



At The Table

USDA nutrition assistance news and information for partners and community organizations

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The Challenge We Face

*A message from James Arena-DeRosa
Northeast Regional Administrator*

As the new Northeast Regional Administrator I am delighted to write this greeting for "At the Table" our regional newsletter to colleagues involved and interested in the food and nutrition community. I come to this position with many years in the non-profit and government sector, working on issues that crossed hunger, agriculture and health; and continue to find inspiration in the many individuals dedicated to ending hunger in America. My past community and leadership experiences with both Oxfam America and Peace Corps continue to inform much of my approach to building partnerships; I look forward to working with our partners in the Northeast.

2010 was an extraordinary year in our country and for those of us fighting hunger and advocating for good nutrition. 1 in 4 Americans are now served by one of 15 food and nutrition programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service. Today, more Americans are receiving SNAP benefits than in any time in the program's history. Here in the Northeast, we administer and oversee the programming of \$8 billion in federal food and nutrition funds.

We talk and write at times about "food insecurity," but the activist in me prefers those who talk more directly about "Hunger in America." Because like it or not, in this land of limitless possibilities and unprecedented material wealth, there are times when millions of American men, women and children do not know where their next meal is coming from.

As counter cyclical programs, many food assistance programs are designed to expand when the economy lags. Some find the numbers of Americans now receiving food assistance as an indictment of the US economy but we must also examine the positive side to this story.

As we experience one of the country's greatest economic challenges since the great depression - the collective efforts of government, non-profit and community and corporate groups have held back the tide of "food insecurity" and the situation appears to be stabilizing. The rapid growth in the number of recipients of public assistance means that our programs are working as they should be ... but we can do more.



Even those who work in our field may find a few numbers a bit surprising:

- Did you know that about 90% of the individuals receiving SNAP benefits are working poor, elderly or children?

- Or that almost 50% of all new mothers in America receive WIC benefits and nutrition education support?

- And sadly, that on average almost 1 out of 3 individuals eligible for SNAP do not apply or receive benefits? - something we need to better understand in the months ahead.

The biggest challenge I see for the Food and Nutrition Service in the years ahead is that as we move from an agency focused primarily on food access and food distribution to one also focused on nutritious food and nutrition education - we will be investing more time and energy on the national dialogue about what constitutes a healthy diet and makes for a balanced lifestyle - all issues with tremendous long-term impact on America's health and economy.

It is an honor to reacquaint myself with this community and I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 represents a major step forward in the nation's efforts to provide all children with healthy food in schools. Nearly 32 million children receive meals through the school lunch program and many children receive most, if not all, of their meals at school. With more than 17 million children living in food insecure households and one out of every three children in America now considered overweight or obese, schools often are on the front lines of the national challenge to combat childhood obesity and improve children's overall health. This legislation includes significant improvements that will help provide children with healthier and more nutritious food options, educate children about making healthy food choices and teach children healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 authorizes funding for federal school meal and child nutrition programs and increases access to healthy foods for low-income children.

What Does It Do?

Improves Nutrition and Focuses on Reducing Childhood Obesity

- Gives USDA the authority to set nutritional standards for all foods regularly sold in schools during the school day, including vending machines, the "a la carte" lunch lines, and school stores.
- Provides additional funding to schools that meet updated nutritional standards for federally-subsidized lunches. This is an historic investment, the first real reimbursement rate increase in over 30 years.
- Helps communities establish local farm to school networks, create school gardens, and ensures that more local foods are used in the school setting.
- Builds on USDA work to improve nutritional quality of commodity foods that schools receive from USDA and use in their breakfast and lunch programs.
- Expands access to drinking water in schools, particularly during meal times.
- Sets basic standards for school wellness policies including goals for nutrition promotion and education and physical activity, while still permitting local flexibility to tailor the policies to their particular needs.
- Promotes nutrition and wellness in child care settings through the federally-subsidized Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Expands support for breastfeeding through the WIC program.

Increases Access

- Increases the number of eligible children enrolled in school meal programs by approximately 115,000 students by using Medicaid data to directly certify children who meet income requirements.



(December 13, 2010) President Barack Obama signs The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 at the Harriet Tubman Elementary School in Washington, D.C. The President applauded the bipartisan support for this significant legislation.

As one of First Lady Michelle Obama's chief responsibilities and passions, she has dedicated herself to helping children grow up healthy and reversing the childhood obesity trend.

