



Newsletter from Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina

Message from the Chair

Dear Eat Smart, Move More NC Partners,

I hope that this message finds you and those you care about doing well. Having sources of support and hope is essential to thrive, and is particularly relevant as the COVID-19 pandemic persists. Experiences from the pandemic have forced some of us to truly face issues that have been too easy to ignore in the past. Some in our communities experienced for the first time what it feels like to live in “crisis” and to struggle with meeting basic needs. The truth is that this is not a new experience for too many, and I hope that the sense of urgency to address health equity and justice persists.



This call to action was conveyed by a stellar group of panelists at our **Eat Smart, Move More NC Partners Meeting on August 25 titled “Food Security: The Pandemic and Beyond.”** The efforts being led by each of the panelists highlighted what is happening in different settings and communities across the state, and prompted attendees to think about systemic causes and historical contexts. Achieving healthy eating opportunities wherever people live, learn, earn, play, and pray requires valuable food access and assistance initiatives, as well as sustainable and systemic transformations toward food justice and sovereignty in communities. Be sure to watch the [recording of the meeting](#) so you can hear directly from the panelists and be inspired by their words.

The Eat Smart, Move More NC Executive Committee is strongly committed to health equity and will infuse it into all aspects of the movement. To successfully achieve this, we need the help of partners across the state. Below are some ways you can engage with us:

- **Serve on the Executive Committee:** We will be confirming the 2022 Executive Committee members between now and November, so it is the ideal time to contact us if you're interested.

- **Join an Eat Smart, Move More NC Subcommittee:** Joining a Subcommittee is a great way to contribute your skills and time in focused areas. You can read [descriptions of the Subcommittees](#) on our website.
- **Invite your partners/colleagues to join the movement:** We rely on “a network of networks” to grow the Eat Smart, Move More NC movement.

If any of these opportunities interests you, or if you have other ideas to engage in the Eat Smart, Move More NC movement, please contact us at info@eatsmartmovemorenc.com.

Until next time, eat smart, move more, and be well!

Joanne Lee, MPH, RD
 Chair of Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina
 Collaborative Learning Director with Healthy Places by Design

Summary of Eat Smart, Move More NC Partners Meeting



The most recent Eat Smart, Move More NC Partners Meeting was held on August 25th and we were very fortunate to have had such an amazing panel of experts serving schools and communities.

- **Shorlette Ammons** with [Center for Environmental Farming Systems](#)
- **Tracey Bates** with [School Nutrition, NC Department of Public Instruction](#)
- **Kwesi Brookins** with [Fertile Ground Food Cooperative](#) and [Center for Family and Community Engagement](#) at NC State University
- **Kathryn Kolasa** with [The MOTHeRS Project](#) at East Carolina University
- **Brielle and Michelle Wright** with [The Farmers B.A.G.](#) (Blessed, Abundant and Gifted)

In follow-up to the [August 25th meeting](#), we asked our panelists: “**If there is one thing that you hope the participants remember/take away from the Partner Meeting on Food Security, what is it?**” and here are just a few thoughtful comments:

- “I hope that participants took away recognition of the fact that Food Security is a Justice issue. And although it may be a bit cliché to say, but food insecurity affects us all, not just those for whom it is a more immediate issue.”
- “All pregnant women, and especially women who are food insecure, need specific nutrients to contribute to a healthy pregnancy. ECU Physicians and the MOTHeRS project are eager to share the evidence-based handouts that can be used to educate

women, as well as describe shelf-stable, less expensive foods that can fill the gap.”
MOTHeRS Project [documents](#) are available for adaptation/use.

- “Children and families depend on the nutritious meals provided by School Nutrition Programs. School meals make a difference in the lives of students. Well-nourished students are fit, healthy, and ready to learn. Our North Carolina Nutrition Teams are dedicated and committed to supporting the health and academic success of our students and nourishing children’s bodies, minds, and souls each day. Please continue to advocate for and support our North Carolina School Nutrition Programs.” For more info on N.C. School Nutrition Programs, please visit the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Division website, <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/school-nutrition>.

The next Partner Meeting is scheduled for December 2nd at 1pm and will focus on “Moving More” – mark your calendars and stay tuned!

Be Active Kids®

Be Active Kids® and Go NAPSACC are joining forces! After 21 years as a program of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, the award-winning Be Active Kids program is pleased to announce that it will be incorporated into the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s nationally recognized Go NAPSACC program.

