

Champlain Food Committee Minutes of November 3, 2008 Meeting

Present: Erin Hanley, Parm Padgett, Sharon McConnell, Colleen Cowell, Gwen Causer, Leslie Colomb, Nancy Pruitt, Bobby Young, Bonnie Acker, Thomas Case, Betsy Rosenbluth

Great turnout at the meeting! We talked about a lot of different things, some of which are listed below. But we will focus on the following:

1) Involving Kids in Making and Trying Healthy Foods

4th and 5th graders are currently doing a unit on Healthy Kids—Healthy Neighborhoods, and are working with students at Barnes. We talked about having the kids make a healthy snack, to be served in the classrooms at snack time, or a sample of food to be served on the salad bar several times. Lots of opportunities to incorporate math skills, surveying, graphing, etc., when increasing recipes, surveying students about which version of foods they like better, etc. Possible activities include: testing different hummus recipes, salad dressings, dips for vegetables, making yogurt parfaits with granola and fruit. The point is to get the kids involved in making foods with more fresh, whole and local ingredients, and then interesting them and other students in eating them.

Thomas Case and Arethusa Farm also have a quantity of Vt. Cranberry Beans that still need to be threshed and winnowed. He is willing to save this task for 4/5 students to do, if they are interested. Idea is that the beans could be incorporated into this Healthy Kids project, maybe by making a rice and beans dish that could be sampled on the salad bar. Bobby also has a couple of bags of beans that need threshing.

Colleen will talk to 4/5 team and teachers and see what they would be interested in.

Food Committee will ask PTO for funds to support such projects.

At the next meeting, we'll figure out how else the committee can help, either by sourcing ingredients, helping to find recipes, helping coordinate with kitchen staff and Doug Davis.

2) Bring Food Service Staff into these conversations.

Bobby will talk to Doug about bringing Champlain Food Service workers in to talk with us about some of these issues. We can ask them what they observe in the cafeteria every day. What foods are popular and working well on the salad bar? What can we do to support their work? How might they help us move toward getting more whole, fresh and local food in the cafeteria and interesting the kids in it? What do we need to be aware of when contemplating working in the kitchen to do food prep, i.e. timing with staff, storage issues, etc?

It would also be good to bring them into some of these activities we're talking about, the food-making by students, the threshing and winnowing, to show them some of the background, and get them interested early on.

3) ReBrand the Zucchini Bread?

People are very happy to have the homemade breads as part of the breakfast/snack offering. But, in an effort to make it more appealing to students, we're wondering if we could jazz it up a little, or rename it. Perhaps cook it in a sheet pan, and cut into squares. Throw a few apples in it, put a little cream cheese drizzle on top, or powdered sugar, and call it a fruit cake. It is really good, but we're wondering if the name, and the word zucchini are making the kids unlikely to try it. Bobby will discuss this with Doug.

Other Ideas or Notes of Interest:

Could incorporate an art project into the food projects the kids are working on. Bonnie might be able to help with that, perhaps working with Jenny Peck, the Champlain Art teacher. Should photograph the threshing and winnowing process, if that happens.

Send home a handout for parents about what new food their kids made (or tried) at school this week, along with easy recipes for how to make it at home.

PTO could sponsor workshops on cooking with whole, fresh and local foods.

At multi-cultural dinner—make a big pot of something to contribute to the pot-luck, made with “whole, local and fresh” ingredients that highlights the foods the kids have been testing and sampling. Take a few minutes at the dinner to have Bobby or a farmer talk about, or demo, how they prepared the dish and offer parents some simple techniques or recipes that they can make at home.

Barnes is having community suppers twice a year. They recently had over 400 folks attend the last one. A delicious lentil kale soup was a huge hit.

Taste test different carrots, local and not, to see if the kids can detect any differences.

Healthy Living and City Market both have staff and programs we could take advantage of when looking at any of these ideas. Shelburne Farms runs a great workshop at City Market that goes from milling flour to making flatbread.

Look into coordinating with Erin, after-school coordinator, about having some whole food snacks made by the after school cooking class, which could be served the following day.

If we pursue the bean project, could make it multicultural, learning the names of different beans in Spanish, tasting different kinds of beans used as a base in different cultures.

Next Meeting: We will try to meet with Colleen and her team. Time and location to be announced.

