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2019 Innovation Grant Proposals

Project Title & Applicant

Hydroponically grown produce to supply RSU#39 School Cafeterias; Caribou Tech Center - Scott Moir, Agriculture & Natural Resources Instructor, + 3 partners

Current Work

Caribou Tech currently farms 9 acres of land which includes 5 acres of processing potatoes and the remaining acres are garden vegetables sold to the public. Excess food, if any, is donated to the local food pantry. We currently have a 60' x 22' year round greenhouse which is only used for growing flowers and seeding vegetables in the springtime.

Project Description

We are proposing to purchase a hydroponic system for our fixed, permanent greenhouse so that we may grow produce year-round which can then supply RSU#39 school cafeterias for grades PreK-12 with fresh produce year round. We would like to partner with the University of Maine at Presque Isle's Agricultural program so that this can be a comprehensive elementary through post-secondary collaborative experience.

Capacity

We currently have the greenhouse and are only lacking a hydroponic system in order to produce year-round. RSU#39 will involve students in elementary, middle level, and high school in the planting, harvesting, and distribution of produce to their respective cafeterias. UMPI will continue their collaborative efforts with Caribou Tech by lending their student's expertise and guidance on this project.

Project Impact

Potential impact includes the ability to supply RSU #39 school cafeterias with locally grown produce, involving elementary and middle level students in this process, and providing Agricultural students at the high school and post-secondary levels with educational experience in setting up a year-round hydroponic system. This project fits with the goals of this funding because it is creating a direct Farm to Table experience of incorporating Maine grown produce into a food distribution program. Additionally, this project will create a learning experience for students in elementary school up through the post-secondary level. The main measurement of success will be an increase in locally grown produce distributed through RSU#39 school cafeterias. Additionally, success can be measured through number of lessons and learning experiences created for students involved in this project.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

Building Networks to Create Power: Authentic connections, collaboration, peer-to-peer sharing, distributed and democratic leadership/representation, and learning among food systems stakeholders are critical network functions that influence positive disruption and amplify innovation. Food System Education & Awareness: Knowledge of the potential and pitfalls of the food system, the complexities of getting food to our plates, and the importance of local, healthy food should be shared with all food system stakeholders. Food as Medicine: Access to and consumption of fresh, local, healthy food by all is fundamental to health.

Developing the Network

Caribou Tech/Caribou FFA does not currently have a food-distribution relationship with RSU#39 Food Services because we cannot supply them year round. Having a hydroponic system in our existing greenhouse will allow us to create a reasonable pathway to establishing that relationship. We already have a collaboration relationship with UMPI in terms of concurrent enrollment and working together with the Cooperative Extension, so this opportunity would strengthen that connection.

Potential to Scale

Yes because other school districts that are connected to an Agricultural program may have an interest in copying this model of locally grown food distribution. Additionally, Caribou Tech could expand to be able to supply other local food-distribution centers.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



Baseline Budget

Purchase Two Hydroponic Systems (\$800 each), any additional funds will be used to purchase grow lamps (\$500). Caribou Tech Center may match grant funds to get this project started.

Project Title & Applicant

Students as Future Organic Farmers; Julie Wallace MSAD 59 + 2 partners

Current Work

We are a school program that has an indoor aquaponics "farm." We are in our second year and have been building our systems to be able to provide the lettuce for our school salad bar. We also manage a community garden for the town. This outside garden utilizes a small hobby greenhouse and provides produce for the town's food pantry.

During our summer work, since the school lunch program was not in session, we were able to sell our lettuce to a local restaurant.

Project Description

We have been recognized by the state and were asked to present at this years Farm to School Conference at KVCC. We have also worked directly with the Dept of Agriculture in the areas of students at work and the process of "selling" to our school lunch program. All of these steps help the relationship building and understanding of how we can bridge education, agriculture, sustainability and access to healthy foods. I would like to eliminate the small barriers that are stopping us from making big strides in our process. We need to add electricity to our small outside greenhouse so we can use it to extend the growing season and make the impact we know we can. This would provide a much more diverse group of goods for the local pantry. In the area of the aquaponics, we are still lacking biomass (more fish) to create the optimal systems. We are running at 1/2 capacity and if we could reach full capacity, we could sell steadily to local restaurants and possibly Hannaford as well as provide the school lunch salad bar.

Capacity

My program would do the work. We can do the updates to the greenhouse ourselves. We have contacted Madison Electric and the town manager about the power access. Somerset Health works with us on the greenhouse and it's use provides healthy fresh produce to the food pantry. Doris Lindblom is our Food Service Director, she is directly involved in providing the parameters that the state school food program is governed by. She would have us provide lettuce for all three schools in the district if we could. They are very excited at the quality of our lettuce and the deep greens it provides the students that eat lunch. They each advocate for the improvement of access to healthy foods. Our intent to sell to restaurants allows our program to become sustainable and therefore more secure for the future. We plan to have small index cards with our logo to show that our lettuce is created locally.

Project Impact

Providing more access to healthy organic food for the food pantry. Allowing the expansion of the school lunch program and the ability to sell to local restaurants. Our progress will help expand the dialogue in the community around food systems and healthy food. Tracking our progress through outcomes and how many community groups we interact with and provide food for. On a larger scale, using the aquaponics and community gardening as vehicles to teach students is an impact that has no measurement. These students are learning to be farmers, they are seeing every step it takes to get the food to an institution and then calculating the rewards. Giving this knowledge and understanding to our future providers is the most important impact of all.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

Education and Awareness - as part of our school program, we are teaching the work and steps it takes to go from farm to a plate. Healthy food and food as medicine is part of our nutrition goals.

Developing the Network

I have been involved with the Maine Farm to School group. I plan to share my success with others so that they can also use their classrooms to provide this kind of experience and learning environment.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



Potential to Scale

Yes, I believe it can be a model that can be copied to all areas. The power of using aquaponics to teach sustainability and how we can all create food systems to grow our own food or food for our community is a vital step for the future.

Baseline Budget

Optimal upgrades:

Tilapia fish above 40 grams will be \$10.00 a fish. 9 fish to make approx 1 pound.

I need an additional 25 pounds. 225 fish at \$10.00

Aquaponics upgrades: \$2250.00

Electrician to mount a meter and run a line into the greenhouse - \$500.00

6 removable panels created for sides of greenhouse - \$300.00 supplies

Greenhouse unit that turns on fans and heater at set temperature - \$300.00

Greenhouse upgrades - \$1100.00

Project Title & Applicant

Maine Veggies for Maine Kids, Martha Poliquin, Falmouth Public Schools Nutrition Director, + 3 Partners

Current Work

Falmouth Public Schools (FPS) and Portland Public Schools (PPS) purchase local foods for their school nutrition programs, directly from farms or through local distributors. Both districts engage students and staff in farm-to-school activities through classroom curriculum, school gardens, and local foods. PPS partners with Cultivating Communities and Food Corp. FPS employs a Garden/Greenhouse Manager and Garden Champions. Both districts participate in Maine Harvest Lunch Week and the new Harvest of the Month program sponsored by the DOE.