“For More than two decades, Be Active Kids has done amazing work to create a culture of health in North Carolina’s child care centers by working with more than 5,000 centers to train 20,000 child care providers in best practices around physical activity and good nutrition,” said Dr. John Lumpkin, president of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. “We are so proud of the work they have done and we’re excited to see what’s possible with the new partnership.” A team of researchers and public health professionals with UNC-CH’s Children’s Healthy Weight Research Group, located at the Center for Health Promotion Disease Prevention, will investigate the best ways to build on and utilize components of the Be Active Kids program in Go NAPSACC’s suite of online tools.” It is an exciting development to welcome Be Active Kids into the Go NAPSACC Team. By combining our two successful programs we will improve our ability to build healthy habits in young children across North Carolina and the nation,” said Dr. Dianne Ward, director of the Children’s Healthy Weight Research group. For more information, visit [Be Active Kids FAQs](#)

Submitted by: Richard M. Rairigh

Halifax County Schools Green Leaf Farm

The Halifax County Schools Green Leaf Farm contributes to the mission of health and sustainability in the surrounding community by nourishing the minds and bodies of the students and community at large through affordable fresh produce and supporting the local economy. This project will give present and future generations an opportunity to view agricultural education as a prominent and thriving industry that serves everyone.

Green Leaf Farm is a 12- acre farm that grows fresh produce in Halifax County. It was developed from only 2 acres and is expanding every year. Students help to grow collards, cabbages, broccoli, mustard, turnips, arugula, kale, lettuce,



squash, snap beans, cucumbers, sweet corn, cantaloupe, watermelon, okra, and zucchini. There are plans to increase the variety of vegetables grown and to plant fruit trees. Halifax County students cultivate produce that can be used in dining facilities across North Carolina. Through this process students get an entire view of the process from farm to table, while picking up valuable skills, like marketing, communications, logistics, customer service and an array of other skills. Programs like this help students see the importance and viability of agriculture in their community and in the world at large.

The farm also serves as a learning lab and helps to feed the community. Green Leaf Farm participates in Community Support Agricultural membership, through which the farm program donates fresh produce to food insecure communities in appropriate packaging. A half-acre of Green Leaf Farm also serves as a learning lab for the school district. It is a STEM-based initiative that incorporates soil labs that connect students with nature, growing plants, studying the ecosystems, and creating outdoor learning labs.

As a part of the educational experience, Green Leaf Farm also has plans to invite visitors to enjoy the tours, u-pick sales, wagon/sleigh rides, school tours, agriculture technical tours, a roadside stand, agriculture-related crafts/gifts, festivals or fairs, and a farmer's market.

Green Leaf Farm and Halifax County Schools are excited to continue fostering this partnership.



Submitted by: Faith Boakye



Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiatives

Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiatives (RVCHI) is the community outreach program of Vidant North Hospital in Roanoke Rapids. Ms. Kayla Taylor, a native of Weldon, took the helm of this organization approximately two years ago and hit the ground running!

There are several moving parts: As with each hospital in the Vidant Health System, there is the overall community outreach. There is also the Partners in Faith (PIF) group, which is made up of members of area churches in Halifax and Northampton County that work together to strategize ways to make their congregations and communities healthier.

In an attempt to provide more healthy food options in the Roanoke Valley, RVCHI has operated a community garden on the grounds of Halifax Community College as well as funding two community garden spaces: one in Weldon at a former preschool and the other in Tillery, NC.

Since COVID ended in-person meetings, the Partners in Faith (PIF) group meets virtually monthly to discuss healthy meals using the "Faithful Families Thriving Communities" curriculum in partnership with the local Cooperative Extension. RVCHI has also hosted summer fit parties in various locations in Halifax and Northampton counties where healthy foods were served to the participants. RVCHI continues to coordinate with various community partners in food distributions in both counties.

To learn more about all the things going on at RVCHI, visit the website: <http://getfitstayfitrv.com>.

Submitted by: Rev. Dawn Daly-Mack, RN

Health Data and Equity

Check out the recording of a national webinar on [Exploring Asian American & Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Identity and Health Equity](#) hosted by County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. This webinar addressed populations that are often excluded in conversations about health equity.