- Helps certify an average additional 4,500 students per year to receive school meals by setting benchmarks for states to improve the certification process.
- Allows more universal meal access for eligible students in high poverty communities by eliminating paper applications and using census data to determine school-wide income eligibility.
- Expands USDA authority to support meals served to at-risk children in afterschool programs.

Increases Program Monitoring and Integrity

- Requires school districts to be audited every three years to improve compliance with nutritional standards.
- Requires schools to make information more readily available to parents about the nutritional quality of meals.
- Includes provisions to ensure the safety of school foods like improving recall procedures and extending hazard analysis and food safety requirements for school meals throughout the campus.
- Provides training and technical assistance for school food service providers.

Let's Move!



The Let's Move! campaign, started by First Lady Michelle Obama, has an ambitious national goal of solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation so that children born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight. Let's Move! will combat the epidemic of childhood obesity through a comprehensive approach that will engage every sector impacting the health of children and will provide schools, families and communities simple tools to help kids be more active, eat better, and get healthy.

Mrs. Obama began a national conversation about the health of America's children when she broke ground on the White House Kitchen Garden with students from a local elementary school in Washington, D.C. Through the garden, she began a discussion with kids about nutrition and the role food plays in living a healthy life. That discussion grew into the Let's Move! campaign.

At the launch of the campaign, President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum creating the first ever Task Force on Childhood Obesity to conduct a review of every single program and policy relating to child nutrition and physical activity and develop a national action plan to maximize federal resources and set concrete benchmarks toward the First Lady's national goal. The Task Force's recommendations focus on the four pillars of the First Lady's Let's Move! campaign:

- empowering parents and caregivers
- providing healthy food in schools
- improving access to healthy, affordable foods
- increasing physical activity

This problem can't be solved just by passing laws in Washington. It's going to take all of us—governors, mayors, doctors, nurses, businesses, non-profits, educators, parents—to tackle the challenge once and for all, so Let's Move! to end the epidemic of childhood obesity together.

The comprehensive plan can be found at www.LetsMove.gov



As communities and organizations get behind the First Lady's Let's Move! campaign, one group that could have a tremendous impact on the health and well-being of children is the Nation's chefs. As part of her effort to turn policies into practical solutions for America's families, Mrs. Obama is calling on chefs to get involved by adopting a school and working with teachers, parents and school nutrition professionals and administrators to help educate kids about food and nutrition. By creating healthy dishes that taste good, chefs have a unique ability to deliver these messages in a fun and appealing way to the larger audience, particularly children.

The "Chefs Move to Schools" program, run through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will pair chefs with interested schools in their communities so together they can create healthy meals that meet the schools' dietary guidelines and budgets, while teaching young people about nutrition and making balanced and healthy choices.

food for thought
EATING WELL ON A BUDGET™



Helping Families with Limited Resources Eat Healthy

The USDA joined Sesame Workshop for the launch of a multimedia outreach initiative designed to help low-income families cope with limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

The Food for Thought Program will provide families with an educational outreach kit, which includes an original video featuring the debut of four new Sesame Street Muppets, the "Super Foods." The video also features Elmo and friends, along with real families as they try new foods, learn about the importance of healthy snacks, and discover sharing a meal together is a perfect opportunity to connect as a family.

Through this project, Sesame Workshop will extend the *Healthy Habits for Life Initiative* by educating families on how to nurture their children's overall development through good nutrition - even in the face of tough economic or social decisions to create positive effects that last a lifetime.

The program includes several resources for caregivers and young children including a DVD, a caregiver guide, a children's story, recipe cards, a provider's guide and a web page, sesamestreet.org/food with games and other ideas.



HealthierUS School Celebrations

Rhode Island Celebrates Its First Gold Schools

FNS Deputy Administrator for Special Nutrition Programs Audrey Rowe presented HealthierUS Gold Awards to the Curvin McCabe and M. Virginia Cunningham Elementary Schools in Pawtucket, RI. The schools are the first in RI to achieve HealthierUS School status and they celebrated their achievement in a special assembly featuring nutrition performances by each grade level.

Solange Morrisette, the Pawtucket School Food Service Director, actively promotes the use of local produce and offers a daily fruit and vegetable bar using as many local products as possible.



Binghamton (NY) Hosts Olympic-Themed Gold Celebration

The Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena was the site of an Olympic-themed celebration recognizing six Binghamton elementary schools for achieving HealthierUS Gold status. A health fair featuring exhibits created by each of the Gold schools; a Parade of Schools with hundreds of flag waving students; and a special letter from First Lady Michelle Obama were a few of the highlights. Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Deputy Under Secretary Janey Thornton did the honors of recognizing the schools and presenting the awards.

