

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

2006-2007 Farm-to-School Grant Application

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Project Summary

The School Health and Advisory Committee (SHAC) at Barre Town Middle Elementary School (BTMES) has been a Vermont leader in successful wellness initiatives since 1996. SHAC is committed to the ongoing process of exploration and implementation of sustainable, innovative, health-nurturing programs that support student wellness. **The SHAC Subcommittee on Farm to School (F2S) will explore, develop, and implement a sustainable program to increase the use of nutritious locally grown food and food products, and to develop an awareness in the students and the community of the connection between the farm and this food.**

The SHAC F2S program will include initiatives to integrate seasonal, local food purchases into the current purchasing agent contract, develop kitchen staff technical skills to process local, whole foods, expand the existing taste-testing program to highlight local foods, and introduce students to the producers of local foods. The program will improve the selection, nutrition, and participation in the school's lunch program, explore options for sourcing fresh foods locally, and support local farms in the region.

Need and Readiness

BTMES is the heart of this Washington county rural community. The campus is near the center of Vermont's granite industry. The 962 students (pre-school through grade 8) are from an economically and socially diverse population. Approximately 20% of the student body qualifies for federally subsidized meals at school.

Nutritionally at-risk students will benefit from the opportunity to learn and experience healthful foods. Sharing the 'adventure' of tasting and approving new menu items is a powerful equalizer that engages children in healthful decision-making regardless of social or economic advantages. All students benefit from an equal opportunity to eat 'premium' nutrition, and the nutrition model may influence choices at home.

The school outsources food service supplies and personnel to the Abbey Group located in Enosburg Falls, Vermont. This contract is renewable annually, and the terms of the contract allow for 10% of food to be purchased outside of Abbey Group's established vendors. The local food purchased for the F2S program will be within the terms of the contract. The program will provide BTMES with an opportunity to introduce local foods that are not offered through the Abbey Group. The F2S program will also demonstrate to the Abbey Group how to make purchases from local farms, and how they may incorporate this process within other schools they serve in Vermont. BTMES has a staff of 2 principals, 85 teachers and 45 para-educators. The school and the community have a dynamic School Health Advisory Committee, (SHAC). SHAC was established by the school board in 1996. The 20 SHAC members represent faculty, administration, parents, community members, and food service staff. SHAC's mission statement (*Appendix A*), up-to-date meeting minutes, and nutrition policy (*Appendix B*) are posted on the BTMES website (www.btmes.org). SHAC has considerable influence on school wellness programs and directives (*Appendix C*). The 2006 Action Plan which includes school health goals is attached (*Appendix D*). SHAC is committed to establishing a F2S program as part of its ongoing mission to enhance the students' and the community's awareness about healthful choices, and to enhance the school's nutrition-centered lunch program.

Objectives, Activities and Timeline

Meeting with Abbey Group agent, food director and grant coordinator. January 30, 2007.

- ❖ Review cost and seasonality of 2006 locally produced foods that were purchased through the Farm to Table program, a sister program of F2S.
- ❖ Determine if local food should be purchased by the Abbey Group agent or the school's food director.
- ❖ Determine the total cost of purchasing the local foods for 2007. (Food Works records indicate that the average cost for purchasing food in the Farm to Table program for neighboring schools of similar size to BTMES is less than \$3,000 annually).
- ❖ Explore options for selling local nutritious products as a la carte items as an option for sustainable funding of the school's F2S program.
- ❖ Determine if the Abbey Group will help sustain annual staff development after 2007.
- ❖ Identify needs and purchase equipment to more efficiently handle and process whole, fresh foods. This equipment may include a commercial food processor, additional stovetop burners, additional cold storage, cutting boards, vegetable stick cutter, and possible installation costs.

Meeting with local school food directors and grant coordinator. February 28, 2007.

- ❖ Discuss the options for sustaining the F2S program through the sale of nutritious a la carte items. (At least two Washington County schools attribute a la carte sales as an important factor in the profitability of their nutrition-centered food service program.)
- ❖ Learn successful recipes and processing techniques using fresh local foods to develop F2S recipe book for BTMES kitchen.

Meeting with VT FEED, food service director, grant coordinator and at least one other F2S subcommittee member. February 28, 2007.

