek Organic Farm, Bluestem Farm, Friske Orchards—or by the local-foods distributor Cherry Capital Foods.

He blends 200 kale smoothies. And some days he makes a quinoa salad textured with dried cherries and folds it into beef tacos infused with fresh spices or the dried chiles hanging from the cafeteria's concrete block wall, as though this were a gourmet restaurant.

In this tiny school of 200 students in rural Charlevoix County, six out of 10 students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, meaning their families' incomes are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty line. That's an annual income of \$36,900 for a family of four. According to a 2014 study conducted by Feeding America, 15.7 percent of Michigan children experience food insecurity—meaning their families have limited or uncertain access to adequate food. In Charlevoix County, that figure tops 20 percent.

This makes school food, where children eat up to two meals every day, particularly important.

The Boyne Falls children adore “Chef Nate” for his devotion to them, and for his commitment to serving real food that comes handpicked and fresh, not mass-produced and wrapped in plastic.

“Thank you for the amazing food you give us,” one student wrote in a letter to Bates last October. “I love when you give us tacos. They are better than Taco Bell’s ... When I walk into the cafeteria, I smell, and I just drift right to it.”

For Bates, serving fresh, local food isn't a radical act, but something that should be commonplace in every school. “When I came here I was shocked that this isn't how everyone does it,” said Bates, who joined Boyne Falls in 2013. “Let's step back and do what our grandmothers would have done. We're not revolutionaries out here.”



Courtesy Petoskey News-Review

## A FLOURISHING FARM TO SCHOOL MOVEMENT: 15 YEARS OF HISTORY

Nathan Bates and Boyne Falls Public School are a shining testament to the impact of northwest lower Michigan's flourishing farm to school movement. It is a movement that is benefiting schoolchildren both nutritionally and academically and, at the same time, is giving small and mid-size farmers a growing market for their crops and helping them stay on their land.

Groundwork Center has played a key catalyzing role in the farm to school movement since first writing about the idea in April 2002. We included this new-old strategy as part of a special report entitled *The New Entrepreneurial Agriculture*, which celebrated local farmers selling direct to customers in their own community as a burgeoning opportunity. Most recently, our *10 Cents a Meal* initiative has inspired state policy.

***So for the 15-year anniversary of our farm to school work, we thought we'd take a look back. We hope some of the lessons we've learned will help others.***

This report explores how the farm to school movement in northwest Michigan grew legs and is moving steadily forward, what events and resources helped it gain momentum, who the key players and partners have been, and what strides they took to put healthy, local food on the plates and in the curriculum of students not just in Boyne Falls but throughout northwest Michigan, and beyond.





Courtesy Dana Goodwin

# IN THE BEGINNING

*The following articles are from Groundwork's 2002 report *The New Entrepreneurial Agriculture*, and from an article that the Community Food Security Coalition contracted with Groundwork to report and write to share key components of national history in advance of the second National Farm to Cafeteria Conference in June 2005.*

## SCHOOLS, FARMERS LOOK FOR WAYS TO PUT MICHIGAN PRODUCTS BACK IN THE CAFETERIA

APRIL 2002 BY PATTY CANTRELL

June Bailey, food service director for Comstock Public Schools near Kalamazoo, knows how she struggles to make sure kids eat fresh, nutritious food. As the wife of a farmer, Ms. Bailey also is familiar with how farmers in Michigan struggle to find buyers for the food they produce.

But rather than buy apples, potatoes, or milk from Michigan's farms, public schools buy through

national food service companies that often supply Washington apples and Texas strawberries instead. Like hospitals and other large food buyers, schools rely on national distributors to deliver large quantities of food, often in preprocessed form, to their doorsteps on a weekly basis.

It bothers Ms. Bailey, however, that more of the food that school children eat does not come from local farms.

"We get our carrot sticks from a plant in Kentucky. But I'm told there may be a processor in Grand Rapids that slices carrots," she says.

"There needs to be a way for farmers to tell me what they have available and for me to tell the farmers what food I need," she says.

But can Michigan farmers supply the needed variety and volume of food?





## FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS PLEASE KIDS, ENRICH FARMERS

APRIL 16, 2005 BY DIANE CONNERS

In 1997, when Rodney Taylor directed food service for the public schools in Santa Monica and Malibu, California, a parent urged him to replace the pre-packaged fruits and vegetables at the salad bars with produce from local farms.

Fresher produce, the father argued, would taste so much better that students would jump at the chance to eat healthier foods.

Mr. Taylor, who will speak in Ohio in June at the second National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, thought the idea would be an operational nightmare. Cooks would have to tear up lettuce leaves and cut carrot sticks instead of just dumping them out of bags. Mr. Taylor would have to buy from multiple farmers instead of one food distributor who delivered. And he'd need to negotiate prices.

And really, he thought, would the kids even notice? "To be quite frank, I was quite skeptical," Mr. Taylor said. "I did not think it would work at all."

But the experiment Mr. Taylor tried at one elementary school launched one of the first two known farm-to-school programs in the country. And the number of students munching on greens for lunch at one of his schools skyrocketed from 10 students to 180. He became a believer.

"The fact of the matter is, it was far simpler once we got into it than we thought it would be," he said.

### MANAGING FROM FIELD TO CAFETERIA

Just a couple years earlier, in the northern Florida Panhandle, J'Amy Petersen started what is believed to be the first farm to school program in the country at Gadsden County Public Schools.

Petersen, a dietitian who grew up on a farm in North Dakota, didn't need to be convinced that just-picked fresh foods are more nutritious and flavorful. She was interested when Glyen Holmes, a representative of the New North Florida Cooperative of Farmers, asked if she would consider buying fresh locally grown collard greens instead of the frozen greens she used in the school lunches.

Petersen didn't know whether she could afford to have her cooks chop the collards before steaming them. But the Florida farmers offered washed, chopped, and bagged greens. What about health and sanitation? Mr. Holmes asked the local health inspector to observe the farmers' processing line to assuage Ms. Petersen's concerns.

