

Buffalo Grown

...an initiative of the
Massachusetts Avenue
Project

March 2010



Healthy Eating by Design: A Recap

In 2005, Michelle Stieglitz, the Project Coordinator for Healthy Eating by Design (HEbD) developed a salad bar program at Bennett Park Montessori with Zoe Hollomon and Erin Sharkey from MAP. Samina Raja from the University at Buffalo's department of Urban and Regional Planning, evaluated whether students were actually eating healthier at lunch as a result of the salad bar program.

HEbD was able to implement a number of projects at Bennett Park Montessori in addition to the salad bar. Erin Sharkey, also from MAP, led the after school program focusing on healthy cooking and snacking. A mural was painted at the school depicting the food system process and accenting the farm to table concept. To incorporate physical health into the program, Justin Booth from Blue Bicycle worked with BPS students to create a bike path.

The program ran for 1 year under the guidance of Healthy Eating by Design staff and Bennett Park was able to keep the program running for six or seven months following the conclusion of HEbD. Zoe stated that for the program to have run longer more funds would have been needed. The 90,000 grant from Robert Wood Johnson was used to pay for staff, the food and equipment for the salad bar, and materials for the mural and after school program.

Most importantly was the reaction of the student body to the new salad bar. When asked about the student reaction Zoe said "It was super popular" of the salad bar. She was responsible for tracking each student's food choices including what foods they discarded. She ran taste testing challenges. After a taste testing challenge involving a variety of apples, students could

eventually differentiate between the different varieties and knew where they were from. Local farmers made guest appearances to talk with students about the growing process and where their food came from.



In order to obtain the fresh produce for the salad bar staff met with local farmers in face to face meetings, explained the plan and what would be needed to make it work. Porter Farms, Native Offerings and Lexington Coop donated produce and the remainder was purchased from the Coop. Zoe added that roughly 2/3 of the produce was organic.

After learning the background of the project I asked Zoe to share her thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The salad bar received a lot of attention from students and staff and they were really disappointed when it was no longer an option. Having youth, who are often stereotyped as loathing vegetables, really get into the salad bar and get excited about its existence made the salad bar quite successful. Staff from HEbD were able to build connections with existing cafeteria staff who were unsure of the project and whether or not it would be successful. Staff were extremely creative and interactive with students and parents were very involved, many of them wanting to increase healthy food options.

As for weaknesses, money kept coming up, particularly the lack thereof. Zoe also mentioned that there wasn't enough cooperation from the school district to keep the program running and that there was a lack of equipment.

Recipe of the month

French Onion Soup

Ingredients

- * 6 large red or yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced.
- * Olive oil
- * 1/4 teaspoon of sugar
- * 2 cloves garlic, minced
- * 8 cups of beef stock, chicken stock, or vegetable stock (traditionally the soup is made with beef stock)
- * 1/2 cup of dry vermouth or dry white wine (optional)
- * 1 bay leaf
- * 1/4 teaspoon of dry thyme
- * Salt and pepper
- * 8 slices of toasted French bread
- * 1 1/2 cups of grated Swiss Gruyere with a little grated Parmesan cheese

Method

1 In a large saucepan, sauté the onions in the olive oil on medium high heat until well browned, but not burned, about 30-40 minutes (or longer). Add the sugar about 10 minutes into the process to help with the caramelization.

2 Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the stock, vermouth or wine, bay leaf, and thyme. Cover partially and simmer until the flavors are well blended, about 30 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Discard the bay leaf.

3 To serve you can either use individual oven-proof soup bowls or one large casserole dish. Ladle the soup into the bowls or casserole dish. Cover with the toast and sprinkle with cheese. Put into the broiler for 10 minutes at 350 degrees F, or until the cheese bubbles and is slightly browned. Serve immediately.

Serves 4-6.

Curriculum Tools

Wondering how to incorporate concepts such as food systems, nutrition, and gardening into your classroom and curriculum? The following resources include themes and activities that fall into major educational disciplines, many of which can become interdisciplinary.



Food for Thought curriculum

<http://oregonprogress.oregonstate.edu/fall-2009/food-thought--curriculum>

This curriculum was designed by Oregon State specifically for high school aged students. It incorporates reading comprehension, hands-on activities for science, social studies, and language arts but the standards are specific to Oregon, so as a NY state teacher you may need to make adjustments.

Cost: Free

Project Food, Land & People curriculum

http://www.foodlandpeople.org/resources/second_ed.html

Brought to you by Project Food, Land & People, a non-profit dedicated to helping people of all ages understand the "interrelationships among agriculture, the environment, and people of the world." Their publication Resources for Learning is geared toward K-12 and includes 55 activities.

Cost: \$45

Math in the Garden curriculum

<http://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/education/eduMIG.shtml>

Math in the Garden uses the garden as a way to explore mathematical concepts.

Cost: \$29.95

Two free activities from Math in the Garden :

http://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/education/educlimages/MIGpdfs/MIG_DataSnacks.pdf

http://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/education/educlimages/MIGpdfs/MIG_HandSpans.pdf

Life Lab Science Program curricula

<http://www.lifelab.org/store-curricula.html>

Life Lab, a California non-profit, developed the first Life Lab school garden in Santa Cruz in 1978 and has developed a number of curricula to tie traditional disciplines to gardening and the environment.

The Growing Classroom
\$39.95

Kid's Garden Activity Cards
\$19.99

Sowing the Seeds of Wonder
\$16.95

Life Lab Science K-5 Garden Based Curriculum

Grade K \$75.95

Grade 1 \$79.95

Grade 2 \$79.95

Grade 3 \$79.95

Grade 4 \$189.00

Grade 5 \$189.00

Salad bars: getting started

Define your objectives

- 1) What are your goals for the salad bar?
- 2) What foods will you serve?
- 3) How often each week?
- 4) Where will they be purchased?

Sample: Serve 5 vegetables, 3 fruit, plus one type of lettuce/spinach, etc...

Serve only whole grains, focus the protein component on using legumes,

Use no products with trans fats and serve only fresh, unprocessed foods in a cost effective manner.

For more advice on getting started with a salad bar at your school, take a look at Salad Bars in Schools: a fresh approach to lunch by Lori Nikkel and Joanne Porter.

View chapter 2 for free with this link: http://www.foodshare.net/download/SaladBarManual_chpt2e.pdf

News

The Farm to School Advocacy Group is planning the next Farm to School meeting for April, having had very poor turnout in March. Stayed tuned for the invitation.

MAP will be attending the Enviro Fair at Buff State on April 20th. Come visit us and other environmentally supportive groups in the Buffalo area.

Now that it is spring and the beginning of the growing season, I'm encouraging teachers to take advantage of MAPs workshop offerings. Contact me at 716-882-5327 ext 6 or alyce@mass-ave.org

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to our project please let us know.



Questions? Comments? Ideas?
Please contact us at:
271 Grant Street Buffalo, NY 14213
716-882-5327
www.mass-ave.org