

LUNCH LOVE COMMUNITY

what you'll find inside!

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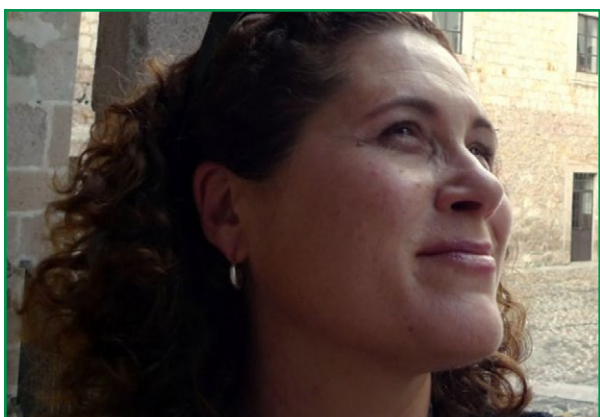
Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

Use your film screening of **LUNCH LOVE COMMUNITY** as a tool for educating your community about ways to improve your school district's lunch program and food policies, and the importance of connecting kids with the food they eat. This guide offers some background information, helpful tips & discussion questions for an informative, rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit lunchlovecommunity.bullfrogcommunities.com/lunch_resources

About LUNCH LOVE COMMUNITY

LUNCH LOVE COMMUNITY is a beautiful and engaging story of how a diverse group of pioneering parents and food advocates came together to tackle food reform and food justice in the schools and neighborhoods of Berkeley, CA. Through a mosaic of twelve inter-connecting short documentaries, the film explores food and education, children and health, and citizens making democratic change. This is a rich and multi-dimensional story of passion, creative energy, and idealism—a project linking the ways we teach our children to eat and understand food to the traditional passing of powerful values from one generation to the next.



About the Director

Helen De Michiel is an American director, producer, media arts advocate, strategist and author whose work includes film, television, multimedia installation and digital transmedia. As producer, director and writer, her work includes the dramatic feature film *Tarantella*. Her documentary work includes *Turn Here, Sweet Corn*, broadcast on the PBS series POV in 1993, and *The Gender Chip Project*, created in an innovative participatory process with a cohort of young women studying science, technology, engineering and math. De Michiel was a member of the Peabody Awards Board of Jurors from 2001 to 2007.

LUNCHLOVECOMMUNITY

Introductory Section

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

About *Lunch Love Community*

In 12 short episodes, this documentary story explores how a diverse group of pioneering parents, educators, advocates and food professionals came together to tackle food system reform and food justice in their Berkeley, California schools and neighborhoods.

How to Use *Lunch Love Community*

Lunch Love Community and the accompanying discussion pages are designed so that you can use them in many different ways:

- If you are a high school teacher or college professor, you may use *Lunch Love Community* to explore a range of topics – including child nutrition, equity and justice, citizen participation, public policy, or school reform – for your economics, education, food studies, health, political science, sociology, social studies, or sociology courses.
- If you teach film or media studies, you may use *Lunch Love Community* to explore documentary and digital storytelling, or community engagement models.
- If you are a parent, child advocate, or community developer, you may use *Lunch Love Community* to spark a community conversation or to incite change around school food, children's health, or food equity in your area.
- The 12 films may be used alone or together, depending on your time and goals. You may want to show the entire series of films as a comprehensive case study of one community's food reform efforts. Alternatively, you may choose one or more films that more specifically meet your course or program objectives.
- The discussion page for each film offers a number of entry points for exploring the themes presented in the film. You may use some or all of the questions to guide a group discussion on the themes. You may also select specific questions as writing prompts for individual reflection.

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

We Hunger For....

Synopsis

This film introduces the *Lunch Love Community* series and explores the idea that food is more than just nourishment. Through the different perspectives of individuals striving toward food equity and to change school food in Berkeley, California, the film shows how food also feeds or embodies such needs as justice, change, success, experience, love, and connection.

