April 2013

ALFI School and Community Orchard Project

ATLANTA, Georgia - This spring, the Atlanta Local Food Initiative partnered with five schools and community gardens to install edible orchards that will feed, teach, and inspire students and the surrounding neighborhood for years to come.

In the past three years, ALFI has planted eight orchards (seven at schools) that connect students, teachers, and the community to the local food movement. This year, volunteers planted apples, pears, plums, persimmons, paw-paws, blueberries, raspberries, serviceberries, kiwis, muscadines, and more! These trees, vines, and bushes will continue to grow and nourish the schools for a long time.

For more information about incorporating fruit trees, vines, and

Calendar

April 25
USDA Funding Webinar

May 3
USDA Farm to School Census Deadline

June 10-13
TN School Nutrition Association Annual Conference Gatlinburg, TN

October 17-20
SC School Nutrition Association Annual Conference Myrtle Beach, SC

April 15-18, 2014
National Farm to Cafeteria Conference Austin, TX

Please send upcoming events to: brittany@asapconnections.org
berry bushes into your school garden, check out this handy tool from ALFI. It includes lists of trees and bushes that are fruiting for summer school and back-to-school time in the fall, suggested fruits for fences, and more!

**USDA Representative Visits TN High School**

JACKSON, Tennessee - A greenhouse at a local high school got a USDA inspection in early April.

Dr. Janey Thornton, USDA Deputy undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, visited Liberty Technology Magnet High School to observe the Jackson-Madison County School System’s innovative Farm to Tray program.

Farm to Tray is a project that’s purpose is to take fresh produce grown in Liberty’s greenhouses and supply it to the district’s school cafeterias. Liberty is currently providing lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers to eight area schools. To date, the program has supplied 1,664 heads of hydroponic lettuce, 296 cucumbers and 320 tomatoes to these schools.

Dr. Thornton was shown how the district is meeting new healthier meal requirements by offering fruits, vegetable, whole grains and low fat items. Calorie restrictions are also a part of the healthier eating effort.

"Sometimes, we underestimate our students. Students are much more aware of what’s going on and are making better choices," said Dr. Janey Thornton of the USDA. "In many, many instances more than we are giving them credit for."

The secretary also had lunch with the students and got an up close look at the magnet school’s hydroponic greenhouse that produces local fruits and vegetables for the students.

**News From USDA: Farm to School Census**

USDA is doing the Farm to School math! The call to action is simple – whether a school district has participated in Farm to School activities or not, USDA would like for you to complete the Farm to School Census.

For information on completing the census prior to May 3rd please visit the USDA Farm to School Census.

**2013 NFSN Annual Meeting**

Interested in learning more about the future of the National Farm to School Network and how you can get involved? Southeast state leads will be attending the National Farm to School Network annual meeting May 19-21 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Make sure to contact your state lead to get your questions answered!

**State Leads**

- **Florida** - Erica Field, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- **Georgia** - Erin Croom, Georgia Organics
- **Kentucky** - Tina Garland, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
- **North Carolina** - Laurie Stradley, University of North Carolina Asheville
- **South Carolina** - Holly Herring, Dept. of Health and Environmental Control
- **Tennessee** - Phyllis Hedges, Tennessee Department of Education

**Southeast Regional Lead Agency**

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) - Emily Jackson and Brittany Wager

**Get on the Map!**

Farm to School programs are expanding across the country, and you are part of the movement!

Whether you are hosting farm field trips, sourcing local product, or working away in a school garden, we want to hear about it.

Share your story and get your program on the map. Join the
ASHEVILLE, North Carolina - On April 9, ASAP’s Growing Minds Farm to School Program hosted a meet and greet for Western North Carolina produce distributors and institutional buyers. Attendees gathered at an area farm to enjoy a local BBQ dinner on a warm spring evening.

Child Nutrition Directors, hospitals, and child care centers gathered to learn about how to promote the local produce they are serving in their institutions. Produce distributors in attendance were able to network with potential buyers and see first hand the demand for local products.

Buyers and distributors commented that not only was it beneficial for them to network with each other, but that it was also a great opportunity to learn from their peers about different ways to promote local food and farms.

The event was funded by ASAP’s USDA Farm to School grant which aims to bring more locally grown food into the existing distributor network that serves schools in Western North Carolina.

Featured Farm to School Children’s Book

_Saving Strawberry Farm_

by Deborah Hopkinson

Now that spring has arrived in full force, are you featuring local strawberries? Check out this Farm to School book about a strawberry farm!

In the hot summer of 1933, a young boy helps to rally his town to save the local strawberry farm from a bank auction. Set in the Depression, the book focuses on simple pleasures like homemade lemonade and the importance of community. It also features a description of the Depression era in the back of the book.

Thank you for your work,