

HEALTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK  
FARM-TO-SCHOOL/CATCH MEETING  
September 2, 2010

In Attendance: Cindy Loenard, Cobb School Garden Club; Judith Diggs, Bio Farm; Marla Peterson, Nutrition Director; Tammy Alakszay, LCOE/Americorps; Michelle Malm, Food Services Director, Kelseyville Unified School District; Joanne Breton, Upper Lake Elementary School Board Member; Rebecca Breton, Upper Lake High School student; Jim Leonardis, Leonardis Organics; Lorrie Gray, Lake County Hunger Task Force.

CATCH TRAINING. Susan reported that the 8/12/10 CATCH Training was well attended with representatives from five of the County's six school districts including superintendents, principals, teachers, food service directors and parents. There were also two people from Mendocino County. Morning snacks and lunch, provided by Michelle, were abundant and excellent. She explained that the training, coordination tool kits and curriculum were paid for by a grant from the California Endowment.

Tammy reported that there is a big "CATCH Is Here" sign in front of Upper Lake Elementary School and that she did CATCH activities in her daughter's classroom. She also said that CATCH activities will be done Mondays at Upper Lake Middle School's After School program. Tammy announced that the week of September 19 is "Rethink Your Drink" week and that September is Obesity Prevention Month.

Susan explained that HLN had to cancel an August 13<sup>th</sup> CATCH Preschool Training because of staffing issues related to state budget cuts but Shelly Mascari plans to incorporate CATCH into Childcare Planning Council orientations and trainings. Susan also suggested that CATCH might be promoted on school websites and in school newsletters.

Michelle said that Kelseyville Unified's elementary teachers are feeling overwhelmed with 11<sup>th</sup> hour class changes and large class size. With PTO volunteers, most are willing to restart the fresh food basket program on the 16<sup>th</sup>. She added that the District plans to promote increases in attendance by offering a BBQ for families of elementary school students with perfect attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Cindy Leonard announced that she is spearheading a Harvest Festival at Cobb Elementary School from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 18. She invited everyone to attend, suggested a CATCH demonstration during the Festival, and requested information and/or other gardening/nutritional materials for distribution.

Susan shared a link to a website called Roots of Change providing opportunities to influence policy platforms, information about the School Modernization Act and other planks related to farming and food. Jackie will post a link from HLN's website.

Susan also announced a series of workshops offered in September and October by UC Santa Cruz Farm. The one and two-day workshops relate to garden education and garden-based learning. Jackie will also post a link to the workshop information on the HLN website.

Jim announced that the CAFF meeting to begin a feasibility study for a regional food distribution hub will be in Windsor from 9-11 a.m. on September 28.

#### SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAMS

Jackie said that she had talked to Donna Bowen about confusion between the Migrant Education and Seamless Lunch programs in Middletown. According to cafeteria staff, there were a number of children coming in for lunch in their wet swimsuits so she wasn't sure exactly who was turned away without food.

Marla reported that the Konocti Unified Seamless Lunch program delivered about 1,000 breakfasts and lunches each day to Konocti Unified students at 4 elementary schools, as well as a number of low-income apartments and trailer parks. She explained that USDA had threatened to withhold funding because some of the children ate their breakfast/lunch away from the van (on a lake beach or in their apartment). Marla said she drove the California Department of Education inspector around to show her demographic realities and program strengths including the fact that her cafeteria staff had the opportunity to check on the welfare of students. She added that many parents were very grateful to be able to go to work without worrying about whether or not their kids would eat and use their food cost savings for gas to get to and from work.

**BUY LOCAL, EAT FRESH IN RESTAURANTS.** Susan explained that HLN was going to approach a half dozen restaurants to see if they'd be willing to promote their use of local produce as well as menu items that met certain nutritional criteria such as high vegetable content, low salt, low fat. In response to Susan's question about restaurants using the schools' nutritional analysis software, Marla explained that it would be easy enough to do after all the ingredients were input into the system but the input process was pretty labor intensive because software requires all the brand names. There was some concern that restaurants may not wish to share recipes and specific ingredients.

Susan added that she was expecting to start with a half dozen restaurants already using local produce and provide them with window clings and table cards to promote and explain the "Eat Fresh, Buy Lake County Grown" program. Jim said that he is currently selling produce to Zino's, The Saw Shop, Blue Wing Café and Twin Pines Casino.

**ONLINE ORDERING SYSTEM.** Susan reported that the Farm Bureau had encountered a number of delays in launching the online ordering system. The delays were primarily due to a review process that includes both CDFA and USDA. Marla and Michelle said they are both part of the system's pilot and have both submitted/asked a number of questions that will result in increased ease of use for commercial buyers.

Regarding Susan's comments about the efficiency of piggybacking on the Co-Op's delivery drop points, Judith suggested also using Farmers' Market locations to make it easier on the growers and build foot traffic at the markets. In response to concerns about crop availability, Jim said he believed there were more farmers extending their growing season to achieve near year round production.

10/21/10 WORKSHOP: GROWING OUR LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY. Susan announced that HLN would be sponsoring an afternoon workshop at the Fairgrounds on Thursday, October 21, 2010 as a follow up to the Local Foods Forum. Dr. Shermain Hardesty's presentation will focus on Lake County's agricultural economy and Gail Feenstra will talk about how to build a strong Farm-to-School system. She said HLN will also be inviting local experts to talk about distribution, food processing, local markets. Jim suggested contacting Bob Corshen who is the transportation manager for CAFF.

Susan added that she would like to also be able to offer tastings of locally prepared vending machine foods such as dried pears, kale chips, trail mix. Jim mentioned that Nature's Food Center has kale chips that he believes are locally produced.

SCHOOL RECIPE CONTEST. Susan said that HLN is working with Shelly Mascari to launch a school recipe contest this fall. Discussion included the following points:

- Michelle said it would be a good opportunity to get parents involved and suggested focusing on foods that kids could fix for themselves when they get home from school.
- A cook-off between the kids who submit the best recipes could be held with local chefs assisting. Tammy said that the cook-off her kids participated in had several rounds for different age groups. In this case, there could be a cook-off at each school, then at each district and, eventually, countywide.
- Farmers' Market certificates would make good prizes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.