Project Description

An often identified obstacle in purchasing local produce is finding and connecting with Maine farms. Additionally, finding farms that understand the needs and procurement requirements of school nutrition programs adds to the challenge. One way to start relationships with interested farms, buy local produce, and meet the USDA Procurement Guidelines is to solicit Forward Purchasing Contracts (FPC). This proposal is a request for funds to hire a consultant to create a forward purchasing contract template that could be used by any Maine School Food Service program and possibly other food serving institutions (prisons, colleges, hospitals). Writing a forward purchasing contract and submitting it as an RFP can be a challenge for those with limited experiences and skills in doing such. Having Child Nutrition Services involved in the process and final product will help ensure it meets procurement requirements. This will give School Nutrition Directors confidence in using it. With this template, directors will be able to customize it with the local vegetables they are looking for and advertise it in area newspapers.

Capacity

Proposal organizers and partner representatives have the capacity to execute this project. We anticipate meeting for two hours monthly December to June (see timeline below). The creation of the template will be done by the contracted consultant. The template will actually increase school nutrition directors' capacity to find local vegetables to purchase.

Project Impact

For minimal funds, we would be creating a procurement tool that any director could use regardless of their knowledge and capacity in this area. An easy to use template will help school nutrition directors establish relationships and contracts with farmers. FP contracts will mean school nutrition directors can plan on certain volumes of local vegetables. Farmers can make plans for growing crops and forecast farm expansions.

Success will be measured by the number of contracts that are put into place for the 2020-2021 school year.

Maine Farm to Institution Values



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



Local food purchasing through Forward Purchasing Contracts aligns with all 8 core values of MEFTI. A food economy that benefits all - farmers will set their prices to reflect true cost of growing vegetables in Maine; Building networks to create power - collaboration with those directly involved in the growing and consumption of Maine vegetables; Food system education & awareness - FP contract template will address issues of distribution; Food as medicine - this is how to get more fresh, local, healthy food into school nutrition programs; Resiliency - helping to keep new and growing farms in business; Thriving environment - organic growing practices may be given extra points in the contract scoring process; Transparency - FP contract and RFPs create an open and fair procurement process; Equity - collaborators are from organizations that support immigrant farmers.

Developing the Network

Participating in the Shared Gifting Process will inherently strengthen our participation in the MFSN and MEFTI. Both networks bring people and organizations together to share knowledge and experiences. Our proposal will create a tool that can be used by members of both networks.

Potential to Scale

The potential is endless. We would be creating a tool that could be used over and over, in multiple districts (and sectors) to help each one increase their local purchasing of vegetables. The template may lend itself to FP contracts for fruits, dairy products, animal proteins, and sea products.

Baseline Budget

Newspaper Advertising for consultant - \$100.00

Consultant to create contract - \$60.00/hour x 15 hours = \$900.00

In-kind contributions - school nutrition directors' and partners' time at meetings.

Project Title & Applicant

Supporting Healthy Eating Through Hands-On Nutrition Education; Maine Association of Conservation Districts, + 3 Partners

Current Work

The Southern Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District is currently working with two elementary schools in the RSU29 (Houlton) school system on a hands-on nutrition education project using food and cooking to engage students. The grant project is being funded through the USDA-Farm to School network for two years and began July, 2019. The project involves a mobile kitchen cart, called a Charlie Cart, that is to be used in individual classrooms for student cooking lessons in tandem with a 54 lesson curriculum that is aligned to math, science, and English language arts. Seasonal field trips to local farms will be held and will be followed by preparation and cooking of related fruit, vegetable, or grains that were grown on-farm.

Project Description

As with the USDA-Farm to School grant project, this proposed initiative will include RSU29 food services staff during a school-wide Charlie Cart training in spring, 2020 and inviting staff, when applicable, for classroom cooking lessons. While Southern Aroostook is an agriculturally rich area, most people are removed from working farms. Connecting farm visits with in-class cooking lessons is a way to build relationships between farm and schools and to strengthen the importance and value of farming in our community, hopefully leading to future partnerships between the two.

Capacity

The proposed initiative will fit in with the current USDA-Farm to School grant project and will be seamlessly integrated into the ongoing project and its implementation. Proposal partners are the lead educators for the mobile kitchen cart project, representing each school, and will continue in that capacity for this initiative. Both educators and RSU29 administrative staff are fully supportive of the USDA-Farm to School Mobile Kitchen Cart Project and understand the importance of food education as part of not only healthy food access but healthy minds.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



Project Impact

Through working with elementary school teachers to confidently integrate fresh fruits and vegetables with in-class cooking with the mobile kitchen cart as part of their classroom's learning experience, the goal is to teach hands-on nutrition education to children through food and cooking and build life-long healthy eating habits and cooking skills. Success will be measured through post-cooking tastings and encouraging discussions with students about the lesson, incorporating related science, math or English skills accessed during the cooking session.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

"A Food Economy that Benefits All" is aligned with this proposal through building relationships with local farmers, and providing ALL children the opportunity to learn how to access fresh, healthy food and provide them with the skills to prepare that food. "Food System Education and Awareness" is also a large part of the project as a whole since the challenges faced by both farmers and school districts can be complicated. Building such relationships and knowledge at the local level can hopefully move the conversation forward and partnerships developed. Not least, a "Thriving Environment" is needed to continue to have a vibrant and diverse agricultural community in Southern Aroostook. Our natural resources are an integral part of our life and need to be valued as such.

Developing the Network

The proposal will further strengthen the Mobile Kitchen Cart Project within Farm to School and the Maine Farm to School Network. Both MFSN and MEFTI networks provide valuable resources that can be utilized to assist schools to begin accessing local foods and, through this project, to make local food procurement a priority moving forward.

Potential to Scale

I believe there is great potential to incorporate nutrition education through hands-on cooking lessons in schools throughout Maine. The "Fresh Fruits and Veggies Program" that many schools benefit from is wonderful and successful on a broad scale. However, classroom cooking lessons bring that program to a higher level by providing basic cooking skills to students so they are able to provide healthy foods for themselves.

Baseline Budget

Budget request: \$500; \$150 will be used for ingredients to conduct classroom cooking lessons based on \$25 per each class (SASWCD-led cooking lessons will use only USDA-Farm to School grant funds); 2 field trips related expenses of \$200; \$150 for nutrition education training with Charlie Cart personnel.

