

RFKM 2013-14 Key Victories

August, 2013

- MCPS delayed turning on vending machines selling sodas and candy until 30 minutes after the end of school day.
- MCPS improved transparency about a la carte sales on their web site.

September, 2014

- A trial of healthier vending and a la carte items began in Takoma Park Middle School.

October, 2014

- MCPS began removing marketing messages for soda on vending machines.

January, 2014

- MCPS removed strawberry flavored milk from sales in all of its schools.

May, 2014

- MCPS replaced "Sidekicks" frozen juice sorbets containing artificial food dyes with two other flavors of "Sidekicks" without artificial colorings.

June, 2014

- MCPS conducted a trial of free water in cafeterias.



Changing the School Food Environment

According to the CDC's 2013 data, 7.1% of students in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are obese and an additional 12.9% are overweight, with rates for Black and Hispanic/Latino students more than double that of White students. Obesity during adolescence has been shown to cause lifetime increases in rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and colon cancer and adverse psychosocial consequences for women. These include completion of fewer years of education, higher rates of poverty, and lower rates of marriage and household income. In addition, a growing body of research suggests that obesity is associated with poorer academic performance beginning as early as kindergarten, which could explain some portion of the achievement gap in MCPS.

Real Food for Kids - Montgomery (RFKM) serves as a champion for healthier food for the children in MCPS. When children have access to food that is low in added sugar, contains no artificial dyes or additives, and is of high nutritional quality, there is evidence that school performance improves. Good nutrition is essential for children to reach their full physical, academic and social potential. With 34% of MCPS students qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS), 74 schools with the highest FARMS rates serving universal breakfast in the classroom, and many students receiving an after-school snack, a large number of the most vulnerable children in MCPS are eating two to three meals a day in school. It is essential that this food be of high nutritional quality.

Real Food for Kids - Montgomery began in October 2012 with a meeting of parents concerned about the quality of the MCPS food and has grown to a coalition of over 3000 supporters, including parents representing 162 of the 202 schools in Montgomery County. In addition, we have 51 official representatives to MCPS schools, who are taking a leadership role in changing the food environment and policies at their child's school. Our work has already brought about a number of changes to the school food.

RFKM's Activities 2013-2014

During the school year 2013-2014, RFKM conducted a number of outreach and advocacy events in support of our mission.

School Food Forum

On November 2, 2013, RFKM and Montgomery Victory Gardens presented a School Food Forum: "Creating a Vision of Fresh, Real Food in MCPS." This forum brought together experts and stakeholders to move the conversation forward on improving school food. Over 150 people attended, including Montgomery County councilmembers, Maryland State delegates, one Maryland State senator, plus representatives from many other legislative offices. Tony "Cafeteria Man" Geraci, the keynote speaker, gave an inspiring talk on how he engages students in developing menus, grows a portion of his own produce from farms that he and students construct using hoop houses, and follows the philosophy that food has to "look good, taste good, and be good." A final call to action was delivered by Lindsey Parsons, Co-Director of RFKM. Board of Education President Philip Kauffman attended the event and was quoted in the Gazette on November 6: "It's clear the community is concerned about food served to students ... the school system wants to hear what those concerns are. We're all about improvement, and to the extent that we can improve, we'd like to improve."



Screening of the film *Lunch Hour*

On May 3, 2014, RFKM hosted a screening of the full-length documentary *Lunch Hour*. *Lunch Hour* explores the National School Lunch Program, childhood obesity, and our addiction to unhealthy foods. The film shows what schools, parents, authors, doctors, politicians, celebrities and chefs are doing to cure this American epidemic. Director, Writer and Producer James Costa attended our screening and led a lively discussion following the film.



Other Outreach and Advocacy Activities, Fall, 2013

- Exhibition at the Takoma Park Street Festival
- Presentation to the Montgomery County Pediatric Society
- School Representative Training
- Testimony at MCPS Board of Education Meeting
- Presentation to the Women Business Owners of Montgomery County Monthly Meeting
- Interview on "Forward Motion", Montgomery Community Media
- Presentation at Action for Healthy Kids Breakfast Summit

Other Outreach and Advocacy Activities, Winter/Spring 2014

- Exhibition at the Montgomery County Volunteer Fair

Spotlight on Schools

Bradley Hills ES Wins RFKM Most Improved School Food Award

This year, Bradley Hills Elementary School (BHES) in Bethesda, MD earned the Most Improved School Food Award from RFKM. The advocacy work done by RFKM's school representative Lisa Mandell and their PTA's wellness committee is an example to all schools in MCPS of what can be accomplished with an organized parent effort. Their efforts started with a school food survey conducted at the end of the 2012-2013 school year, which indicated that parents were opposed to many of the a la carte items being sold in the school and had concerns about the nutritional value of the hot lunches. Wellness Committee Chairs, Lisa Mandell and Aimee Aronson, arranged a meeting between their principal, Sandra Reece, and MCPS Food and Nutrition Services Director Marla Caplon to voice parents' concerns. Based on this meeting, MCPS agreed to remove the a la carte items that over 50 percent of parents disapproved of (e.g., gummy fruit snacks, Doritos, and ice cream) and replace these with healthier alternatives. Additionally, the survey revealed that parents desired a salad bar, which was subsequently installed in the cafeteria. Other initiatives included Rainbow Week to teach kids about eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, 'What's Up with Wellness' monthly E-Reports, Party Snack Tip Sheets, and a professional hula hooper and 25 new hula hoops at recess. Congratulations to BHES on their great work in providing healthier options to their students!