The results?

The children immediately noticed the difference in flavor between the fresh and frozen collard greens, leaving nary a bite of fresh greens on their plates. Before, portions of the cooked frozen greens always ended up in the trash. And the school orders helped the farmers build their business, get bank loans and snare grants to purchase storage coolers, more sophisticated processing equipment, and refrigerated delivery trucks.

Yes indeed, says Beth Cryderman-Moss, a government procurement specialist with Michigan Works!, the state employment agency, who witnessed the trouble her farmer friends and neighbors had making money in the state's highly agricultural Thumb region.

She points out that the wonders of nature, cold storage, and hydroponics make it possible for even mid-winter menus to feature fresh apples, squash, tomatoes, carrots, beans, herbs, onions, potatoes, eggs, milk, and honey from Michigan.

The key is building awareness and instilling desire, says Marla Moss of the Michigan Department of Education. "We need to generate enthusiasm among the people who will be serving the local asparagus, potatoes, and beans to the kids."

*Patty Cantrell, who launched Groundwork's highly regarded food and farm program in 2001, was a pioneering champion for the idea that farmers are vibrant entrepreneurs who are just as important to regional economies as shops located on main streets and manufacturers in business parks. A journalist and economist by background, she now lives in Missouri and writes nationally about the economic power of local food.*



Courtesy Renee  
D Photography

# CAFETERIA



Diane Conners remembers launching Groundwork's program with schools the same year that she also compiled its first Taste the Local Difference® guide to area farms: "My main role was to introduce the idea of farm to school in the Grand Traverse region, and get people excited about it," she said. "I also talked to every single farmer in the guide about whether they would like to sell to schools. Each was interested, but not everyone had the right capacity or the right crop. So my work in the beginning was largely matchmaking farmers to food service directors."

Groundwork held a series of farmer-buyer meet and greets over the next dozen years, trainings for farmers called *Get Farming! Keep Farming!* that gave farmers skills to meet local market needs (which were different from industrial-scale markets) and two farm to school conferences. Food service directors said they valued the time they were given at the conferences to talk with other food service directors interested in farm to school purchasing, so we created a Learning Circle of food service directors to continue sharing ideas, which now lives on in a different form through our local MSU Extension.

Infrastructure also grew. In 2008, the new regional interest in buying local food sparked the launch of a local foods distribution company, Cherry Capital Foods, filling a major gap for food service directors and farmers too busy to arrange multiple orders. Groundwork also won one of the first National Farm to School Grants in the country, which included funding for what is now the MI Farm Cooperative, a cooperative of small and mid-scale farms in the region, to help buy equipment to wash, dry, chop and bag produce for the school market.

Still, food service directors faced an issue of tight school budgets. As directors told us, their budget issues aren't always about the cost of food. They might have to make cuts because a record-number of snow days means they have less revenue coming in the door to pay for food, labor, and overhead for which they already have costs to pay. We looked to the *Michigan Good Food Charter*, a set of 25 recommendations from statewide groups and individuals to grow Michigan's local food economy, for a solution that has now reverberated throughout the state.

But first, the beginning.



## SURVEY: SCHOOLS WANT MORE FRESH FOOD

NOVEMBER 2004 BY DIANE CONNERS

When potato farmer Jim Bardenhagen bit into a raw spud in front of a group of grade-schoolers last month, chewed it deliberately, and then swallowed it, he drew loud groans of “EEEwww!” from the shocked youngsters.

“It’s good,” Mr. Bardenhagen insisted as he handed each student a free, uncooked, take-home sample from his farm in nearby Leelanau County.

Mr. Bardenhagen was a big hit during his visit to Traverse City’s Central Grade School, where he talked to students during recess after lunch — when they’d eaten his potatoes baked. Twice as many kids as usual skipped the pizza that rules the hot lunch table in favor of trying his freshly harvested potato. They did it because they were intrigued when school officials told them a local farmer grew the potatoes.

It was also a success for the Traverse City Area Public Schools’ new farm to school pilot program, an effort to bring fresher, better tasting, more nutritious, locally grown food to students. The program, which is breaking new ground in this part of the state, is part of a movement that’s changing how students eat and how small- and medium-sized farmers do business.

According to a just-released survey, there is now so much interest in such programs that they could soon spread from adventurous school systems to many others across Michigan. The survey by the Michigan Department of Education and the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University (now the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems) shows 73 percent of school food service directors responding are interested in buying local foods and 10 percent of those surveyed said they already are doing so.

### FRESH FOOD GAINS

Central Grade School joined that 10% earlier this fall when it began participating in a program designed by the Groundwork Center to connect local farmers with northern Michigan’s largest public school system.

“What I would hope is that we will be able to utilize local produce district-wide to guarantee a fresher product for our students,” said Kristen Misiak, the Traverse City district food service director. Ms. Misiak said students are enthusiastic about eating the fresh produce because of the connection to local farmers. “They met the person who brought it there, instead of thinking the food came from some far away place, or not even thinking about it at all.”

Meanwhile, interest in farm to school programs continues to rise nationally, particularly with statistics indicating that childhood obesity is soaring. Food service



directors at a recent Community Food Security Conference in Milwaukee spoke passionately about their responsibility to provide students healthy, fresh food as a way to promote better learning. One director, when asked why she was paying more for fresh local cucumbers instead of buying cheaper ones off a mass distribution truck, said: “Because the kids eat it.”

### HELPING FARMS HELPS CHILDREN

Observers say that the potential for farm to school food programs is huge for both farmers and kids because both are facing a crisis.

Michigan’s small- and medium-sized family farmers are failing at an alarming rate in today’s global bulk commodity marketplace. The state lost 17 percent of its farms with sales of \$25,000 to \$100,000 from 1997-2002, and eight acres of farmland every hour, or nearly 361,000 acres.

