



REAP Reporter

Newsletter from REAP Food Group • SUMMER 2018

The Faces of Farm to School

They say it takes a village to raise a child. At REAP Food Group, we understand a crucial part of raising healthy, future generations is through access to nutritious, locally-grown food and sharing knowledge of how it gets from soil to plate. It's a belief we work tirelessly to champion in the schools and out in the community, 365 days a year.

During the school year, our little "village" at REAP includes our dedicated Farm to School staff - a director, education coordinator and four part-time AmeriCorps Nutrition Educators. You can find them in Madison classrooms from September through early June teaching kids about agriculture and nutrition, guiding hands-on cooking lessons with local chefs, and bringing local farmers into classrooms.

As soon as students start singing "School's out for the summer!" our Farm to School team quickly shifts gears from reaching kids in the classroom to reaching kids and their families out in the community. This summer marks our third year working with the Madison Metropolitan School District's Summer Food Program, providing free meals to children 18 and younger. REAP Food Group runs four sites for the Summer Food Program, where we feed, teach and engage with children and, thanks to generous support from the City of Madison, feed their parents and caregivers as well.

When the 2018 Summer Food Program launched June 18, our Farm to School team doubled. With support of the Wisconsin Partnership Program, we welcomed four summer interns - Breana Collins, Samuel Park, Gregorio Abrajan and Erika Swant - to help promote, facilitate and evaluate the program at our four Summer Food Program locations: Elver, Leopold and Southdale parks, and Centro Hispano.

This summer, REAP partnered with Centro Hispano to engage two



(Top, left to right) Ross Cohen, Farm to School Education Coordinator; Natasha Smith, Farm to School Program Director. (Middle, left to right) AmeriCorps Nutrition Educators Marissa Silverberg, Fabian Bogdan, Laura Aprill and Hayley Traun. (Bottom, left to right) Ambassadors Marisela Martinez and Rosalba Montoya; Interns Breana Collins, Samuel Park, Gregorio Abrajan and Erika Swant.

of their "promotoras" as REAP ambassadors in a community-led process around local food and nutrition. The ambassadors, Rosalba Montoya and Marisela Martinez, have led outreach efforts with families at Centro and Leopold Park daily to share REAP's work in their children's schools and to explore what resources would help families better access local, sustainable foods. This effort was made possible with funding from the Healthy Dane Collaborative.

As of the Summer Food Program's halfway point July 16, our dedicated Farm to School staff, AmeriCorps members, Ambassadors and interns served 1,600 meals to children and nearly 300 meals to adults at our four program sites.

As we prepare for another school year of educating and feeding the next generation, we bid farewell to our longtime Farm to School Program Director Natasha Smith. Natasha started at REAP in 2013 and became a steadfast leader in the local food movement who cultivated and nourished some of our most important community relationships - among them, with the Madison Metropolitan School District. We wish her all the best on her move to the East Coast!

FROM THE DIRECTOR: *Looking Forward with the REAP Team*



It's hard to believe it's late summer already. In our household, we've barely put away the school supplies that came home in early June!

Another successful Burgers & Brew is behind us and once again I am honored and humbled by the talented chefs, brewers and producers who give of their time and talent to make this event so special. Thanks, also,

to all of you who showed up to celebrate our amazing local food and support REAP's work to make it available to all.

The last seven months have seen transitions for REAP in initiatives, faces and efforts. I'd like to share with our supporters and partners some of the changes that have been happening or are coming up.

We welcome two new members to the Board of Directors: Kathy Trudell and Dr. Russ Lemmon. In addition to welcoming new board members, the REAP Board elected a new roster of board officers in July. Drew Howick is board chair, Jill Jacklitz is vice-chair, Craig Dreikosen is treasurer and Tracy Kuczenski is secretary.

New initiatives such as the UpRoot by REAP food truck and this summer's community-led engagement effort with Centro Hispano are not only transforming school food in Madison but also sowing the seeds to grow our impact beyond the school walls and into our community.

Leveraging the success of UW Health's efforts to implement a sustainable purchasing policy for their food purchases, we have increased our work with institutional partners and are identifying how to increase their purchase of local and sustainable produce.

This fall we will welcome new staff to the team and embark on our next strategic plan to build on the amazing progress we've made in strengthening the local food system here in Dane County and Southern Wisconsin. The process will bring opportunities for

listening sessions with our trusted partners in the nonprofit, retail and producer sectors.

Launching new efforts and directions also means we've had to make the tough decision to let go of other efforts, in order to ensure that what we do, we do well and effectively.

We will not produce a "Where the Locavores Go" coupon book.

While we continue to celebrate the impressive local bounty and talent in our annual Burgers & Brew event in June and Harvest Gala in November, we will not hold Pie Palooza in 2018.

