FY2024 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

Organization Name:	Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)						
Project Name:	Preserving Farmland through Farm to School Connections						
	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023)						
Reporting Quarter:	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023)						
(Check one)	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024)						
	X Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024)						

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

Quarter 1

Quarter 1 activities focused on engagement and planning for the year ahead with Buncombe County Schools and Asheville City Schools. We provided all schools access to a variety of our farm to school resources, including seeds, Lending Library (books), Lending Kitchen (cooking equipment and supplies), Meet Your Farmer video series, lesson plans, and other materials on our website. We provided free passes to all staff and discounted passes to all families for ASAP's Farm Tour, which was a great opportunity for making and deepening connections between farmers and consumers. In addition, we have been working with School Nutrition administrative staff from Buncombe County Schools to support farm to school districtwide. This included connecting them to local farmers to procure tomatoes and beef for school meals, and providing farmer promotional materials for social media and cafeterias. We are also supplying recipe cards featuring local crops and "I Tried Local" stickers to be distributed to all cafeterias.

We met with administrators and champions at 5 Title I schools to identify needs, assets, and goals, and are in the process of attending school wide staff meetings to introduce our program. We are preparing to provide customized resources and training to help these schools implement farm to school activities and engage their students, families, and local farmers. We are also scheduling quarterly cafeteria promotions beginning in October to celebrate National Farm to School Month. We are providing promotional banners highlighting WNC farms that will be displayed in cafeterias, and are identifying Buncombe County farmers that could attend these events and provide taste tests of their products.

Quarter 2

In Quarter 2 we continued to provide broad farm to school support across Buncombe County. Through a monthly outreach email, we again provided all schools access to our resources, including seeds, books, cooking supplies, Meet Your Farmer videos, lesson plans, and other materials on our website. We formed a relationship with the Healthful Living Curriculum Specialist at Buncombe County Schools, and are working with her to integrate farm to school into Health & Physical Education courses.

Quarter 2 also focused on deepening relationships with the 5 Title I schools we are providing customized support to. We attended staff meetings at 4 schools to introduce ourselves and our program. We visited cafeterias at 3 schools and did a taste test with all students using products from the local farmer that we connected the school with. For example, we paired Claxton Elementary with Flying Cloud Farm, and we served samples of salad made with their kale. We will continue to support these partnerships through coordination of farm field trips, farmer visits to the schools, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes for staff and families. Promotional banners highlighting WNC farms were distributed to 4 schools and hung in their cafeterias. We provided mini-grants to 2 schools to support their farm to school efforts. We attended a family carnival event at 1 school where we engaged students and their parents with an interactive activity and ASAP materials promoting local food and farms.

Quarter 3

In Quarter 3 we met with principals of the five Title I schools receiving targeted support to finalize plans for spring activities, including training and workplace wellness opportunities for teachers, final taste tests with students, and family / community events. We did taste tests with all students at 4 of those schools, again using products from the local farmer that we connected the school with. We also provided promotional materials to those schools, including cafeteria banners highlighting WNC farms and classroom connections for our taste tests. We delivered two virtual statewide trainings focusing on our new farm to school toolkit, and two elementary school teachers from Buncombe County attended as guest speakers to talk about their farm to school work. We distributed resources to educators, including mini-grants, hard copies of our new toolkit, and mushroom growing kits.

We continued to provide broad farm to school support across Buncombe County through monthly outreach emails and other communications sharing our free resources available to all schools. Also promoted was ASAP's CSA Fair, an event where both educators and families could meet farmers and sign up to participate in Community Supported Agriculture. At the district-level, we met with the Healthful Living Curriculum Specialist to discuss farm to school in Health and Physical Education classes, as well as the School Nutrition Director to continue discussions around local food procurement for student meals.