Matching funds include teacher's salaries of 12 hrs prep and lesson time at average of \$45.08/hr = \$540.96; Charlie Cart training session of \$3,000; and farmer volunteer time of 8 hours at \$19.09/hr = \$152.72. Match total: \$3,693.68

Project Title & Applicant

Stratton School Garden - Vermicompost & 3 Bin Composting System; Anne Poirier-Flight, Stratton Schools, + 3 Partners

Current Work

Stratton School is a Pre K–8th grade elementary school located in Eustis Maine. The school serves students in the towns of Stratton, Eustis, Coplin Plantation township, Wyman township, Coburn Gore, and Carrabassett Valley.

We have 6 educational raised beds that were built in the Spring of 2011. The first few years the gardens were used by interested teachers when they had the time in their curriculum.

In 2015 a school-wide cohesive program unfolded. During the Winter months middle school students determine a garden theme for the upcoming spring. There is a school wide seed planting day, community members are involved, and every student gets their hands in the dirt. The seedlings are grown and cared for by students in all of the classrooms. Later in the spring the seedlings are transplanted by students into the raised beds. Extra seedlings are taken home by students to grow in their home gardens. The garden beds are watered, weeded, and maintained throughout the summer by staff, parent, and community volunteers.

In years past some of our summer crops were served at a local farm to table restaurant. This season the produce grown in these beds has been used in the Summer Recreation lunch program, the school lunch program, and in our Harvest Pot Luck Dinner— our annual garden



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



fund raiser. This annual event is a themed dinner that is free and open to all community members. All of the food served at the meal is prepared by students and most of it is locally sourced; from the produce to the meat, dairy, and grains.

It has been in the works to expand our school gardens beyond our educational raised beds and to focus on growing produce that will go directly into the school lunch program. This fall we built an additional 6 raised beds. The produce grown and harvested will continue to be used by the school food service to feed our students fresh, healthy and local produce.

Project Description

Our proposed initiative is to enhance our existing garden program by introducing composting at the school. Composting is a proven strategy of reducing waste and creating nutrient rich soil. Healthy soil means healthy plants and healthy food for our bodies.

Our initiative is two tier. The first involves a Vermicompost system in our 3rd/4th grade classroom. The second is to build a three-bin composting system for our entire school. Currently we are not composting and a great deal of fruit and vegetable scraps are ending up in the trash. We are also spending limited garden funds to purchase commercially manufactured compost. Since our gardens are growing, we will need more resources and it is time to start our own composting system.

The funds that we are requesting will go to purchasing a Vermicompost; Worm Factory Composting Bin, red wiggler worms, materials to build the 3-bin composting system, and composting supplies such as; aerators, thermometer, and food grade compost buckets. The composting system will be built by the middle school students with the assistance of local carpenters and community volunteers.

We will be networking with the UMaine Cooperative Extension on safe and effective composting strategies and incorporating this into our Science curriculum.

We will be collaborating with the school's food service program to collect pre and post consumer waste and get it to the compost bin. We will work with the school maintenance crew to gather leaves and grass clippings.

By creating our own compost we will reduce what we add to the waste stream, save money and streamline the process of adding nutrients to our garden beds, by turning our food scraps into rich compost and organic fertilizer.

Capacity

At Stratton School we have Wellness Team, made up of both students and staff, and a Garden Committee, made up of staff, administration and school board members. We are very fortunate that our Garden program has the support of our administration, school Board, and greater school community.

To execute the work of our proposed initiative we will be collaborating with our proposed partners and also many other school staff and community volunteers.

Anna Beaulier, the 3rd/4th grade teacher will be implementing the Vermicompost into her classroom and integrate it into her science curriculum. She will be using resources from the UMaine Cooperative extension on how to successfully get this started and as a continual resource of knowledge. The Worm Factory Composting Bin will produce both compost and "Worm Tea".

Kimberly Truskowski works at Sugarloaf as their Environmental Steward. She also oversees the Town Of Carrabassett Valley food composting operations. Kimberly works with the local community on green initiatives and education. We would like to have her come to Stratton School and work with the Wellness Team setting up an achievable and sustainable composting program at the school.

Jim Bellwood, school custodian along with Anne Poirier-Flight will oversee the building of the 3 bin composting system. We will be the ones responsible for gathering supplies. We will work with our schools Volunteer Coordinator, to solicit skilled community volunteers who can work with the middle school students on building the composting system.

Joanne Raymond, our school food service director, will be involved with collecting pre consumer waste from the kitchen. The school Wellness committee will be involved with introducing composting to the students, ensuring that it is achievable and sustainable. Students and the school Garden Committee will be engaged with the aerating of the bins.

Once the compost and compost tea is ready to be used we will be donating some regularly to the Carrabassett Public Library's gardens. Their gardens are a series of raised beds at the library that are planted and maintained by volunteers. Produce grown in this garden is donated to the local food bank in Eustis.

Project Impact

The potential impact of our school composting systems is reducing greenhouse gases by limiting our waste stream and producing nutrient rich compost for our school gardens. We will be networking building with a local composting expert to help get us started. We will be collaborating with our school community to ensure the composting system is achievable and sustainable. Our educational efforts include incorporating composting into our school science curriculum. Our outreach includes donating compost and compost tea to the Carrabassett Public Library Community Gardens. The produce grown in these gardens is donated to the local food bank, and by us helping their gardens we are indirectly helping to provide fresh produce to our local food bank. In turn we are helping our students, families and local community members to have access to lack fresh produce.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



Success will be measured by limiting food waste and by producing compost. Compost to be used in our school gardens is the first step of this project. True success will be measured when we are able to produce enough compost or worm tea that we are able to share this with the Carrabassett Valley Public Library community gardens. We will keep records and track date including how much Worm Tea is produced and how much tea and compost is donated.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

The Stratton School Composting proposal aligns with many of the Maine farm to School Institution Values. Building Networks to Create Power: By collaborating with the Carrabassett Valley Public Library Community gardens, we are creating a network of growing local, fresh produce for the citizens of the surrounding area. There will be network building and shared learning as a result of our collaboration. Resiliency & Equity As we collaborate with the Carrabassett Valley Public Library Community garden, we are creating a “robust local food system”, that is essential for our students, citizens, and society. 38% of the students at Stratton School qualify for free or reduced lunch, due to their family’s household income. Data from the 2000 census stated that 14.3% of the population in Eustis is below the poverty line. Poverty and obesity are synonymous in this country, mainly because “cheep” food is not whole or nutritious food. By being able to contribute to the production of fresh produce for our community food bank we are helping ensure that those of low income are able to access to healthy foods; developing a fair food system. Food as Medicine: Stratton School is a ‘5-2-1-0 Let’s Go’ school, supporting healthy eating and physical activity by limiting screen time, increasing outside time, and serving healthy snacks. Our administration and school community is on board with the belief that fresh, local, and healthy food is fundamental to good overall health and improved learning. Food System Education & Awareness/ Thriving Environment: Teaching kids about food, from seeds to the meal on our plates and all of the love and labor in between is something that the Stratton school embraces in their curriculum. Teaching kids about caring for their bodies goes hand in hand with caring about the environment. Healthy soil = healthy plants. By caring for the environment and learning how to grow our own produce we are sustaining our food source for the future.

