

**Resolution for Missoula County Public School
in support of the Food and Farm Project**

WHEREAS, fresh, seasonal, local, sustainably grown foods are recommended source of nutrition for growing children;

- When schools provide locally-grown food, participating children eat significantly more servings of fruits and vegetables. For example, Davis Unified School District in California found that children ate 3-3.5 servings per locally-grown salad bar lunch as compared to 1 serving per child choosing the hot meal.ⁱ

WHEREAS, knowledge of food—how it is grown, who grows it, how it is prepared—is integral to a healthy education;

- There are at least 200 Farm to College programs and 400 Farm to School programs in 22 states.ⁱⁱ

WHEREAS, purchasing from local farmers and ranchers can create positive community relationships;

- Researchers at The University of Montana found that most respondents in a survey of Missoula County residents were concerned about “how far away the food I eat/buy comes from.”ⁱⁱⁱ

WHEREAS, public school is an excellent place to nurture and preserve Montana’s food traditions and agricultural heritage;

- In 1950, 70% of the food Montanans ate came from Montana. Today that number is less than 15%, and we are losing around 250 ranches each year.

WHEREAS, Farm to School programs across the nation have increased student participation rates in the national school lunch program;

- Trends show that participation increases substantially when a program is started, and that numbers then level off after an initial rush. In a pilot program at Pioneer Elementary School in Davis Joint Unified School District, participation rates increased by 30% after the program was initiated, and then leveled off to an increase of 7% over pre-salad bar days.^{iv}

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Missoula County Public Schools will support the Missoula School Food and Farm Project.

Through the pilot *Missoula School Food and Farm Project*, Garden City Harvest works with Missoula schools to provide education that increases knowledge about where food comes from and encourages wise eating choices.

Through two separate, complementary components, the project aims to instill and reinforce the concept that food and agriculture is integral to community, economic, environmental, and personal health.

Garden City Harvest Community Education Program

This component provides experiential learning opportunities for Missoula school children on the Garden City Harvest/EVST PEAS Farm, a 6.5 acre farm located in the Rattlesnake Valley. Farm staff and trained volunteers provide educational lessons and facilitate student participation in everyday farm activities, such as planting, harvesting, or composting. The learning opportunities cover topics from local agricultural and natural history to scientific concepts based on agricultural systems to sustainable building.

Farm to School

The second component, *Farm to School*, brings the nutritious benefits and learning opportunities of local farms into schools. By working with local farmers and ranchers, food service staff feature Montana-grown food items in the school cafeterias when possible. Garden City Harvest interns provide educational classroom learning opportunities for students about what types of food are grown in Montana, how these can be a part of a healthy diet, and how food choices affect the broader community.

ⁱ Farm to School Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from www.farmentoschool.org/faq.htm.

ⁱⁱ Personal interview. June 2005. Marion Kalb. Director of National Farm to School Program Office, Community Food Security Coalition.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Food Matters: Farm Viability and Food Consumption in Missoula County, 2004*. Retrieved from www.umt.edu/cfa/.

^{iv} Farm to School Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from www.farmentoschool.org/faq.htm.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees on May 9, 2006