



Changing the way we think about feeding our kids

An evaluation of the Farm to School Salad Bar Project
Dragon Lake Elementary, Quesnel, BC

Date Evaluated: May 2007-February 2008



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Executive Summary

This evaluation reviews the successes and challenges of the Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot Project during the period of May 2007 – February 2008. The report discusses critical aspects that will promote sustainability of the project.

The Farm to School Salad Bar Project began in May 2007. Funded by Northern Health, managed by School District 28 and Northern Health staff, and operated by volunteers and parents alike, they set out to improve the diets of school aged children, educate the youth about the significance of a local economy and to raise awareness of the need to build lasting partnerships between local farmers and schools.

This pilot project is considered a best practices model for the promotion of nutrition education and the value of supporting the local economy within a target population of students aged 5 – 12 years old. The most important factor limiting the success of this project was the lack of partnership between local farmers and the school.

Overall, this project was successful and can be sustainable over the long term. Increasing funding opportunities for other schools and organizations to initiate similar projects would be recommended.

Background

Farm to School salad bar projects connect schools to local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals at school, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local small farmers (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/farmtoschool.asp>).

The initial implementation of the Farm to School Pilot Project in northern British Columbia has a very short history from initial discussions of how a project like this could work to actually putting the project into practice. Dragon Lake Elementary was one of six pilot projects in two health regions waiting for funding following a phase where Northern Health supported a process to assess and ready schools. Dragon Lake Elementary was included in the list of potential pilot projects because they understood the vision, goals and objectives and they had the human and material supports ready should funds become available.

In addition, the principal and staff of Dragon Lake Elementary School recognized the need for bringing healthy, local food to the school and there was a good volunteer base of parents and other community members who were interested in the project and who could be called upon to participate as needed. Finally, the school meals coordinator of School District 28 was essential in pulling this pilot together and assisted both with funding, in-kind time, and general promotion of the project. They made a commitment to plan and launch the project within a short period of time and sustained the program for 20 weeks into the following year.

Through the dedicated leadership who were the driving force behind the implementation of this project, the Farm to School Salad Bar Project has become synonymous with best practices in promoting healthy eating and healthy living amongst school aged children in Quesnel, BC.

The primary objective of the pilot project as implemented by Northern Health and School District 28 was to improve the health of school aged children by increasing access to local, fresh, nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods at school. The secondary objective was to link the local farm/food producers with the students at Dragon Lake Elementary to increase student understanding of the importance of local food systems.

As stated in the initial project summary, there are six objectives which include:

- 1.) Increase fruit and vegetable consumption amongst participating school aged children
- 2.) Improve student knowledge about foods, nutrition, and health
- 3.) Enhance student skills in food production, processing, and handling
- 4.) Increase student understanding that local food systems and the food produced from such systems is central to health, culture, community, environment, and the local economy
- 5.) Strengthen health, farm, and school partnerships
- 6.) Provide a model program, having potential to be implemented elsewhere in the province

Evaluation methods and measurement tools of the Farm to School Salad Bar Project were in place before the project began. An initial six week pilot was implemented at the end of the school year 2007, and commenced again in September 2007 – February 2008. The initial six week pilot allowed for the team to identify and resolve any gaps in project delivery before the students resumed their studies in the fall.

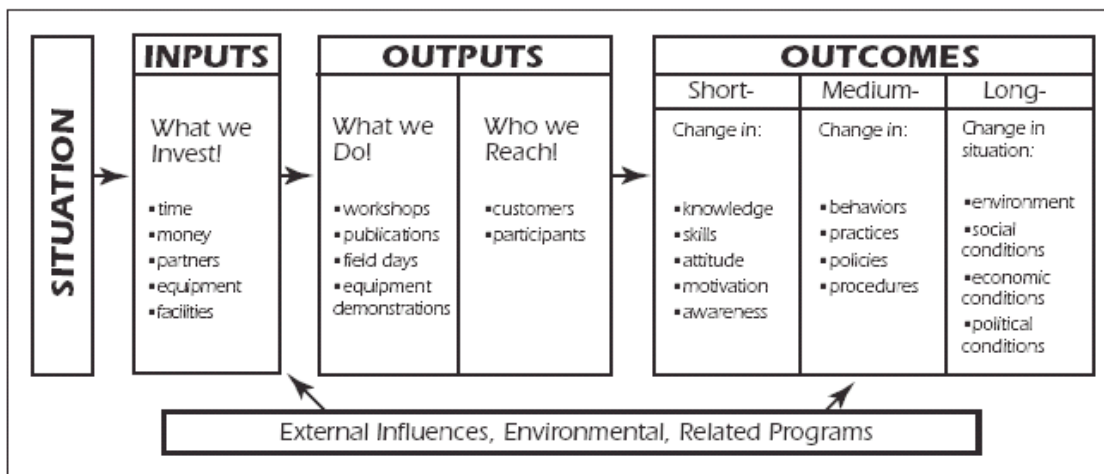
There were two phases to this evaluation. In order to evaluate the initial six week pilot, a survey was sent to the parents, volunteers, and students from kindergarten to grade 7 for their feedback on their experience with the project (Appendix 1). Another survey was sent out to parents, student volunteers, and the project committee at the end of the project (Appendix 2). The data collected from these surveys help to inform the overall evaluation. Teachers were not surveyed after the six week pilot due to time restrictions. It is unfortunate that they were not surveyed as this information would have been invaluable for the evaluation.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot Project focused on the success of the project in terms of meeting the objectives that were identified in the initial proposal as well as the financial and logistical aspects that could make this project sustainable.

Several methods were employed in evaluating this project. A logic model approach was used (Figure 1) to monitor project objectives. In addition, the evaluator attended meetings with the school meals coordinator, Northern Health, and the school principal and volunteer parents in order to discuss any concerns, gaps in service delivery, or suggestions in service delivery that could improve the overall project. Students were also assessed in their knowledge of nutrition, the importance of a local economy, and skills in how to prepare a healthy salad bar lunch. Preparation of a healthy lunch was observed by the evaluator while surveys, games, and promotional items helped to identify their level of knowledge of nutrition and the local economy. Finally, an interim report was provided after the initial six week pilot that focused on the responses from the surveys. These responses helped to guide the remainder of the pilot project.

Figure 1: Logic Model





Evaluation Findings

At the conclusion of the 6 week trial, volunteers, parents, and students from grades 1 to 7 were asked to participate in a survey regarding their experiences with the initial phase of the salad bar project. Below is a summary of the outcomes of those surveys.

Summary of Volunteers Survey

Three volunteers were provided the survey outlined in Appendix 2 and asked to complete it based on their experiences with the initial 6 week trial of the salad bar project.

The total number of survey participants responded that their volunteer experience was excellent. They were satisfied with the length of their shifts and training they received and felt there were no changes required (although only 2 of the 3 volunteers have their Foodsafe designation). Suggestions on the logistics of the salad bar were minimal and easily accommodated to help in successful delivery of the program. One respondent suggested added shelving and storage in the kitchen would be beneficial. Another respondent suggested that the salad bar be moved to the gym which is in closer proximity to the kitchen and easier for the volunteer staff to deliver. All respondents felt that the menus and food preparation were adequate and the number of volunteers and workload expected of each were acceptable. Finally, the support from the school was satisfactory and student helpers and involvement in program delivery was also welcomed.