One interesting key point of the webinar was that the Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories that are used to collect much of the data in our country are constructs. There is much diversity within the groups that have been lumped together in these broad categories, and this has masked some real health disparities in local communities.

If community practitioners do not see the differences and disaggregate the data, they may unintentionally contribute to inequities in their communities.

Another key point of the webinar was that past policies and practices have not only perpetuated harmful stereotypes about Asian Americans, but they have also intentionally pitted Asian American and Black communities against one another.

Submitted by: Joanne Lee, MPH, RD

Center for Environmental Farm Studies

Please join us for one or both of our upcoming virtual sessions on Racial Equity in Farm to School. These sessions will be held from 3:00-5:00 pm on the last Tuesday of the month, September 28 and October 26. Ideally, join with others from your school or community. These are the final two sessions in a 5-session, 2-hour summer series led by the team from weare-nc.org and hosted by [CEFS farm to school](#) and the [Farm to School Coalition of NC](#). Join us! [Register for each session individually](#).



Also, join an informal hour-long discussion space around implementation starting at 3pm on Tuesday, October 5, one week after the September session, where we can share what actually doing this work looks like in our day-to-day efforts: Racial Equity in Farms to School implementation discussion (no pre-registration required). Send questions to tes_thraves@ncsu.edu.

Submitted by: Tessa Eliza Thraves

Growing Minds Farm to School

Since 2002, the Growing Minds Farm to School Program (a program of [Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project](#), or ASAP) has offered children in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachian Mountains opportunities to learn about local food and farms in the classroom, cafeteria, and community. Now a nationwide movement, Farm to School and Preschool programs feature four core activities: edible school gardens, farm field trips, classroom cooking with local food, and locally grown food served in meals or via taste test.

Through farm to school, children build community connections and learn about where food comes from and how it grows. Students who participate in farm to school activities gain comfort tasting, cooking with, and growing fruits and vegetables. Farm to school offers a holistic, hands-on approach to engaging students across subjects, from science, math, and literacy, to art and nutrition.



Growing Minds utilizes an “upstream” approach to provide resources and training to educators, school nutrition and early childhood education professionals, and nutritionists. In order for farm to school programs to thrive, educators and food service directors need support and resources. That’s the role that Growing Minds plays, providing training and technical assistance, facilitating community connections, offering mini-grants, and creating farm to school resources, including lesson plans, educational videos, recipe cards, and more.

Growing Minds supports initiatives across the state through its work as a co-facilitator of the [NC Farm to Preschool Network](#) and a Steering Committee member for the [Farm to School Coalition of NC](#). Learn more at www.growing-minds.org.

Submitted by: Gwen Hill

Medical Food Pantry Emergency Bag Contents; Client Education Handouts; and Volunteer Training PowerPoints

The Medical Food Pantry at Vidant Medical Center, Greenville, NC is a partnership of the Brody School of Medicine, Vidant Medical Center, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina that provides emergency shelf stable foods to patients of Vidant and ECU who screen food insecure. Eastern AHEC is the training partner. Patient education materials, as well as a description of the emergency bag contents for “healthy”, “carb controlled” and “low sodium” diet prescriptions, are available at: Medical Food Pantry [handouts](#).



Submitted by: Kathryn Kolasa

Register for the #NCCrunch2021

Registration for the 2021 North Carolina Crunch is now live! [Sign up now](#) for the 2021 North Carolina Crunch to receive a free guide with tips and resources so that you are ready to crunch this fall.



The N.C. Crunch, co-hosted by the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina and N.C. Farm to Preschool Network, is designed to celebrate agriculture, nutrition, and farm to school activities. Annual N.C. Crunch events offer kids and adults an opportunity to taste and learn about locally grown North Carolina produce with their schools, early care, and education (ECE) centers, community organizations, and/or families. Farm to School/Farm to Early Care and Education Month also offers an opportunity to recognize the importance of farm to school/early care and education and honor all those who contribute to feeding our kids and communities – from farmers, farm workers, and food hub distributors, to school and early care nutrition professionals, educators, garden coordinators, bus drivers and transportation professionals.

This year’s N.C. Crunch is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2021, but you can plan to participate any time during October that works for you in celebration of Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education Month. Plan now for produce orders and educational activities and reach out to local partners who can help. Utilize this opportunity to recognize and thank our agriculture, education, and school and early care and education nutrition heroes who make farm to school activities possible!

Submitted by: Tracey Bates