



Food Connects Farm to School

2019-2020 Annual Report

Healthy Families. Thriving Farms. Connected Communities.



2019-2020 Overview

Our Farm to School program seeks to increase food access and improve student nutrition by cultivating healthy food and farm connections in classrooms, cafeterias, and communities in and around Southern Vermont. This year, our team:

- Received a contract from the Agency of Education to design and deliver professional development in partnership with four other FTS organizations
- Presented our work at the Massachusetts Farm to School Institute and the Slow Living Summit
- Contracted with statewide partners to provide Farm to School coaching to 6 schools in Southern Vermont in addition to our Member Schools.
- Supported schools in purchasing over \$107k of local food, a 20% increase from last school year



Interest in our work around Trauma Sensitive Approaches to Farm to School continues to grow. Food Connects facilitated communities of practice have continued the work beyond the end of workshops and new best practices have led to culture shifts in schools. We plan to bring the training to the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference and districts throughout Vermont in 2020 and 2021.



Financial Information

Income

Grants
Education Services
Donations

\$66,956
\$37,360
\$11,250

Total Income

\$115,566

Expenses

Payroll \$88,550
General & Admin \$14,466
Operating Expenses \$4,699
Fixed Expenses \$7,403

Total Expenses

\$115,118

The State of Farm to School

2020 is already a momentous year, with racial inequities brought into sharp relief and the COVID-19 pandemic closing schools and disrupting learning. Food Connects continued its strong support to schools during this time, while also remaining flexible to new needs as they arose.

We were a conduit for information between the Windham Region Hunger Council, the charitable food system, and school nutrition programs. We worked closely with the Windham Southeast School District and the town of Brattleboro to establish the Weekend Foodbox program to provide additional food relief to local families, and remained a reliable supplier of local food despite nationwide supply chain disruptions.

Looking forward, we're imagining what school will look like and what support teachers and school nutrition professionals will need. We're working closely with nutrition programs on how to adjust operations to keep staff and students safe, expanding our Trauma and Nutrition training to reach more teachers, and working with partners on professional development and curriculum examining questions of food justice within Farm to School.

Farm to School Fast Facts



30 VT schools engaged in Farm to School programming



over \$107k spent on local food

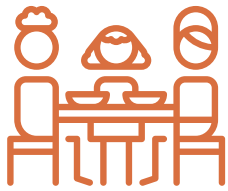


11 school gardens grown & supported

supported partner schools in raising \$25k in FTS grant funding



provided FTS professional development to 86 educators & food service professionals



120 families provided additional food relief through the Weekend Foodbox Program



4,175 students reached in VT

Member Schools

- Putney Central School
- Brattleboro Union High School
- Brattleboro Area Middle School
- Academy School
- Green Street School
- Oak Grove School
- Dummerston School
- NewBrook Elementary School
- Guilford Central School
- Leland & Gray Union High School
- Townshend Elementary

Partner Schools*

- Bellows Falls High School
- Bellows Falls Middle School
- Grafton Elementary School
- Saxtons River Elementary
- Central Elementary
- Westminster Community School
- Twin Valley Elementary School
- Riverside Middle School

* Grant Funded

Member School Spotlight

“Food Connects has been an integral part of helping to develop goals and a focus for our school gardens at Academy School. Their influence began last year with helping to form a team that participated in the North East Farm to School Institute at Shelburne Farms. Over the past year, Food Connects supported and helped facilitate our Farm to School committee meetings and provided information on numerous grants and resources that will help to grow our garden program in the future. Academy School is so thankful for all the support we have received from Food Connects and especially, Sheila Humphreys! We are looking forward to another wonderful year of partnership with Food Connects.”

Kathy Cassin, Garden Coordinator at Academy School



“Food Connects is a vital partner to our school nutrition program. Since schools closed due to COVID-19, that statement only became more true! Over the past 3 months, we have bagged and delivered roughly 152,000 meals to students in our community. Throughout all of this, Food Connects remained flexible and is there whenever needed. Whether it’s helping recruit volunteers, coordinate the Weekend Foodbox Program, or identify grant funds to help cover increased costs—Food Connects is there every step of the way!”

Ali West, Brattleboro Town Schools Food Service Director, Fresh Picks Cafe

Our Staff:

- Richard Berkfield**
Executive Director
- Alex McCullough**
Food Hub Manager
- Beth Lewand**
Food Hub Sales Associate
- McKenna Hayes**
Food Hub Operations Manager
- Tracy Lake, Elisa Daus, Jacob Gallogly, Jesse Howard**
Food Hub Drivers
- Scott Berzofsky**
Food Hub Operations Coordinator

- Nathanael Matthiesen**
Food Hub Operations & Fleet Coordinator
- Conor Floyd**
Farm to School Program Manager
- Sheila Humphreys**
Farm to School Coordinator
- Karen Sprague**
Full-Charge Bookkeeper
- Laura Carbonneau**
Development & Communications Manager

Our Board:

- Betsy Gentile**
- Taylor Burt**
- Kevin Brennan**
- Kevin Stine**
- Jane Dewey**
- Arlene Hanson**
- Paul Renouf**

Funders & Partners

Thank you! Our community funders and partners are the backbone of our programming in schools in the Vermont region. The support of these organizations enables us to bring Farm to School programming to educators, food service directors, farmers, and community members to build healthy families, thriving farms, and connected communities.

Funders

- Edward Jones • Fanny Ames & Edna Louise Holt Fund • Food Connects Member Schools • Rise VT
- The Claneil Foundation • The Thomas Thompson Trust • United Way of Windham County • VT Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets • VT Education

Partners

- Hunger Free VT • National FTS Network
- Rooted in VT • VT Farm to Plate • VT Foodbank
- VT FTS Network

Find us online at www.foodconnects.org or follow us on:

