



OCTOBER 24, 2012

healthy + sustainable + affordable + fair

[www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org)

Center for Science in the Public Interest

GUIDE FOR  
SCHOOL ORGANIZERS

Winner of  
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**2012 Greenie Award**



# healthy + sustainable + affordable + fair

Dear Food Day Leader,

Food Day is a nationwide celebration and movement toward more healthy, affordable, and sustainable food that takes place annually on October 24. In 2011, the inaugural Food Day was celebrated with more than 2,300 events in all 50 states. Many major school districts—and many more individual classrooms—got involved, including Boston, Los Angeles, Boulder County (CO), Portland (OR), and more. Please help make Food Day 2012 an even bigger success!

With sky-high rates of childhood obesity—at the same time that millions of children have limited access to healthy, fresh food—the Food Day effort is especially relevant to children and schools. Food Day's supporters include the National Education Association's Health Information Network, National Assembly on School-Based Health Care, several state education departments, and numerous school districts. This year, Food Day is partnering with the [President's Challenge Program](#) to help encourage families and children to develop healthy lifestyles and support First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation.

This guide will provide you with the tools you need for organizing successful Food Day activities in your school's classrooms, lunchroom, or garden, and tips on improving school food policies. When considering how to incorporate Food Day activities into schools, remember to invite the entire system to get involved—from administrators and teachers to school nutrition services directors and physical education specialists—and don't forget students! By working together, you can become one strong, united voice educating and involving students and advocating for change.

To get inspired by last year's Food Day, check out the 2011 report with [highlights](#) of what happened around the country, and watch our [video](#) about the ways people across the country celebrated Food Day.

Food Day is your day, and it will be as successful as you make it. Please contact us for assistance as you develop your plans: [foodday@cspinet.org](mailto:foodday@cspinet.org) or 202-777-8392.

Good luck and thanks for joining us!

The Food Day Team



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## OUR VISION

Food Day is a nationwide celebration and movement toward more healthy, affordable, and sustainable food. Food Day was created by the nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). More than 100 national groups and 80+ Advisory Board members help raise awareness of food issues and strengthen the food movement. With Food Day, we can celebrate what we have and join our forces to achieve what we need

Food Day is not just a day; it's a catalyst for healthier diets and a better food system. Let's use all this energy to make a meaningful and long-lasting difference!



## FOOD DAY PRIORITIES

### Food Day is: Healthy + Sustainable + Affordable + Fair

Our national priorities address overarching concerns within the food system and give common ground for building the movement. We intentionally keep our platform broad and cultivate Food Day in order to:

- Promote safer, healthier diets
- Support sustainable and organic farms
- Reduce hunger
- Reform factory farms to protect the environment and animals
- Support fair working conditions for food and farm workers

Schools are ideal places for food education, as making healthy choices has gotten more difficult, and our children are especially vulnerable to junk-food marketing and poor food choices. Healthy and appropriate eating habits in children will impact their weight and health as adults. In addition, balanced and healthy school meals improve school performance and behavior. We hope that Food Day will inspire actions to advocate for local, state, and federal policies and programs that promote healthy eating and obesity prevention among children and youth.

## FOOD DAY 2011 IN SCHOOLS

Hundreds of schools participated in Food Day activities in 2011 in ways that included taste tests introducing children to new, healthy options; nutrition lessons; cooking demonstrations; lectures; workshops; conferences; and health fairs. Special Food Day menus were served in Detroit, Denver, Boston, Portland, and Boulder County public schools. Here are some events from around the country:

### Halls of Shame Bentonville, Arkansas

Students at nine public schools created “Junk Food Halls of Shame” collages to highlight marketing of junk to children and held a contest to increase the number of students eating a healthy lunch at their school. The prize was a healthy meal prepared by a professional chef.





### **Rabbit Creek Elementary Anchorage, Alaska**

Students at Rabbit Creek School in South Anchorage participated in a blind taste test comparing locally grown carrots to out-of-state carrots. They judged the Alaskan carrots to be superior by a two-to-one margin.