Run Time

7:43 minutes

Discussion

- One of the speakers in this film says that when we're talking about food, we are actually talking about a lot of other issues, too, including things like justice or connection. Which of the food issues raised in the film resonated most with you?
- Author Sara Miles is quoted in the film as saying, "Anywhere there's food, spirit and matter intersect." What do you think she means by this? Do you agree with her?
- How has this film expanded or altered your definition of food?
- What do people hunger for in our community? How is food related to that need?
- In the film, the chef says that when we feed each other, we're keeping each other alive, making it the most important thing we can do. How might our communities be different if we made it a priority to feed each other better?
- What factors influence what you eat in a given day? What steps could you take to focus on the many other ways food can feed you – like connection, love, and success?
- If you could write a new food policy for your school or community, what would you include?
- What can we do to promote better food quality and food access in our schools and in our community?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Flamin' Hot

Synopsis

Visiting a middle school where food is used as a cross-curriculum theme to teach science, math, nutrition, and art, this film shows students involved in two hands-on activities: burning cheese puffs to time the rate of consumption, and examining the nutrition labels on chip bags.

Run Time

3:37 minutes

Discussion

- The image of the burning cheese puff is quite dramatic. What might students take away from this experiment?
- At King Middle School, the teachers have made a concerted effort to infuse food as a theme for teaching science, math, nutrition, and art. What do you think might be the value of a cross-curriculum theme like food? Is that something the schools in our community should consider?
- Teacher Phoebe Tanner mentions cheese puffs and sodas as nutritional issues for her students. Why should schools be concerned about what their students eat or drink? What role do you think schools should play in promoting healthful behaviors?
- As teacher Beth Sonnenberg described, information and knowledge don't necessarily affect behavior. How does being aware of the consequences of our choices affect behavior? What do you think it would take to change kids' and adults' food behaviors?
- In the film, students look at the nutrition labels of various kinds of chips. Do you think nutrition labels provide adequate information for making healthful food choices? What else would be beneficial? Who should be responsible for providing accurate, nonbiased information about products that affect our health?
- Should schools consider banning certain unhealthful foods on campus so that they aren't sold and kids can't bring them in their lunches? If so, what foods would you ban?

- Researchers are finding neural similarities between drug addiction and problem eating behavior. Processed foods containing fat, salt, and sugar can cause classic signs of addiction including cravings, loss of control, and preoccupation with the food. How do you think our society, our community, or our school should respond to this new information?
- What strategies does the filmmaker use to allow viewers to draw their own conclusions about the healthiness of snack foods?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

The Parent Factor

Synopsis

Parents who were involved in developing a new district food policy in their community in the 1990s describe their motivation for taking on this work, and some of the challenges they faced.

Run Time

5:51 minutes

Discussion

- One of the activists in the film describes how they tried to identify the top 10 things that would make their school better—and found that behavior was #1 and food in the cafeteria was #2. If we were to ask people to name the top things that would make things better for everyone in our community or school, what do you think would make the list?
- One parent in the film pointed out that their neighborhood has nine liquor stores and only one grocery store, and another that children feel respected when served scratch-made school lunches. Looking around our school or community, what messages might children receive about what we value?
- Even in Berkeley, which we often think of as progressive and innovative, the parents had to work hard for years to make change. If we wanted to improve school food in our community, what barriers might we need to overcome?
- One parent says that as a mother, your child's health is the most important thing to you. What do you think is the most important thing for children to have or get?
- For what issue in our community or school would you be willing to work for several years to improve?
- The parents in the film took on different aspects of the project according to their strengths and interests. What strengths might you bring to a school change or community improvement effort?
- If you were asked to rename this film, what name would you give it?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Wanda

Synopsis

In this story, senior cook Wanda McAfee-Conart talks about her work in a school district's nutritional services facility. She points out ways it is important both to her and to the children served.

