March 20, 2010

Connecting to Healthy Food
PFP offers farm-based youth education with an eye toward obesity prevention

By Susan Grove

The United States is experiencing a childhood obesity epidemic. Nearly 1/3 of children and adolescents (31.7% in the 2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) are obese or overweight. In a recent official survey of two thirds of the City of Poughkeepsie School District, 47% were classified as overweight and/or obese, which is even higher than the alarming national average. According to the CDC, an overweight or obese child is likely to develop health problems, such as high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels and type-2 diabetes (previously considered to be “adult” illnesses) before reaching their teens. Overweight and obese children are at higher risk than their healthy-weight peers for many other serious illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, asthma and certain types of cancer.

According to the Robert Woods Johnson foundation, the latest research shows that the environments we live in directly impacts the foods our children eat and how much activity they get. When their experiences are dominated by fast and unhealthy food and few opportunities to actively use their bodies, our children eat worse and are less active, and their health — and our community — suffers.

We need to do all we can to make it easier for children to eat healthy foods and be active — especially in cities like Poughkeepsie where many have limited resources. In the City of Poughkeepsie School District almost 80% of students are eligible for free (67%) or reduced (12%) lunch, which means that 80% of children come from homes where the annual gross income does not exceed $33,874.

We believe that many youth — and their families — don’t have many opportunities to connect to healthy food. The PFP, located in the City of Poughkeepsie, is a working farm and an educational resource for experiential learning. Continued on page 2

SkillShare

An event where amateurs and experts, enthusiasts and those who are just curious, can gather together in a friendly open environment to share their stories and experiences, and join in a community discussion on topics of interest.
PFP Supports Obesity Prevention Through Farm Based Education

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Farm-based, physically active learning experiences can help children re-connect to their bodies, to food and to health. When a child has an opportunity to walk through farm fields and see vegetables growing with their own eyes that they harvest and eat, they gain support for making healthy eating choices. When a teenager learns through hands-on activities to identify and harvest vegetables, cook with farm fresh produce and interact with the environment of the farm, they make the connection between land, plants and nourishment. Sometimes, these are brand new experiences.

The PFP provides unique educational experiences not readily available in other venues to youth of all ages, backgrounds and economic classes. We have seen the power of positive, firsthand and interactive experiences engaging with fresh food as a young person. These experiences can be transformative, planting the seeds for a healthier future.

In 2009, more than 375 youth participated in 27 farm visits and activities coordinated with 14 different programs. In 2010, we aim to make our farm-based educational programs even more widely available and to expand the number of youth who have the opportunity to connect with healthy food on our farm. The PFP requests modest fees be paid by participating community groups to help cover overhead and staffing costs. This has presented a barrier for some groups looking to visit the PFP. To supplement the fees that groups pay, an Educational Programming Scholarship Fund was established in 2009 and expanded for 2010 through the support of donor advised grants from the Ann and Abe Effron Fund administered by the Community Foundation of Dutchess County. Many PFP members have made gifts designated for education. We are very grateful for this support that helps us make it possible to host a wide diversity of groups at the PFP.

We are seeking additional funding support to expand our scholarship fund and to cover the expenses for facilitating groups of children and youth to participate in the hands-on learning activities offered by the PFP - consider making a tax-deductible contribution today! We are also seeking volunteers who are interested in being trained to facilitate farm-based learning at the PFP - contact us to learn more!

Community Education Goals

In the short term:
- Youth will recognize fresh vegetables in the fields, be involved in preparing and cooking them and learn how they taste.
- Youth will have positive, active experiences in the natural environment, will know how to carry out basic farm tasks and will be able to work individually and as a group performing them.
- Young people will understand the importance of farming in relation to food and in relation to creating and maintaining healthy bodies and a healthy environment.