Quarter 4

In Quarter 4 we saw the culmination of partnership-building with the 5 Title I schools receiving targeted support. All 5 schools received a farm-focused workplace wellness offering, in some cases with the farms that we partnered them with. Staff experiences included using provided tokens to shop at their local farmers market, visiting a u-pick flower farm, having a local foods picnic, and participating in a cooking demo. One school invited their partner farm to hold a Sprout Market, a mock farmers market where we provided staff Farm Bucks (play money) to purchase items of their choice. We also helped another school hold a Sprout Market with their partner farm for family night, and observed students' excitement when "shopping" on their own and engaging with the farmer. In addition, staff from all 5 schools received farm to school training, although this proved to be a challenge with teachers' schedules. We provided a recording for staff to view on their own, as well as stipends for farm field trips and a variety of resources for them to implement activities. We did final cafeteria taste tests with these schools and found that students became more open to trying the foods over time. One taste test was part of a visit from USDA representatives and other special guests to highlight the great work being done by Buncombe County Schools Nutrition. We continued to support the School Nutrition Director in purchasing from local farms and promoting local foods served in school meals. (1498 characters)

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Progress toward annual goals

	Please on					
Measure	Annual Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Progress
# teachers trained/provided with resources to implement Farm to School programming	75	0	3	14	196	213
# kids/consumers reached with promotions/activities	26000	26000	0	0	0	26000
# of school staff provided with workplace wellness offerings	75	0	0	0	134	134
# Buncombe County farms and market outlets supported/promoted	130 farms & 180 market	136 189	0	0	0	136 189

Comments:

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

			Total Spending (Enter Data)				1				
Spending Category	S	starting	Qua	arter 1	C	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	C	Quarter 4		Amount
Personnel	\$	16,250	\$	1,813	\$	4,063	\$ 5,250	\$	5,124	\$	-
Training	\$	2,125	\$	-	\$	496	\$ 113	\$	1,551	\$	(35)
Travel	\$	225	\$	18	\$	-	\$ 18	\$	207	\$	(18)
Client Support	\$	1,400	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$	1,347	\$	53
Building Maintenance	\$	4,000	\$	304	\$	912	\$ 1,075	\$	1,709	\$	-
List other cost										\$	-
List other cost										\$	-
List other cost										\$	-
Total	\$	24,000	\$	2,135	\$	5,471	\$ 6,456	\$	9,938	\$	-

Comments:		

Growing Minds Farm to School Program: Planting Seeds for Partnership at Oakley Elementary

Background

Growing Minds is the farm to school program within ASAP, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project.

We define farm to school as providing students - as well as educators and families - positive experiences with local food and farms in the classroom, cafeteria, and community.

During the 2023-24 school year, Growing Minds began a partnership with Oakley Elementary to help build its own farm to school program!



We got to learn about fruits and vegetables, meet a farmer, and try new foods.

Oakley Elementary Teacher



2023-24 Activities

Local Farm Connection

Growing Minds paired Oakley with Flying Cloud Farm, who provided produce for taste tests and participated in other activities. Visit them in Fairview for a wide variety of organically grown vegetables, berries, and u-pick flowers.

Student Taste Tests

Growing Minds visited all students during lunch in the fall, winter, and spring. They tried **sweet potato sticks with homemade ranch**, **sweet potato soup**, **and strawberry salsa** - all made with produce from Flying Cloud Farm.

Sprout Market

At the Oakley Spring Block Party, **nearly 500 members of the school community** had access to our Sprout Market, a mock farmers market with Flying Cloud Farm where we provided "Farm Bucks" to purchase items of their choice.

Farm to School Training

14 teachers and staff attended Growing Minds training and learned all about school gardens, classroom cooking, and farm experiences for students. We provided a variety of resources to help them with their farm to school activities.

Fun on the Farm

At the end of the year, Growing Minds hosted 14 teachers and staff at Flying Cloud Farm to **show our appreciation** for all they do! We cut fresh flowers from their fields then had a picnic filled with delicious local snacks.

Growing Minds Farm to School Program: Planting Seeds for Partnership at Oakley Elementary

Impact

Growing Minds shared a survey at the end of the year to collect feedback, and 9 teachers and staff from Oakley completed it.

After doing farm to school activities:

- 78% said they know how to access or grow local fruits and vegetables
- 89% said they plan to eat more local fruits and vegetables

Looking Ahead

Building the capacity of Oakley to implement farm to school is a top goal of our Year 2 partnership.

For the 2024-25 school year, teachers and staff have identified the following goals and activities:

- Create a farm to school team consisting of teachers, other staff, and parents to guide this work.
- Host a farm to school training with all teachers at the beginning of the year, including how to lead classroom taste tests.
- Align school-wide literacy curriculum with farm to school activities.



Access our free resources at growingminds.org or connect with us by emailing growingminds@asapconnections.org.

