

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
August 19, 2014
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: September 16, 2014, 3-5p.m. @ [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

Steering Committee - Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); David Lewis (UCCE Marin); Bonnie Nielsen (UCCE Marin); Leah Smith (AIM); Rebecca Smith (HHS)

Committee Members – Alexandra Danino (SF/Marin Food Bank); Denise Trevino (YLI); Gueidi Beltran (WIC); Miguel Villareal (Novato USD); Peter Healey (AIM); Sheila Kopf (SF/Marin Food Banks); Socorro Romo (Pt. Reyes Food Bank); Terrie Green (Marin City Community Services District)

Guests – JJ Foley (Conscious Kitchen); Judi Shils (Teens Turning Green); Karen Brown (Center for Ecoliteracy); Lauren Klein (UCCE); Maggie Weber-Striplin (Conscious Kitchen); Paloma Collier (Conscious Kitchen)

Welcome and introductions (Janet Brown)

Marin City tour debrief

Thanks again for a wonderful, educational experience in Marin City. Folks were really impressed by the shared vision for change, as well as the gardens. People loved the container garden project with the children – the perfect place to start (with the kids). Good to see the community players working together. Folks appreciate learning some of the rich history of Marin City to give background and context to the current issues, and are looking forward to hearing the results from the market analysis. Terrie Green shared that she had had no idea that the impact of the container garden project would be as strong as it has been – it's a confidence builder for the kids. There really is a movement gaining momentum; the food access issue is growing, and the community is working together. Everything is green and growing in the gardens, it's an exciting time! There will be another tour with folks from the Marin Community Foundation, and she will let Council members know when. Tours give another perspective when you're walking around the community.

School meals and wellness policy on the local, state and national level

(Karen Brown, Director, [Center for Ecoliteracy](#))

Change often begins with bold action, and policy follows.

- Mission: kids understand how nature sustains life and life accordingly
- Teachers saying the quality of meals in schools was directly contradicting what they were trying to teach. Led to the "Rethinking School Lunch" program from Center for Ecoliteracy = framework to begin discussions with all sorts of educators about making lasting change.

- Center for Ecoliteracy outreach programs:

- [“Making the Case”](#) for change, for improvement, for healthy school meals. The Center created a package with a customizable [presentation](#), [research document](#) with national long-term studies and surveys, and other resources to help make the case. General adult public agrees that schools have a role to play in nutrition and health.
- **“California Thursdays”** to be launched on October 23. Network of school districts across the state, bite-sized implementation strategy. Program where schools learn to create meals with CA-sourced ingredients including more fresh fruits and vegetables, including recipes. High numbers that interest the press and growers, can influence others and lead to a radical shift. Images for use in marketing (posters, banners, t-shirts, etc.).
- **“Raised on California”** animated interactive website with calls to action using the CA flag and the bear on the flag in outreach. Bear is Mama Bear and walks through 56 interactive scenes of agriculture and nutrition.
 - Importance of innovation
- **Case studies of 4 school districts:**
 - **David Binkle, Food Service Director of LAUSD.** Changed his procurement model to a Request for Proposal model – only discussing quality and location of food sources, not cost. “I stopped buying food and I started having relationships.” Quality criteria including animal rights, farm worker rights (LAUSD minimum wage is \$15/hr. by 2016)
 - **Sandy Curwood, Ventura USD.** Multi-district collaboration; union of 6 districts working on recipe development, procurement (requests), and professional development. Average daily participation in their lunch program doubled since beginning.
 - **Scott Soiseth, Turloch USD.** “real. fresh.” Marketing program resulting from what students want. 100% of fruits and vegetables from local farms. Hired a marketing agent, expensive presentation of healthy fresh food, led to participation in lunch programs went up 300%.
 - **Jennifer LeBarre, Oakland USD.** Life expectancy difference of 10-17 years between Oakland Hills and another Oakland community. Similar data for Marin is available in the [Portrait of Marin](#). Findings of feasibility helped Measure J pass in 2012 for half billion dollars to improve school food facilities in Oakland including 1.5 acre campus farm, food education center, central kitchen. Now bond measures around schools need to include this aspect of healthy food access because that helps the measure pass!
- 1 out of 5 US households with kids reporting food insecurity – same number for Marin low-income households, where 1 in 5 low-income households had to skip meals to make ends meet in Marin.

Q & A:

Q: Is the Center sharing existing model wellness policies from schools? A: there is a model wellness policy guide on the website. Some schools have wellness committees that kids participate in, and those tend to be very successful. Check out Elk Grove policies. One way to have policies not go in the drawer (Tom Bates): when you create policy, create the watchdog agency that goes with that policy – tie it together so there is no escape of responsibility.

Q: Is there a coalition that is working on serving suppers to kids, to be served at the local community center? A: Many districts to 5 meals: breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, and supper. Don't know if there is a coalition for suppers.

School meal options in Marin City (Judi Shils from [Teens Turning Green](#) and JJ Foley from the [Conscious Kitchen](#)) ****presentation****

- **Background:** Conscious Kitchen came out of Teens Turning Green's program "Eco Top Chef," which pairs kids with chefs to learn about where their food comes from, culminating in a cook-off of fresh, local, organic, seasonal, non-GMO, and zero-waste meal for \$2.20 per head. First non-GMO school in the country! They have been collaborating with Marin City MLK Bayside School for a few years. Took menus from Eco Top Chef and did a week pilot with the chefs, served with real silverware and napkins, and flowers on the tables. Kids ate the food, were nourished, and didn't throw away any. Conscious Kitchen was founded last year, working with chef Justin Everett of Cavallo Point Lodge and Al Baylacq. Good Earth provided schools 2x/week to MLK at no charge for first 6 months to get the program off the ground.