The evening prior to the Gold Celebration, the Binghamton food service staff was recognized at a special reception.

The six recognized schools are: Calvin Coolidge Elementary, Benjamin Franklin Elementary, Horace-Mann Elementary, MacArthur Elementary, Theodore Roosevelt Elementary and the Woodrow Wilson Elementary.



HealthierUS School Celebrations

Somerville, MA - Three Schools Achieve HealthierUS Status

Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone decreed "HealthierUS School Challenge Day" as Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Under Secretary Kevin Concannon handed out awards at a special school assembly.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park grabbed Gold, with Bronze going to Arthur D. Healey School and West Somerville Neighborhood School. All three schools achieved a standard of excellence in a District recognized nationally for its achievement in the effort to reduce childhood obesity.

"Introducing more recipes with whole grains and fresh foods, offering more fresh fruits and vegetables daily, and enthusiastically encouraging students to make healthy choices are among the many reasons we honor you today," said Superintendent of Schools Tony Pierantozzi.

"You join an elite group of schools that have been able to achieve health, nutrition and fitness excellence," said Concannon in his remarks to a crowd of more than 300 students, parents, staff, community partners and elected officials gathered for a special, citywide celebration.

To date, only eight Massachusetts schools have achieved HealthierUS status; half are public elementary schools in Somerville. The Argenziano, Healy and West Somerville Neighborhood Schools join Somerville's Winter Hill Community School, which attained Silver certification in 2008.



TAKE THE CHALLENGE

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC) is a voluntary initiative established in 2004 to recognize those schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that have created healthier school environments

through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

In February 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama introduced Let's Move!, incorporating the HealthierUS School Challenge into her campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. At that time she called on stakeholders to double the number of HUSC schools in a year and add 1,000 schools per year for two years after that.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is making it easier and more appealing for schools to take the HUSC challenge including:

- Providing schools monetary incentives for each award level: Bronze (\$500), Silver (\$1,000), Gold (\$1500), and Gold Award of Distinction (\$2500);
- Offering an online HUSC toolkit to provide schools a step by step guide on how to navigate the application process; and
- Providing schools with a range of educational and technical assistance materials that promote consumption of fruits and vegetables and other key aspects of the Dietary Guidelines.

Currently, 1047 HUSC awards have been made to schools in 38 states! FNS is committed to reaching 1250 schools by June 2011.

More information can be found at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>

News Briefs



The United States Department of Agriculture, the National Football League and the National Dairy Council have teamed up with multiple health organizations and several major corporations to fight and defeat childhood obesity. The campaign empowers students to “fuel up” with nutrient-rich foods they often lack and “get up and play” with 60 minutes of daily physical activity.

For more information go to www.fueluptoplay60.com



USDA has an initiative to develop local and regional food systems and support small and mid-size farms. “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” aims to enhance farmers market promotion programs, generate new income opportunities for farmers, promote access to locally grown foods, and help schools utilize locally grown foods in their school meals programs. It also wants to empower consumers to be able to make smart decisions when they eat. For more information visit www.usda.gov

Farm to School Teams

In support of this initiative USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service and Food and Nutrition Service have teamed together to form a “Farm to School Team” to assist local administrators in their efforts to purchase locally grown food. The team identified nine areas across the country.

In the Northeast Region three school districts were selected: Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA; Jamestown Public Schools, Jamestown, RI; and Burlington School District, Burlington, VT.



Maine Receives Team Nutrition Training Grant

Nineteen states were awarded Team Nutrition Training Grants to help children develop good nutrition and physical activity habits for healthier lifestyles. Nearly \$5.5 million in funding (*Maine received \$349,721*) will support efforts to help elementary and secondary schools applying for the HealthierUS School Challenge. During the two year grant period, states will provide training and technical assistance to school food service staff, promote the use of USDA foods, and teach children skills needed to make healthful food choices. More information can be found at teamnnutrition.usda.gov.

USDA WIC Technology Grants

Nearly \$14 million in technology grants have been awarded to 13 states to improve technology and enhance benefit delivery systems for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Funded by the FY 2010 agriculture appropriations bill, States will use the grants to conduct electronic benefits transfer planning and implementation activities to expand the use of EBT in WIC as well as promote technical standardization in various areas of the program.