### **School Menu Transformation Initiative Los Angeles, California**

Jonathan Fielding, the Director of Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, along with Chef Giovanni Delrosario of Chefs Move to Schools (a program of *Let's Move!*), visited elementary schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District to talk to children about the importance of eating a healthy breakfast. Cooking demonstrations showcased the school-menu-transformation initiative aimed to emphasize more healthy and sustainable foods for students.

### **Encouraging “Smart Choices” on Food Day Boston, Massachusetts**

Boston Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services served a special local menu on October 24 featuring locally grown apples, butternut squash, and green beans as part of a healthy meal of baked pollock with lemon-butter, paprika, and parsley. The Health and Wellness Department sent Food Day posters to all school principals to publicize the day and made available a special “Smart Choices” toolkit with strategies and educational tools for healthy eating.

### **Students Talk Policy Raleigh, North Carolina**

Nearly 200 community representatives from across North Carolina, including students from Raleigh's Exploris Middle School, met for a conference at the State Legislative Building to discuss ways to increase access to, and consumption of healthy, local fruits and vegetables. Participants collected over 1,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to donate to food-insecure families.

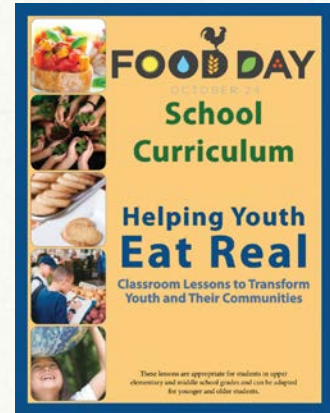


## **Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+)**

This year Food Day is partnering with the President's Challenge Program to ask Americans to get active, eat real every day, and help encourage families and children to develop healthy lifestyles. To support First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation, PALA+ calls for a weekly healthy eating goal and 60 minutes per day of physical activity for kids and 30 minutes per day for adults, five days a week for six out of eight weeks. Help us promote the Challenge ([www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org)) in the weeks leading up to Food Day.

## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Professors at Teachers College, Columbia University, created a unique Food Day school curriculum. The 88-page Food Day curriculum for upper elementary and middle school grads offers five lessons designed to teach children the importance of eating real, fresh food; cutting back on processed foods; and advocating for a healthier community. The lessons can be easily adapted for older or younger students. Teachers are encouraged to use the curriculum on the week of October 24. You can download the curriculum for free at [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org).



**“I cannot say enough about this amazing series! The Food Day curriculum really sparked engagement in my students. I have seen many students who are typically bored and under-stimulated, transform into engaged, participatory, and enthusiastic students when I use this curriculum. It’s so visual and user-friendly.”**

**— Jessica Zirn, nutrition educator, who taught the curriculum to students in Madison, Wisconsin**

The students make Eat Real Action Plans and learn to compare whole and processed foods, choose a more plant-based diet, and reduce the portions of foods with excess sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. In an interactive way, they master how to use USDA’s My Plate when planning their meals. They learn about challenges to “Eating Real” and create an advocacy project to make it easier for their community to “Eat Real.”

Although the five lessons have been designed to be taught in sequence around the time of Food Day, you can use them individually and at any time. We highly encourage you to teach the lessons the week of October 24th! Imagine the impact we can have if schools across the country teach the lessons at the same time and advocate within their districts for positive change. You will find the instructions in the curriculum for connecting the lessons to Common Core State Standards and to Science Education Standards for students.





**"The Food Day curriculum is powerful in its simplicity. It provides tools that teachers can use to promote Food Day goals throughout the school year."**

**— Chef Tim Cipriano, New Haven Public Schools,  
New Haven, Connecticut**

The following is a sampling of other suggested Food Day activities in schools. Many of the activities can be adapted to any educational level or situation. Be creative!

