MINDFUL EATING IN THE SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Building a Food Service Program With Sustainable Values
Established 2006
Reggio-inspired Forest School
Currently 62 students enrolled, ages 2-6
Fosters relationships of child citizens with their community and planet
The Power of Food

Eating food is an act we all take part in daily; it is one of the greatest opportunities to demonstrate our values and take care of our environment, our local economy, and the fellow humans working to grow and harvest our food.
Raintree’s Sustainable Food Model

- Partner with local vendors who share your values and practice sustainable farming
- Plan seasonal menus
- Grow your own food
- Preserve produce for the winter
- Incorporate meaningful food experiences into the curriculum
- Reduce, reuse, recycle: creative leftovers, composting, recycling, reusable dishes
Partner with local growers

- Double Star Farms
- Eat Here St. Louis
- Companion Bakery
- MOFU Soy Beanery
- Midwest Pasta
Plan seasonal menus

- Peak flavor, nutrition, and freshness
- Best prices
- Fosters an appreciation for each unique season
Grow your own food

- Create connection with earth, weather, and environment
- Learn to appreciate the labor and resources needed to feed ourselves
- Increase consumption and reduce waste of students who help in the garden
- Save money in purchasing produce
Preserve produce for the winter

- Freeze whole or cut fruit - peaches, nectarines, berries, grapes, applesauce
- Blanch and freeze vegetables - green beans, brussels sprouts, spinach, peppers
- Refrigerate quick-pickled vegetables, hot sauces, salsas, jams
- Dry herbs, garlic, onions
- Invest your time and money in summer, save time and money in winter
Incorporate meaningful food experiences into the curriculum

- Snack Attack
- Bread Day
- Student-directed class projects
- Gardening
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Compost food scraps in kitchen and dining room
- Invest in reusable dishes
- Repurpose old jars, cartons, bags and containers
- Don’t throw away leftovers- save for another meal, send home with faculty, donate to a shelter
  - freeze fruit for smoothies
  - save leftover meat and vegetables for soups or stirfries
  - make breadcrumbs or bread pudding from the stale pieces
Getting Started

Begin small:
- Get other stakeholders at your business on board and invested—administrators, dining service directors, students, faculty, parents
- Make easy substitutions with local seasonal produce for what’s already on your menu
- Incorporate local veggies into a salad bar
- Start a “Fruit/Veggie of the Month” program to celebrate produce at the peak of their season
- Offer taste tests of new and interesting produce
- Save money by buying bulk produce at peak season and freezing it for the winter
- Start a garden
- Switch to eco-friendly cleaning supplies
- Switch to reusable dishes
Community Resources: things to read and people to know

- USDA Farm-to-School Program: https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school
- Gateway Greening: gatewaygreening.org
- Maplewood Richmond Heights Seed-to-Table Garden
  http://www.mrhschools.net/gardens/
- Saint Louis University Nutrition and Dietetics Department: Healthy Eating with Local Produce: https://www.slu.edu/news-help-slps-grant-story-717
- 2014 St. Louis Regional Food Study, Missouri Coalition for the Environment: