

2018 Michigan Good Food Summit

Breakout Session #12: Valuing and Supporting Youth Engagement for 10 Cents a Meal and Farm to School Success

1:45 pm

Speakers: Elissa Penczar, Chef Instructor, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center; Diane Conners, Senior Policy Specialist, Food and Framing, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities; Brandon Archer, Alumnus, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center; John Sharpe, Second Year Student, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center

Diane Conners: 10 Cents a Meal Program

- 15 years in the making
- Focus on building resilient communities
- Healthy Kids, Thriving Farms Publication
- Launched in Traverse Bay area schools
- Started with 1 new product (produce) a week in 1 Traverse City School
- In addition to the new product the farmers of the produce visited the school at recess to engage the kids in discussion about growing and eating the produce.
- When the kids had the opportunity to interact with the farmer they found 2 times more kids tried the produce at lunch time.
- Expanded the program into all Traverse City Schools, but it hit a ceiling of what they could do.
- Schools have \$1-1.20 a meal to spend per kid and only .20 to .30 cents of that for fruits and vegetables.
- Good Food Charter included the .10 cents a meal program in their objectives in 2010
- Program is in 3rd year of the pilot stage with the goals of testing the idea, collaborating between schools, collecting data and stories to help influence and inspire the legislatures to make it mandatory.

How the program works:

- Funding is a procurement/reimbursement
- In the program schools must record their best practices, stories and collect data to help support possible expansion of program
- There has to be an education component to the program to connect the kids with the food and farmers
- Funding is awarded depending on request and prosperity regions within the state
- Center for Regional Food Systems puts out a monthly report about the progress of the program including the number of new business connections for farmers, food hubs and distributors
- Communities have to ask for the program

Steps to get the program in your school:

- Find the people to help support the funds. Make connections with local farmers, food hubs and garden groups
- Find out who the voices are in your community that can be the liaisons to the legislatures
- Visit the 10 cents a meal website for resources and statistics
- Make sure to include the youth's voices in the process
- Senator Jeff Hansen was the head of the School Funding Sub-Committee, but is at the end of his term. Will have to educate the new senators about the program,

Elissa Penczar

- -Vocational Tech Center not directly involved in K-12 so not eligible for 10 cents a meal program.
- -Partnered with Food director at local school district to help introduce local produce into schools.
- -Partnership started 4 years ago to teach real skills in a meaningful way with a collaboration of teachers from the Hospitality and Tourism department.

Program

- 19 second year students focus on 1 Michigan product 3x a year
- 8 weeks each product
- Learn basic info and forms of the product
- Students come up with recipes using the product then conduct a professional taste test
- Students choose the best recipe that they can use to produce 4,000 meals for the local school districts
- Students are then in charge of making the 4,000 meals happen. Students take over school kitchens and teach the employees how to prepare the food.
- Every child in the district gets to taste and provide feedback.

Benefits of 10 cents a meal program:

- Develop professional relationships between organizations, farmers, food hubs, the students and community
- Schools can bring in the products with the program
- Promotes Equity
 - Access to Michigan foods and veggies
 - Know how to use the produce
 - Know where food comes from
 - Provide skills and career opportunities
 - Students are the teachers

- Allows the students to have a voice – they decide what recipe to use, speak at conferences
- Community-based approach appeals to stakeholders
 - Bring in other groups to work with
 - Kindergarteners came to kitchen to learn from tech students
 - Tech center gives classes to local organizations
 - Partner with non-profits

John Sharpe: Current Student

- Had little knowledge about where food comes from and good food choices
- Learned about the tech center program and cultivate mi
- After the experience he would like to own a restaurant because the program gave him good life experience to work in high stress environment
- Wants kids to inspire kids
- Program opened his eyes to opportunities in the food system

Brandon Archer: Program Graduate

- Went into the program with no knowledge about farm to school programs
- Took asset tours to learn about what was available to them as students in the community
- Liked that he was a voice at the table and helped make decisions
- Made good community connections
- Got to meet with leaders and politicians in the field

How to keep the 10 Cent program going?

- Grow it slow
- Growth comes from the communities asking for it and not making it a mandatory rule.

How can youth connect with law makers?

- Connect with candidates as they are campaigning
- Invite them to the school to speak
- Be an advocate not an adversary

Call to Action

Investing in local foods for kids in schools is part of Michigan's identity.

1. Bring all voices to the table and build relationships with new voices in Lansing.
2. Create a 10 Cents a meal network.

3. Bring partners to the table with you to talk to the legislature.

Visit website for tools to help support your program to legislature and the community. Website also has K-8 curriculum available for the program to help introduce idea to teachers.

Questions:

1. *Are you available for consulting? Yes*
2. *Is there a connection between the culinary school and the ag program within your school? Some. We use some of the items they grow.*
3. *If you are not part of one of the funded areas, how do you get the program in your area? Get local voices talking about it then speak up to the legislature.*
4. *What if you want to get started but want to head off some of the possible limitations to the program to better sell the program to the community? Get the schools to do small things that will help set them up for success in the application process. Make connections within the community. Utilize resources on 10 cent webpage, Mi Farm to Institution and Center for Regional Food Systems.*