- ❖ Assess needs for food service staff development.
- ❖ Contract for at least 2 staff development sessions for 2007 that will educate food service staff in areas of identified need, such as processing whole, fresh foods, enhancing salad bar foods, recipe development

Explore special menu events using local, fresh food and recipes from cookbooks based on children's literature (such as The Redwall Abbey Series and Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House Books). April 30, 2007

- ❖ Teachers with appropriate grade level reading curriculum, the food service director and

the grant coordinator will meet to discuss this idea for fall 2007.

Explore ideas to educate and connect students to the producers of local foods. May 30, 2007.

- ❖ A professional speaker, a parent, the consumer science teacher and the grant coordinator will explore ideas on making a presentation to Family and Consumer Science classes
- ❖ The presentation will educate the students as to why and how we can connect local farms with our consumer choices.
- ❖ Feature posters in the cafeteria of farm families whose products are used in the school's food program

Expand the existing taste testing program to feature local, fresh foods. November 30, 2007.

- ❖ Schedule at least 4 events between January and November 2007. The SHAC taste testing committee and the grant coordinator will plan these events around availability of seasonal produce.
- ❖ Feature successful taste tasting items on the school menu at least three times annually. The food service director and the grant coordinator will schedule these featured items.
- ❖ Plan and organize a special community event in mid-May or early October in the school's lunch facility. The event will feature a local chef preparing menu items using fresh local foods. This community event will be broadcast locally. Farmers whose produce is used in the event will be invited and recognized as special guests. A parent, the grant coordinator and a local television producer will head the planning committee.

Attend the annual Vermont Chef to Table event. December 2007.

- ❖ The food director, grant coordinator and at least one F2S committee member will attend this event that educates food service and chefs about using local farm products in their menus.

Collaboration and Coordination

BTMES SHAC F2S Subcommittee (*Appendix E*) will collaborate on developing a F2S program in alignment with the current BTMES wellness policy and the *Vermont Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines*.

Scott Chouiniere, Karen Davenport and Mary Dollenmaier will explore contract options for purchasing local farm products, a la carte menu items, and kitchen facility improvements for more efficient processing of whole, fresh foods. They also will discuss support the Abbey Group can supply for staff development.

- ❖ Identify and prioritize equipment needs
- ❖ Determine cost of purchase, installation plan, and installation expense
- ❖ Determine what sustainable support the Abbey Group will provide for equipment purchases and staff development.

Sara Lisniansky is the Farm-to-Table program administrator for Food Works at Two Rivers. Farm to Table is a year-round, pre-order program delivering fresh, local produce each week to food service facilities.

- ❖ The program is a direct sales connection with more than 12 local farmers and increases local farm sales with large school orders.
- ❖ Mary Dollenmaier will establish an account with Food Works for the school.
- ❖ Karen Davenport or Scott Chouiniere will coordinate with Sara Lisniansky for local produce purchasing and delivery.

Mary Dollenmaier will make an appointment with the food directors of U32 and/or Montpelier HS to learn about efficient processing technique for whole, fresh foods and successful recipes using local foods.

Abbey Nelson, VT FEED administrator, coordinates food service professional development workshops as well as in-school mentoring. These programs build skills in processing and planning meals using fresh, whole foods.

- ❖ Karen Davenport, Scott Chouiniere and 2 F2S representatives will explore staff development needs with Abbey Nelson at the initial free consultation.
- ❖ The identified needs will be the focus of at least 2 sessions of mentoring or classes attended by food service and a F2S subcommittee representative.

Patty Meriam and Mary Dollenmaier will determine literature curriculum for grades 3-5 and which books have 'theme' cookbooks to use for a special menu event.

Tod Murphy, local farmer, founder of the Farmer's Diner, and nationally recognized advocate of connecting local farms with the community will advise the F2S subcommittee on a presentation.

- ❖ Tod Murphy, Patty Meriam and Mary Dollenmaier will explore ideas to make a presentation on connecting local farms with consumer choices in the Family and Consumer Science classes.

- ❖ Meghan Kane, the Family and Consumer Science teacher, will coordinate with Tod Murphy, Patty Meriam and Mary Dollenmaier on curriculum.