In the long term:
- Access to fresh local food will improve and nutrition-related health problems will decrease as we continue to expose young people to the benefits of eating and cooking with local produce.
- Farming knowledge will be passed on to future generations, as youth are exposed to possible career opportunities in farming and related fields while improving upon their communication and work skills.
- A generation of youth will understand the importance of farms in our communities, towards promoting a more just and sustainable food system in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

- Visit us at farmproject.org -
Staff from Heifer International and Just Food recently facilitated a full-day Training of Trainers (TOT), rooted in participatory development philosophy and designed for people who have skills or knowledge of any kind that they want to convey to others. Fourteen individuals - PFP staff, volunteers and partners - participated in experiential activities, individual and group reflection, and practice, and built their skills and learned tools for designing and leading educational experiences for any age or demographic group. The experiential learning cycle (and how to incorporate it into a training session) was emphasized as core training skills. The experiential learning cycle describes the process of guiding a training participant through four phases of an effective learning experience, summarized in an easy to remember way: what (the content that is being conveyed), gut (the learner's reaction to the content), so what (the learner's analysis of the content), and now what (the learner making conclusions about how s/he will apply the content). The TOT also covered questions and discussion techniques that engage learners, working with less-than-perfect workshop situations and designing a lesson plan. The TOT will support PFP's efforts to build our Community Education programs in 2010!

PFP Launches New Website!

If you have been to our website, www.farmproject.org, you will notice that it looks different! A group of volunteers, led by PFP Member Sean Dague, have been working for more than a year to create the new site, built on the open source Drupal platform. Daniel Chen generously donated his services to design the site. Not only does the new website look different, it has several features, including a content management system, that will make it easier for us to keep it up-to-date, with upcoming events, news and newsletters easy to access. A liaison has volunteered from each Board committee (Events, Finance, Fundraising and Programs) to learn how to use the new site and keep all the information about PFP activities fresh.

Many thanks to all who have been involved in making this new site possible, including Sean, Ben, Dan, Carlie, Ed, Georgette, Hilary, Jane, Hannah, Susan and Wendy!

- Visit us at farmproject.org -
Upcoming Events

SkillShare: How Do Our Gardens Grow?

Saturday, April 10th
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Adriance Memorial Library Meeting Room located at 93 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Are you ready for thoughts of sun and warmth and green growing things? Come join us at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project’s Spring SkillShare! Learn about Poughkeepsie’s very own certified naturally grown farm and join with others to share your experiences and discuss springtime topics such as starting your own organic garden, garden ecology, or how to harness the bounty of the new season. We encourage everyone to come – gardeners, food enthusiasts, people who are looking for a better way to feed their families, or those who would just like to celebrate the coming of spring!

For those PFP members who would like to get involved with this event, we are looking for the following:

• People who are enthusiastic about gardening, dirt and the outdoors, and would like to share their knowledge and experiences in a small group setting. Topics for small group discussions can include but is not limited to: Container gardening, Soil science and fertility, Composting, Seed starting, Native and companion planting, Garden ecology and biodiversity, Spring medicinal herbs, Beating springtime allergies naturally.

• Donations of baked goods or snacks to be shared at the Spring SkillShare. We are looking for individual servings of baked goods such as cookies or muffin, or cheese/fruit/vegetable plates.

Please contact Susan Tveekrem at stveekrem@gmail.com or 845-380-1846 if you are interested in helping out or have ideas for discussion topics. Free and open to the public. Suggested donation $10, $5 for students, $5 for low-income.

Sustainable Agriculture in Nicaragua

With guest, Sarah Junkin Woodward
Center for Development in Central America

Friday, April 16
6:00 p.m. – optional Nicaraguan meal ($20 - registration in advance)*
7:00 p.m. – Talk and discussion (free and open to all)
Café Bocca, Mt. Carmel Sq., Poughkeepsie
* BY APRIL 12, SEND $20 PER PERSON TO: Barbara Lindsey, 53 Ferris Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

The Center for Development in Central America is a non-profit organization seeking to address human needs created by poverty in the Western Hemisphere’s second poorest nation by helping communities become self-sufficient, sustainable, democratic entities. The Center has created Coproexnic, a unique cooperative business of growers to market organic products that exports organic sesame, coffee, honey, peanuts, black beans, and cotton. For more info, see www.jhc-cdca.org

Open House & Plant Sale

May 15, 9 a.m – 3 p.m
May 22, 9 a.m – 12 p.m.