Run Time

3:13 minutes

Discussion

- What do you think Wanda McAfee-Conart means when she says you have to nurture food?
- How can you tell when something is cooked with love? How might it affect school meals to be cooked with love?
- McAfee-Conart talks about the importance of presenting food so that it is most appealing, something we might not think of when it comes to school meals. What suggestions do you have for improving the presentation of school meals in our school or community?
- What do you think is the relationship between a school's nutrition services and its educational function? How does each support the other? Is one more important than the other?
- What makes McAfee-Conart's job rewarding to her? What qualities do *you* think are most important in a career?
- The film touches on the physical labor involved in preparing fresh school meals. Do you think our society should place a greater value on work such as this? In what ways would things be different if it did?
- What affect might it have – if any – if children got to know the people responsible for preparing their school meals?
- One issue that many school districts face is that they no longer have kitchens or food preparation equipment, and instead simply heat up and serve pre-processed foods. What small step could we take toward fresher, more healthful lunches in our schools– no matter the school kitchen situation in our community?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Feeding the Body Politic

Synopsis

Several of the activists who instigated a district-wide school lunch initiative in the 1990s look back on their experiences. This film illustrates what can happen when everyday citizens share a vision and work together to create change.

Run Time

9:44 minutes

Discussion

- What's a memory you have—fond or otherwise—of school cafeteria food? (It might be from your own experience, or a family member or friend.) How does your experience shape your perspective on school food?
- What responsibility do you think schools should have for addressing food-related health issues like Type 2 diabetes and childhood obesity?
- School lunch chef Ann Cooper calls it success that kids are eating school meals prepared with whole grains, organic produce, no chocolate milk, and no desserts. How would you define a successful school meal program?
- In the beginning, people scoffed at the citizen activists' vision of kids growing, preparing, and eating healthful food at school. If you wanted to change the school meal program in our community, what criticisms do you think you would face? How would you respond to them?
- In just one decade, the citizen activists were successful not only at changing the school food in their district, but at inspiring new national school lunch policies. Why and how might their idea have gone "viral"? What were the steps that they went through to make these changes happen? What lessons can we draw from their success?
- What does this story tell us about politics at the local level in our country? What does it take to make change and sustain it over time?
- The film highlights the passion and tenacity of the citizen activists. What do you think it would take for our community to move forward on this issue?

- Beebo Turman describes in the film how she had never been an activist before, but that school food grabbed her interest because it was about healthy kids learning better. What issue facing our schools or our community might have the power to grab you in the same way?
- What is one thing you could do this week or this month to share with others your views about school food or another issue you think is important?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

The Whole World in a Small Seed

Synopsis

In this story, teacher Rivka Mason talks about the value of gardening as a learning experience for students, and how even a single seed or plant can be a rich teaching resource.

Run Time

4:07 minutes

Discussion

- The film ends with teacher Rivka Mason saying that the school garden is definitely making a difference. What difference do you think she's referring to? How might school gardens make a difference for students in our community?
- This film is titled, "The Whole World in a Small Seed." What images, thoughts, or feelings does this metaphor evoke?
- How prevalent are school gardens in our community? How could we find out?
- How has time in a garden or out in nature impacted your life? Do you think it should be the job of schools to provide students such experiences?
- The film presents some positive learning outcomes of school gardens. What might be possible downsides of school gardens for students?
- Teachers and schools are under a lot of pressure to make every instructional minute count – often with state and local standards and high-stakes testing in the mix. What would you say to someone who questions spending time and resources on school gardens?
- Mason says that most school gardens start with one parent, one teacher, or one class. Is there anything our community as a whole could do to promote more school gardens, rather than relying on the energy and interest of individuals?
- One issue that people often raise about school gardens is that they require expertise that the school staff may not have. How might we involve gardeners or other experts in the community to create and maintain school gardens? What organizations or other community resources might be willing to provide information, advice, or supplies?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

If They Cook It, They Will Eat It

Synopsis

In this revealing glimpse into an elementary school's student cooking program, the teachers explain and show the benefits of teaching students and their parents how to prepare affordable, delicious food.

Run Time

5:06 minutes

Discussion

- What value do you see in teaching children cooking skills during the school day?
- Cooking teacher Kathy Russell searched for connections with the curriculum, incorporating science, math, and English into the cooking lessons. Do you think schools should teach cooking only if it fits with other subjects, or should it be taught for its own sake?
- Brenna Ritch says that she loves giving children a voice and the skills to be advocates for their own health. How much of a voice do you think children should have in terms of their health?
- The film points out that parents are floored when they realize that even their young students are using box graters, serrated knives, and juicers. In general, how do we find the right balance between keeping children safe and letting them explore new things?
- Russell points out that cooking and eating are sensual experiences, and that when we keep children away from food preparation, they are missing out on part of the enjoyment. How do you think incorporating the senses into more learning experiences at school or home would be beneficial?
- Russell tells parents, "If they cook it, they will eat it." What other examples can you think of where involving children directly in a task usually reserved for adults helps them to appreciate the work, and enables them to become more capable?