When asked about the overall program design and delivery, there were interesting responses. All respondents thought the salad bar program was an excellent initiative although two people suggested there was room for improvement. The only concern identified was the order in which children received their lunch. The suggestion was that the class order should be rotated so each class gets a chance at first selection of the salad bar. Everyone felt that the program did not require changes to the quality of the produce although a comment was made that occasionally produce delivered was not fresh. Two volunteers stated that changes were needed to increase the amount of chicken and bison that was available.

It was reported that the types of lunches that children were eating prior to the salad bar program were sandwiches, granola, juice, hot lunch, fruit, cookies, crackers/cheese, and pepperoni. After participating in the program children are trying new foods and have increased their intake of fruit and vegetables.

Summary of Parents Survey

“Participating in the salad bar was a treat/change from bagged lunches. The parent knows their child is eating well, and my son asked to buy different foods for home meals”

All parents who completed the survey stated that their children participated in the project and that they would like to see the salad bar continue beyond the pilot for the health benefits it offered their children. When asked how their child’s salad bar experience was, the majority responded that it was excellent or very good. Comments made to the contrary included 2 requests to improve the soup, 1 request to have more protein, and a concern that their child’s class always ate last and the food options were limited. Suggestions for improvement included changing the soups, involving more parents, and making the weekly menu available ahead of time so parents with fussy eaters could prepare their children. It is interesting to note that only 1 respondent commented that it would be great to see the local component strengthened and only 1 respondent thought that the program strengthened health, farm and school partnerships. Suggestions for improvement of the overall project included having a room closer to the kitchen for the salad bar to ensure cleanliness and concerns of the volunteers taking on too much work. Finally, comments from the parents surveyed suggested that while the salad bar was a good idea and they were willing to pay \$2.50-\$3.75 to feed their children, they wanted to see a larger variety of foods, more food per child and to increase the serving size. Children are allowed to return to the salad bar for second servings but it is uncertain if the respondents were aware of this when answering the survey. Overall, most parents felt that there could have been more ‘favourite’ foods available and there was a strong response that the head volunteer should be a paid position for the amount of work they were asked to complete.

Summary of Committee Survey

“Well done everyone. I think that it is a great success overall”

The majority of the committee members who were surveyed reported that they thought the objectives of the project were met although it was stated that the lack of a coordinator (after the initial 6 week trial) resulted in a decrease in building awareness about the project. All committee members reported that the overall strength of the project was that students were increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables they consumed at school as well as at home. Limitations that were identified included equipment needed in the kitchen, the need for more

volunteers, and again, the lack of a coordinator. Some committee members suggested having the salad bar closer to the kitchen would provide a cleaner, more efficient atmosphere. Overall, committee members reported that they thought the salad bar project was an excellent project but day to day coordination and promotion of the salad bar was lacking.

It is interesting to note that the original committee dissolved after the initial 6 week trial and a new committee was not put in place for the remainder of the project. While it is difficult to determine the exact cause and effect of why the committee dissolved, it has been suggested that there were challenges with team work as well as a significant change in staff/principal that impacted the continuance of a committee and coordinator.

Summary of Student Volunteers Survey

All student volunteers who responded to the survey reported that they thought the FoodSafe course was a valuable course for volunteering on the salad bar. All students, with the exception of 1, reported that they would like to continue to volunteer at the salad bar. When asked about jobs they liked to do versus jobs they disliked, the majority reported that they enjoyed preparing and setting up the salad bar while the majority disliked doing dishes. Twenty three students reported that they would like to take the FoodSafe course while 5 of the respondents had taken the course.

What the kids had to say!



Summary of Grade 1 Surveys

There were 20 respondents from grade one who participated in the survey. They were asked a variety of questions that included the new foods they tried, what they liked and disliked, and what they learned about eating locally and healthy. Foods that were new to this group were lettuce, chick peas, salad, pita bread, cantaloupe, kiwi, noodles, peas, rhubarb muffins, tuna, and turkey. Some of the foods they liked were tacos, salad, carrots, apples, peppers, strawberries, pita bread and crab. Least favourite food items were chick peas, peppers, crab, grapes, tomatoes, beets, and sprouts. All respondents liked the salad bar for reasons that included the fact that the food was local, tasty and healthy and there was lots of food. The majority of students (15/20) came back for seconds and all reported that they had enough food and enough time to eat their lunch. Questions were asked in an attempt to determine if the children learned where their food comes from, the importance of buying locally, and what a food mile is. The majority of students identified the correct definition of a food mile and where the best tasting food comes from (18/20) and 9/20 reported eating healthy was an important lesson they learned.

Summary of Grade 2 Surveys

Twenty-two children from grade 2 were given the survey to complete after the first six weeks of the salad bar pilot project. Twenty children participated in the project, 2 did not. New food items that were tried were pita bread and kiwi. Favourite foods included tacos, strawberries, and watermelon. Least favourite food was tomatoes, crab, chick peas, and pomegranates. 11 students responded that they are eating a lot more fruits and vegetables since trying the salad bar and they liked participating because the food was tasty. The total number of respondents said they would like to continue to participate in the salad bar program. The majority of students came back for seconds or thirds (15/22) and all but one thought they had enough time to eat their salad. Like the grade 1 students, the majority understood the definition of a food mile and learned that eating healthy was important. The only food identified as being available to purchase locally were strawberries and lettuce.

Summary of Grade 3 Surveys

13 grade 3 children completed the salad bar survey. Some of the new foods they tried were pita bread, walnuts, chili, noodles, and crab. While there were a wide ranging list of fruits and vegetables the kids ate before they tried the salad bar, there were obviously a few additions to their list of foods they liked such as snow peas, broccoli, cantaloupe, beans, kiwi, and celery. One child even responded 'everything!'. The majority of kids also responded that they are eating 'more' or 'a lot more' fruits and vegetables than prior to the salad bar program and they enjoyed trying new foods and found the salad bar to be 'tasty'. For this group of kids, pita bread and tacos were quite popular while foods that were disliked included mushrooms, chickpeas, green beans, sprouts, soy beans, crab, and beats. One child responded that there was nothing on the salad bar that he/she disliked. All 13 respondents said they would like to try the salad bar again, the majority came back for seconds and only 2 felt they did not have enough time to finish their lunch. 11 respondents correctly answered the food mile definition while the total number of students surveyed (13) knew it was best to get your food locally. Finally, the majority of students understood the importance of eating locally and eating healthy foods. Other responses to the 'what have you learned' question included 'pineapple is not local' and 'the salad bar tastes good'.