Developing the Network

Currently Stratton School participates in the National Farm to School Network’s Harvest of the Month and the school sent 3 Garden Committee Members to the Maine annual conference this October.

We are hoping that this proposal will strengthen out participation in the Network(s), both nationally and locally in Maine as we share similar values of hands on learning through school gardens, and increase access to local foods.

Currently we procure produce form a local farm; River Web in Avon Maine. We were inspired at the annual Maine conference and are currently looking to network with more local farms to procure food for our school lunch and breakfast program. By strengthening our participation and involvement in the Maine School to Garden Network there will be more opportunities for shared learning of local resources. The shared gifting component of this grant opportunity is an excellent way to network, share, and learn from other farm to institution programs in the state of Maine. We are stronger together.

Potential to Scale

Our school composting system will be limited by the space constraints of our school grounds, but the ability to create more networks and collaboration within the surrounding community is absolutely a potential.

Our goal is to be able to donate compost and compost tea to community gardens. The more we can produce the more we can donate.

Options for scaling thing up would be:

Connect with the local transfer station or local farms and determine the potential of a large scale composting pile.

The Stratton serves the families of 6 surrounding towns and villages, there is the potential of composting in each one of these communities.

Collaborating with the surrounding communities on creating community gardens. The school garden and wellness committees could be a resource for these communities when starting their own gardens.

Upgrading or expanding the compost system in the future so it is winterized and can still reach optimal composting temperature in the winter months.

A Zero Waste Initiative. Currently our school is working on implementing ‘The Golden Trashcan’, an initiative to limit waste.

Baseline Budget

Stratton School is requesting \$887.79 for their school composting system. Funds will be spent as listed below:

1 - Compost Aerator @ 28.67

1- Pitchfork @ 45.98



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



1- Compost Thermometer @ 35.84
2- Big Green Compost Bucket @ 73.90
1- The Worm Factory + 1 lb bag of Red wigglers: 194.90
Supplies to build at 3 bin compost system:
Lumber 274.00
Hardware 126.50
Hardware Cloth 62.00
Fiberglass Panels 46.00

Total funds being requested: \$887.79

Project Title & Applicant

Kittery School Nutrition Chef to School Series; Wendy Collins, Kittery Schools, +2 Partners

Current Work

The Kittery School Nutrition Program has been actively buying local food for many years, but is hindered by the short growing season of our school gardens and local farms close enough to deliver directly to the schools.

Project Description

The Heirloom Harvest Project's (HHP) mission is to promote regional heritage foods; agricultural diversity; and the connections among farmers, chefs, and consumers in our community. They seek to build public awareness about locally raised heirloom produce, heritage meats and sustainable seafood while highlighting the connections among farmers, fishers, chefs, and consumers through educational food-related events.

The Three River Farmers Alliance is a network of local farmers working cooperatively to distribute local food to the greater Seacoast ME/NH region. Their online marketplace allows consumers to procure fresh local food from over 40 farms and food producers.

The HHP Chef to School Series will allow the Kittery School Nutrition Program to streamline the procurement of local foods. Local Chefs will be in our kitchens each month to train staff on culinary techniques using local ingredients. The relationship with the Chefs from amazing local restaurants gives us buying power and options we otherwise wouldn't have. An example of this is Chef David Vargas contracted a deal with a local chicken farm that he buys from for his restaurant, Vida Cantina. He told them about our mission and procured chicken for our Chef Day creation, Chicken Parm, at a price that was unheard of!

Capacity

The Chef-to-School program is being executed by a team comprised of Kittery School Nutrition Program staff, liaisons from the Heirloom Harvest Project and Three River Farmers Alliance, as well as local chefs, and community volunteers. The list below describes the roles and responsibilities:

- Wendy Collins, Director Kittery School Nutrition Program: Kitchen Staff and administration liaison
- David Vargas, Chef: Heirloom Harvest Project and Cchef Liaison
- Stephanie Deihl, Project Coordinator: Programming/School-Chef Liaison Community Outreach/Volunteer coordinator
- Allison Magill: Community outreach/Education committee -Slow Food Liaison what is she going to do?
- Alicia Cuttle, Community Volunteer: Media/PR/Communication
- Brent Hazelbaker & Sarah: Farmer liaisons

As mentioned above, this project will utilize famers, chefs, school personnel and community members to bring and teach students about local foods and why they are important. Each Chef day culminates with the Chef doing tastings of the local product and talking about where the food came from.

Project Impact

The HHP-CTS series is a community to table collaboration between the Kittery School District and talented local chefs and farmers who share a common vision. The purpose of the program is to incorporate healthy, local ingredients and innovative recipe changes to the USDA recipes, into the school lunch program. The program goals are: increase the amount of local food in the lunch program, increase student participation and create a database of chef-inspired healthful recipes, using USDA food and guidelines. These impacts and the this



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



program fit with the goals of this funding as it will include collaborations between food service institution and local food producers. Success of this project will be measured by an increase in student participation. Additionally, we anticipate and increased awareness of the school nutrition program, efforts to diversify the program and menus and public interaction with the program.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

There are several Maine Farm to Institution Values that the Chef-to-School program will align with. #1 A Food Economy that Benefits All: The Chef-to-School program provides access to a wider variety of local healthy foods, to which students may not otherwise be exposed. #2 Building Networks to Create Power: The Chef to School Program is building connections between the Kittery School District team and local farms through the Three River Farmers Alliance. Additionally this program has initiated connections with several local chefs who are now involved in the school lunch program. #3 Food System Education & Awareness: A key component of the Chef-to-School program is to share information about where the foods being served come from, how it is prepared by school and chef collaborations, and the importance of food choices. Information is also being shared with families and community through social media and promotional materials for each monthly event. # 5 Resiliency: Kittery's Chef-to-School program is also demonstrating the connection between the school lunch program and how it can support local farms and farmers. #7 Transparency: Kittery's Chef-to-School program is building transparency for stakeholders about where food comes from and how it is being used in preparation of student meals.

Developing the Network

The HHP-CTS will bring together the community in one place to support the nutrition of the students in our schools. The network of chefs, farmers, parents, school professionals, businesses and volunteers in Kittery is wide spread. The local newspaper printed an article about this initiative that sparked interest from many community members who are offering their talents to support the growth of this program.

Potential to Scale

There is potential to scale this program up across the region by expanding the chef and farmer networks to other school districts. This is the goal Chef David Vargas has set for his group, with Kittery being the pilot district.

Baseline Budget

The Chef-to-School program was kicked off during the Maine Department of Education's Maine Harvest week in September. Chef-to-School lunches will take place each month September through June.