WIC safeguards the health of more than 9 million low-income women, infants and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing supplemental food benefits, nutrition education, counseling and breastfeeding support. These grants will build on the successes of the \$100 million investment made in WIC EBT and existing technology projects by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Four states in the Northeast have received EBT Planning Grants: Connecticut (\$290,950); Maine (\$226,748); New York (\$400,000); and Rhode Island (\$255,585).

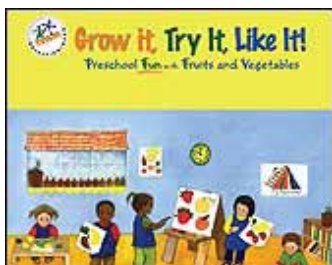
USDA Grants to Support Emergency Feeding Network

USDA announced nearly \$6 million in grant awards supporting food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens to improve and expand their capacity and infrastructure. Funded through the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Infrastructure Grant program, the awards will help the Nation’s emergency feeding network meet the needs of the increasing numbers of people turning to food pantries and soup kitchens to feed their families.

Nearly \$3.3 million was awarded to 19 organizations in 17 states, which primarily serve rural areas. The remaining funds were awarded to another 20 organizations in 15 states that serve a mix of rural, suburban and urban communities.

In the Northeast the FCS Food Pantry in Maine (\$214,500) and the Church of St Francis Xavier in New York (\$70,129) received grants.

News Briefs



Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables

A garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care centers that introduces

kids to three fruits - peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe, and three vegetables - spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash is now available.

Each kit includes hands-on activities, planting activities, and nutrition education activities that introduce MyPyramid for Preschoolers.

One copy per Child Care Center is available upon request through Team Nutrition www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/growit.html

USDA Announces Child Care Wellness Grants

The USDA announced Child Care Wellness Grants to 14 states for the improvement of health and wellness in child care settings. More than \$7.7 million in funding will support state agencies in implementing initiatives through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). More than half of the funds awarded will be distributed to local child care sponsoring organizations and institutions through state agencies.

The CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and in making care more affordable for low-income families. Through CACFP, more than 3.3 million infants and children and 112,000 adults receive nutritious meals and snacks each day.

During the grant period, ranging from two to three years, states will fund activities that promote nutrition and physical activity in child care; provide technical assistance and training to sponsors and providers; perform outreach campaigns to increase program access in underserved areas; and/or make innovative use of technology to provide training to sponsoring organizations and child care providers.

In the Northeast Region, Maine received a grant for \$564,040 and New York received a grant for \$693,635.

Massachusetts Selected to Test Ground-Breaking Nutrition Pilot Program

The USDA announced that Hampden County, Massachusetts, will conduct the first-ever Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) - an incentives-based program to empower low-income Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized \$20 million to research whether incentives for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) will increase their purchase of healthful foods.

"This pilot project will empower low-income Americans to eat more nutritious food and has the potential to strengthen the SNAP program that serves as a critical safety net to the most vulnerable in our society," said Agriculture Secretary Vilsack. "Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, especially in the place of higher calorie foods, can help move America toward healthier lifestyles and a healthier future."

The Healthy Incentives Pilot will enroll 7,500 randomly selected SNAP households to receive incentives. For every dollar participants spend on fruits and vegetables using their SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, 30 cents will be added to their benefit balance - thus cutting the cost of fruits and vegetables by almost one-third.

Massachusetts was selected competitively based on its comprehensive pilot proposal that included very thorough and strong design, implementation, staffing and management plans. Hampden County is a mix of 27 urban, rural, and suburban cities with a total of 50,000 SNAP households. The majority of recipients are concentrated in the areas of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee. Massachusetts will begin operating the pilot in the fall of 2011.

"The Healthy Incentives Pilot is an incredible step toward reducing obesity by encouraging low-income Americans to add more fruits and vegetables to their diets," said USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon. "It's time to move forward with innovative approaches like HIP to get Americans eating more healthily."

Secretary Vilsack also announced the selection of Abt Associates, Inc. of Cambridge, Mass. as the independent contractor to evaluate HIP. The evaluation will focus on whether incentives increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables and how participants' overall diets are affected. Researchers also will study HIP effects on the State, retailers and other SNAP stakeholders and assess the feasibility of implementing HIP nationwide.

Around The Region in 2010



Pictured l to r: Northeast Regional Administrator James Arena-DeRosa, U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and FNS Deputy Administrator Audrey Rowe

Child Nutrition Tours - Connecticut and Maine

Audrey Rowe, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Deputy Administrator for Special Nutrition Programs joined U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut's 3rd District at the Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School in New Haven to discuss the Administration's priorities for improving school meals and the health of children across the nation. FNS Northeast Regional Administrator James Arena-DeRosa moderated a discussion on Child Nutrition Reauthorization with approximately 20 school officials and local, state and community leaders.