Mary Dollenmaier will coordinate with Food Works and local farmers to create posters of farm families whose products are used in the school's food program

The existing SHAC taste testing committee will incorporate fresh local produce in their recipes.

Ordering local products for the taste testing events will be coordinated by Mary Dollenmaier. Each lunchtime event serves samples to 400-500 students in grades 1-4. Karen Davenport and Mary Dollenmaier will collaborate on featuring successful recipes on the school menu at least 3 times annually.

Tony Campos, 'New England Cooks' producer, will host a live show at BTMES featuring a local chef using local farm products. The community and farmers with featured products will be invited to attend.

- ❖ The show will be televised on the community channel in Barre.
- ❖ Patty Meriam and Mary Dollenmaier will coordinate with Tony Campos on organizing the event.
- ❖ Tony Campos, Patty Meriam, and Mary Dollenmaier will explore the idea of inviting guest chefs periodically to BTMES to work with the food service staff and demonstrate recipes using local foods.

The annual Vermont Chef to Table event will be attended by Karen Davenport, Mary Dollenmaier and at least 1 F2S subcommittee member.

Program Evaluation

- ❖ Invoices of local foods purchased will document and measure the total volume purchased from local farms.
- ❖ The 2007 lunch program will be compared to the previous 2 years in terms of percentage of students participating.
- ❖ Sales receipts, installation invoices, and photos of the new equipment in use will document the purchases.
- ❖ Notes and/or decisions resulting from meetings on a la carte sales will be summarized by the F2S program coordinator and submitted.
- ❖ A book of successful F2S recipes will be submitted.
- ❖ Staff development sessions will be summarized from reports by attendees submitted to the grant coordinator. New skills/ideas/recipes from the sessions that are implemented will be monitored and documented in the F2S recipe book by the grant coordinator.
- ❖ Compiled results from taste testing events, and successful items that are featured on the food service menu will be submitted as documentation of taste testing.
- ❖ The presentation on connecting local farms with the community will culminate with a test or survey for participating Family and Consumer Science students. The results of the survey will be submitted as a student evaluation of the concepts in the presentation.
- ❖ Posters of farm families hanging in the cafeteria will be photographed and submitted as documentation.
- ❖ The televised guest chef taste testing will be submitted as a DVD and posted to the BTMES website.
- ❖ Complete a final report using the form provided when grants are awarded. The report will include a description of grant activities, grant evaluation, and a summary of expenditures.
- ❖ SHAC F2S subcommittee will make a final report presentation to the school board in December 2007. This meeting will be televised to the community. The presentation will summarize the successes of the 2007 F2S program, and describe plans for self-sustained initiatives in 2008.

Proposed Project Budget

Description of Expenditures	Cost
Local fresh food purchases (school meals, cafeteria taste testing events, and community tasting event)	\$ 4,000
Food service professional development (travel fess included)	1,000
Kitchen equipment and food preparation tools	3,200
Substitutes for food service and teachers (3 days)	420
Teacher release time (8 hours)	70
Supplies for posters, cookbooks	150
Advertising for community event	100
Stipend for taste tasting servers (6 parents)	150
Grant coordinator to provide technical assistance in implementing grant initiatives and establishing a self-sustaining F2S program. (stipend and travel January - December 2007)	5,000
Total	\$14,090

APPENDIX A

SHAC Mission Statement

Mission Statement

“The School Health Advisory Committee implements programs and policies that provide students, parents, staff and community the knowledge and skills to make life-long and sustainable healthful choices.”

APPENDIX B

BTMES Nutrition Policy

NUTRITION POLICY – Code: EF

Philosophy

Good nutrition is essential to peak academic performance and to long-term health. Nutrition programs and nutrition education are an integral part of high-quality education.