The Chef to School series is requesting a grant for \$1,000 for promotional products, and a small stipend for a PR coordinator, and most importantly to help offset the cost of buying local products directly from the farms. The farms sell us their "seconds" that won't sell at a Farmers Market, but the pricing is still more than buying "non" local from our distributor.

We would greatly benefit from additional funding through the Shared Gifting process to sustain the program throughout the school year. Our goal is to increase participation and understanding about the importance of sourcing food for our school lunch program from local farms which will ensure the sustainability of this program.

\$300.00 Stipend for PR coordinator

\$700.00 paid to Three River Farm Alliance for local farm products

\$1,000 extra would also be paid for the same budget for the second part of the school year

Project Title & Applicant

Incubating Learning: Increasing Portland Public Schools Procurement from Somali Bantu Community Association's Incubator Farming Program (Liberation Farms), Somali Bantu Community Association of Maine, +3 Partners

Current Work

SBCA's largest program, Liberation Farms, aims to provide new American farmers access to, and culturally-appropriate resources for, the means of sustainable food production for themselves and their communities to bolster food and economic security. We currently have over 150 Somali Bantu refugee farmers participating in the farming program.

In the past, we have sold to institutions such as Bates College, Saint Joseph's College, and Portland Public Schools (PPS). In particular, we



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
MAINE



are interested in scaling up our capacity to provide locally grown, chemical-free produce to PPS. Liberation Farms provides tomatoes, beets, squash, zucchini, and carrots to PPS for their scratch-cooked marinara sauce. In 2018, we grew and sold approximately 3,000 pounds of produce to PPS and in 2019 provided nearly 5,000 pounds. Through thoughtfully crafted MOUs, PPS has agreed to take up to 6,000 pounds of produce. Liberation Farms wants to invest in the infrastructure and training to be able to meet that goal.

Project Description

To honor this critical partnership, and work to meet our goal of selling 6,000 pounds of produce to PPS, SBCA proposes to use this grant money to invest in high quality tomato trellising for our fields and greenhouses. This improvement in infrastructure would dramatically help us increase our tomato production and quality. Further, this grant would allow us the capacity to create promotional materials showcasing Liberation Farms and our farmers to the students at the Portland Public Schools.

We envision materials such as signage for the lunch room and lunch line and are interested in exploring the potential of “farmer trading cards”. This an important opportunity to communicate to Portland students that refugees, immigrants, and new American farmers in Maine are doing good work in our shared home state and for students to develop connections to their food, Maine’s agricultural heritage, and our environment. We recognize that representation matters - many students at PPS identify as Somali or Somali Bantu, this is an opportunity to have students see themselves reflected in the people that are growing and producing delicious, nourishing food for them.

Capacity

We have a committed group of commercial farmers excited to continue marketing crops to Portland Public Schools and other local institutions. We have a strong team of staff and advisors that work to support these farmers in providing the best quality, organic produce possibility.

Markets Manager, Kristina Kalolo, will continue to maintain primary responsibility for crafting MOUs, communicating with Central Kitchen, and aggregating and distributing orders.

Jim Hanna, the Executive Director of the Cumberland County Food Security Council, will continue to support and advocate for more local food purchasing by limited resource farmers through his work with the Food Fuels Learning initiative, which works to build food security in Portland Public Schools.

Portland Public Schools Central Kitchen has been a key partner for Liberation Farms. The 2019 season marks our third year selling tomatoes to Central Kitchen for marinara sauce. Food Service Director, Jane McLucas and Central Kitchen Manager, Lori Beatham, have expressed a clear interest in maintaining and growing our existing relationships, and promoting SBCA’s work with food to the Portland community.

Project Impact

This grant would provide SBCA with the opportunity to provide Portland Public Schools with a full 6,000 pounds of tomatoes annually. This increase in production would increase the amount of earned income for our commercial farmers and provide Portland students with organic, local, produce in their school meals.

This investment nourishes students who eat our food for lunch and our farmers who get to engage with familiar traditions and meaningfully utilize their agricultural roots as they build new lives here in Maine. The program provides a safe place to connect with land, gather as a community, and preserve cultural traditions, critical to mental health. Farmers consistently report that the program improves their physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.

Further, the increase of this production would mean that all parties involved are cutting down on the carbon footprint of transportation and packaging of produce from out of state. We source our seeds locally, distribute our food locally, use human power to grow our produce, and we only use organic growing practices.

Our program actively addresses issues of hunger and accessibility in Cumberland County and bolsters the local food economy with its institutional relationships. The Liberation Farms and PPS relationship is a beautiful illustration of how our communities are successfully working towards closing the hunger gap with local food.

Maine Farm to Institution Values



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Although the mission of Liberation farms and this proposal aligns with every MEFTI value, it most potently relates to the value of equity. Not only is this initiative about healthy, local, environmentally responsible food, it is food and environmental justice in action. It is a demonstration of the success that is possible when marginalized communities have the opportunity to organize and lead themselves. It provides new American families struggling with racism, poverty, food insecurity, and environmental injustice with the tools to be economically independent and the agency to contribute to our local economies and food systems. SBCA is an organization that is run for and by the Bantu community. Our Executive Director, Board of Directors, and the majority of staff is entirely made up of Somali Bantu men and women. This structure reflects our core value of centering and uplifting Bantu voices when providing services for, or making decisions about, the Bantu community. As a historically marginalized group, the SBCA demonstrates what equity and inclusion could look like here in Maine. We reach people who often fall through the cracks of government and non-profit social services systems. This grant, and the subsequent stability and success of our existing partnerships PPS, would help us capture the resources and revenue to fulfil our promise to make our program accessible to anyone who wants to participate. Further, our proposal to showcase the incredibly valuable work our farmers are doing is an additional opportunity to combat the inequities and adversities they are facing by spreading awareness and rewriting the current harmful narratives.

Developing the Network

With this grant we could leverage our growing scale to pitch our mission and our produce to more schools and institutions in Maine. In addition, with the ability to produce and distribute promotional material, we would be able to reach out to new Mainers and other Somali Bantu refugees looking for economic opportunities, space to celebrate cultural traditions, and find affordable avenues to live healthfully. We would also be able to recruit interested parties to volunteer time and donate resources to support our mission. These materials would help our organization uplift Bantu voices and deconstruct stigmas about the Somali Bantu community in Maine. The distribution of promotional materials would help us advertise our cultural events, encourage folks in Maine to visit our farms, and attend workshops we offer, like a recent workshop at our Lewiston location, sponsored by MOFGA, discussing the planting and winterization process for garlic. Lastly, by spreading awareness and inviting people to engage with us and our work, Mainers will have the opportunity to get in touch with their environment, their food systems, and educate themselves about cultural differences in Maine.