For children, the statistics are equally alarming. Depending on their age, the percentage of children who are obese has doubled or tripled over the last 30 years. Michigan schools, meanwhile, spend more than \$200 million a year on food — a huge potential market for farmers that offers them a way to diversify.

And the students taste the difference. After eating one of his hot baked potatoes, one child told the farmer that it tasted “sweeter” than ones they’d eaten in school before. Mr. Bardenhagen responded by explaining that different varieties of potatoes have different flavors. Then another child told him: “You make good potatoes.”

## FARMERS FIND NEW MARKETS IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

FEBRUARY 2012 BY DIANE CONNERS

Farmer Jim Schwantes almost didn’t come.

But Schwantes, who grows vegetables north of Cedar, set aside his skepticism and ventured out on a snowy day last week to join nearly 30 other growers at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center, in Leelanau County. They were there to talk with the food service directors of five area public and one private school. The topic: Creating more business opportunities for farmers interested in selling to schools.

Schwantes wasn't expecting much. In the past, he's found that schools weren't that interested or willing to work with local farmers.

It's much easier, after all, for schools to order products from a large distributor and just heat pre-processed foods rather than actually prepare meals from scratch. That means it's easier for big farms in California, Washington or even Peru, who use those large distributors, to get their produce onto schoolchildren's lunch plates.

But Schwantes was pleasantly surprised. The food service directors of Traverse City Area Public Schools and the four public schools in Leelanau County have been meeting monthly all year, brainstorming ways to expand their farm to school purchasing and fresh food preparation.

"We provide a consistent number of meals on a weekly basis," said Sam Hybels, the former restaurant chef who now heads up Glen Lake Community Schools' food service. "If you have something you can get to me at a decent price, I'll buy it."

"We are having a hard time finding eggs," said Dave Ruszel, food service director in Leland.

"I can take greens and wash them," said Janis Groomes, food service director in Northport. "I'm willing to come in June and process things and put them into my freezer."

"If there was a washing facility, I'd be very interested in micro-greens," said Gary Derrigan, food service director for Traverse City and Suttons Bay schools. "I'm very interested in table grapes."

Schools still must deal with regulations, differing labor capacities, and a budget of about \$1 to \$1.30 a meal for food. But Schwantes and other farmers saw true interest from schools to work through obstacles. "There's really been a big shift in attitude," Schwantes said after the meeting. "They were really interested in figuring out how to buy things."

## SNYDER SAMPLES TRAVERSE LOCAL FOOD EFFORTS

MARCH 2012 BY DIANE CONNERS

When Governor Rick Snyder visited Traverse Heights Elementary School earlier this month, he read a children's book, *Discover the Magic of Rainbows*, to a group of kids.

The governor's hosts wanted the book's message—Eat lots of different fruits and vegetables!—to get through to the children. But they also wanted to get a message to the governor about their new project, called "*10 Cents a Meal for School Kids and Farms*."

The educators, farmers, and advocates will soon be raising money to pay for the pilot, which will spend an additional dime on each student's meal in several local school districts in order to purchase fresh, locally-grown produce.

Schools typically have only 20-30 cents a meal for fruit and vegetable purchases. The boost is meant to benefit not only children's health, but also the economy: In 2011, Michigan schools served 141.4 million lunches, so *10 Cents a Meal* would send \$14 million to state farms and food businesses, and \$28 million if schools match the 10 cents from their existing school lunch funds.

The *10 Cents* idea is one of 25 listed in the *Michigan Good Food Policy Charter*, assembled by a statewide network of schools, organizations, and individuals looking for ways to improve health, grow jobs, and boost the state's economy.

"We are asking the governor, legislators, and state agencies to watch this project closely, help where they can, and monitor its results," said Hans Voss, executive director of the Groundwork Center.

## FUNDRAISING FOR GOOD HEALTH, ECONOMICS

Gary Derrigan, TCAPS food service director, told the governor that schools would be a reliable market for local agriculture if issues such as tight budgets can be addressed. He also pointed out that

*the district is effectively "the largest restaurant in the region," serving 7,000 meals a day.*

Farmers also were among those who showed up to meet the governor and express their interest in the project. They included Steve Robinson of Silver Lake Farms, in Antrim County and Harry Norconk of Norconk Farms in Benzie County, which sell to Traverse City Area Public Schools; and Mark Coe of Calvin Lutz Farm in Manistee County, which sells to Benzie and Manistee schools. Triston Cole, who farms in Antrim County, also attended as president of the Antrim County Farm Bureau.

Some of the extra 10 cents a meal, advocates point out, could go beyond helping local growers. The extra spending power, for example, could spur new jobs in food businesses to wash, dry, and bag local produce for the schools.

"School, farm, business, and nonprofit stakeholders in northwest Michigan have identified building farm to school markets as one of our region's key opportunities for economic development, while also providing a positive way to invest in the health of school children," said Don Coe, a member of the Michigan Commission on Agriculture and Rural Development, and an active representative of Traverse Bay Area Economic Development Corporation and the Northwest Michigan Food & Farming Network.





**EVENTS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER:** Cherry Capital Foods, the local foods distributor that started in Traverse City, developed the Michigan Apple Crunch day during National Farm to School Month in October. Everyone in school crunches an apple at the same time. The photos are priceless. And the event has now spread to four other states

## LOCAL FARM TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CREATES STATEWIDE OPPORTUNITY

JULY 26, 2016 BY HANS VOSS

The state legislature has put Michigan on the map as a leader in the national farm to school movement with an innovative state pilot program called *10 Cents a Meal* that was started here in Traverse City.

The measure, which provides funds for competitive grants, will dramatically increase locally grown fruits and vegetables in school cafeterias in two regions—10 counties in northwest Lower Michigan and 13 counties in West Michigan, including the Grand Rapids and Muskegon areas. It provides a match incentive of nearly \$250,000 for schools to buy local food in the 2016-17 year, with hopes of taking it statewide in the future.

