

# The Unquowa School Farm To Fork Food Service Philosophy 2013

*"The Mission of The Unquowa School is to develop, educate and prepare our family of children with an unafraid spirit to achieve their personal best in a changing world."*

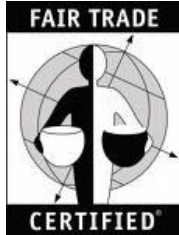
It is our belief that the school's Farm to Fork Food Service Philosophy clearly exemplifies this mission.

## **Our Farm to Fork Vision:**

*"To provide a nutritionally balanced, good tasting, environmentally and fiscally responsible menu that utilizes local, sustainably produced and quality ingredients."*

With this food service philosophy, we promote:

- The awareness of environmental, nutritional and community responsibility as well as the ethical treatment of growers and animals.
- A commitment to meals that are prepared using fresh, whole, unpackaged and unprocessed ingredients to the maximum extent possible, in order to preserve nutritional content and reduce packaging waste.



Sport Hill Farm, Easton CT

## **A Commitment to Sustainability**

We support:

- Local farmers who practice sustainable agricultural methods in order to support a cleaner and safer environment; to create more connections within the community; and to reduce transportation costs.
- Recycling and composting in order to have "zero waste" – Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.
- Composting a portion of pre and post-consumer food trimmings from our kitchen and dining room for use in our school garden and grounds
- The development of Farm to Fork trained chefs by creating and facilitating a Residency program for aspiring chefs who are recent graduates of a culinary institution.

## **A Commitment to Community**

We promote:

- A school garden that provides a hands-on learning environment for the students.
- Family style dining among the children and faculty with sufficient time for eating and encouraging good eating habits and manners.
- Communication with parents, teachers and the school community about the importance of modeling healthy choices.
- Relationships with local farms. We partner with local farms and execute farm visits for the children to help bring families and farmers together.
- Purchasing as much food as we can from those within our community.

## Our Policies

### 1. Food and Health

#### **Our work so far:**

At The Unquowa School we strive to serve only whole, fresh and seasonal food that maximizes nutritional well being. We believe nutrition affects a child's overall health and ability to focus and learn. We have set forth and adhere to a list of minimum specifications that guides us in all of our menu creation.

#### **Our Minimum Expectations and Specifications:**

- To serve snack and lunch on a daily basis to students, faculty and staff
- To serve fresh, local and seasonal food
- Keep food affordable without compromising the quality
- That no food or ingredient shall contain, nor be manufactured in a facility that used any nuts or nut products
- To serve organic food to the maximum extent possible and to constantly look at ways to manage our total costs to achieve this
- Cook food from scratch and serve it fresh
- Satisfy the health and diet needs of all our clientele – i.e. vegan or vegetarian requests, attention to specific dietary/allergy needs
- Serve homemade desserts no more than 4 times per week and with a portion size no larger than 1 ounce
- Use only fresh, whole eggs from chickens raised in a cage free environment
- Use only milk, grass-fed beef and pork and all natural poultry from animals raised without the use of growth hormones and non-therapeutic antibiotics
- For environmental and religious reasons, serve red meat and pork sparingly.
- Use only natural oils in cooking (no hydrogenated or trans fats)
- No ingredient shall contain high fructose corn syrup
- No food will be deep fried
- All fruits and vegetables are to be fresh and in-season as a priority
- Yogurt is to be organic
- Salad dressings are homemade and low fat or Organic
- Tuna must be dolphin-safe
- Deli meats must be Applegate Farms brand or the equivalent, and salami or other processed meats shall not contain nitrates or nitrites.
- Pastas must be Barilla® Plus™ pasta or a whole wheat pasta equivalent in nutritional profile or organic.
- Flour will be unbleached
- Rice will be organic.
- Preference will be given to breads, bagels, baked pretzels, tortillas, pizza dough and other bread-like products that are whole wheat or whole grain, with preference given to whole grain.
- Bake most breads in house.



Getting ready for Breakfast for lunch



Urban Oaks Organic Lettuce



shucking corn picked this morning

## Baking Bread

We started baking bread in 2006. Teaming up with Hobart Company we were able to receive a 40 quart mixer in exchange for a study on cost comparisons between purchased breads and house made breads. By making our own products instead of purchasing from large distributors, the school saved more than \$4,500— 7% of our total food budget in the first year. For the school year 2009-2010 we are saving over \$7,600 by making all breads in house.

**“This is how my grandfather makes his bread.”**

— Unquowa School Seventh-Grader



Loaves of pullman bread for French toast



steel cut oat bread



2<sup>nd</sup> grade rosemary bread sticks

### Our goals for the future:

- Continually strive to increase our use of organic, GMO free and local foods
- We will work towards using more whole wheat and whole grain products and investigate ways to educate the school community about the benefits of this.
- Refresh ourselves and establish a organic hierarchy list?
- Investigate fair Trade Coffee costs.

## The Granola Story



When the school embarked on the sustainable food initiative in 2005, chef/consultant John Turenne of [Sustainable Food Systems](#) suggested one way to start would be to create our own granola to serve to students. Because the school was a ‘nut free’ environment so, we determined that we would customize a recipe that focused on using organic oats, sweetened with local honey and maple syrup. Students were then included in the making and testing of recipes to find one that not only met nutritional goals, but also was a tasty and popular treat.