- Have a healthy-food drawing competition or create a class mural of students' favorite fruits and vegetables. Follow up with a discussion of why eating fruits and vegetables is healthier.
- Build a "Junk Food Hall of Shame" and "Super Food Hall of Fame." Have students cut out junk-food advertisements in magazines or bring in food packages, and display items.
- Host a classroom tasting of farm- or garden-fresh fruits, veggies, and herbs.
- Have a grade-wide or school-wide super-food or junk-food drawing/ coloring competition for healthy snack prizes.
- Have a classroom poster or essay contest about food and farms.
- Take a field trip to a farm, pumpkin patch, or apple orchard.
- Have a school-wide assembly and invite farmers and/or chefs to talk and do demonstrations.
- Organize a petition to remove any junk food and soda from vending machines.
- Host a cooking competition involving local chefs and student helpers.
- Take a field trip to get hands-on experience at an urban garden or local health-oriented restaurant.
- Evaluate the de facto nutrition policy of the individual school or school district and petition for improvements.
- Organize a debate about food, agriculture, or the environment, either in the classroom or in an assembly.
- Coordinate a research project for students around food, agriculture, or biology on or around Food Day.
- Coordinate with other subject areas (health, PE, science, English, other classes) for integrated lessons and projects (e.g., essay competitions about science topics, guest speakers, etc.).
- Show a film to your students and have a discussion afterwards. Check out the Resources section of [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org) for a Film Screening Guide.

## FOOD DAY IN THE CAFETERIA



“The best part about Food Day was having a national campaign to tie into. It was challenging to convince the school food-service directors to prepare a locally sourced meal, but when they got the Food Day materials and the fancy poster, it made it click for them...”

— *Lindsay Howard,*  
*Montana Food Corps*

With schools implementing new school meal standards this fall, Food Day is a perfect tie-in to highlight successes and support the work toward healthier school food options. Use the momentum to improve school meals and help schools meet the new USDA standards.

Some ways to celebrate Food Day in the cafeteria are:

- Serve a special cafeteria meal featuring local foods.
- Celebrate with local/seasonal produce.
- Introduce taste and food education activities in the cafeteria.
- Organize cooking demonstrations and recipe swaps.
- Use the day to expand a salad bar. Check out the Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools program ([www.saladbars2schools.org](http://www.saladbars2schools.org))
- Start a Farm to School program ([www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)).



**National Farm to School Network (NFSN)** connects schools and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias; improving student nutrition; providing agriculture, health, and nutrition education opportunities; supporting local and regional food systems. Food Day and NFSN partner again this October for the second annual National Farm to School Month, and you can join a variety of exciting activities, including:

- “Farm to School Counts,” a campaign for schools, school districts, and Farm to School practitioners to track the dollar value of local foods served and the number of children participating in educational activities during the month of October.
- A “Theme of the Day” social media campaign spotlighting an aspect of Farm to School, activity, or food on each week day during the month.

Connect with one of NFSN’s 8 Regional Lead Agencies or 50 State Leads on [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org), and join in celebrating National Farm to School Month on [www.farmtoschoolmonth.org](http://www.farmtoschoolmonth.org).



## HEALTHY SCHOOL MEAL STANDARDS



### Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act

In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA), which represents a major step forward in providing all children with healthy school meals. More than 31 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program, and children consume a third to a half of their daily calories at schools. With one out of every three children in America overweight or obese, we should ensure that school foods are healthy.

As part of the HHFKA, the USDA recently updated the nutrition standards for school meals. The new standards will:

- Double fruit and vegetable servings and increase the variety of vegetables.
- Set first-ever standards for sodium, trans-fat, and whole grains.
- Require all the milk to be low-fat or fat-free.
- Set calorie standards that address not only hunger but also obesity.

#### Healthy School Meals, Snacks, and Beverages

Schools will begin implementing these new standards this school year! Here are some ways you can help support implementation of these healthy school meal standards.