The funding shows that Michigan still has the wherewithal—even in a tough political climate in Lansing—to innovate a program that sets a new national model to benefit kids and farmers. Right now, only a few states in the country have or are contemplating similar programs.

It may seem like common sense today (who could argue with healthy local food for kids?) but make no mistake, it took more than a decade of persistent community collaboration from local school officials, farmers, parents, and local food advocates—as well as concerted leadership from our region's elected officials—to make it happen.

In 2013, Groundwork raised matching funds from foundations and local businesses and partnered with the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District to launch a local *10 Cents* pilot program. In the year prior, the three initial participating school districts spent \$30,000 on local food, but after two years of the matching funding, they spent nearly \$150,000 on local fruits and veggies, an average increase of 142% each year. Four other districts joined the program and the seven districts together purchased 25 different products grown by 36 area farms.

Those striking results, plus research that showed if the whole state adopted the *10 Cents* program it could generate \$28 million for Michigan farmers, attracted the attention of State Senator Darwin Booher (R-Evart) who introduced legislation to launch the state program.

It's an important moment for the local food movement here in northwest Michigan. After all the hard work by so many dedicated local leaders who created a strong track record to demonstrate the many benefits of farm to school programs, Michigan is now poised to leverage this region's success to benefit kids and farmers across the state. It's that spirit of commitment and collaboration that made this possible—and that makes this community so special.



# CLASSROOM

Meghan McDermott, now director of Groundwork’s Food & Farming Program, remembers heading into area classrooms when she joined our organization as a FoodCorps service member in 2013, two years after this pioneering national service program started.

Groundwork structured her service around research results that we’d long championed: when children are exposed to healthy food multiple times in different settings they are more likely to later select these foods in the cafeteria. We would send our FoodCorps service members into our participating schools to carry out activities like cooking, gardening, nutrition education, and cafeteria taste tests. Groundwork knew these activities could also meet teachers’ education goals.

“We would speak at school staff meetings to see which teachers might want to bring healthy food activities to their classrooms,” Meghan said. “Sometimes it started slow, often due to a lack of belief in the educational value of cooking and gardening activities in the midst of busy teacher schedules and curricular demands. But it quickly grew to the point where our program was so popular that we were often in 11 back-to-back classes every 30 minutes throughout the school day.”

That popularity felt like success. However, one of Groundwork’s goals was to integrate farm to school activities into school culture and regular school teaching so that it would be sustainable after we left.

As a result, we shifted course, and with a plan that Meghan created. We scaled back the number of teachers we were working with so our FoodCorps service members could have more time working with individual teachers to integrate lessons into their existing curriculum plans. Groundwork also engaged Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District in providing professional review of the lessons we developed to make sure they met curriculum requirements.

Today, the Traverse Bay ISD maintains a farm to school resource website so that principals and teachers from anywhere in the state can now have a school-based site to find these lessons. Other school systems have adopted the lessons based on the professional ISD review. And Munson Healthcare, our region’s major hospital system, sees this program as a valuable community health strategy and recently secured funding to extend these lessons to even more schools region-wide.

Following are our stories of classroom to cafeteria connections.



## PLANTING THE SEED WITH FARM TO SCHOOL

MAY 2013 BY JAMES RUSSELL

A plastic dishpan of potting soil, a cup of seeds and some small plastic baggies made their way around a conference room at the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District.

These simple materials evolved into tiny greenhouses and a mini-science lesson for teachers to engage their students on local food and agriculture.

The Groundwork Center, TBAISD, and FoodCorps teamed up to plant this seed—literally and figuratively—that local food and agriculture can be an integral part of the classroom.

“We know teachers are extraordinarily busy, working to meet state and national teaching standards, and that there are a lot of demands for your time. That’s why we’ve worked hard to integrate farm to school with those standards, so it supports your educational goals,” said Diane Conners, who directs Groundwork’s Farm to School program.

Some examples: Divide up apples for a tasty lesson in fractions for elementary students. Use corn to spur a discussion of Native American heritage. Create a taste test using different varieties of carrots, and tally the results in a graph for a quick math lesson. Present any new food to the students and ask them to write out their scientific observations on smell, taste, appearance and even sound using objective and subjective language.

*“You’ve never heard a class as silent as when they all take a bite of lettuce or kale and they all begin writing away their observations,”*

said Daniel Marbury, a FoodCorps service member with Groundwork.

Students’ exposure to new foods makes it easier for them to make better choices in the cafeteria, too. Janis Groomes, food service director at Northport Public School, described how their school garden changed things in the cafeteria.

“Last year we started our school gardens ... we had a few carrots and greens, and when we put them on the salad bar, the kids lit up: ‘I planted that.’ ‘We harvested that.’ ‘I tasted that.’ ‘I know what it tastes like,’” Groomes said. “Farm to school has been the saving grace in a changing food service program.”



## STUDENTS GIVE STRANGE- LOOKING VEGGIE A TRY

OCTOBER 2013 BY MEGHAN MCDERMOTT

“It looks like a baby alien!” “A space ship!” “A forest of mini Christmas trees!”

Those were just a few of the remarks I heard when I arrived at Traverse Heights Elementary School in Traverse City to promote the locally grown produce being served in the cafeteria.

What vegetable could provoke such an engaged and dramatic response from hungry students? On Sept. 17, the “baby alien” in question was a head of Romanesco cauliflower, grown by Lutz Farms in Kaleva and served up for lunch.

Romanesco cauliflower, for those unfamiliar with this broccoli cousin, does look a bit extraterrestrial at first glance. It’s easy to see how curious kids might come up with more than a few imaginative identities for this brilliant brassica, with its lime-green hue and a spiky surface. But there’s much more to this funky vegetable than its appearance; Romanesco is rich in vitamin C and contains more beta-carotene than standard white cauliflower.

