



Rural Action
Working Together to Revitalize Appalachian Ohio



School Day at the Chesterhill Produce Auction: A Multi-stakeholder Educational Field Trip

In 2015, Rural Action hosted its first ever food system education field trip at the Chesterhill Produce Auction, a rural food hub operated in Morgan County. On May 6th and May 12th, 2015, 170 students from The Plains Elementary and Alexander Elementary learned about and experienced the components of a local food system by participating in planting, composting, nutrition education, cooking, insect sampling, a mock auction, philanthropy and food access and distribution.

Schools

This field trip was a continuation of Rural Action's Farm to Institution to School project. Alexander Local Schools and Athens City Schools both participate in Rural Action's Farm to Institution to School Program. Through this program they receive local produce purchased from the Chesterhill Produce Auction and other local farms. The produce is then processed by Hocking College Culinary students prior to arriving to the school's kitchen. School Day at the CPA grew out of stakeholder's desire to connect students to this new local food they were seeing in their cafeteria. Six members of the



Alexander Local food service staff and Dan Phillips, the Food Service Director, inquired about a field trip for students where they could gain a better understanding of the local food system.

With this idea in the works, the Athens City Schools Nutrition Group played a crucial role in the develop-

ment of the event. The group, which consists of Superintendent Tom Gibbs, parents, the school nurse, teachers, and community organizations, were enthusiastic about a field trip possibility for their students as well. Members provided feedback on planned activities for the event during their monthly meetings.

With the help of Rural Action's Environmental Education Coordinator, Joe Brehm, age appropriate curriculum was developed for the program, and all of the activities followed the appropriate learning standards.

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Sponsors

The event was made possible through the support of partner organizations including Hocking College, Live Health Appalachia, Community Food Initiatives, Ohio University's COM-Corps program, the Athens City Schools Nutrition Group, and Rural Action's Environmental Education Program. Each of these partners participated and worked with the students to demonstrate a different part of the food system during the event.

Funding was provided by a USDA Farm to School Support services Grant, Sisters of Saint Joseph Charitable Fund, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation. Local restaurants Lui Lui, Lake Hope Lodge, Jackie O's Pub and Brewery, Restaurant Salaam, Kiser's Barbeque, Hocking Hills Dining Lodge, Burr Oak State Park, The Pharmacy, Avalanche Pizza, and Casa Nueva, also contributed to the success of the event by becoming event sponsors.

Testimonials

The event's importance was widely

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- **Andrea Molnar | Owner, Lui Lui Restaurant**

noted by those who participated in the event.

Jennifer Trainer, second grade teacher at The Plains Elementary School said, “Thanks for the invite to The Plains Elementary. Our second graders enjoyed themselves and learned a great deal about local food.”

Chesterhill Produce Auction farmers that volunteered their time during the event noted that the event was a learning experience for all involved. “We felt like we learned as much as the students did,” said one of the participants.

Community members and sponsors also voiced the events success and their support of food system education for students. “My son really loved this field trip! Keep up the good work,” said parent Lacey Martin.

Community member Paul Linscott showed his support of the day saying, “This is what this area needs, great job to all that work to make our community a better place!”

Andrea Molnar of Lui Lui restaurant said “I was a sponsor because I really appreciate

all that CPA does in helping my business and the community obtain quality local foods. Also I think it's important to teach kids while they are young the many health and economic benefits of sourcing food locally.”

Learn More

For more information about the School Day event please contact Tom Redfern, Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry at tomr@ruralaction.org or 740-677-4047 ex. 21.

Rural Action is a membership based organization working to build sustainable local economies in Appalachian Ohio. For more information about Rural Action's work visit www.ruralaction.org.