Kevin Concannon, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) Under Secretary joined U.S. Congresswoman Chellie Pingree of Maine's 1st District at the Bonny Eagle Middle School in Buxton to participate in a roundtable discussion with approximately 15 school, state and local officials to discuss Child Nutrition Reauthorization. They also joined the students for lunch, which included kale from the school's greenhouse.

U.S. Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (l) and FNCS Under Secretary Kevin Concannon have a conversation with one of the students.



ARRA Funds - Making A Difference in School Cafeterias

Kevin Concannon, USDA Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Under Secretary visited the Walker Elementary School in Concord, New Hampshire. Thanks to ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) funds, the school purchased a new dish washing machine. The one it had was too old for replacement parts to fix it and there were no funds available for a new one. Last year \$100 million in competitive grants were made available to schools across the nation to buy equipment critical to ensuring children receive healthy, safe meals.

All it takes is one visit to a school kitchen, especially one like the Walker School staffed by a single food service worker responsible for daily meal preparation, service and clean-up to see what a difference one piece of equipment makes.



Kevin Concannon, USDA Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Under Secretary (r) and Bill Janson, Concord, NH Food Service Director (l) discuss the positive impact of ARRA funds on school cafeterias.

Around The Region in 2010



New York WIC Media Campaign on Breastfeeding

New York is building upon the success it had with breastfeeding rates among WIC participants. Using the \$1.6 million WIC Breastfeeding Performance Bonus Award it received from the USDA, New York launched its media campaign entitled "Breastfeeding: For My Baby. For Me." The campaign included TV spots, internet ads, and ads in buses and on bus shelters statewide. The campaign reached out to new and expectant mothers primarily in lower income areas.



Emergency Food Demand Up in New York City

Under Secretary Kevin Concannon speaks to NY-1 about the importance of SNAP and USDA foods as more New Yorkers seek emergency food from pantries and kitchens. He was in New York City to participate in a press conference with the NY City Coalition Against Hunger highlighting its Annual Survey. Demand at NY City's soup kitchens and food pantries grew by 6.8% in 2010. Most hungry New Yorkers were able to get by thanks in large part to federal stimulus funding for emergency food and boosts to SNAP.



26th Annual Massachusetts Tomato Festival

Tomato farmers from across the Bay State converged on Boston City Hall Plaza seeking bragging rights for the top tomato. The 26th Annual Tomato Festival kicked off the Massachusetts Farmers' Market Week. Entries were judged by a panel of food writers, chefs, cookbook authors, grocers, and federal and state officials. First time judge James Arena-DeRosa, Northeast Regional Administrator, spoke about the important role farmers' markets play providing low-income individuals and families with access to healthy and affordable, farm fresh foods.



Rhode Island WIC Campaign

To promote the start of the new WIC Food Package, the Rhode Island WIC Program ran an advertising campaign which included billboards, bus wraps and radio spots in both English and Spanish.

Around The Region in 2010



Fruit and Veggie R/x Program Launches in Maine



Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Under Secretary Kevin Concannon joined Maine nonprofit Cultivating Community, Wholesome Wave, the Pilgrim Health Care Foundation and other Maine-based organizations to launch their Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program in Portland and Skowhegan, Maine. This new health initiative allows local physicians to track the overall well-being of at-risk patients after prescribing more fruits and vegetables to family diets. In Portland, the pilot will focus on Somali refugee women at extremely high risk for diabetes as they transition to healthful diets.



The Under Secretary provided keynote remarks and participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Boyd Street Urban Farm, a collective of immigrant and refugee farmers.