Roasted romanesco florets were served on the salad bar, and while the cooked version was considerably less alien in appearance, many children seemed wary of adding it to their tray. But with a little encouragement and an interactive display of the variety of cauliflower colors, shapes and sizes, many were persuaded to give this veggie a shot.

I was visiting Traverse Heights' cafeteria as a service member with FoodCorps. The following week I would head to Interlochen Elementary, where I would introduce students to the Fibonacci sequence by showcasing natural spiraled beauties like Romanesco in the company of sunflowers, pinecones, seashells, and succulents in their classrooms. By taking a multidisciplinary approach and encouraging children to try new things, we end up with kids learning and discovering something they enjoy—a win for all sides. It's all about cafeteria to classroom connections.

## SHARING ACROSS THE STATE: UN-BEET-ABLE LESSONS

MARCH 2017 BY DIANE CONNERS

If a food service director serves beets, how might classroom teachers get students excited about eating them while also meeting their own teaching schedules and educational objectives?

In the Traverse City and Boyne Falls *10 Cents* schools this year, they do so by tapping into a collection of lessons vetted by curriculum specialists at Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD).

The lessons were developed with the assistance of FoodCorps service members. They have worked in the classroom with teachers to test the lessons for ease of use.

In one class, FoodCorps service member Lindsay Hall worked with children to create Valentine's Day cards using beet juice as the ink.

"To connect to curriculum, we talked about how beets grow, how beets were used throughout history as fabric dye, and how the words 'beet' and 'beat' are homophones — giving us plenty of un-BEET-able puns for our cards," she said.

### COLLABORATION ACROSS THE STATE

Food service staff, educators, and others from Muskegon County made a "learning journey" to Traverse City in the fall to explore farm to school ideas. They discovered the professionally vetted lessons at TBAISD, and it was a highlight, said Deb Warren, who is coordinating farm to school program development in the Muskegon *10 Cents* schools.

"We are trying to figure out a way to utilize it in our districts and, really, countywide," she said. "A lot of times when you see



curriculum, it is always in other states. The Traverse City one is very helpful."

Mike Hill, superintendent at the ISD, is glad to hear it. He became committed to farm to school after seeing the difference it made for his son when Glen Lake changed its food a few years ago.

"Imagine being in middle school, as an overweight boy," he said. "You go to your school each day, eating pizza and hot dogs. Amazingly, the school adopts a farm to school and fresh food concept. The young man starts a mission to eat healthy. Four years later you have a valedictorian of his class, all-state athlete and ambassador for fresh, locally grown food. The school made the difference. We cannot underestimate the impact this has for our priority, children."

**SUPPORTING FARMERS:** Farmers are much more prepared to sell into local markets, thanks to Groundwork's local food marketing business Taste the Local Difference®, and early training programs called *Get Farming! Keep Farming!* that Groundwork launched when few existed here. But others soon followed or collaborated, such as the Small Business Development and Technology Center at Michigan Works!, Networks Northwest, and MSU Extension. Crosshatch Center for Art & Ecology, another nonprofit in our region, has become a major leader in small farm trainings. And the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce created a bridge loan fund that small farms have tapped into for short-term loans that have helped them do things like purchase equipment for better serving schools.





Courtesy Christina Marbury

# COMMUNITY

Jen Schaap joined the Groundwork staff this year thanks to a prime example of a community coming together with the resolve to build its local food economy. The Local Food Alliance of Northern Michigan, a volunteer-led group working to enhance the culture of local food and farming in the Northern Farms Foodshed, recruited Groundwork to open an office in Petoskey, and bring our work in farm to school, food access, and farmer business support to their community.

We've learned that farm to school can go much further when people throughout the community get excited and involved. Jen has seen that first hand already through her work assisting the Public Schools of Petoskey with a fun activity called "Try-It Tuesdays". The Health Department of Northwest Michigan developed the program, using Groundwork's Harvest of the Month materials. Parents and other volunteers conduct taste tests in the classroom, using local foods that will also be featured in the cafeteria.

"I heard a great story where one of the grandmas of one of these students said that her fourth-grade granddaughter brought Try-It Tuesdays home and she began her own family version, which is called Try-It Fridays," Jen said. "She makes the recipe at home on Fridays so that her whole family can enjoy it. Those are the ripple effects we like to see with what we're doing."

We've found conferences and events to be another way to bring people together, whether that means attending professional development opportunities around the country or hosting conferences of our own. In 2008, we attracted 330 food service directors, teachers, farmers, students, school nurses, and others to our first regional farm to school conference—the first farm to school conference ever held in Michigan. Another 400 attended in 2010.

Networking with other advocates for farm to school has always been key to the success of Groundwork's farm to school program. From the 10-county Food and Farming Network of Northwest Michigan to the National Farm to School Network and the Edible Schoolyard Academy, sharing and learning from peers has served as a critical point for inspiration and program development.

And allies statewide, like the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems and Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan have helped us take the local policy initiative *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms* to the state Legislature, with the potential for it to go state-wide. So, too, have numerous everyday citizens who answered the call to contact their legislators to support *10 Cents* funding.

You can find those partners, too. Here are some of our community stories.





Courtesy Oryana Community Co-op

## **‘FARM RAISERS’ MAKE CENTS**

AUGUST 2006 BY DIANE CONNERS

Sporting a cap that said “Born to Farm,” Tom Cooper nursed a cup of coffee as 26 fourth graders from nearby Central Lake Elementary School hopped off their buses and scrambled into the pole building where his family turns cherries into specialty jams, salsas, and fruit butters.

They were on a mission to see Mr. Cooper’s cherry orchards and get the inside scoop on his Rocky Top Farms delicacies. Instead of selling candy or magazine subscriptions to raise dollars to fund a history field trip, these kids sell local farm products—jams, maple syrup, fresh apples, bottled milk, even frozen chickens.