Summary of Grade 4 Surveys

There were 28 grade 4 students who responded to the salad bar survey. Twenty one students participated in the salad bar pilot project while 7 did not. Students in this grade liked the salad bar for reasons that included the food being tasty, healthy, having a variety and freshness of the produce. While they liked the food that was offered, the majority (16/28) wanted to see juice or dairy added to the salad bar while 6/28 would like to see more food in general and more fruit. Other responses included the suggestion of adding crackers and cheese, warm food, and/or soup to the salad bar. Favourite foods were varied and ranged from tacos (8/28), salad (5/28), and one each response for watermelon, rhubarb muffin, strawberries, ham, fruit, kiwi, crab, cantaloupe, and blackberries. Foods least favoured by this group included rhubarb, tomato, radish, apples, beet, and one response stated 'nothing'. Responses for new foods tried were wide ranging and included noodles, rhubarb, crab, sunflower seeds, and goat cheese. It is interesting to note that preferred fruits and vegetables prior to and after participating in the salad bar project are very similar and some participants responded that they ate the same as before. All students also responded that they ate fruits and vegetables at each lunch time and some responded that this consumption did increase once they began to participate in the salad bar project. This group also thought they should have the salad bar 3 days a week and the majority (21/23) would like to take the Food Safe course so they could volunteer in the fall. Responses to the importance of eating food that is produced locally included taste, less pollution, healthier, and awareness of food miles and the majority (18/28) knew that buying food from the farmer's market was the best place to purchase local foods. However, when asked to define a food mile with multiple choice options, 24 responded correctly while the remaining 4 answered incorrectly. In addition, responses to the question about what they have learned were answered with a variety of responses that included 'eat local', 'about food miles', 'eat healthy and in season', 'try new foods', 'healthy food tastes good', and 'nothing'. This is a

broad range of responses although the majority of grade 4 students clearly learned from their experience.

Summary of Grade 5 Surveys

Of the twenty three grade 5 students who answered their survey, 18 participated in the salad bar while 5 did not. 11 children liked the salad bar because it was tasty and 8 thought it was healthy. One respondent disliked peas and another disliked 'some foods' but did not specify which ones they disliked. Identified favourite foods were tacos and strawberries; mushrooms and beet were the least favoured. The majority of students responded that they did not try any new foods and 3 tried chick peas for the first time. Prior to participation in the salad bar pilot project, there was a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that this group liked and sprouts were the only identified food that was added to that list. Although this group did not identify a significant amount of new fruits and vegetables, they did report that they ate a lot more since participating in the pilot project. 14 respondents said they would like to have the salad bar available for lunch 3 days a week because it is tasty, healthy, saves money, provided the opportunity to try new foods, and saved them from packing their own lunch. 11 students said they would like to volunteer in the fall semester and 12 would like to do the food safe course. Finally, 8 students reported that it was important to eat food produced locally as it is healthier and local foods can be purchased at the farmer's market. The overall lesson learned in this group was to try new foods and learning about the importance of a food mile.

Summary of Grade 6 Surveys

There are 22 grade 6 students and 21 participated in the salad bar pilot project. The majority of students liked the salad bar for reasons that included the salad bar being tasty, healthy, the opportunity to try new things, variety and having lots of food. Others disliked the salad bar because it was too cold (2/22) or the fruit was gone when the class's turn came and the pita bread was stale. Suggested improvements to the salad bar included increasing variety and adding more fruit and drink. Others wanted warm options or to add dessert. Tacos, strawberries, and noodles were identified as the most favoured foods while crab, tuna, and peas were identified as the least favourite. The majority reported that they did not try new foods on the salad bar and the fruits and vegetables they liked to eat now after participating in the project are the same as the foods they ate previously. This group also reported that they did not eat any more fruits and vegetables than previously and the majority (18/22) wanted to have the salad bar offered 3 days a week. 16 students would like to volunteer in September and 17 would like to take the food safe course. Like most groups, students reported that it is important to eat food produced locally because it is healthier and this food can be purchased at the local farmer's market. It is interesting to note that not all students understood what a food mile was although the majority (18/22) did respond correctly. Likewise, 18/22 reported that it is best to get food from your local farmer while others responded the refrigerator and the cupboard are good places to get food. Lessons learned include eat local, eat healthy, try new food a lot, don't be overweight, how our food is poisoned and learning about the food groups.

Summary of Grade 7 Surveys

Eight grade 7 students participated in the salad bar pilot project and 10 students completed the survey. Students liked the salad bar for varying reasons that included not having to pack a lunch, the food was tasty, it was something new, there was lots of food available and they liked eating locally. One respondent did not like cold meat. Suggested improvements included the addition of more fruit such as pomegranates and hot food such as perogies. Others would like to have more time to eat. Favourite foods included tacos, crab, noodles, salad, and tuna while least favourite foods included pita bread, hummus, chicken, lettuce, crab, and cold meat. 4/10 did not try any new foods while 2/10 reported that all foods were new to them. Fruit and vegetables eaten prior to participating in the salad bar included apples, carrots, strawberries, oranges, and bananas: new fruits included cantaloupe. Servings of daily fruit and vegetable increased from 1 serving to 3 and 7/10 students would like to see the salad bar offered 3 days a week. Only 2 respondents would like to volunteer or take the food safe course. 5/10 students did not know what foods are available from the local farmer and/or farmer's market and 3 responded that they did not know why it is important to eat locally. 4/10 thought local food was best purchased from the store and 3/10 correctly answered the local farmer's market. 4/10 reported they did not learn anything new. The remainder of students learned 'to eat healthy', 'there are lots of local foods available', and that 'eating lunch gives me energy.'

Project Implementation

Progress with the Farm to School Salad Bar project has been exceptional. From its inception in May 2007 to its conclusion in February 2008, the project has been successful in implementing the initial goals and objectives. The school meals coordinator for School District 28 was instrumental in keeping the momentum going and the long list of parent volunteers made the success of the project possible. From the 6 week trial to the 'official' beginning of the project in September, 2007, there was a considerable change of staff at the Dragon Lake Elementary School. A new principal was welcomed as well as new teachers and support staff. Although there were changes in staff that could have potentially altered the project deliverables, it did not negatively impact the outcome of the project. Instead it cemented the need to provide the salad bar to children in order to promote healthy eating, healthy living, and the importance of supporting the local economy.

As a result of the efforts of many, this project has quickly moved from an idea based loosely on the Field to School Salad Bar model in Toronto, Ontario to 1 pilot school in Quesnel, to the Public Health Association of BC providing funding for 16 Farm to School Salad Bar projects. The first call for proposals has recently concluded.

Project Effectiveness

Approximately 224 students aged 5-12 years of age participated in the Farm to School Salad Bar project twice a week averaging 13,000 meals provided from May – June 2007 and September – February 2008.

A primary component of the Farm to School Salad Bar project was to evaluate student consumption of the salad bar and students' ability to put together a balanced meal. In addition, food waste was also a consideration and the evaluation included steps taken to decrease wastage or to re-use products that were not immediately consumed.

Students were monitored at the beginning of the 6 week trial of the salad bar project and it was identified that a number of students were not able to make a balanced meal with the salad bar options. This gap in the project was immediately addressed and the solution involved posting a picture of how a salad should look from the choices available that day. The students could look at the salad bar options and make a salad following the picture provided. This was an excellent solution to a challenge faced by some students.

At the end of the 6 week trial, students were asked if they ate less, the same, more, or a lot more fruits and vegetables since participating in the project and as Table 1 indicates, the majority of students in grade 1 to 7 reported consuming a lot more fruits and vegetables since the project began.