##### *Encourage Students to Eat Healthy School Foods*

Work with your school district and school to:

- Get students involved — taste tests, voting on meal options, recipe contests, a student ambassador who strategizes how to get peers involved and excited about school meals, etc.
- Work with teachers — offer taste tests so teachers are more familiar with new school offerings and talk about them with students, encourage teachers to eat school lunch with students, conduct teacher training on nutrition education and the benefits of the new school nutrition standards, etc.
- Send information home to parents — invite parents to eat lunch at school, send a letter or include a message in the school newsletter about the improvements to school meals and how parents can reinforce healthy eating at home, have taste tests and a school food booth at parent nights, and encourage parents to participate on a school wellness policy or health committee.



- Implement a policy to require that recess be held before lunch, which helps children eat better and be more ready to learn when they return to the classroom.
- Increase meal appeal — cook vegetables to preserve vibrant color; vary the cuts of fruits, vegetables, sandwiches; use catchy names like zippin' zucchini and fire-engine-red tomatoes, etc.
- Use behavioral tricks to change the placement and prominence of the healthier choices — place plain milk closer to the students than chocolate milk, have healthier options before less healthy options in the serving lines, place fruit in colorful bowls, etc.
- Increase the variety of fruits and vegetables — install salad bars, feature a new fruit and/or vegetable every month with fun facts, offer a variety of choices so children can find one they like, vary the way fruits and vegetables are prepared or served to find preparations that most students enjoy.
- Offer fresh, safe, free drinking water to students throughout their time at school. That includes after-school programs, sports practices and school-sponsored events.
- Assess what foods are marketed in your school or district, and apply nutrition standards to all marketing in schools through a local board of education policy or school wellness policy.

#### *Technical Assistance/Training*

- Work with your local school district or school to ensure they are getting the technical assistance they need from your state's child nutrition program, USDA, National School Food Service Management Institute, School Nutrition Association, Alliance for the Healthier Generation, or other organizations.
- Encourage your school or district to participate in HealthierUS School Challenge or the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program.

#### *Increase Participation*

Work with your school district and school to:

- Encourage all students to fill out paperwork to apply for free lunch. By encouraging all students to apply, you ensure that more eligible students apply to and receive free and reduced-price lunches and reduce the possible stigma of submitting the paperwork.
- Periodically send notes home to remind parents that they can apply for free and reduced lunch at any time of the year if their financial situation changes or if the number of members in their household increases.
- Use a method of payment for meals that does not identify which children are receiving free lunch.
- Consider providing universal free breakfast or lunch to students in schools with a high percentage of free and reduced-price meals.



### Wellness Policy

Work with your school district or school to strengthen your school wellness policy and ensure that it is implemented.

- Apply nutrition standards to the marketing of foods, beverages, and brands on school property.
- Set nutrition standards for foods at school parties and prohibit the use of food as a reward.
- Conduct only healthy fundraisers.
- Institute a closed-campus policy to support participation in school meal programs and reduce children's exposure to unhealthy foods during the school day.
- Ensure that there is a wellness policy coordinator in each school who could serve as a liaison with the district and coordinate implementation of the policy.
- Send information about wellness policies to parents and post on your school's website.
- Apply nutrition standards to all school-sponsored events.

### Fundraisers

Healthy fundraisers set a positive example and support healthy eating and physical activity by children, nutrition education, parents' efforts to feed their children healthfully, and the fundraising needs of schools.

- Apply nutrition standards to all school fundraisers on or off campus through legislation, regulation, local or state board of education policy, or through a school wellness policy.
- Provide [ideas for healthy fundraising options](#) to parents, PTA, and school clubs.





## FOOD DAY IN THE SCHOOL GARDEN

Become part of the food system! Because Food Day is at the end of October, it may not be the time to plant a garden in many parts of the country, but it can certainly be a day to announce plans for a garden. So, use Food Day to announce your garden or rally people around an existing one.

- Host an event on the site of the upcoming garden.
- Take pictures of the site “before” and next year follow up with the “after” pictures.
- Hold a class on vegetable gardening or cooking to demonstrate meals that can be made with future crops from the garden.
- Hold harvest celebrations or use Food Day curriculum activities.
- Get a “pet plant” and allow children to take turns caring for it.
- Plant a class window garden.
- Join the Edible Schoolyard project, [www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org).