### **BETTER THAN CANDY**

The farm fund-raising idea is the brainchild of Pepper Bromelmeier, a parent who works for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a federal agency that provides services to farmers. One day, she received a survey from the school that asked her what she thought of the kids’ traditional candy sale.

“I hated the candy sale,” she said. “It’s encouraging them to eat candy. It’s not local. And the profits go out of the area.”

But Ms. Bromelmeier also hates complaining without offering a solution. So she called farmers she knows from her work to float the idea of what she calls farm-to-community fundraisers, and they loved the idea.

Now, Central Lake’s fourth grade kids visit three or four of the dozen or so farms whose products they sell; learn math and business skills by figuring a mark-up for their profit over the farmers’ wholesale price; and practice English skills by writing thank you letters to the farmers and sending sales pitch letters to moms, dads, aunts, uncles, and neighbors.

### **RAISE FARMS AND FUNDS, NOT FAT**

Nationwide, schools, churches, and other nonprofit groups earn about \$1.7 billion a year selling products ranging from candy, cookie dough, and submarine sandwiches to wrapping paper and magazine subscriptions, according to the industry trade group Association of Fund-Raising Distributors and Suppliers. Schools represent about 83 percent of that total.

And according to research in 2000 by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 82.4% of schools nationwide, organizations such as student clubs, sports teams, or PTOs sold food to raise money— and 76.4% of them sold chocolate candy, followed close behind by high-fat baked goods and other types of candy.

On average, schools keep 45% of the proceeds and the companies, which provide promotional materials and record-keeping, get the other 55%. There’s the profit to the suppliers of the products themselves, such as candy companies or national magazines. The fundraising trade group is barred by confidentiality agreements from releasing those figures.

Central Lake’s fourth graders sell about \$4,000 worth of products each year in a two-week period and net about \$1,400 in profit. The \$3,600 in gross revenue that goes to the farms (before farm expenses are taken out) isn’t enough to preserve the local farm economy by itself, Ms. Bromelmeier said.

But Mr. Cooper, at Rocky Top, believes it could help if every school in the region took up the idea. And he views it as good advertising, because it introduces families to his farm who otherwise might not have known it existed.





## CONFERENCE TO SHARE SCHOOLS' LOCAL-FOOD SUCCESS SECRETS

FEBRUARY 2008 BY DIANE CONNERS

Sometimes timing is everything. Nearly two years ago 100 high school students at Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools staged a strike to protest the quality of their cafeteria's lunches.

The kids, tired of what Superintendent Tom Stobie has acknowledged was food "basically warmed up from a can," ordered pizza, had it delivered to the school, and pointedly opened the boxes in the cafeteria.

"It sent a strong message to us that they were not happy with what was being served," Mr. Stobie recalled recently. "I said, 'We need to listen to what the kids are saying and try to make some changes.'"

And that is where good timing helped out: Around that same time, the Groundwork Center was urging the Frankfort-Elberta system to join its Farm to School

program and, like a growing list of schools in northwest Lower Michigan, change its cafeteria menus to include food grown on local farms.

Frankfort-Elberta accepted the invitation.

Now, three years after Groundwork first piloted the farm to school concept in partnership with nearby Traverse City schools, it's clear that a number of schools in northwest Michigan are well past the tryout stage and are making farm to school an everyday fact of local school life.

"It has become a normal part of the ordering," said Jodi Jocks, dietician for Traverse City Area Public Schools. "We have relationships with the farmers now."

In fact, more than 30 schools in the region are now serving about a dozen local farm products, from apples to winter squash. Now Groundwork and these pioneering schools will share what they have learned about using the power of local food to improve children's dietary health and build new markets for area farms. On March 12, they will host a regional farm-to-school conference in Traverse City.

Four public school districts and three private schools are among 17 organizations producing the conference, which will be at The Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Called *Farm to School: Healthy Kids, Thriving Farms*, it will provide expertise about bringing fresh, local food to cafeterias; help schools, camps, and farms learn from each other; and provide practical tools to start or expand farm-to-school programs—from cafeteria food to classroom curriculum to homegrown products for school fundraisers.

The Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools this year made dramatic changes. The schools began buying local and organic food when possible, and also antibiotic-free beef. The schools invested a \$225,000 grant in kitchen renovations so cooks can make everything from scratch. Another big step was to hire Beth Collins, a nationally known veteran of innovative school food service programs. Ms. Collins will give the keynote presentation at the March 12 conference.

Superintendent Michael Buell is horrified at reports that the current generation of children may be the first to die younger than their parents because of soaring childhood obesity and diabetes rates. "The thought of schools feeding kids 180 days a year and playing a role in that is mortifying," he said. "We have to be a part of the solution."

## FARMS, FOOD AND HEALTH

Health departments, hospitals and dietitians have become some of our greatest farm to school champions. Traverse City hospital Munson Medical Center has provided the time of a dietitian and trained chef to cook with kids in the classroom. A community wellness coalition recruited Groundwork to launch farm to school programming in Benzie County. And the Northern Michigan Diabetes Initiative, Munson Healthcare Regional Foundation, and health insurance companies variously sponsored our farm to school conferences and our 2014 and 2016 Farms, Food and Health conferences, which included farm to school breakout sessions.

[continued from page 15]

Jenifer Murray, personal health administrator for the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, another conference planning partner, is excited by the regional changes. “Nutrition is key to chronic disease prevention,” she said. “And we know that good nutrition is related to good learning. To make changes in a school system that affects so many kids—this is big.”

The idea seems to be working. Mr. Stobie’s school has seen an 85 percent increase in the number of students showing up for lunch who pay full price. That’s a vote of confidence unheard of during the days of the Frankfort-Elberta student strike.

## KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES, TASTEFULLY

JUNE 2008 BY DIANE CONNERS

Sometimes keepin’ up with the Joneses is a good thing. That’s when it’s called inspiration. Consider these vastly different lunch menus at schools just over 20 miles apart, in northwest Michigan’s rural, farm-rich Leelanau County.