Table 1: Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

I am eating _____ amount of fruits and vegetables since I tried the Salad Bar	# of respondents	Less	The same	More	A lot more
Grade 1	20		4	6	10
Grade 2	19		3	5	11
Grade 3	12		5	3	4
Grade 4	25		11		14
Grade 5	18	1	4		13
Grade 6	19	2	10		7
Grade 7	7		4	3	
Total:	120	3	41	17	59

An overview of the Objectives

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

“Since the beginning of the Salad Bar program, my child is now eating more fruits and vegetables and is open to trying new things”

- Parent survey

It was evident from the beginning of the project that fruit and vegetable consumption had increased with students not only because of the availability of nutritious foods offered at school but because they were also consuming more fruit and vegetables at home. The younger aged students reported trying many new foods while the older students reported there were few foods they had not tried previously.

Contrary to this self reported response, during salad bar days when the menu was more ‘creative’ and included more meat, the salad bar was more successful than usual. For example, tacos made with local bison meat were a huge success and the students often requested to have this particular menu item. However, it is important to highlight when tacos or similar items were served, students typically ignored the fruits and vegetables. When the menu focused on one hot item (i.e. soup) along with fruits and vegetables there was a shift towards increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

The evaluator visited the school during the second week of the salad bar project and asked each classroom questions (Table 2) after their lunch break in order to hear first hand what students thought of their salad bar experience.

Table 2: Questions asked to students who participated in the first week of the Salad Bar project

1.	Who tried the salad bar today?
2.	Who tried something new to eat? What was the new food item you tried? Did you like it?
3.	Would you like to continue having your lunch from the salad bar?
4.	What are some foods that you would like to see offered at the salad bar?

On this particular day, the majority of students participated in the salad bar. In each class, there were approximately 3-5 students who did not participate. As mentioned previously, the younger students tended to have tried new foods at the salad bar, while the older students were less likely to identify new food items. Not everyone liked the new foods but it is a good indicator of project success that they were at least willing to try new foods. In addition, out of the total number of students asked if they would like to continue having lunch from the salad bar, 3 students reported that they did not like it. Foods that students would like to see at the salad bar were interesting in that many responses included watermelon, mango, honey dew melon, pears, peaches, grapefruit and pomegranates. The only local food items that were mentioned were strawberries and blueberries.

Student knowledge about food, nutrition, and health

“Eat local, eat healthy”

- Grade 1 response from survey

The nutrition education provided at the onset of this project along with continual promotion of the importance of eating locally and making healthy food choices resonated with the students and it was apparent that students increased their knowledge about food, nutrition, and health. When surveyed, the majority of students knew what a healthy food choice was and why they should avoid unhealthy foods. Other students reported that ‘healthy food tastes good!’ and ‘the salad bar is way better than hot dog days!’

Nutrition education was provided to all children at Dragon Lake Elementary and not only to those who participated in the project. A student from Simon Fraser University (SFU) was recruited as a communications coordinator. She was provided an overview of the project, travelled to Dragon Lake Elementary to see how the project looked in practice and was then asked to develop a nutrition education program for the children based on her observations.

The program she developed was remarkable and well received by teachers and students alike. Initially, she developed fact sheets (Appendix 3) and a bookmark (Appendix 4) outlining the importance of the Farm to School Salad Bar project and why it was initiated at Dragon Lake Elementary. She then asked the students to draw a picture of what the Farm to School Salad Bar project meant to them. A grade 3 student, Haley Scholel, was the winner of this contest and her drawing is highlighted in most of the educational material. Following the development of the fact sheet and bookmark, a poster was designed that highlighted the project. This poster was widely distributed in the Quesnel area in an effort to promote public awareness of the project. Following this initial public awareness campaign, the broader media were contacted and an article appeared both in the Quesnel Cariboo Observer newspaper and the Prince George Citizen highlighting the benefits of the project. Once this preliminary awareness building campaign was established, it was time for the students to get down to the business of learning about nutrition and the local economy. The SFU student was phenomenal in incorporating fun in a learning environment. She had colouring contests (Appendix 5), information sheets on the ‘journey of the apple’ (Appendix 6) and a word search game (Appendix 7). Finally, a ‘Story of Quesnel’ was produced that was an incredible resource for building public awareness about the project (Appendix 8). This exercise proved to be instrumental in educating the students in the relevance of the local economy, local farmers, healthy eating, and healthy living.

The survey responses from the students stated that the majority of students surveyed correctly defined a food mile and that it is important to buy food locally. I believe that the success of this education component comes directly from the interactive education tools developed by the SFU student. It is here that it would have been beneficial to have surveyed the teachers to learn about programs or activities at the school that focused on food. However, teacher input was omitted from both surveys due to time constraints of both the teachers and coordinators.

Enhancement of student skills in food production, handling, and processing

“I’m going to get a job this summer because I have my FoodSafe”
- Age 12 student

One of the many benefits of this project is that the students were involved in the preparation and handling of the bi-weekly salad bars and this exercise increased students self-esteem and helped to build job skills. Grades 5 – 7 were given the opportunity to participate in receiving their FoodSafe certificate at which time they could volunteer during salad bar days. 11 students and 4 adults participated in the FoodSafe program. However, as Table 2 indicates, only 5 of the 31 volunteers had their FoodSafe training while the majority recognized the importance of having the course and would like to continue volunteering.

Table 2: Student Volunteer Questions and Responses on FoodSafe Training

Question	# of responses	Yes	No
Did you take the FoodSafe course?	31	5	26
If you have not taken the FoodSafe course, would you like to take it?	25	23	2
Do you think this is a valuable course for volunteering for the Salad Bar Program?	31	31	0
Would you volunteer for the Salad Bar Program again?	31	30	1

The students who participated in the salad bar alternated between weeks 1 to 4. The menu repeated every 4th week which allowed the students to become familiar with the food items they would help prepare. The school meals coordinator reported a positive working atmosphere in the kitchen as the students were assisting with food handling and processing. This task also promoted team work and developed an understanding of the skills and collaboration required for successful project delivery.

The only challenge with this objective was the limited access the students had in food production. It would have been an invaluable learning experience for the students to partner with local farmers and assist with the harvesting or preparing of local foods for market. Relationships were not developed early on in the project and this was one challenge that was faced throughout the pilot.

Strengthening of farm and school partnerships

As mentioned in the previous section, there were challenges with strengthening partnerships between the local farms and Dragon Lake Elementary School. There was an incredible amount of work put into the development of this project and coordination between School District 28, Northern Health and their partners to ensure this project was a success. The focus from all levels of staff was on setting up the salad bars, ensuring the food was prepared to the highest of standards, and maintaining a level of quality of foods that would be satisfactory to the students and parents alike. However, developing a partnership with local farmers and/or producers was not considered until after the salad bar units were ordered and assembled, parent volunteers were in place, the committee for the salad bar was organized, and the menus prepared. By the time the local farmers/producers were engaged there were limited types of food available. Farmers suggested that they would have needed more time to prepare for extra orders by increasing the amount of food they planted and increasing harvesting production. In addition, other concerns they brought to the table included the need for the school to commit to purchasing products by having a contract in place with individual farmers. They also discussed commitment and developing collaboration in food production. For example, they would welcome input from the salad bar committee on products they would like to have available for salad bar days but would appreciate flexibility in orders as well. One observation made at the end of the 6 week trial is that committee members felt establishing relationships with the local farmers should be the responsibility of Public Health and not the individual school. As a result of this difference of opinion, the school continued to purchase food from local wholesale food outlets or purchase directly from the local Farmer's Market when it was open.