Procedures

1. Our school participates in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program in order that all students are assured access to high quality nutrition every day. Appropriate modifications are made to ensure those children with special dietary and health needs are able to participate. Procedures are in place to protect confidentiality and identity of students qualifying for free or reduced price school meals. We promote the use of these programs by regularly informing families of the program's benefits.
2. All meals sold to children at Barre Town Middle and Elementary School will meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the criteria set forth below:
 - Our meals emphasize low-fat main dish protein items. A variety of fresh fruit or vegetables are offered daily in a child-friendly form, e.g., oranges, quartered.
 - Fresh and frozen vegetables are preferred over canned. They are prepared by steaming whenever possible.
 - Desserts are limited to fruit and items that support low fat baking techniques and nutrition principles and are served in age appropriate sizes. Examples of encouraged foods are: pudding, frozen yogurt, regular yogurt, trail mix (nuts, seeds, dried fruit), 100% fruit Popsicles, low-sugar/low-fat cookies and fig bars.
 - Ala Carte and vending machine items are limited to a variety of healthy snacks. Some examples of encouraged foods are: raw vegetable sticks/slices with low fat dressing or yogurt dip, fresh fruit, 100 % fruit juices, water, milk, frozen 100% juice Popsicles, dried fruits, trail mix (dried fruit, seeds, nuts), dry roasted nuts, low-sodium crackers, pretzels, popcorn, low-fat muffins, granola bars, low-fat yogurt, cottage cheese, and cheese.
 - The salad bar will be stocked with a variety of vegetables, fruits, protein, and grain items. Bacon bits and similar items will not be offered.
 - Condiments and salad dressings will be low-fat.
 - Food and drink will be served at appropriate temperatures.
 - The bread and bread alternates offered to students will be at least 50% whole grains.
 - Beverages served are limited to 100% fruit juices and a variety of milk Caffeinated beverage will not be available to Barre Town students.
 - The use of salt is limited to recipes where it is an essential ingredient.
 - Foods are not deep-fat fried; cooking oil used is poly-unsaturated.
 - Menus are planned a month in advance to assist in providing needed nutrients over the long term. Healthier food choices will be highlighted.
3. Our food services program participates in the "offer versus serve" method of meal service. A wide variety of healthy foods are offered and students are encouraged to make wise food choices. Good food habits are encouraged through the modeling of appropriate portions, suitable variety and preparation techniques that emphasize high quality nutrition.
4. Our cafeteria is a pleasant and inviting place. The cafeteria atmosphere is monitored regularly to ensure that meal times are relaxed and pleasant.
5. Nutrition education is an essential part of the curriculum. Teachers and food service personnel, as well as students, frequently update their knowledge of this rapidly changing field.

6. Fund raising activities of school groups are consistent with the nutrition standards of the food service program and the nutrition principles taught in the classroom. Candy food sales are prohibited.
7. School administrators will monitor fundraising activities in order to ensure that they are not in conflict with sound nutrition messages.
8. Administrators, staff, and extracurricular groups shall ensure that all school activities, including classroom practices and incentives, are consistent with the sound nutrition practices taught in the classroom and implemented in the school meal programs.
9. School personnel will collaborate with parents and the community to support these guidelines and the promotion of lifelong healthy nutrition habits.
10. Oversight of this policy will be delegated to the Board's School Health Advisory Committee.

APPENDIX C

SHAC Wellness Programs

- ❖ “Crops for Kids”, a school garden, is self-sustaining through fund raising and grants.
- ❖ SHAC “taste testing” program is in the 3rd successful year. These events educate students about nutritious choices and enhance participation in the school’s lunch program.
- ❖ SHAC helped implement composting of cafeteria waste, and 5.33 tons have been composted since September.
- ❖ SHAC has initiated a Safe Routes to School project through a 2 year grant. This project promotes wellness through biking activities and is centered on a new local bike path that leads to the BTMES campus.
- ❖ SHAC was instrumental in procurement of 35 bicycles in expanding the physical education curriculum to include mountain biking.

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APPENDIX E

BTMES SHAC F2S Subcommittee Members

- ❖ Jesse Shapiro, teacher , NOFA-VT member
- ❖ Susan Barnard, teacher and co-chair of SHAC
- ❖ Ted Rikken, BTMES principal
- ❖ Tanya Crawford-Stempel, school nurse
- ❖ Patricia L. Meriam, parent and trustee of the Barre Opera House, Vermont Granite Museum of Barre, and the Leahey Foundation, Inc.
- ❖ Tina Glosser, parent
- ❖ Cameo Lamb, student and member of Community Service Learning Project
- ❖ Karen Davenport, food director for the Abbey Group
- ❖ Scott Chouiniere, purchasing agent Abbey Group
- ❖ Mary Dollenmaier, grant and program coordinator, NOFA-VT member