Other Outreach and Advocacy Activities, Winter/Spring 2014 cont.

Presentations to PTAs (Oakland Terrace ES, Rock Creek Forest ES, Flora Singer ES, Sligo Creek ES)

Presentation at Flora Singer Science Fair

Exhibition at the Matsunaga Fun Run

10% Day at Pete's-A-Pizza

Wine Pairing/Farm-to-Table Dinner and Silent Auction

School Representative Training

Testimony before Montgomery County Council Health and Human Services/Education Committee Joint Meeting alongside MCPS Supt. Joshua Starr and head of Food and Nutrition Services, Marla Caplon

Presentation of petition with 2002 signatures and testimony of 8 parents, students and advocates at MCPS Board of Education Meeting

RFKM Leaders Named Community Heros and Recognized by State Legislature

In January, 2014, RFKM Co-Directors Lindsey Parsons and Karen Devitt were pre-



sented with Montgomery County Civic Federation's "Community Hero Award" for their work in improving the MCPS school food environment. Subsequently, the Maryland House of Delegates acknowledged this award and presented the organization's co-directors with certificates.



As a teacher in MoCo public schools, I see the negative effect this so called food has on students daily. Many of these students count on these meals as their only food for the day and sugar and chemicals aren't fitting for creating a positive learning environment."

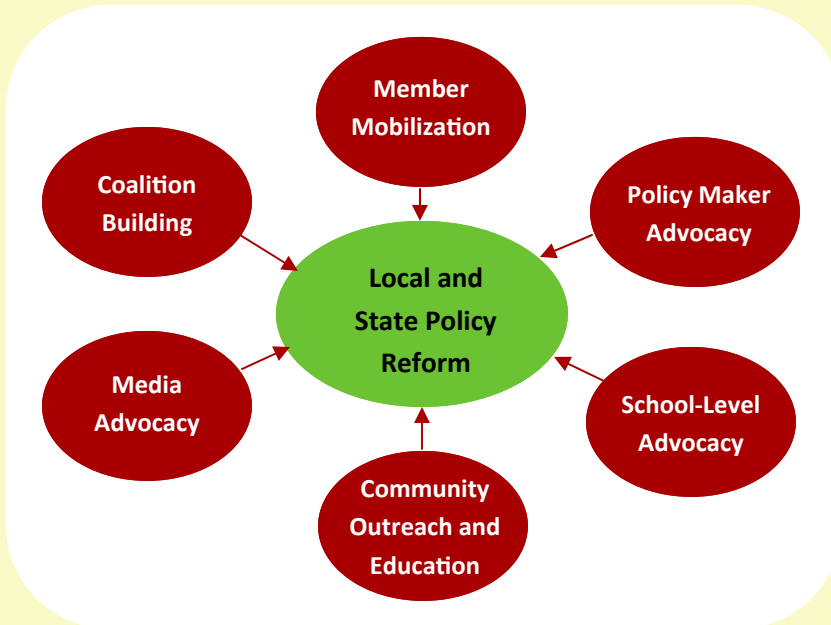
-an MCPS Teacher

Our Priorities for 2014

Each year, RFKM polls its members on their top priorities and advocates for those priorities in Montgomery County and the state of Maryland. These are our priorities for calendar year 2014.

1. Advocating for a system-wide solution for easier access to free, unlimited water in cafeterias.
2. Offering at least one meal per day that is not a typical "junk food" (e.g., not chicken nuggets, pizza, hot dogs or burgers).
3. Removing chemicals listed as "caution" or "avoid" by Center for Science in the Public Interest from all food served in MCPS.
4. Replacing unhealthy a la carte items with healthier items.
5. Eliminating or drastically reducing typical "junk food" options.
6. Setting an upper limit for sugar in any product served in MCPS.
7. Replacing unhealthy vending items with healthier items in machines that are on during the school day.
8. Moving from processed, pre-plated and reheated food to food cooked from scratch at the central facility with more prep work done on site at schools with kitchens.
9. At the beginning of each school year, having each school send to parents a list of a la carte items sold at that school with information on how to block children's lunch accounts to prevent a la carte purchases.
10. Offering unlimited fruits and vegetables free to all children who purchase lunch.

How We Advocate for Nutritious Food in MCPS



Member Mobilization: We grow our membership through reaching out to new parents, teachers and students via school and PTA listservs, social media, back-to-school nights, and other outreach events. Members are polled each year in order to set our school food reform priorities. Members are then mobilized to take action to advocate for better food at their children’s school(s) and on the district level.