A recommendation to improve farm to school relationships is to focus on the local level and to proceed in small steps. Some projects suggest that to 'pick one farmer and one product'¹ is considered to be a best practices approach that can help define success. Building relationships both between and within communities has proven to be more sustainable as multiple levels of support can increase opportunities for success. Multiple levels of support include the student consumers, volunteers who prepare the food, school administrators who organize the types of food available, and government agencies who financially support the project. When everyone involved in the project is engaged in the decision making process, the likelihood of success is increased significantly.

Additionally, consistent contact with local farmers aids in establishing a trusting relationship. Visiting local farms with students, creating a list of produce, seasonal availability and quantities of food farmers help in developing local food menus. Finally, a payment schedule that quickly reimburses the farmer is always a welcome addition to any agreement². Overall, engagement of farmers, educators, parents, children, and volunteers who will be involved with the project promotes sustainable relationships and project success.

¹ Kirby, L.D. (2006) Defining Success in the Farm to School Arena. Prepared for the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, North Carolina, USA.

² Brillinger R, Ohmart J, Feenstra G. 2003. The Crunch Lunch Manual: A case study of the Davis Joint Unified School District and a fiscal analysis model. UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Davis, CA. www.sarep.ucdavis.edu. Accessed March 13, 2008.

Farm to School Salad Bar Project as a Model of Best Practices

“The salad bar is very affordable. As a single mother this is fantastic. I don’t have to worry about what my kids are eating”

- Personal correspondence between parent and evaluator

By all measures, this project can be considered a model of best practices for farm to school salad bars on a provincial or national level. From the initial discussions of how a farm to school salad bar could be incorporated in northern BC through to the conclusion of the pilot, there has been incredible support from all levels of interested parties. Northern Health was successful in securing expertise, equipment, resources and support. School District 28 was instrumental in identifying Dragon Lake Elementary as their pilot school, promoting the project on a local level, incorporating volunteer parents and students in project management and identifying gaps in project delivery and immediately resolving any issues that emerged. In addition, the school meals coordinator and principal of Dragon Lake Elementary ensured the project was cost effective and accessible for all families and students and the teachers were instrumental in promoting nutrition education and supporting the salad bar.

This project could not have been possible without the volunteers and volunteer parents who dedicated their time and resources to ensuring the success of the salad bar. Many of the completed surveys referenced the dedication of the volunteers as a primary factor in the overall success of the project. Individuals took time out of their schedules to shop for vegetables at the local farmer’s market, and attended planning meetings; often willingly putting in extra hours beyond what was asked of them. This is a good indicator that the Farm to School Salad Bar project was not only a success with the students but with parents and volunteer parents alike.

True success of a project can be defined in the acceptance of the goals and objectives within the target group but also by the interest generated outside the target group. Throughout the project, interest was expressed by a seniors group who visited a salad bar day at Dragon Lake Elementary. They thought a salad bar following the same format as the school would be great addition to their daily menu options and asked for information on how they might be able to establish the same type of program to suit their specific needs. Likewise, neighbouring schools also visited Dragon Lake Elementary on salad bar days and expressed interest in establishing the same project in their schools. Interestingly, the design of this salad bar is not specific to this project but can be used as a general template and/or modified to fit with the specific needs of any group or organization.

Discussion

The Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot Project was implemented at the Dragon Lake Elementary School from May – June, 2007 and September - February, 2008. The initial evaluation of this project indicated that most of the objectives outlined for the project were met. Surveys were sent out to students, parents, and volunteers to evaluate the project from May – June 2007. The majority of students reported that they were eating more fruits and vegetables than before participating in the project, their knowledge about food, nutrition, and health increased throughout the program, knowledge of the importance of local food systems was developed and students were given the opportunity to participate in the FoodSafe program.

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of students surveyed were consuming more or a lot more new fruits and vegetables than prior to participating in the project. Grades 6 and 7 did not report eating a lot more fruits and vegetables as often as the younger grades but were more likely to report no change in consumption. While these numbers are reflective of the initial 6 week trial only, a similar pattern was seen throughout the remainder of the project.

It was encouraging to observe the increase in student knowledge about food, nutrition and health over the course of the project. The development of the educational tools and communication package was a significant contribution to the student's education and made their learning experience enjoyable. It was evident in the student surveys that they learned the importance of healthy food choices, nutrition, and health based on responses to the question "What have you learned?" which included "eat healthy" and "fruits and vegetables taste good".

It has been determined that the education component of this project increased knowledge about food, nutrition, and health but it also promoted the significance of local food systems and the need to support local farmers to ensure a sustainable food system. All students in all grades recognized that this lesson was the foundation of the project and they were able to link the significance of a local economy to health and healthy outcomes. This linkage can be accredited to the initial education component developed by the communications student from SFU as well as the ongoing collaboration between teachers and support staff who also promoted this project objective on a regular basis. In addition, the education component of the project increased student understanding that local food systems are central to health, community, the environment, and the local economy. Students were provided the opportunity to participate in skits, colouring contests, and demonstrations about food miles. This campaign was very interactive and the students enjoyed participating. Yet, the one challenge that was identified was that there is no information available regarding teacher education on food, nutrition, and health. This would have been an interesting component for the evaluation and is recommended to be considered for future evaluation.

Furthermore, as a means of project promotion, students in the higher grades were given the opportunity to participate in a FoodSafe program. Once they were certified, they were given the option to develop a resume, could go through an interview process and then volunteer on the salad bar days. While not mandatory, this was an excellent way to build interview skills and self esteem and to encourage the students to participate in the project while learning about

food preparation, nutrition, and health. Learning skills in food preparation also enhanced student skills in food production, processing, and handling. However, there is a need to explore options in educational tools that either engages students with community members that will build knowledge of local food production or develop a type of mentoring program between the student and farmer. This aspect of education would aid in strengthening relationships between the student and the farmer.

Although the results of this pilot project were very positive, one gap that was noted was that more work needs to be done with building positive working relationships with the local farmers and food producers. Without developing this relationship this project is simply a salad bar project and not a Farm to School project. The schools need to develop relationships with the farmers as an initial step in project development. In addition, harvesting seasons are critical to the time required for relationship building. Farmers typically plant in the spring so in able to participate in a meaningful way, consultation should be begin as soon as possible.

Reasons for the gap in farmer/school relationships may include timing (farmers may not have such large numbers of produce ready upon request and planning may need to be done with them for the fall), financial concerns (farmers may require a contract or up front payment to guarantee the sale of increased production), or awareness (relationships need to be established and farmers supportive of the project before they become active partners in the project). It is recommended that before the next phase of the Farm to School Salad Bar projects start, the first and foremost objective would be to speak with farmers and work towards building successful working relationships. Without this crucial step, the Farm to School project will be limited in its success.