We also decided to phase out Family Food Fest, focusing instead on participating in more extracurricular events in our partner schools. Last fall, our four AmeriCorps Nutrition Educators attended more than 25 back-to-school events to reach students, their parents and caregivers with Farm to School activities. These events are an opportunity for students to share what they are learning with their families and to bring that knowledge and enthusiasm home - an effective way to deepen the benefits of Farm to School education.

As we look to the future, we anticipate introducing new ways to celebrate good food (perhaps with our food truck) and continue to feed our souls and bellies with the incredible local and sustainable foods of Southern Wisconsin.

We are so excited for what the future holds at REAP.

Sincerely,

Helen Sarakinos, Executive Director

2017-18 FARM TO SCHOOL MILESTONES

Spring was a time of celebration for our Farm to School team. In April, REAP and MMSD unveiled Uproot by REAP, a food truck serving healthy, locally-sourced lunches to students at La Follette, East, West and Memorial high schools. Using their school lunch accounts, students can grab a fully reimbursable, locally sourced meal on their way to off-campus lunch.

Uproot by REAP was made possible by a generous truck donation from specialty cheese company Roth Cheese, who has been a strong corporate supporter of REAP's mission.

Once the final school bell of the 2017-18 school year rang, we rolled Uproot by REAP into the Summer Food Program. All summer long, our bright red truck could be found at Southdale and Elver parks delivering free, locally-sourced lunches to Madison children and their families.

In May, we installed a Garden Bar in Emerson Elementary School, realizing a dream we've worked to fulfill the past six years: a Garden Bar in all 42 MMSD elementary and middle schools. Garden Bars are placed in the lunch room and offer a daily selection of nutritious, local and sustainably grown fruits and vegetables. The seed for this dream was planted in 2012 when REAP received a Transform Wisconsin grant, which helped fund several of REAP's Farm to School programs, including piloting the first three Garden Bars in Madison elementary schools. The pilot was so popular with kids that MMSD and REAP obtained additional grants to expand it.

Because children choose what they eat, the Garden Bars have led to a notable increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables in schools, a decrease in food waste, and reduced food packaging.



Uproot by REAP serves fish tacos to East High School students. (Right) Emerson Elementary fourth graders sample veggies from their new Garden Bar.



NESSALLA KOMBUCHA DONATES

We are proud and grateful to be the recipients of NessAlla Kombucha's 2017 1% for the Planet allocation, honoring their commitment to a global movement that connects businesses with environmentally-minded nonprofits to create a healthy planet.

NessAlla Kombucha's founders and co-owners Vanessa Tortolano and Alla Tsylin were inspired to donate to REAP Food Group because of its dedication to supporting local producers, farmers and businesses, and because their children reap the benefits of our Farm to School work in Madison classrooms.

"You're super local to us, so that's awesome and amazing, and you all work with schools to better the food for the children that go to public schools here in Madison," Tortolano said. "We have young children in public school."

Support and connections with our local business partners is crucial to REAP Food Group's work in the greater Madison area. Thanks to generous individuals and businesses, we are able to continue reaching consumers, producers and businesses, and growing a just and sustainable local food system in Southern Wisconsin.



Vanessa Tortolano and Alla Tsylin

COMING UP

'TASTE OF WISCONSIN' HOLIDAY GIFT BOXES



It's never too early to start thinking about the holidays! As in years past, REAP will offer two different "Taste of Wisconsin" Holiday Gift Boxes this season featuring sustainably-grown Wisconsin snacks and goods. Proceeds from this annual sale benefit local farms, businesses and our Farm to School program. Join our newsletter at reapfoodgroup.org or follow us on social media for holiday sale updates!

THE BOUNTIES OF BURGERS & BREW



Photo by Hannah Wente.



Photos by Michelle Torkelson.



BURGERS & BREW BY THE NUMBERS

\$44,509

RAISED IN 2 DAYS

48

RESTAURANTS & BREWERIES

136

VOLUNTEERS

2,700+

BURGERS SERVED

REAP FOOD GROUP THANKS OUR 2018 BURGERS & BREW SPONSORS



BRAVA



Bob's Copy Shop.com
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SUMMIT CREDIT UNION
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REAP Food Group



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Ross Cohen, *Farm to School Coordinator*



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reapfoodgroup.org

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JOIN US FOR AN INTIMATE
HARVEST-INSPIRED BENEFIT
DINNER CELEBRATING LOCAL
FOODS AND CHEFS



DINE IN OR CARRY OUT AT A
MADISON AREA RESTAURANT
TO SUPPORT REAP'S FARM TO
SCHOOL PROGRAM

REAP Food Group nourishes the links between land and table to grow a healthful, just, and sustainable local food system. You can support our mission by making a donation online at reapfoodgroup.org/give. Every annual donation above \$45 makes you a REAP member.