The resulting batch of granola became so popular in the dining room that parents began demanding the chance to bring it home. Students grasped the opportunity to create an 8<sup>th</sup> grade fundraising project. We have since embarked on a marketing plan that will branch out to provide the Unquowa Granola to the public in local markets as further fundraising initiatives for scholarships. Students have not only helped develop the recipe and endorsed its goodness, they are now involved in developing a brand image with a name, logo and business plan for public distribution.

## 2. The Dining Experience

### **Our work so far:**

We offer family style dining in a pleasant setting with seven students and one faculty member to a table. We also rotate the assigned seating on a monthly basis in order to promote social skills. This method of dining helps to encourage healthy eating habits, enjoyment of meals, good manners and respect for others. We provide a thirty minute lunch period for each of the lower school and the upper school students. Other factors we've achieved include:

- A daily "Food Talk" by one of the chefs
- Conversion of washable dinnerware from disposable
- The kitchen and chefs are accessible to the students and families at all times
- Children help with food prep before school
- Specific catering needs to children with dietary concerns
- Free meals to all faculty and staff
- Invested in new furniture



### **Our goals for the future:**

- Continue to promote faculty commitment to educate students and nurture good eating
- Renovate the dining facility so as to provide a kitchen and dining facility that matches the quality of the program itself.



### **3. Professional Development**

#### **Our work so far:**

At The Unquowa School, the kitchen staff is a partner in providing an excellent experience for students, teachers and staff. It is our goal to provide regular training, at least annually, to the kitchen team and other staff on basic nutrition, and the benefits of organic and sustainable agriculture. We want the individuals promoting our mission to be knowledgeable and supportive of our values and mission. Some examples of this have included:

For the chefs:

- Created a Resident Chef program for recent culinary school graduates to education of Farm to Fork food service programs in schools.
- Bi-monthly learning journeys to farms, other schools executing similar programs
- Members in the CT Dept. of Agriculture's Farm to Chef program
- Attending or participating in seasonal cooking demonstrations at CT NOFA's annual conference
  - Regular chef representative at the Annual Celebration of CT Farms, Dept. of Ag. Events



Lauer's Clam Chowder with all CT grown products. The Unquowa School is the only invited school to participate the celebration for the past four years. Said to be, "the hottest food event in the state" with 30 of the top chefs in CT participating.

**Celebration of CT Farms 2009**

- Food Allergy Policy and staff training was created (See Addendum for Policy)
  - Internship with Chez Panisse Restaurant
  - Books, publications and videos
- For the faculty:
- Opening Orientation and presentation at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture
  - Annual opening meals featuring Farm to Fork themes
  - Field Trips to the Yale Sustainable Food Project Garden

#### **Our goals for the future:**

- Create a meaningful collection of books, publications and videos for faculty
- Come up with culinary development for cooks' helper - Ann Marie
- Culinary/Baking Development for David (Bantam Bread?)
- Ongoing orientation of the Farm to Fork program for new faculty. (include a copy of this document in their packet)
- Continue the Resident Chef program and garner foundation support for its operation.
- Update Organizational memberships.

## Organization Memberships

- [CT NOFA](#) (Northeast Organic Farming Association)
- [CT Farm To Chef](#)
- [Slow Food USA](#)

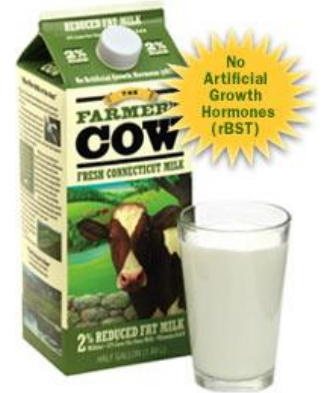


## 4. Procurement

### **Our work so far:**

We purchase food from small, local farmers and distributors as a first and foremost priority at all times. The school also has a direct relationship with Sport Hill Farm and [Stuart Family Farm](#) and receives fresh produce and grass fed beef from them on a regular basis. We also have instilled policies that:

- Support the purchase of fair trade products like bananas and coffee
- Purchase local milk from [The Farmers Cow](#) cooperative
- Other direct local purchasing includes honey from [Red Bee](#), Sport Hill Farm, Stuart Family Farms, [Urban Oaks Organic Farm](#)
- Minimized the use of packaged products, therefore reducing the waste created
- Have added the resources of United Natural Foods, Inc. for access to natural and organic grocery items that otherwise are not normally stocked by traditional suppliers.



### **Our goals for the future:**

- Continue to add more small local farmers to subsidize the items that are not currently procured locally.
- Create a specific quantifiable definition of what local means.
- Consider Tracking and measuring our sustainable food purchasing by using the [Real Food Calculator](#) tool.

## **5. Waste Management**

### **Our work so far:**

The Unquowa School believes that a significant part of our environmental footprint begins with the amount of waste that we create. In that regard, we invested in a dish washing machine and washable serviceware. The separation of plastic, glass and metal is also part of our recycling program. The immediate results were a decrease from seven 50 gallon bags of trash per lunch period to one. We have also have incorporated a composting program for kitchen waste.