- As the film suggests, some parents may not know themselves how to prepare and cook food. In what ways could that reality be impacting families, schools, or communities all over the country?
- What might be the benefits of families learning together? What classes might our school or community offer for parents and kids that would be both fun and educational?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Just Produce/Food Justice

Synopsis

This film is a portrait of two youth development workers who supervise a program bringing fresh, organic produce to people who don't otherwise have access to it. Exploring the topic of food justice, it raises such issues as the health disparity between people with different income levels, how some neighborhoods have become "food deserts" where fresh food is not available, and how to involve young people in the solutions.

Run Time

13:20 minutes

Discussion

- David McClellan defines food justice as everybody having opportunities to fill their stomachs with nourishing, healthy food. Who do you think should be responsible for ensuring that everyone has access to healthful food, grocery stores, community gardens, and so on?
- What assumptions about food, youth, and other things does the film bring to light? In what ways do assumptions like these help or hinder our understanding of others?
- What issues do you see around food justice in our community? How might they be the same or different from those identified in the film?
- The film looks at young people who are building awareness of how health and economic disparities often go hand-in-hand with the lack of affordable, healthy food. How could we increase awareness about this concern in our community or beyond?
- The Farm Fresh Choice program involves young people in raising food and selling it at wholesale prices in neighborhoods where fresh produce is scarce. What would be the benefits of a program like this in our community? What might be the challenges? How do you see young people getting involved in food system reform?
- In many communities convenience stores are often very close to schools and, as the film points out, many students buy their lunches and snacks at these stores. Is there anything we can do to promote healthier offerings, or to encourage young people toward healthier choices?

- What can we learn from young people about food? What can we learn from elders? What are ways we might join together young people and elders to—as Jonathan Hill in the film puts it— “fight the same fight”?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

The Labor of Lunch

Synopsis

Through scenes of food service staff preparing a meal, and statistics about both a local school lunch program and the national program, this film offers a visual reflection on what it takes to provide fresh and healthful school lunches to students.

Run Time

4:36 minutes

Discussion

- What was the most interesting thing about the lunch preparation process depicted in the film? Did anything surprise you? What does the film reveal about the labor involved in making freshly prepared school food every day?
- This film has no speaking or narration – only video and written statistics about school lunch programs. Why might the filmmaker have chosen this format for the film? Which of the statistics presented in the film stood out for you?
- If you could talk to one of the food service employees in the film, what would you ask him or her?
- The old adage says “There’s no such thing as a free lunch,” and as the film indicates, each lunch costs about \$4.90 to make. What benefits do school meal programs provide students? Families? Schools? Communities?
- Many school meal programs break even by using lower cost pre-prepped or processed foods. Do you think it would be worth paying more for children to receive meals from fresh ingredients?
- The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 limits the calories and starches school meals may contain, and requires more fruits and vegetables than previously. When it went into effect, some high school students went on strike because they didn’t like the new meals. How can we make school lunches both healthy and appealing to kids?

- One study found that over half of the produce required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act may end up in the trash. Some people say it would be cheaper—and create less waste—if students were given small rewards (like a nickel or a raffle ticket for prizes) to eat fruits and vegetables. What do you think of “bribing” kids to eat more healthfully? How else might we encourage healthy choices?
- What is the status of the school meal program in our community? How could you become more involved?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Feed and Be Fed

Synopsis

This film features school lunch chef and food reform activist Ann Cooper, who helped to turn around a district's school lunch program, making it more nutritious and more environmentally sustainable. It highlights her motivations for advocating for healthful food in schools.