- **A year into the program:** Chef Maggie Weber-Striplin works with 2 union employees and a member of the Marin City community in the kitchen. The program budget was \$40,000 less than what the school district had allocated – the program is sustainable! People have noticed a positive transition in students' manners, an improved lunchroom tone, and increased attendance.

- **Relationships** have been the most important aspect of the work; with purveyors, producers, volunteers, community members, etc. Students told CK that their teachers never used to eat with them because the food was so bad, and now teachers sit and eat with the kids – conversations happen that wouldn't otherwise. Produce purchased at the farmers market every week by producers rooting for the Conscious Kitchen. Weekly flower arrangements are possible because of spoiled flowers from Whole Foods. Students help in the kitchen, believe that Chef Maggie is really cooking for them. "Food of the Month" launched to integrate new foods by Maggie taking foods to each classroom.

- **Mentorship:** every month teens work with Justin at Cavallo Point in the kitchen in chef mentorship program. Conscious Kitchen Ambassadors grades 3-8 learn with CK, develop skills and ownership, and share with their fellow students.

- **Upcoming:** working to start other Conscious Kitchen programs elsewhere (such as Bogota, Columbia); the Garden, Nutrition and Cooking Program is becoming more integrated; and the Conscious Kitchen Cookbook project, honoring the food wisdom of Marin City.

***There is always an opportunity to change protocol! Greatest needs: commitment, intent, and collaboration.*

School Gardens update (Lauren Klein) ****[presentation](#)****

- The Community Gardens Summit is coming up – Saturday October 25.
- Marin has 19 school districts, and 50 schools out of 75 total have gardens. Non-profits and organizations have a presence in these gardens, but could use more. Most critical need: consistent management (material needs are secondary), especially in lower income schools. Folks are working on material and resource libraries, bringing people together via tours and meet-ups. Looking at bringing

community members into school gardens as well as Shared Use Agreements. Central coordination is critical in getting districts to talk to each other. Many groups and models providing curriculum and resources; Marin County is behind. Success depends on school administrator and teacher buy-in. Does Marin import a program? Staff a joint private program? Create a new program? - Marin Strong Start = ballot measure for sales tax increase to benefit kids in Marin County focused on early childhood environments and before- and after-school environments with a health component with nutrition focus woven in. Potentially large funding opportunity.

HEAL Cities Campaign update (Rebecca Smith)

CA Center for Public Health Advocacy developed the HEAL Cities Campaign for and by cities; a policy platform for cities to adopt saying they support healthy eating and active living and facilitating a network of cities sharing policies and best practices. The hope is that cities will adopt the resolution and move forward with next steps. Novato has been participating for several years, and is looking at healthy eating and active living through their General Plan. Marin City was the first unincorporated area in the state to adopt the HEAL Cities Campaign, followed by their healthy beverage plan. They will be convening on September 24 with panels of experts presenting and discussing issues, and are inviting city officials, city planners, parks and recreation officials, city councils, etc. They hope to highlight policy opportunities throughout Marin where there may be potential follow-up.

Q: Any link to climate change in this conversation? A: Land use policies, mixed-use development, etc. all relate to climate change. Things will happen differently in each city.

Q: What are “complete streets?” A: Streets designed with active transportation in mind.

QUESTIONS TO ALL:

Q: Can you share experience with attempts to source local food? A: There is a lot of production in Marin, and discussion around collaborating with farmers and paying them directly is happening. Lots of farmers seem willing and able to increase production. Part of the thinking behind CA Thursdays was to try to start small, because it can shake the whole system. Concept of California 1 = 100% sourced in CA and as close to Oakland as possible, and California 2 = all ingredients aren't sourced in California at that scale (i.e. tofu). Lots of buy-in and support – Oakland is getting phone calls from producers (wanting to help, wanting the press, etc.). California grows about half of the country's fresh fruits vegetables, and nuts. Involving kids in doing the research on sourcing ingredients increases success. Food kids grow tastes the best.

“From Asphalt to Ecosystems” by Sharon Danks, highly recommended new book on incorporating and collaborating around food issues in schools.

Q: Perhaps a forager on behalf of Marin districts could come to farmers markets and pick up produce for schools. Could help with the missing piece of connecting the players. “What do you need? I'll drop it off!” Judy would love to have that discussion. Could this also help retailers around the county? A; AIM is open to having that conversation, especially as the permanent home for the farmers market is completed.

Council representative updates (All)

- Leah Smith: Who is interested in learning results of mobile market feasibility study: Alexandra and Rebecca.

Closing remarks (Janet Brown)

"It's not easy to cross boundaries to adopt a whole-systems approach to health. It means leaving the areas we know well and venturing into fields where we have to depend on the expertise of others. It means learning unfamiliar concepts and mastering new tools to engage complexity. It means asking people to take health into account in making decisions that usually depend on other considerations. It may provoke controversy. It may make people we approach uneasy and even angry. It requires patience, imagination, courage, integrity, and a sense of humor."

- Dr. Richard Levins, John Rock Professor of Population Science, Harvard School of Medicine

Meeting adjured at 5:00 p.m.

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