Another challenge that presented throughout the pilot was financial benefits. Both Northern Health and School District 28 provided funding throughout the project and it would have been an asset to assess financial contributions that may have come from other sources such as local community members and/or businesses. Likewise, leaders in the community were very supportive of the project and while their support was not financial, it should be recognized as a successful relationship that encouraged partnerships from the broader community. However, this was not a goal for this evaluation and is not discussed in this report but it is recommended to be considered for future evaluation. In addition, any improvement in student behaviour and learning from altering their eating patterns was mentioned towards the end of the evaluation as an aspect that would attribute to the model of best practices. Clearly, this question is of great interest and student's antidotes, parents and teacher's observations and review of student grades should be explored in greater detail for future evaluation.

Overall, this project has shown remarkable success as a model program that can be implemented in other schools or organizations elsewhere in British Columbia or on a national level. Through the support of Northern Health, School District 28, teachers, staff, and volunteers, the Farm to School Salad Bar Project is a best practices model for the delivery of healthy, nutritious food that is accessible and appropriate. Education on food miles, local food systems, and the local economy are invaluable to the students understanding and awareness of the importance of a healthy environment and will contribute to a healthy environment for generations to come.

Appendix 1

EVALUATION:

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

I am in Grade: (Circle one) K 1 2 3

One new food that I have tried on the Salad Bar is _____

Before the Salad Bar started, fruits and vegetables that you liked to eat were _____

Fruits and vegetables that I like to eat now that I have tried the Salad Bar are _____

I am eating less _____ the same _____ more _____ a lot more _____ fruits and vegetables since I tried the Salad Bar

I like the Salad Bar because _____

My favorite food on the Salad Bar was _____

My least favorite food on the Salad Bar was _____

I would like to eat from the Salad Bar: Yes _____ No _____

Are there any foods you cannot eat: _____

Did you come back for seconds or thirds? Yes _____ No _____

Did you have enough time to eat your salad? Yes _____ No _____

What is a food mile?

- a. How far a cow can walk?
- b. How far my food travels to get on my plate
- c. Seeing how many apples I can put together to make up a mile
- d. How far a banana can walk?

Where is it best to get your food from?

- a. The refrigerator
- b. The grocery store
- c. From the local farmer/producer
- d. The cupboard

Circle the foods you can buy locally:

Lettuce Strawberries Bananas Cucumber Tomatoes

Chick peas Mushrooms Tuna Beans Broccoli

Pineapple Peaches Bison Chicken Peppers

What have you learned? _____

SALAD BAR SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

GRADES 4 TO 7

Firstly, we would like to thank you for participating in the Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot that has been at your school. This pilot is the first of its kind in British Columbia; therefore, in an effort to find out what you think about the Salad Bar, we would like you to answer a few questions.

I am in Grade: (Circle one) 4 5 6 7

1. Did you have lunch from the Salad Bar? Yes ____ No ____
2. I like/ disliked the Salad Bar because _____

3. I would improve the Salad Bar by _____

4. My favorite foods on the Salad Bar were _____

5. My least favorite foods on the Salad Bar were _____

6. Some new food items that I have tried on the Salad Bar were: _____

7. Before the Salad Bar started, fruits and vegetables that you liked to eat were _____
8. Fruits and vegetables that I like to eat now that I have tried the Salad Bar are _____

9. How many fruits and vegetables did you eat at lunch time before you tried the Salad Bar?

____ none ____ 2-3 servings ____ 4-5 servings ____ lots more

10. How many fruits and vegetables are you eating now since you tried the Salad Bar?

____ none ____ 2-3 servings ____ 4-5 servings ____ lots more

11. I think we should have the Salad Bar for lunch: (please choose one)

3 days/week ____ 2 days/week ____ 1 day/week ____

Why: _____

12. Would you like to volunteer to help with the Salad Bar Program in September? Yes ____ No ____

13. Would you like to take the Foodsafe course in the September? Yes ____ No ____

14. What foods are available from your local farmer and/or farmer's market?

15. Why is it important to eat food that is produced locally?

16. Where do you go to get local foods?

17. What is a food mile?
- e. How far a cow can walk?
 - f. The distance food has traveled from where it is produced to when it gets to our stores
 - g. Seeing how many apples you can put together to make up a mile
 - h. How far a banana can walk?
18. Where is it best to get your food from?
- a. The refrigerator
 - b. The grocery store
 - c. From the local farmer/producer
 - d. The cupboard
19. What have you learned? _____
20. Any other comments: _____

Appendix 2

SALAD BAR SURVEY FOR VOLUNTEER STAFF

Thank you for taking the time to complete our Salad Bar Questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential; only the Salad Bar Committee will have access to this information. Comments about your experience with the Pilot Program will enable us to continue to improve and meet the needs of this innovative lunch program and future Farm to School Salad Bar Programs.

Using the following scale please circle the most appropriate answer.

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent

1. Overall how would you rate the Salad Bar Program?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

2. How could we improve the Salad Bar Program? _____

3. Overall how was the quality of produce delivered to your program?

1 2 3 4 5

4. How was your volunteering experience?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

Please rate the following:

5. Volunteer shift length: Longer _____ Shorter _____ Same _____

Comment: _____

6. Training: More _____ Less _____ Same _____
Comment: _____

7. **Physical location and equipment:**

Kitchen:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

Salad Bar Program Serving Room (a.k.a. Music Room)

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

8. Student helpers and involvement:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

9. Menus and food preparation:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

10. Number of volunteers:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

11. Too much work:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

12. Need for more support from the school:

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

13. Overall how was the quality of produce delivered to your program?

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

14. Was there enough food?
 Changes required _____ Not required _____
 Comment: _____
15. What types of lunches were the children eating prior to participating in the Salad Bar program?

16. What are children eating now after participating in the Salad Bar program for the past six weeks?

17. Did you understand the job you were asked to perform?
 Yes _____ No _____
 If no, which job(s) needed more clarification? _____
18. Do you have Foodsafe? Yes _____ No _____
 If no, would you like to take Foodsafe? Yes _____ No _____
19. Would you volunteer for the Salad Bar Program again?
 Yes _____ No _____
20. Additional Comments:

Please return this survey by Wednesday, June 28th. Thank you.
 If you have any questions please feel free to contact Michelle Lessard at (250) 991-5555.

SALAD BAR SURVEY FOR STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for taking the time to complete our Salad Bar Questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential; only the Salad Bar Committee will have access to this information. Comments about your experience with the Pilot Program will enable us to continue to improve and meet the needs of this innovative lunch program and future Farm to School Salad Bar Programs.

1. As a volunteer for the Salad Bar program, please tell us what you learned:

2. What jobs did you enjoy doing? _____

3. What jobs did you not enjoy doing? _____

4. What jobs would you like to do if you volunteered again? _____

5. Did you take the Foodsafe course? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, would you recommend the Foodsafe Course to other students?