Run Time

8:53 minutes

Discussion

- What is something from the film that surprised you? Disturbed you? Inspired you?
- What characteristics does Ann Cooper exhibit as an activist? What does it take to be a great leader and reformer? Do you think it's necessary to have a leader of her caliber in order for a program to be successful?
- Cooper cites the Centers for Disease Control as saying that one-third of whites and one-half of African-Americans and Hispanics born in 2000 will get diabetes in their lifetime, many before graduating high school. If this were a reality, what impact would it have for our schools? Our community?
- At the beginning of the film, Cooper says, "The reason we have to change the way we feed our kids is that we are actually killing our kids with food." She then wonders what it will take for adults to change what they feed children. How would you respond to her?
- Cooper raises the issue of the achievement gap – the disparity in academic performance between white students and students of color – and suggests that nourishing food can help students learn better. What other tools might be used to raise achievement, in addition to providing nourishing food at school?
- What is sustainability? What connections do you think there are between sustainability and school food? What would it take for the school meal program in our community to be more sustainable?
- Cooper says replicating the Berkeley school lunch program is a matter of passion and priority – someone really caring and the administration making it a priority. What can we do (personally or as a group) to inspire more passion around this issue or to make it more of a priority in our community?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

Imperfection Salad

Synopsis

Charlotte Biltekoff, professor and author of *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health*, discusses the history and cultural and moral implications of dietary reform movements, and points out that when we are talking about changing other people's diets, often we are not just talking about food.

Run Time

5:44 minutes

Discussion

- What's one message that stands out for you from the film?
- What can we learn from the history of dietary reform in this country? In what ways has the discussion about diet changed since the late 1800s? In what ways has it stayed the same? What issues facing our society today might relate to this history?
- Charlotte Biltekoff raises the point that when people talk about issues like reforming school lunches or improving children's food choices, they are usually not just talking about food. What other hidden assumptions, social ideals, or truths might be underlying these conversations?
- Do you agree or disagree with the idea that food is an important way to address larger social problems? What evidence can you cite to support your position?
- Why do you think the filmmaker chose the title "Imperfection Salad" for this film? (Hint: It plays off of Laura Shapiro's book *Perfection Salad* about the beginnings of food reform and the scientific modernization of the American diet)
- What role, if any, do you believe schools should play in teaching children what or how to eat? Who do you think should decide what foods or behaviors are presented as healthy?
- Biltekoff points out that people who are targets of dietary reform feel judged and may resist others' efforts and advice. How can our society address public and personal health concerns related to diet and health, without alienating anyone?

- As the film suggests, diversity and culture may be involved when people don't eat the way we think is right or correct. Can you give an example or a story illustrating this?
- What is one thing you can do this week or this month to apply an insight you learned from this film?

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Discussion Page

Prepared by Leslie Comnes

But Is It Replicable?

Synopsis

A former school superintendent and other nutrition services professionals address the question of whether the Berkeley school food program is possible in other districts, and give suggestions for starting slow and garnering community support.

Run Time

6:38 minutes

Discussion

- Former superintendent Michelle Lawrence says that kids can only learn academically when their social, emotional, and physical wellbeing is being addressed. What responsibility do you think schools should have for the whole child? Where do we draw the line of what schools should and shouldn't be concerned with?
- Why might school food be an issue now in our society? What do you think is going on in a larger context?
- As the film points out, part of the reason the Berkeley program was ultimately successful is that the community as a whole is into tasty, healthful food. What characteristics or issues are most important to our community? For what might parents and other community members be motivated to fight?
- One issue that Berkeley's program helps to address is the current epidemic of type 2 diabetes and obesity associated with poor nutrition. How much of a problem are these issues in our community? What are or should our schools be doing to address them?
- As mentioned in the film, if a school meal program is not self-supporting (meaning that all the costs are covered by revenue), the extra money must come from the general fund. What might be the value of taking some money out of the classroom and putting it into food services? How much money, if any, should schools use this way?
- Several of the speakers said that whether the program is replicable depends on how much the district backs it. Given the specific challenges our district or community faces, what might it take to change our schools' food program?

- When talking with representatives from another district, the director of nutritional services recommended starting slowly. Some baby steps mentioned were buying organic milk, or serving fresh fruit instead of canned. What baby step could we encourage our school district to consider?
- What could we do to raise community support for a school food or other change initiative?