Come see what the PFP is all about and take home potted herbs, flowers and vegetables grown in our on-site greenhouses. This year we are also selling PFP-grown seeds and featuring potted plants grown from these seeds.

- Visit us at farmproject.org -
A Seat at the Table: the inaugural dinner in the fields

On Saturday evening, July 17, 2010, the inaugural “A Seat at the Table” local food feast and fundraising celebration will be held in the PFP fields. Working in collaboration with the well-known al fresco dinner company, Outstanding in the Field, we will celebrate by bringing together everyone from local farmers, chefs and food artisans, to members of the community and sitting them all together to explore the connection between the earth and the food on our plate.

Guests will sit at long, linen-draped tables in the middle of the fields, while sipping local wines and eating a five-course meal prepared by Hudson Valley’s celebrated chefs Megan and Charlie Fells of the Artist’s Palate, using only fresh, local ingredients for the meal. Participants of the fundraiser will also be given a tour of the farm and will have a chance to view educational materials and exhibits set up about the PFP, food and farming. The main purpose of this event is to honor the people whose good work brings nourishment to the table and to celebrate the PFP, its connection to the community and its work towards a just and sustainable food system.

If you would like to volunteer to make this an unforgettable event, there are many ways to help out! Below is a list of everything needed from items as small as salt shakers to members who are willing to help. Contact us if you have ideas to share: Amy Sherman (sheepmom23@aol.com) or Amy Pelletier Clark (pelletierae@yahoo.com), Co-Chairs of A Seat at the Table

Items needed
- Votive holders and candles
- Port-a-Potties

Committee positions available
- Solicitation, Event planning
- Ticket sales, Advertising/Outreach

Local foods needed
- Meat, Dairy, Bread, Seasonal fruits,
- Dessert item, Condiments
- Non-alcoholic beverages

Volunteer positions available
- Parking attendants, Greeters, 20 Servers

Underwriting support opportunities
- Buy ticket for student intern or purveyor
- Underwrite the cost of food, rentals, service staff

40th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration
PFP will be there, will you?

The Hudson Valley’s 40th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration will be held at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds... PFP will be there, will you? On April 24th and 25th, from 10 am - 5 pm, the PFP will have a booth to share seeds and knowledge about seed

- Tree plantings
- Musicians for Clean Air concerts
- E-waste and CFL take back Environmental NGOs exhibits
- Shows and hands-on activities for kids
- GPS Earth caching
- Farmers’ Market Organic cooking demonstrations and tastings

- Educational presentation series
- Road and foot races
- Makers’ Square and swapapalooza
- Hayrides and animal activities
- Hall of clean energy
- Green vendors exhibition

The Events Committee is looking for volunteers to help staff the PFP table. Please contact ChiWei Ranck at EventsChair@farmproject.org for more information. We hope to see you at the fairgrounds!

Visit us at farmproject.org
Soup-a-Bowl 2010 will be held on the banks of the Hudson River at the Mid-Hudson Childrens' Museum Pavilion and will feature local soup, pottery and live music! Fresh, homemade soup, bread and iced tea will be served alongside a wide assortment of handcrafted pottery on display. A silent auction features more local food and artwork and a beautiful homemade quilt is raffled off. Join us in celebrating local food, art and community while supporting programs that provide low-income families with tons of fresh food each year and life changing experiences learning about food and farming.

Event tickets are available on our website. We are also looking for volunteers to help plan and organize the event, especially people who can help with:

**SOLICITATION (2-3)**
*Responsibilities:*
Solicit items for the soup-a-bowl (food, pottery, business sponsorships, silent auction, etc.)