- We created a regular practice of students maintaining the school's small composter.
- We educated the students to compost their lunch scraps at the clearing station.
- We created a composting a portion of pre and post-consumer food trimmings from our kitchen and dining room for use in our school garden and grounds.

### **Our goals for the future:**

- Creation of a larger composting program that will accommodate most of the food service waste.

## **6. Marketing and Communications**

### **Our work so far:**

We believe that the message of our Farm to Fork program here at The Unquowa School is very important. We feel it is imperative to garner customer (student, family & faculty) buy-in to our program. We also believe that ultimately all schools should be improving the food served and to help that process, we need to broadcast our work to others. Some of the ways we've addressed this is:

- Created a background and history of the Farm to Fork program on the N.A.I.S. Sustainable Initiatives website
- Regularly scheduled student representative meetings to discuss menu and program
- Established an open line of communication and working relationship with the Unquowa Parents Association and individual parents.
- A personal presentation in the kitchen by our chefs during "Take a Look" tours of prospective families.
- A regular featured column written in the monthly newsletter written by our chefs regarding the good food.
- Regular articles contributed to Edible Nutmeg Magazine
- Multiple articles in local and national publications featuring our Farm to Fork program
- The Farm to Fork program is also featured and modeled in the film – [Two Angry Moms](#)
- [Connecticut Style television spots](#)
- [Exposure to the state's public at the annual Celebration of CT Farms.](#)
- Created a separate Farm to Fork "In the Kitchen" web page within the Unquowa School website.

### **Our goals for the future:**

- Establish the best way to communicate this document

## **7. Facilities and Design**

### **Our work so far:**

We have worked to incorporate equipment and smallwares that help us in the aspect of handling and processing fresh, whole food with a very modest investment of funds. We have also procured the donation of a floor mixer from Hobart at no cost in order to support the Farm to Fork initiative.

### **Our goals for the future:**

To this point, we have not invested any additional funds in the infrastructure of the kitchen and dining room. In the future we will:

- Incorporate a music and sound system in the dining room to help with acoustics during chef talks.
- Complete the capitol campaign whose final phase will be the renovation of the dining space.

## **8. Finances**

### **Our work so far:**

From the start, it has been our expectation and goal that the changes to the dining program at The Unquowa School not increase our overall food service expenditures.. This is how we strategically facilitated a fiscally responsible food service program:

- At the outset of our work, we implemented small changes in items that could have cost neutral effect, such as organic milk in large containers instead of conventional milk in individual containers.
- The second year brought the real evidence of cost savings. We began significant food cost monitoring and control methods, thus eliminating waste and high cost, processed foods. Some of our progress:
  - Created a budget based on projected food costs per meal served, overhead and labor.
  - Incorporated formal weekly inventory, invoicing and operating report systems
  - Measured the actual operating costs against our projections and adjusted staffing and menus accordingly.
  - Realized significant savings in food costs due to these controls.
  - Added staffing to support additional production needs.
- Year four we performed a study for Hobart Corporation using their 40 quart mixer. We found significant savings \$4,500.
- Because of our fiscal success, the school increased the food budget by \$5,000 in year five. The result has been an organic salad bar and a new purveyor, Albert's Organics.

### **Our goals for the future:**

- Manage and adjust our budget to anticipate additional increases in the cost of food and continual improvement in food specifications so as to incorporate even more organic and sustainable food into our menus.

## 9. Curriculum Integration

### **Our work so far:**

We feel that incorporation of opportunities into the school's curriculum is an important part of educating our students. Some of our examples of education have been:

- Created the [Unquowa School Farm Camp](#) at Sport Hill Farm:
  - Since 2007 the kitchen chefs have participated in Farm Camp. The Sweet Peas have 3 interactive demonstrations a week. The 1-6 th grade campers had 2 interactive demonstrations with a final pick & preparation lunch. Special emphasis on smelling, tasting and preparation of the fresh food from the farm.
- Creation of a school kitchen garden and composting program
- Daily Chef Talks before each meal period where one of the chefs tells a story about the meal, the season, or food.
- Morning prep sessions with students as they arrive in school.
- Students produce our home made granola.
- Students / classrooms have used the chefs and kitchen for cooking projects
- Classroom Chef lectures on subjects such as nutritional label reading, where your food comes from, etc.
- Expanded the current school kitchen garden
- Created a Student Iron Chef program
- Facilitated '[Food Revolution Day](#)' in conjunction with Jamie Oliver
- Infused the understanding of food issues by incorporating the student version of The Omnivore's Dilemma into the school's health curriculum.

### **Our goals for the future:**

Although there are examples of linking the dining room to the classroom, we feel that much more opportunity lies ahead:

- More Farmer visits / lectures in the classroom
- Establish a program of Food System Literacy
- Create a mapping system for tracking where food actually comes from
- Link the menu with the curriculum
- Begin thinking about the new facility and how we can integrate teaching points for the students.
- Meet 3 times year w/ 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to explain our food philosophy.