Yes _____ No _____

6. If you have not taken the Foodsafe course, would you like to take it?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Do you think this is a valuable course for volunteering for the Salad Bar Program? Yes _____ No _____

8. Would you volunteer for the Salad Bar Program again?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, my name is: _____

Please return this survey by Wednesday, June 28th. Thank you.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Mrs. Lessard at (250) 991-5555.

SALAD BAR SURVEY FOR PARENTS

Firstly, we would like to thank you for participating in the Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot that has been at your school. This pilot is the first of its kind in British Columbia. In an effort to find out what you think about the Salad Bar, we would appreciate if you would take some time to complete our Salad Bar Questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential; only the Salad Bar Committee will have access to this information. Comments about your experience with the Pilot Program will enable us to continue to improve and meet the needs of this innovative lunch program and future Farm to School Salad Bar Programs.

Using the following scale please circle the most appropriate answer.

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent

1. Did your child(ren) participate in the Salad Bar Pilot Program?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please continue with question #2 of the survey.

If no, why not? What changes could be made that would encourage your child(ren) to participate? _____

Thank you, you are finished the survey.

2. How was your child's (children's) Salad Bar experience?

3. What improvements or suggestions do you have for the Salad Bar Program?

4. What would you like to see continue with the Salad Bar Program for September? _____

5. What changes in the Salad Bar Program would you like to see for September? _____

6. The initial phase of the Salad Bar Program was a pilot. An honorarium was paid by the Northern Health Authority to the School Based Coordinator. The cost to you may be altered in the fall. What price would you be willing to pay for the Salad Bar Program in the fall?
 \$2.50 - \$3.00 _____
 \$3.25 - \$3.75 _____
 \$4.00 - \$4.50 _____
 Other _____
 Comment: _____
7. Would you like to see this replace the hot lunch program?
 Yes _____ No _____
8. Is the nutritional component of this program important to you for your child(ren)?
 Yes _____ No _____
 Comment: _____
9. Would you like to see any changes made to the Salad Bar Program menu?
 Changes required _____ Not required _____
 Comment: _____
10. What impact did the Salad Bar Program have on your child(ren) and your family? (Example: volunteering, more nutritional information, easier access to fresh produce)
 Comment: _____

11. To what extent do you believe the Farm to School Salad Bar program strengthened health, farm, and school partnerships?

11. Will you have your child(ren) participate in the Salad Bar Program in the fall when it resumes?

Yes _____ No _____

Comment: _____

12. What types of fruits and vegetables was your child(ren) eating before they participated in the Salad Bar Program?

13. Has there been any change in the types and amount of fruits and vegetables that your child(ren) have consumed since they participated in the Salad Bar Program?

14. Was there enough food?

Changes required _____ Not required _____

Comment: _____

15. Additional Comments: _____

All surveys returned by Wednesday, June 27th will be entered into a draw. Thank you.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Michelle Lessard at (250) 991-5555.

SALAD BAR SURVEY FOR THE COMMITTEE

Thank you for participating in the Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot that has been at your school. This pilot is the first of its kind in British Columbia. In an effort to find out what you think about the Salad Bar, we would appreciate if you would take some time to complete our Salad Bar Questionnaire. Comments about your experience with the Pilot Program will enable us to continue to improve and meet the needs of this innovative lunch program and future Farm to School Salad Bar Programs.

1. Do you feel you accomplished the goals of the Salad Bar Pilot Program?
Yes _____ No _____

2. What did you learn about what worked and what didn't work with the pilot?

3. What would you do differently in the fall to make the salad Bar Project a success? _____

Please return this survey to the office by June 28th. Thank you.

Appendix 3

Farm to School Salad Bar



Picture by: Haley Schotel, Gr. 3 from Dragon Lake Elementary School,

Tasting Local Greens!

Fact Sheet

Background Information:

- Over the last 25 years, more children are considered to be overweight or obese. As an example, almost 30% of Canadian teenaged boys and girls are classified as overweight or obese (2).
- Various studies have indicated contributing factors to the growing trend of childhood obesity that include socio-economic status and the cultural environment which may limit the consumption of fresh and nutritious foods.



- Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada state that there is a direct relationship between children living in poverty and childhood obesity. In 1998-99, 25% of children aged 2-11 living in low-income families were obese in comparison to 16% of children who lived in higher income families (1).
- Studies have also shown that there has been a 300% increase in childhood obesity over the last 3 decades as a result of increase exposure to, and consumption of, fast food and processed food that are high in calories and low in nutrition. This significant increase is also compounded by the lack of physical activity among children (1).
- Furthermore, it has been reported that one in five children do not receive the required servings of fruits and vegetables recommended by the Canada's Food Guide (1).
- As a result of the growing trend in childhood obesity, a significant increase of adult obesity and chronic disease has resulted.
- Obesity related illness costs the BC health care system an estimated \$380 million annually, or 4.5% of total direct health care costs in the province (2).



- Studies have shown that childhood obesity can be prevented by an adequate consumption of fruits and vegetables (1).

What is the Farm to School Salad Bar Project?

- It is a nutritional program that aims to prevent the growing trend of childhood obesity by increasing access to local fresh, nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods on school premises. It also...

- Links children's health to local farms and food sources
- Supports local producers and the local food economy
- Builds a stronger relationship between all community members



- It aims to provide approximately 236,000 meals over a 26 week period to approximately 1475 children aged 5-18 in various communities
 - 6 different locations within B.C. are proposed in Fort Nelson, Hazelton, Kimberly, Oliver, Quesnel, and Williams Lake

What are the objectives of the Farm to School Salad Bar?



- To increase fruit and vegetable consumption amongst participating school aged children
 - To improve student knowledge about local foods, nutrition and health
 - To enhance student skills in food production, processing and handling
 - To strengthen relationships between local farmers and schools
- To increase students understanding of the local food system which is central to health, culture, community, environment and a healthy local economy
 - To be a best practices model that has the potential to be implemented elsewhere in the province

Why Farm to School?

- It nurtures children's health by providing local and nutritious fruits and vegetables
- It gives students the opportunity to learn about their local food system and the importance of healthy eating.
- It offers students the opportunity to try seasonal, local produce while providing education on supporting the local community and environment
- Studies have demonstrated that children who eat healthy food are more alert and do better academically than those children who attend school on an empty stomach

Why Farm to School (continued)

- It supports the local farmers, producers and the local food economy
- It builds a strong and sustainable community
- It changes the environment to where healthy food choices can be easily made
- It brings community members together
 - As demonstrated with Dragon Lake Elementary, the school and community are involved in making the program a success
- It has the potential to decrease long term Health Care costs associated with chronic disease resulting from obesity and overweight



Where is the Farm to School Salad Bar taking place?

- Currently, Dragon Lake Elementary School in Quesnel, B.C. is piloting the Farm to School Salad Bar nutritional program.

Who is involved with Farm to School Salad Bar?



The Farm to School Committee:

- Dragon Lake Elementary School Principal
- School Meals Coordinator for School District 28
- School Staff
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local Farmers

Northern Health Authority:

- Regional Manager of Healthy Communities and Community Food Security
 - manages resources and funding for Farm to School Salad Bar operations
- Community Nutritionist
 - ensures food served at the salad bar is nutritious and healthy
- Environmental Health Officer
 - approves the school's food safety and sanitation plan
- Evaluator
 - Conducts a rigorous evaluation to examine the Farm to School Salad Bars' potential to be an effective health practice that could be implemented elsewhere in the province
- Communications Assistant
 - provides a communications strategy to promote the concept of Farm to School to students

When is Farm to School Salad Bar happening?