Suttons Bay Area Public Schools: Chicken nuggets. Hot dogs. Domino’s pizza.

Glen Lake Community Schools: Chicken pasta primavera. Apple cider pork loin. Macaroni and cheese—with squash puree.

What makes the difference? A conviction that kids need good food for health and learning. An appreciation for food grown with care by local farmers. And the value of having the right person at the right time.

At Glen Lake, that right person is a trained chef whose superintendent and school board told him when they hired him last fall: Create healthy, flavorful meals for students and include as many locally grown products as possible.

In Suttons Bay, meanwhile, school cooks work in a tiny kitchen built in the mid-1990s, when, Superintendent Mike Murray said, most schools weren’t really cooking, they were heating up pre-packaged, often highly processed foods. It made no sense to build a well-equipped kitchen with counter space for chopping.

Now, though, inspired by Glen Lake, Mr. Murray is hoping to eventually emulate what that school’s chef, Gene Peyer, and his staff do: Chop, saute, and simmer approximately 90 percent of their lunches from scratch and turn kids on to the fresh flavors of just-picked fruits and vegetables grown by nearby farmers. Potatoes from Jim Bardenhagen. Apples from Sarah Korson. Asparagus from Harry Norconk.



## SOARING INTEREST

Interest in farm to school programs soared in the Grand Traverse region this spring, when 330 school and camp food service staff, teachers, parents, students, and farmers from Manistee to Petoskey packed a farm to school conference in Traverse City. They heard first-hand how Glen Lake and about 30 other area schools added farm experiences to their classrooms and local farm products to their menus.

Mr. Murray said that parents, teachers, and other school staff returned from the conference bubbling with excitement. “It generated a lot of enthusiasm to shift from what we have now.”

## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Glen Lake moved to all-scratch cooking after the district partnered with Groundwork Center to develop a farm to school program. But Superintendent Joan Groening quickly saw that her staff didn’t have the cooking skills to use fresh produce in a big way. She feared that the only local, fresh produce that would make it onto the menu regularly would be apples. But the staff was interested and wanted help, so Ms. Groening hired Mr. Peyer. It made all the difference.

“I am convinced that the way to do this is by hiring somebody who loves to cook,” Ms. Groening said.

The change has upped the food service budget, but just a little. Because the food is so good, the number of kids eating lunch daily has increased from about 250 to 425, which brings more federal lunch dollars into the school. Because he’s doing scratch cooking, Mr. Peyer saves money by transforming leftovers into new dishes. And now that the staff is trained, labor costs should decline.

The district considered raising lunch prices to cover half the



Courtesy Michael  
Poehlman Photography



extra costs. But with so many area families struggling economically, the district chipped in from the general fund instead. Ms. Groening and her board expect fiscal responsibility, but they don't think school lunch should have to pay its own way. "You don't charge students to learn math," she said.

## IT TAKES PASSION

Mr. Murray now will shop restaurant auctions for good deals on kitchen equipment. He even took his food service staff over to Glen Lake one day in April to see what's possible.

But that's not all. Mr. Murray saw something in Gene Peyerk that is the hallmark of the best teachers, and the best farmers, too—those who rise early to harvest their crop when it's freshest and best for the market, or get up in the black of night to protect tender plants from a freeze.

"What inspired me most was the passion that one person with a vision can bring to a whole operation," Mr. Murray said. "You have to have people with passion."

## 10 CENTS A MEAL KICKS OFF AT THREE LOCAL DISTRICTS OCTOBER 2013 BY DIANE CONNERS

A regional initiative to provide schools with extra funding to buy more locally grown fruits and vegetables for students has become a reality thanks to strong support from local businesses.

The program, *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms*, is starting this fall at Glen Lake Community Schools and the elementary schools of Traverse City Area Public Schools and Suttons Bay Public Schools.

Cherry Republic, of Glen Arbor and Traverse City, made the fall launch possible with a grant of nearly \$28,000.

"It's the biggest donation Cherry Republic has ever made to support local agriculture, and we did it because of the added bonus of getting healthy food in front of our region's children," said owner Bob Sutherland. "This is exactly the type of project that I know my customers would be thrilled to support."

In addition to Cherry Republic's donation, nearly \$10,000 has been raised so far through Cherry Capital Foods, Oryana Natural Foods Market, Firefly Restaurant, Epicure Catering, individuals, and the Traverse City-based Utopia Foundation.

A 10-cent program is one of 25 recommendations of the *Michigan Good Food Charter*, a vision developed by stakeholders across the state to build Michigan's food and farm economy.

"We're thrilled to see this program take off," said Kathryn Colasanti, coordinator for the Michigan Good Food initiative and a staff member at the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems. "We hope this pilot documents the positive impact on kids' eating habits—and farmers' finances—to show the value of implementing something like this statewide."

The extra funding support for schools also comes at a time when Traverse City Area Public Schools has included farm to school purchasing as a key component of its new district wellness policy.

"There's a big difference in taste," said Tom Freitas, the district's new food service director. "Students can tell the difference. I can tell the difference."



# WHAT COMES NEXT?



Courtesy Renee D Photography

We began this report at Boyne Falls Public Schools, where, we noted, 20 percent of area families are food-insecure and six out of 10 children qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

Meghan McDermott, Groundwork's Food & Farming Program Director, saw the impact of food insecurity firsthand while working with another northwest Michigan school. She was a FoodCorps service member with Groundwork then, teaching young children at a local elementary school an introductory lesson on food systems, discussing the steps from "seed to cafeteria tray". She used visuals with the lesson. The image at the center of the food system showed a consumer across from a farmer with vegetables laid out in front of her. A small sign in the corner read "farmers' market."

She described it as "the place where you go to get your food." When prompted to identify this piece of the chain, a kindergartner piped up: "the food pantry."

Not the farmers market. Not the grocery store. The food pantry.