Potential to Scale

We believe that this model - a strong, committed partnership between an incubator farming program and institution - is an exciting model to scale up and replicate. Part of what makes this such an important account for Liberation Farms is that Central Kitchen will accept seconds, or less than perfect quality produce, since they will be turned into sauce. This means that our farmers are able to sell thousands of pounds of delicious tomatoes that are cosmetically imperfect. Without this outlet for seconds, the program would be producing much more compost and food waste. As a training program, having supportive partners that are willing to make creative investments is a total gamechanger. This gives our farmers the opportunity to explore growing in Maine's agricultural climate and about American expectations of produce quality in a safe and forgiving learning environment.

Baseline Budget

Tomato trellising, ties, clips (field and greenhouse): \$600

Tomato seeds and shipping: \$25

Printing expenses for promotional material: \$275

Contracting graphic designer to create promotional materials: \$500

Any additional funds that were not used for the costs above would go towards: packaging materials for the order (waxed boxes), organic fertilizer, pruning shears, and nursery cloth for the greenhouses.

Project Title & Applicant

Let It Grow! Growing the Connors Elementary School Farm to School Movement; Sumaya Sheikh, FoodCorps, +3 Partners

Current Work

Farm to institution work in Lewiston has been a collaborative effort among various schools and community partners. St. Mary's Nutrition Center has a long history of supporting local farm to institution efforts by building relationships with local farmers, convening listening sessions with those involved in the local food system, and hosting a "Meet the Buyers" event to connect farmers and purchasers. The



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Nutrition Center began to focus on school food systems through a partnership with FoodCorps nine years ago. FoodCorps members currently serve at two Lewiston schools, including Connors Elementary, implementing hands-on cooking and gardening lessons, fostering a school-wide culture of health, and working with cafeteria staff to promote healthy school meals and highlight local produce. Both FoodCorps members and a staff member from the Nutrition Center are part of the Farm to School Team at Connors, a group of teachers and staff who participated in the Northeast Farm to School Institute at Shelburne Farms this past summer. The team developed a farm to school action plan that focuses on classroom, community, and cafeteria projects that will be discussed and implemented by the team and the larger farm to school committee.

The St. Mary's Nutrition Center has also collaborated with both Lewiston and Auburn School Districts for USDA Farm to School Planning and Implementation Grants that aim to increase local food procurement in school cafeterias.

Project Description

This grant funding will help support the design and construction of a school garden at Robert V. Connors Elementary School in Lewiston, a new school that opened August 2019 that consolidated two of the highest need elementary schools in the district. Funding will also be used for school field trips to local farms, primarily Whiting Farm in Auburn. Whiting Farm used to be a commercial production farm before being sold to John F. Murphy Homes about 5 years ago and transitioning to a multi use farm that includes educational opportunities, land leased to local community groups, and work opportunities for JFMH clients. Lastly a portion of the funds will be used to cover mileage expenses for members of the Connors Farm to School Team to travel to other school sites and nonprofits who have developed successful and engaging learning garden programs. The components of this project will improve networking and relationship building at various levels. This project will help build excitement and buy in from students, teachers, cafeteria staff, and families at the school level by involving a wide range of the school population in the garden design and construction; through the regularly scheduled farm to school core team and larger committee work; and increased collaboration with the Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator to invite families to be involved in farm to school efforts.

Best practices and lessons learned can be shared with other district schools through partnerships with St. Mary's Nutrition Center and FoodCorps to help create a more robust network of school garden and farm to school advocates in the Lewiston area. As mentioned above this grant can also help support regional networking by sharing grant outcomes with those involved in the new conversations with Portland school food system workers. Networking opportunities at the state and regional level include our partnerships with Michelle Erhard of the Maine School Garden Network as she serves as the coach for the Connors farm to school team that attended the Northeast Farm to School Institute. She is an incredible resource for being able to connect with other around the state who are doing similar work.

Capacity

The Farm to School team formed through the training at Shelburne Farms has become a school approved committee. This allows the Farm to School committee a designated time each month to meet and generate action steps each month. Along with the core Farm to School team of 7 members, including teachers at Connors Elementary, FoodCorps service members, the cafeteria manager at Connors Elementary and staff at the St. Mary's Nutrition Center, the committee also includes 20 additional members who are dedicated to farm to school work at Connors Elementary. This robust membership allows the Farm to School committee to tackle various components of the action plan through sub-committees that work on different identified projects. Outside of set committee meetings where action steps are generated, sub-committees continue this work outside of the meeting time.

Project Impact

This project has the potential for far reaching impact, from the individual student all the way to those throughout the district. At the student level kids will be exposed to how food grows and where it comes from. A new school garden will be visited by roughly 300 kids, or almost half of the school population, just through scheduled FoodCorps programming alone. Because this is a brand new garden there is the unique opportunity to be deliberate in the planning, design, and construction in order to make it both a functional school garden and an engaging outdoor learning space. The research and lessons learned involved in this process can then be shared with other district schools who are looking to improve their school garden programming. Farm field trips also provide a great opportunity for kids to learn about large scale food production and how some of that produce might be used in their school cafeteria.

At the school level there is the potential to partner with cafeteria staff and coordinate seasonal menu items based on what is growing in the school garden. While the garden will not be large enough to provide produce to be used in the cafeteria, there is an opportunity to coordinate what is being grown in the school garden with what is being served on the cafeteria menu. The Connors cafeteria manager is a part of the farm to school team and is invested in highlighting local and seasonal produce in the cafeteria.



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MAINE



Lastly this project offers an incredible storytelling opportunity for Connors students. Through involvement in the garden design, students will gain personal insight into the farm to school movement. They will learn the process and positive impact it has on their education and their diets. Students will be able to take ownership of the farm to school narrative through their work, and in turn be able to share their story with their school community and the Lewiston community.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

Building networks to create power: a diverse group of people are involved in the farm to school team including teachers, ed techs, cafeteria staff, and nonprofit representatives. All are encouraged to share their perspectives, knowledge, and expertise through regular scheduled committee meetings. This fosters networking and peer-to-peer sharing among staff who may not regularly work together. We also hope to create power among students through the creation of a Green Team and engagement in garden design. We value young people as partners in change and value their perspective in what they would like out of their farm to school experience. Food system education and awareness: Lewiston has the highest rate of childhood food insecurity in the state. It is also a high need school district in which all kids are eligible for free lunch through the Community Eligibility Provision. Students and their families are navigating various parts of the food systems in ways that produce unhealthy diets both because of their economic status, and also because of their access and their education. Our mission is to spread food system education and awareness to these students and their families through our garden and nutrition programs at Connors. Food system education is empowering, and we hope to do that in our work. Equity: Connors, FoodCorps, and St. Mary's Nutrition Center all emphasize the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in food system work. These values are especially important in Lewiston, an incredibly diverse city and school district. The value statement that the farm to school team created specifically highlights how learning about and eating healthy, local foods nurtures and celebrates the diversity of the school community. Recognizing the ways that social inequities impact the lived experiences of students at Connors and the larger community is a critical part of the work that all stakeholders are doing.