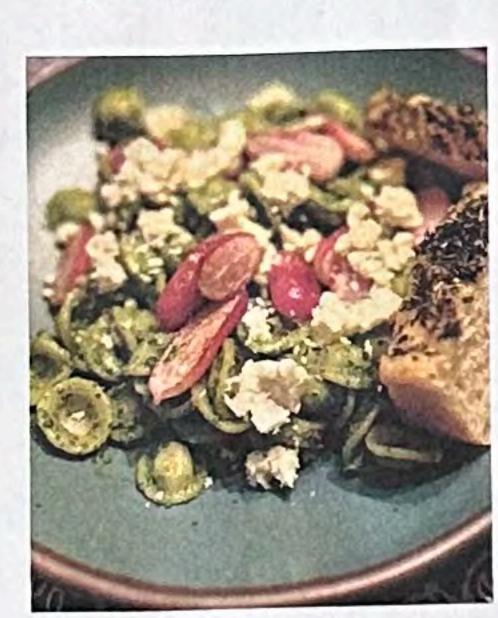


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Our partnership with Growing Minds has been such an easy but magical way to focus on joyful learning. It has been so fun for me as principal to witness the look on students' faces when they try something new and realize that they have discovered something that brings them joy and that they are excited to explore more (and is healthy, too). To me, that is what joyful learning is all about.

Dr. Laurel Stolte, Oakley Principal





This pesto can be made with many types of farmers market greens, including turnip tops, arugula, spinach, or kale. Try this pesto as a dip for raw vegetables or spread on fresh bread!

Radish Top Pesto Pasta

Servings: 4-6 | Time: 20 minutes

- 1 pound pasta, any type
- Salt for pasta water, plus more to taste
 1 bunch radishes with greens
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup walnuts (or use almonds, cashews, or pine nuts)
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 1/3 cup + 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
- Black pepper
- Black pepper
 Feta or goat cheese, crumbled (optional)

Step 1

Fill a large pot with salted water and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook pasta according to directions. Drain and place in a large bowl.

Step 2

Separate radishes from greens. Wash and dry both. Roughly chop radish greens. Place greens, chopped garlic clove, walnuts, grated Parmesan, and lemon juice in a food processor. Process until a paste is formed. With the motor running slowly add 1/3 cup olive oil. Add more oil, if desired, to reach the desired consistency. Season pesto to taste with salt and pepper.

Step 3

Trim radishes and slice in half. If your radishes are very large, cut into quarters. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add radishes and cook, stirring or tossing occasionally, until softened and starting to brown, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Step 4

Stir together cooked pasta and pesto and portion onto plates or bowls. Top with a spoonful of sautéed radishes and crumbled cheese, if desired.



WHO GROWS OUR FOOD?

Highgate
Farms

Radishes



vegetarian • 30 minutes or less • immune boosting • heart healthy • low-glycemic • kid friendly

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) is a nonprofit based in Asheville, North Carolina, serving the Southern

Appalachian region. ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy

Find more recipes at asapconnections.org, or scan the QR code with a smartphone.







WHO GROWS OUR FOOD?

Flying Cloud Farm

Strawberries











FARMERS MARKET TOKENS



ASHEVILLE CITY MARKET SATURDAYS, 9:00AM - 12:00PM

To show our appreciation for all that you do to create positive learning environments for your students, we are offering Johnston Elementary School teachers \$10 in tokens to be used at ASAP's Asheville City Market.

LOCATION:

North Market Street between Woodfin and Walnut streets in downtown Asheville.

MORE INFORMATION:

asapconnections.org







Sprout Market



Oakley Block Party, Friday, April 19th with Flying Cloud Farm



Shop at the farm stand!

Families will receive a \$5 coupon they can use to buy produce directly from the farmers at Flying Cloud Farm.



ASAP's Growing Minds Farm to School team will do a taste test. Take home easy local food recipes for cooking together as a family



East Asheville Tailgate Market takes place each Friday, April to October, from 3 to 6 p.m., just down the street at Tunnel Rd. and Beverly. There are many local farmers, bakers and artisans at this market every week.

Learn more about food access.

Get information about ASAP's Double SNAP for Fruits and Vegetables, which matches up to \$20 in SNAP/EBT spent at farmers markets.