As soon as she joined Groundwork's staff, Meghan worked with food pantry administrators and the Northwest Food Coalition to start a program where the same Harvest of the Month products that she developed to feature in school cafeterias could be featured in local food pantries, often located just a few blocks from the schools she served. With accompanying recipe and activity sheets that she created for food service directors and teachers in schools, the Harvest of the Month guides were now available for families to take home from the pantry too—creating a strong link for kids between community and school, and an affirmation for children.

At Groundwork, we are committed to making sure the work we promote in and for schools is connected to our communities' broader health and well-being.

## 10 CENTS A MEAL

As we go to press, schools in three regions of the state comprising a total of 29 counties are applying for Michigan *10 Cents a Meal* grants, which the Legislature expanded from two regions last year when it first adopted our local pilot as a state program.

As Tom Freitas, food service director for the Traverse City schools says:

*"It could really take farm to school to huge levels if every school was getting reimbursed for spending dollars on local farmers."*

And, he notes, the program requires schools to match the state *10 Cents* funds out of existing dollars that schools currently spend on food, so it doubles the state investment. "Not many grants pay back the state like that," he said.

The impact went beyond our home region in northwest Michigan.

"The state believes in farmers, and the state believes in kids," said Marty Gerencer, project manager of the Muskegon Food Hub, which credits *10 Cents* with helping to catalyze the hub's launch last spring as a needed place for farmers to combine their products for wholesale customers like schools.



Matt McCauley, chief operating officer at Networks Northwest, a workforce, community, and economic development agency covering a 10-country region in northwest Michigan, also thinks *10 Cents* is primed for Michigan's future. Networks Northwest is one of the agencies assisting in the state project.

"This program has the potential to touch a lot of people's lives in many ways," he said. "It addresses a variety of different issues, including education, agriculture, nutrition, and logistics—pieces that are important to every community, urban and rural, in Michigan. There aren't many policy areas out there with that kind of potential."

Groundwork is committed to continuing the conversation about *10 Cents* and its potential for being expanded statewide. You can help spread the word in your community, and we are available to help. More information is available at [TenCentsMichigan.org](http://TenCentsMichigan.org).

## WORKING WITH DEDICATED CHANGEMAKERS

A *10 Cents* expansion statewide also would give Michigan major bragging rights with respect to other states. According to Diane Golzynski, interim state nutrition director at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), State Superintendent Brian Whiston wants Michigan to rank among the top 10 states in the nation within the next 10 years in terms of educational achievement.

"In order to do that we have to end food insecurity, so some students don't have to think about where their next meal will come from and can focus on being good students," she said. "When we end food insecurity, we'll see economic, health, and education gains."

MDE is working to make local food a regular, commonplace part of its work for school food service. We have similar partners at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

"We're trying to embed this in our culture," Golzynski said of MDE. "It should be what we do, not just something extra. There should be an expectation that schools source produce from local farms. That should be an automatic conversation that's so embedded that we don't even need to talk about it."

## SUPPORTING FARMERS AND FOOD SERVICE

Our colleague Colleen Matts at the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems notes there is still more to be done to support farmers and school food service for cafeteria connections.

Universities, nonprofits, and economic leaders can put resources toward developing and supporting more local food economy infrastructure such as local-food distributors like Cherry Capital Foods, aggregation centers like the Muskegon Food Hub, and processors like Michigan Farm to Freezer, another northwest Michigan start-up that has now gone statewide.

And the Center for Regional Food Systems has teamed up with MDE to establish a Farm to School Leadership Institute. One of its objectives is to cultivate food service directors as even better positioned leaders in community food systems, said Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist.

## CLASSROOM & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

As we pored through old articles that we've written about farm to school over these last 15 years, we also came upon a statement from Mitch Irwin, a former head of the Michigan Department of Agriculture. He told us he was impressed with the farm to community fundraisers at Central Lake Elementary in Antrim County, which had students learning math, writing and local economics while selling local farm products to family and friends for a history field trip.

A partnership between the state's agriculture and education departments could produce clear, effective models for weaving agricultural knowledge into traditional academic subjects, he said. It didn't get off the ground, but, as we've learned in farm to school in our region and across the country, every idea has its time.

And it takes all of us. We should encourage our state to lead on these models. But let's work in our own communities and across our communities, too. We'll see you at the table.

**HOW IS THIS WORK FUNDED?** Our funding has ranged from the Michigan-based, national foundation that has spurred much of the local food work across the country, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to numerous family and community foundations connected to our region. Governmental grants, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, have supported our work. Business donations were key to helping us launch *10 Cents a Meal*. Our work has been their work. We have been grateful to find funders, as well as all of the other community partners we've listed and more, who truly care about kids, health, farms, and economy.

*"It's helping our kids. One of our kitchen leaders told me that some kids saw the fresh peaches she was serving and asked, 'what is that?' They'd only eaten canned cling peaches before."* — Tom Freitas, Food & Nutrition Services Director, Traverse City Area Public Schools



**groundwork**  
CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

*"Farm to school sales are going insane. So far we're just touching the tip of the iceberg."* — Mark Coe, former farmer, now with Farm to Freezer

*"It was so good my taste buds went to taste town!"* — TCAPS elementary student

*"There's no one-size-fits-all approach. There are great resources and models that everyone can use, and that we highly recommend. But, you also have to take a look at your own community, see what is available there and who might be energetic or important champions. The situations and the people may change over time. Don't worry about setbacks. Seize and build on opportunities."*

— Diane Conners, Groundwork Senior Policy Specialist

*"I look forward to seeing this as a big part of our future in our state and in our schools. I'd like to feed 1.4 million kids fresh fruits and vegetables grown in the great state of Michigan. We want this to go statewide."*

— Darwin Booher, State Senator, Michigan's 35th District, speaking about 10 Cents a Meal

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Thanks also to our grant funders who made this report possible: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Esperance Family Foundation