Fed Focus

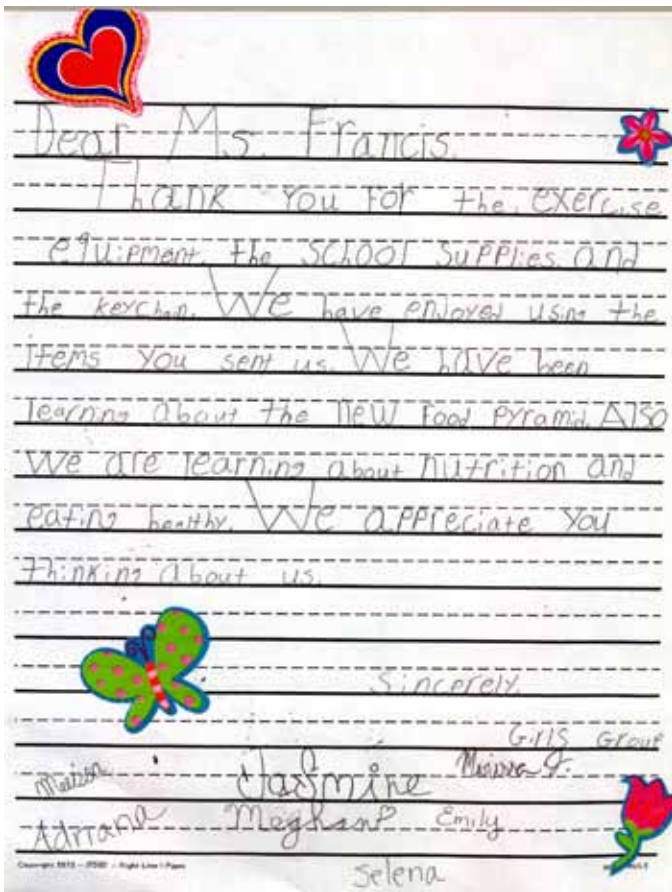


People's Garden Growing in Boston

The Northeast Regional Office People's Garden Committee, a group of employees who have volunteered their time, collaborated with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to beautify a small plot of DOT-owned land, adjacent to the Regional Office in the middle of a heavily trafficked area.

The Garden was planted with staff-donated perennials and other native New England plants. The Committee is eager to see this project flourish over future growing seasons. It has received words of thanks and praise from residents in a nearby apartment complex who appreciate the transformation of this former neighborhood eyesore.

Top left Picture (l to r): Northeast employees Valarie Briggs, Chris Nasados, Beth Harding of Harding Botanicals, Mark Blomstrom, Beth Lopez, Alison Mickiewicz, Regional Administrator James Arena-DeRosa and WIC Director Maureen Mallam.



An Unexpected Thank You

The Food and Nutrition Service Northeast Regional Public Affairs Office often fills requests for materials to help educate kids on the importance of a healthy diet and active lifestyle. The Frisbee flyers, jump ropes and key chains sent to the Bradley School, East Providence, RI were incorporated into the teacher's lesson plan, as incentives that serve as lasting reminders of *Eat Right and Get Active with MyPyramid.gov*. The thank you letter from The Girls Group was a delightful surprise. What a thoughtful reminder of how the small things we do each day can make a big impact.



USDA Takes in Local Flavor

Northeast Regional Office WIC staff member Pam Magnarelli (above center) participated in a Management Evaluation of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program in Maine.

Pam's visit was featured on the front page of the local Town Line newspaper.

Smithsonian Acquires Historic Food Coupons From USDA

At a special presentation, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History acquired Food Stamp Program coupons and other related materials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service.

The acquisition showcases nearly 40 years of significant program changes, from paper coupons to today's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, which have been issued nationally since 2004. The donation includes individual food coupons, booklets, proof sheets, early artist designs, printer's plates, and sample EBT cards.

The rare materials will be part of the National Numismatic Collection (NCC) housed at the museum, which consists of more than 1.5 million objects, including coins, medals and paper currency and preserves the role of money in economic history. The NCC's collection includes the history of the early FSP that began with the 1935 Agricultural Adjustment Act and lasted until 1943, as well as other forms of emergency currency, such as clamshells used by Americans during the Great Depression. With the new acquisition, the museum now holds the single most comprehensive research collection pertaining to food coupons.

"The inclusion of the Food Stamp Program in the National Numismatic Collection is especially significant considering the current economic hardships facing Americans today," said Brent D. Glass, director of the museum. "Millions of Americans have relied on these coupons to sustain themselves and their families, and the museum is proud to join with the USDA to document this important program."

While billions of food coupons have been distributed since the beginning of the program, only a small sample has survived, due to the practice of the coupons being destroyed at a Federal Reserve Bank once redeemed by grocers. By law, food stamp



coupons were de-obligated on June 17, 2009 and are no longer legal tender.

Food stamps began as a pilot in the 1960s under President John F. Kennedy. In 2008, Congress renamed the Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to emphasize the program's focus on nutrition. Today SNAP has the highest participation in the program's history, serving nearly 40 million people, half of whom are children. While feeding low-income Americans across the country, the program also helps stimulate the economy. Every \$5 in new SNAP benefits equals \$9.20 in local economic activity.



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Office of Public Affairs

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