Developing the Network

As mentioned above this proposal will strengthen our networking and collaboration at various levels. The opportunity to build a school garden from scratch allows for deliberate research, planning, and networking with those who have built successful programs. Lessons learned can then be shared with other area schools and partners in the Portland School District. We are particularly excited about the potential to strengthen our participation in the Maine Farm to School Network and Maine Farm to Institution Network in order to utilize existing resources, share newly developed resources and lessons learned, and learn more about statewide efforts and how we can be involved.

Potential to Scale

This work has the potential to be scaled up within the Lewiston school district and across the river in Auburn schools. The Nutrition Center and FoodCorps have partnerships with three other Lewiston elementary schools, Lewiston Middle School, and Lewiston High School. There is also increasing collaboration with Auburn schools through a USDA Farm to School planning and implementation grant. A new effort to connect with Portland schools and organizations focusing on school food system work is also developing since their district is the only other comparable school district in Maine in terms of size and demographics. Lewiston's district Nutrition Director is involved in all of these collaborations and is interested in taking lessons learned on the individual school level and expanding it to the district level. Additional lessons learned and best practices through this grant funding can be shared with all partners in order to improve programming, cultivate partnerships and collaboration, and engage more stakeholders in this work.

Baseline Budget

Total Grant Request: \$1000

Farm Field Trips:

Total: \$260

Fee per student: \$2

4 classes of 20 kids = \$160

Transportation:

2 buses @ \$50 each = \$100

Mileage Reimbursement for Farm to School Team Travel

Total: \$150

School Garden Supplies

Total: \$590



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MAINE



Lumber for raised beds: \$290
Soil and compost: \$125
Hardware: \$50
Hand tools: \$125

Project Title & Applicant

Classroom Cooking & Local Farmer's Dinner with Katahdin School; Katahdin Elementary School, +3 Partners

Current Work

The addition, this year, of Harvest of the Month at Katahdin Schools has been a first step forward in local food procurement. Local food procurement is currently a small fraction of the cafeteria food purchases. Micro-purchases of blueberries and squash usually occur once a year. However, this year blueberries were not obtained due to lack of stable communication and contract with McNally Farms. Apples and potatoes are primarily purchased from Maine farmers. Harvest of the Month purchases will continue and be served at least once a month. Annual field trips to local farms are common. Roughly half of the elementary classrooms will attend either apple picking or potato harvesting. No formal event, contracts, or communications are established between Food Service Faculty and Local Producers.

Project Description

Katahdin Schools is fortunate to exist in a region where farms outnumber grocery stores many times over. However, historically there has been little to no local purchasing of produce, despite the increase in the local produce fund and presence of nearby farms. This project at Katahdin Schools has two main goals.

The first goal involves classroom cooking, student sampling of various local foods, and learning new methods of preparation. Currently, no kitchen or home-ec room is available and FoodCorps is split between the teachers kitchen and the very busy, and strictly regulated, cafeteria kitchen. The first goal can be accomplished with purchases of cooking supplies listed in the budget and a small portion to be used for purchasing of ingredients only when donations are not possible. Currently, food is brought in already prepared using the teachers oven, however this removes a great deal of the visual learning process, fragments the lesson, and complicates the preparation for the FoodCorps service members. The cafeteria closes at 1:00pm which makes sharing cooking tools difficult with the locked cafeteria or unpredictable teachers room. Students will be actively involved in roasting, steaming, cutting, cooking, and following recipes using produce from nearby farms. This will allow the new Food Service Director, beginning in late November, to have data on student preferences. This data will guide larger purchases and methods of preparation of local produce that may have been unfamiliar to students in the cafeteria. Data collection has already begun using FoodCorps vegetable preference survey. This can be expanded to include preparation methods and incorporate student ideas and preferences into the final product before it hits the cafeteria.

The second phase of this farm to institution grant is centered on the creation of an annual dinner between Katahdin Schools dining staff, teachers, and local farmers. This goal can be accomplished with mailings to local farmers and promotion of a free local meal at Flatleaders, a new local restaurant.

This December, the Food Service Director of 20+ years will be retiring. A dinner with local producers would allow the new Food Service Director to learn about their products, optimal micro-purchase times, harvest times, and price points where both parties can be satisfied. It would help establish a clear line of communication between the Food Services Department at Katahdin Schools and local producers. It would help local producers understand the strict guidelines and budgets that public school cafeterias face. Teachers and faculty would be able to learn about field trip opportunities and lesson ideas from the farmers themselves. Lastly, it would give the local farmers a real picture of what the dining and cooking facilities at Katahdin Schools looks like. This will help form long term relationships and give each party a better understanding of the others situation. The template obtained at the October 3rd Farm-to-School Local Food Procurement training will guide this process and allow the Food Service Director to plan far in advance.

Capacity

Current relationships with local farmers have already been fostered and leveraged for classroom cooking donations and knowledge sharing. Relationships will continue to grow. Community support for the schools and students of the Katahdin Region is high. Within the first month of FoodCorps partnership lumber and soil was donated by Richardsons and Katahdin Cedar Log Homes to create seven raised garden beds. Gardiner Farms has offered field trips and is a regular presence at the monthly Good Shepherd Food Pantry hosted in Katahdin Elementary's cafeteria. McNally Farms has also offered to host field trips, provided mulch for the garden, and donated blueberries, zucchini, and tomatoes for classroom lessons. The only supermarket in town, Ellis Market, has already provided donations with reduced rates and custom bulk orders such as forty pounds of sweet potatoes for FoodCorps led cafeteria tastings and classroom



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cooking.

The Katahdin Afterschool Program hosts 5-2-1-0 cooking once a week but the students allowed to participate are less than 10% of those enrolled in the program. The resources and cooking supplies listed in the budget would help expand this number by moving the small weekly cooking lessons out of the teachers' room and into the cafeteria where the Afterschool program meets.

Katahdin Schools partnership with FoodCorps provides Food Education, and access to all students in classroom settings where trying food and talking about food is normalized. FoodCorps service members maintain daily cafeteria presence and time spent with students will give ample time for listening to student preferences. This listening, data collection, and time can benefit future meal planning in the cafeteria.

Project Impact

Through a partnership between RSU 89 and FoodCorps, cooking in classrooms and exposing students to new foods has already begun to yield positive results. In the last two months many students have tried local carrots, onions, beets, chives, garlic, potatoes, yams, peppers, corn, tomatoes and blueberries. Who would have guessed that a majority of students liked cold beets with vinegar?!

Students are empowered to try new foods when they have a hand in the cooking process, and they are able to try the foods in a low-risk, low-stress environment. Many students have already surprised parents and teachers alike with their openness and curiosity in FoodCorps lessons. To quote a second grade student after our Allium (Garlic Family) lesson, "Mr. Tyler, I went home and told my mom to buy white onions!!". I wish I could provide a video of the students wanting another piece of raw onion, or of the 3rd grade student grinning as he munched on raw garlic.