- The Farm to School Salad Bar at Dragon Lake Elementary School initially ran for 6 weeks from May 8th to June 13th, 2007
- It will resume for another 20 weeks starting from October 2007 to February 2008.

How does Farm to School Salad Bar operate in Quesnel?

- 2 salad bar units are installed to offer local food to approximately 150 students every Tuesday and Wednesday
- The salad bar is open to all students – students who wish to participate pay only \$2.50 per a meal at the salad bar. The \$2.50 has been sufficient to cover the cost of the food provided.
- Volunteer parents and students work together to prepare different salad bar themes with local produce every week.
- With exceptional organization and assistance from school staff, in only 15 minutes 150 students can create their salads and are back at their classroom enjoying their lunch.



Resources:

1. Food Share Toronto, Northern Health & Interior Health. (2006). *Field to Table Schools Salad Bar Proposal*.
2. Select Standing Committee on Health. (2006). *A Strategy for Combatting Childhood Obesity and Physical Inactivity in British Columbia*.

“This comprehensive program is designed to change the environment – to build and sustain a situation where the healthy choice is easy”
- Joanne Bays, Regional Manger of Healthy Communities and Community Food Security



“All the students from my class love it! When I asked for a show of hands who wanted to go to the salad bar again, there was not one kid who did not raise their hand”
– Dragon Lake Teacher

“The demand for local greens is beneficial for the farmers and the community. This will create more jobs for the local farmers and people will have more opportunities and choices of eating fresh local produce.”
- Murray Boal, farmer of The Dragon Mountain Farm

“All the kids are enjoying the salad bar and are excited to try the different fruits and vegetables.”

- Michelle Lessard, School Meals Coordinator

“Having the salad bar is way cooler than the hot dogs served at other schools!”

– Dragon Lake Student



“This is the best lunch program ever! I never had something this fresh and tasty before” - Dragon Lake Student

Appendix 4



Picture by: Haley Schotel, Gr. 3
Dragon Lake Elementary School,
Quesnel, B.C.

For Information, please contact

Michelle Lessard
School Meals Coordinator,
michellelessard@sd28.bc.ca

OR

Joanne Bays
*Regional Manager of Healthy
Communities and Community
Food Security, :*
Joanne.Bays@northernhealth.ca

Eating food that is grown or produced closest to you!



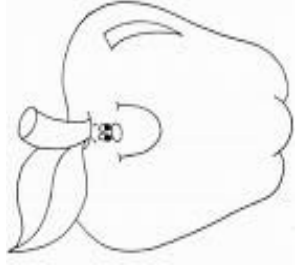
EAT LOCAL =



Appendix 5

Why Eat Local?

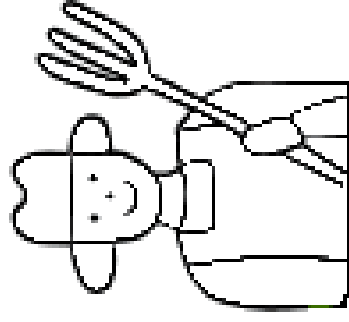
Local foods taste fresher!



Local foods are healthy!



Helps our local farmers!



What is LOCAL here?



Apple



TOMATO



SQUASH



Pumpkin



PEPPER



LETTUCE

PEAS



Strawberry



RADISH



Carrot



Cucumber

Corn



GREEN ONION

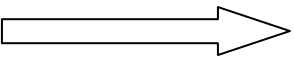


Appendix 6

Journey of the Apple



I'm too young to be picked



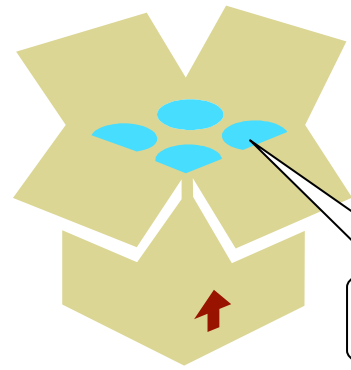
That's not my natural colour!



Food Processing

Food Production

Food Transportation



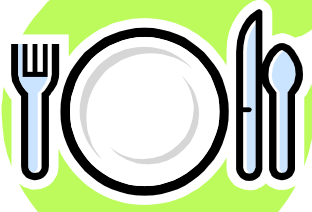
I'm getting squished

I'm not fresh anymore. I've been here for too long

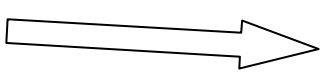


Buying the Food

Food Packaging



Eating the Food



Recycling the waste: composting

Appendix 7

Find your Local Greens

A	T	O	A	C	O	B	D	P	P	E	P	L
O	P	T	P	O	N	A	C	R	O	R	S	E
L	E	P	P	D	I	G	C	S	C	C	S	T
P	E	E	L	T	O	M	A	T	O	U	T	T
A	E	D	R	E	N	A	R	H	R	C	R	U
E	P	R	H	U	B	A	R	B	N	U	A	C
E	B	O	U	T	B	E	O	T	B	M	W	E
P	E	P	P	E	R	O	T	T	E	B	B	T
E	E	O	E	B	T	E	O	O	B	E	E	A
A	T	T	E	R	A	S	P	B	E	R	R	Y
T	R	A	T	O	M	B	E	A	A	B	R	U
C	O	T	O	M	A	T	O	T	N	C	Y	C
A	P	O	L	E	P	E	P	O	T	M	A	T

- Apple
- Bean
- Beet
- Carrot
- Corn
- Cucumber
- Lettuce
- Onion
- Pea
- Pepper
- Potato
- Raspberry
- Rhubarb
- Strawberry
- Tomato

Appendix 8



Picture by: Haley Schotel, Gr. 3 from Dragon Lake Elementary

Tasting Local Greens!

The Story of Quesnel's Farm to School Salad Bar Pilot Project



Through the commitment and effort of Dragon Lake Elementary School and the community of Quesnel the Farm to School Salad Bar pilot project has proven to be one of the best health practices in B.C. This is the first school in the province to pilot a program linking children to farms and offering them local fresh greens. The initiative aims to prevent the growing trend of childhood obesity by providing school-aged children local and nutritious fruits and vegetables for their lunches. More than half the students at the school have been creating their own salads

from a variety of local produce twice a week.

According to Michelle Lessard the School Meals Coordinator, the Farm to School Salad Bar pilot project has done more than just nurturing the kids with local produce.

This project is about transforming the local environment to offer healthy food choices while aiming to build a strong and sustainable community. The kids are eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, they are becoming more familiar with their local food system, and they are beginning to understand the importance of, and links between, local and healthy eating. Other positive outcomes include the reality that kids who make healthy food choices do better academically than those who consume a diet of high fat and sugar. In addition, children who consume a healthy diet are more attentive in class, are more apt to learn and will focus on their studies more so than a child who is either underfed or overactive from a high sugar or fat diet.