*Skills needed:*
- Ability to solicit funding / items
- Ability to communicate with people
- Connections within the community

**TICKET SALES (1)**
*Responsibilities:*
Be in charge of ticket sales

*Skills needed:*
- Organizational skills
- Ability to sell tickets at the market and distributions
- Ability to provide personal contact info for the flyer
- Ability to communicate with people

**PUBLICITY (1)**
*Responsibilities:*
Be in charge of publicizing the event

*Skills needed:*
- Organizational skills
- Creativity
- Ability to communicate with people

Contact Rebecca at rwisnski@verizon.net to get involved.

**BOWL-A-THON**

The third annual Soup-A-Bowl is coming up...and we need your help! Learn ceramics while contributing to this wonderful community event.

**5-Week Discounted Pottery Classes**
Tuesdays, 5:30-8:00 pm.

**NEXT SESSION:** May 4 - June 1  
**FINAL SESSION:** June 29 - July 27

At Barrett Clay Works,  
485 Main St., Poughkeepsie

- $145.00 for 4 Participants or less  
- $135.00 for 5-7 Participants  
- $125.00 for 8+ Participants

Tuition includes free clay and instructor.

- Visit us at farmproject.org -
Got Seeds?

PFP-grown seeds are available!

It's seed ordering time! We have seeds for sale and also for donation to school gardens, food pantries, and other interested community groups. We have several types of beans, tomatoes, peppers and lettuce as well as a beet and arugula.

Purchase seeds here:
- Vassar College Center on Wednesdays, March 24 through April 21, 3-6 p.m.
- PFP booth at the Earth Day Celebration at Dutchess County Fairgrounds April 24 and 25 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- PFP's Open House and Plant Sale on May 15 and May 22
- At PFP by appointment
- By mail order for orders of 10 packets or more

For varieties and descriptions please see our catalog, which can be found on the PFP website at farmproject.org/sites/default/files/2010PFPSeedCatalog.pdf

All seeds were grown at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project by youth and interns involved in City Seeds, a collaborative project between PFP and the Green Teen Community Gardening Program. The seeds are grown without artificial pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers and are open pollinated varieties (so you can save them yourself).

- Visit us at farmproject.org -
Send us your recipes, farm reflections, and photos

Send your recipes, photos, book reviews and short articles (300 words max) on the PFP or agricultural related topics to pfpgrowinggirls@gmail.com.

CSA Shares Available

Do you know someone in the Poughkeepsie area who would like to join a CSA?

- Poughkeepsie Farm Project will be hosting Veritas Farms' CSA again this year and they still have plenty of openings. They are a small certified naturally grown farm in Esopus that raises meat and eggs as well as vegetables. Learn more about this opportunity at www.veritasfarms.com/CSA or by calling 384-6888
- Common Ground Farm in Beacon also has shares available. They can be contacted at www.commongroundfarm.org or 231-2424.

The PFP CSA anticipates being full for 2010 from our waiting list shortly.

Anyone interested in joining the PFP CSA can contact us at info@farmproject.org or 240-3734 to join the waiting list. For people joining the list now, we will most likely have a spot open in 2011.

Ready to get your hands dirty?

Spring Farm and Garden Volunteer Opportunities

We have several volunteer times where anyone can drop in and help out on the farm. Farm and garden tasks in April include greenhouse seeding and potting up, weeding perennials, getting tools ready for the season, and transplanting in the fields. Volunteer times in April and May are:

- General Field Work: Wednesdays and Fridays, 2-5 p.m.
- Meditation (Herb) Garden Tending: Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m.
- Seed Garden Tending: Time to be announced (If you are interested in attending this volunteer session, let us know what time works for you.)

Two Free Plants…

PFP member cards to be sent in early April

Watch for your PFP member cards in the mail the first week of April. Not a member? Consider contributing at the suggested ($50) level or above, and receive two free plants at the Open House and Plant Sale in May!