Students in our school are eager to eat fresh, nutritious, local foods. The second goal of our proposal is to connect local producers and district nutrition staff to keep Katahdin students' bellies full of food they crave, and that we know they enjoy based on preferences expressed during classroom cooking lessons. In the past, local purchasing has been minimal, but interest in more local purchasing exists. The grant will provide funding to host a network-building meal to start bridging the communication gap that currently exists between the school and local farmers. This will facilitate a conversation between these parties about price points and seasonal availability so this relationship can be mutually beneficial.

The goals are to increase farm to school purchasing, consumption, and interactions. The geographic location of Katahdin Schools will make this goal very obtainable. Local food procurement is a small percentage of the total food purchasing and can be greatly increased using the vast network of local food procurers in the area.

Success will be measured by looking at local produce spending year over year. Any replacement of processed foods with produce will be considered a large success. Increased school lunch participation rate will also be used as a metric for success.

Maine Farm to Institution Values

This project is perfectly aligned with the values of the Maine Farm to Institution Network. We seek to build a resilient network focused on food as medicine, education framework, and equity builder for all those in the Katahdin region. This project will involve the community, school, and local farmers in a transparent communication network. Farmers will leave the dinner with a sheet that details when they can sell to Katahdin Schools and at what price. This will provide confidence to farmers that their products will be appreciated and used, while also giving them a reliable purchaser that is nearby, potentially reducing transportation costs. The open lines of communication will allow them to obtain fair prices and ensure that their food is accessible. With almost 70% of Katahdin School students qualifying for free or reduced meals, this proposal would allow students of all backgrounds to try healthy local foods that they may not have access to anywhere outside of school. Currently, a student that consumes both breakfast and lunch at Katahdin Elementary School will eat anywhere from 60g to 100g of sugar at these two meals. Granted, while not all of this is added sugar, it still shows the amount of processed juices, cereals, syrup covered fruits, and lack of healthy vegetable options available. We are confident that all parties involved believe that food is medicine and that locally grown foods provide the most healing. The dinner gathering will help form authentic connections between farmers and school procurement and production staff. It will also allow procurement staff and farmers to be transparent about prices each party needs to sustain, as well as timelines and resources available to each party. Classroom lessons will help bring awareness to the need for local healthy foods and allow for equal access to food.

Developing the Network

This proposal seeks to create a network in the Katahdin region that will be sustained for years to come. Bringing farmers together with school staff will allow for sustainable relationships and transparent communication between each party. Most importantly, this project will introduce local farmers to the Maine Farm to Institution Network itself. Common goals of providing local and healthy food to students and adults alike will bind this group together. The next Food Service Director will be invited to attend Farm-to-School gatherings and procurement trainings.

The network of other grant recipients would provide value to all in the Katahdin Region and allow for knowledge sharing between parties. Katahdin Schools would greatly benefit from the stories and experiences of other parties in the Network. Resources from the Maine



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Department of Education, Maine Harvest of the Month, and all those active with Maine Farm to School Network will help bring new resources, and interest, to a historically isolated part of Maine. The opportunity to share best practices, struggles, and insight would be invaluable. The community in the Katahdin Region is looking to bring in as many resources as possible to help foster this project and the longevity of relationships within the community. This project will be a positive first step towards a larger and wider project to bring real food back to the school cafeteria.

Potential to Scale

The goals of this project are ripe with scaling opportunities. With more communication and planning, the gathering could be expanded to include multiple food service directors and a wider geographic zone of farmers invited. Many schools struggle finding a farmer to produce enough of one product, so pooling farmers products would allow for everyone to have a hand at the table and benefit. This would allow for cost savings and more efficient use of everyone's time. This could also allow local farmers to gain access to many potential purchasers at one time if the situation was reversed and the farmer had too much of one single product.

Potential scaling exists in the classroom lessons as well. FoodCorps Service Member Tyler Morin is breaking ground in the first year of a multi-year partnership between FoodCorps, and RSU 89, with additional service members likely to follow. Opportunity for a traditional home-ec classroom is a strong possibility in the following years now that faculty have seen the benefits and excitement of students for this type of learning and exposure. These classrooms exist at Katahdin Schools but would require a summer of changes to be created. A classroom for cooking would allow lessons to move from a bi-weekly basis to a weekly basis, similar to how students visit Physical Education or Art.

Baseline Budget

Matching donations will be made from FoodCorps Service Member, Tyler Morin. Tyler has received a donation from Bike Maine & The Katahdin Learning Project to be used at his discretion in food education lessons. Tyler will use \$500 of this fund to help support local food purchases needed for cooking and tastings. This will allow for a lower percentage of the applied grant to be spent on produce and more to be spent on long-term assets and the annual dinner gathering. It is understood that this grant is not primarily for food purchases and this will help offset that need. Donations of paper plates, bowls, and silverware has already been made by Katahdin Schools with their dining budget. Donations of bulk cooking oils and spices has also begun, and will continue. Katahdin School teachers have also continuously donated produce from their gardens and family members' gardens. Support from the school and community is very strong.

The fixed expenses below are tangible items that will last for years to come. The largest purchase is for a countertop convection oven to supplement the lack of home-ec classroom. The Maine Fire Marshall has confirmed that cooking in classrooms is allowed. Cutting boards, safety knives, and mixing bowls will be purchased online. Donation requests for mixing bowls may allow this expense to be omitted.

Decorations may also be omitted with partnership with Katahdin Afterschool program to have them created by students.

The variable expenses will be used up and need to be repurchased for a second year event. Originally the idea was to have a dinner at the Elementary School but Flatlanders recently built a new meeting room for events. Tyler Morin has witnessed this room being successfully used for Chamber of Commerce lunches and the price may be lower depending on the number served. Donation and discounts may also occur as this dream becomes a reality. Excess money will be used on additional produce. A small amount has been left to accommodate for fluctuation of prices, shipping costs, or other unexpected expenses.

Counter top Convection Oven that can fit standard baking sheets and has shatterproof glass \$350

Cutting boards - Dishwasher safe (x24) \$50

Metal Mixing bowls & Sealable lids - Dishwasher safe (x5 sizes) \$30

Classroom safe knives (x18) - Plastic knives that have been tested with the Afterschool program \$23

Total Fixed Expenses:\$453

Variable Expenses:

Dinner Gathering - Flatlanders Restaurant \$350

Local produce for classroom cooking \$100

Decorations and Handouts - May not be needed, possible usage of School resources \$15

Promotional Mailings to Farmers - May not be needed, possible usage of School resources \$10

Total Variable Expenses: \$475

Total Expenses: \$928

Excess Fluctuation Funds \$72

Tyler Morin's Matching Funds for Variable Expenses \$500