You can apply to the America the Beautiful fund for free seeds [here](#).

Don't forget about the network provided by your educational system! Get other teachers, nurses, administrators, and food service providers—in addition to parents and student organizations—on board to make Food Day special for everyone.







## Taste Education

According to Slow Food and other advocates, systematically exploring food through the senses can lead to greater knowledge about food and make kids more open-minded eaters who are less likely to turn up their noses at new and different foods. Tasting new foods is especially effective with foods that students have raised or prepared themselves. Whatever you do in your classroom or lunchroom for Food Day, incorporating some aspect of taste education can enhance the students' experience and may even introduce them to a new favorite vegetable! To get started, [download the "To the Origins of Taste" kit](#).



## Food Day Recipes

Help us promote Food Day as a new family holiday!

Encourage students to cook a meal at home with parents, and share tasty, healthy, and nutritious Food Day recipes from celebrity chefs, available on [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org). Don't forget to add the dinners to the Food Day map on [www.FoodDay.org](http://www.FoodDay.org).

### Resources

The Right to Food: A Window on the World (FAO)  
[http://www.feedingminds.org/cartoon/rtf\\_en.htm](http://www.feedingminds.org/cartoon/rtf_en.htm)

Nourish Life Curriculum  
<http://www.nourishlife.org/teach/curriculum/>

Discovering the Food System  
<http://www.discoverfoodsys.cornell.edu/>

Nutra-Net: Pictorial cookbooks for children  
<http://www.nutra-net.org>



## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

Dear \_\_\_\_

I am writing to invite you to join Food Day on October 24, 2012. The effort is a nationwide celebration and movement toward healthier diets and a sustainable and affordable food system in America. I hope you'll use this nationwide day to improve **the nutritional quality of foods and beverages offered at our schools and to provide more food/nutrition education.**

With sky-high rates of childhood obesity—at the same time that millions of children have limited access to healthy, fresh food—teaching children about the benefits of a nutritious diet and how to eat healthfully is invaluable to the success of our students.

I hope you will consider participating in Food Day and using it to raise awareness about healthier options in schools and to improve school food policies.

- Use Food Day to support new school meal standards. In 2011, the Los Angeles Unified School District used Food Day to highlight their Menu Transformation Initiative and healthy breakfast program.
- Pledge to improve school foods and beverages sold in vending machines, a la carte, fundraisers, etc.
- Employ the Food Day nutrition curriculum, developed by professors at Teachers College, Columbia University, ([www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org)). The curriculum provides for week-long education activities on a variety of nutrition and health subjects.
- Install school gardens where students can learn how to grow and harvest healthy, fresh foods.

Celebrating Food Day is a good opportunity to highlight the projects and initiatives you are already working on to improve nutrition and health education.

Sincerely,

NAME



## REGISTER YOUR EVENT

Use the Food Day website to register your Food Day event. Once you have registered your event(s), spread the word by sharing with your colleagues, friends, and family. Others will also be able to find your events by doing a ZIP code search or browsing a map of Food Day events.

**IMPORTANT!** Share your photos, videos, and event highlights with us after Food Day.



### YouTube and Flickr

Make sure to share photos and videos of your events with the entire Food Day community on our Flickr and YouTube pages on and around October 24. You can also share milestones along the way to October 24: planning meetings, community rallies, etc. Upload your Food Day videos to YouTube, include “Food Day” in the tag and description, and we’ll “favorite” as many as we can. Share photos on the [Food Day Flickr page](#).

## CONTACT US

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General Inquiries, Avi Schlosburg ([aschlosburg@cspinet.org](mailto:aschlosburg@cspinet.org))

To find your local Food Day coordinators, please visit [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org).  
(If there is no coordinator, maybe you could be that person!)



## Food Day and CSPI

Food Day was created by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and grew with the support of hundreds of national partner groups. CSPI is a consumer advocacy organization whose twin missions are to conduct innovative research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition, and to provide consumers with current, useful information about their health and well-being. Visit <http://www.cspinet.org> to learn more.



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[www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org)