Policy Maker Advocacy: We meet with policy makers on a local and state level both individually and in formal settings, such as testifying before the MCPS school board. We also send e-mails and make phone calls to advocate for policy changes.

School-Level Advocacy: We recruit parent representatives at each school in MPCS, conduct trainings for and provide materials to these representatives, and support them in reaching out to other parents to form wellness committees, meet with decision makers and make changes at the local school level.

Community Outreach and Education: We participate in city and school fairs and festivals to reach out to the community for membership building and education. We hold movie screenings, seminars and member meetings to educate and inform parents and other community members.

Media Advocacy: We send out press releases, call members of the media and respond to media inquiries to keep the public informed about our work.

Coalition Building: We reach out to other non-profit organizations, government officials and school food advocates for ideas and mutual support in our policy and legislative agendas.

Looking Ahead

During 2013-14 academic year, RFKM achieved a number of successes in changing practices and adherence to already established policy in MCPS. However, we are aware that for lasting change to take effect, we need to create new laws and policies that will institutionalize the changes that we seek, so that another generation of parents will not see our work easily undone. Consequently, as we enter the new school year, we will be seeking to have the MCPS Wellness Committee re-established with a seat for RFKM, as the committee reviews and makes recommendations for changes to the existing MCPS wellness policy in compliance with changed federal regulations.

In addition, we are taking our agenda to the state level in order to enact changes that will benefit not only Montgomery County but children all over Maryland. We are seeking legislation to expand the Farm-to-School program from one week to a month; prohibit dangerous chemicals and set stricter limits on sugar in school food; and require standing wellness committees with parent participation, full transparency about a la carte sales on school menus and web sites, and stricter standards on food sold in vending machines and in other school settings, such as day care and after care.

Financial Report

as of June 30, 2014

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	12,396
Grants Receivable	318
TOTAL ASSETS	12,714
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	-
Net Assets:	
Unrestricted Net Assets	4,370
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	8,344
TOTAL NET ASSETS	12,714
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	12,714

Statement of Activities

SUPPORT, REVENUE AND GAINS	
Foundation Grants	15,000
Business Contributions and Sponsorships	10,712
Individual Contributions	9,186
Special Events	4,075
Gifts in Kind - Goods	946
Government Grants	318
Products and Publications	6
TOTAL SUPPORT, REVENUE AND GAINS	40,243
EXPENSES	
Program Services	
Advocacy, Research, Education	17,076
Lobbying	567
Special Events	2,833
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	20,476
Support Services	
Administration	5,038
Fundraising	3,193
TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES	8,231
TOTAL EXPENSES	28,707
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	11,536

Business, Government and Institutional Funders

(since 2012)

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Dress it up Dressing

Founding Farmers

Hirsch Pediatrics

Kaiser Permanente

Mead Foundation

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

North Chevy Chase Elementary School PTA

Pediatric and Adolescent Care of Silver Spring

Silver Diner

Whole Foods Market - Silver Spring



SCHOOL VENDING MACHINES TO STAY DARK LONGER AFTER SCHOOL

Advisory Committee - 2013-2014

Lisa Büttner, BA (Engineering) and MA (Environmental Studies), Brown University; formerly employed at Winrock International doing rural and renewable energy project development

Barbara Dominguez, MSN (Master of Science in Nursing), The Catholic University of America; Family Nurse Practitioner, currently employed with Unity Health Care, Washington DC

Sebastian Fainbraun, MBA in Finance, NYU's Stern School & CFA, CFA Institute Charter Holder; Managing Partner, Streetsense Capital

Lori Gordon, MPA (Master of Public Administration); Senior Program Manager at a not-for-profit organization that operates research and development centers sponsored by the federal government

Caron Gremont, MPP (Master of Public Policy), Johns Hopkins University; Founder, First Bites

Marla Hollander, MPH (Master of Public Health), Emory University; National Partnership Manager, American Heart Association

Ashia DelaBastide Mann, BA, SSW (Social Service Worker)

Avi Schlosburg, MA, Gastronomy, Boston University; Digital Associate, Pew Charitable Trusts

Aura Triana, journalist and certified translator

Samantha Wallach, MPA (Master of Public Affairs), UT Austin; Public Health Analyst, Montgomery County

Jane Welna, BA, Carleton College; Director of Development, Center for Science in the Public Interest

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Real Food for Kids - Montgomery is a project of the Chesapeake Institute for Local Sustainable Food and Agriculture, a 501(c)(3) organization.

Staff 2013-2014

Staff

Karen Devitt, Co-Director

Lindsey Parsons, EdD, Co-Director

Interns

Mary Kate Roth, Communications and Outreach, Summer 2013

Jade Zheng, Nutrition Research, Summer 2013

Camille Mell-Williams, Fundraising and Development, Spring 2014

Nick Gregory, Policy, Strategy and Advocacy, Summer 2014

Carol Conroy, Fundraising and Development, Summer-Fall, 2014



"Our kids are our future. They can't function well if they aren't offered healthy choices for lunch. The current Standard American Diet offered is processed, leaves them lethargic, promotes weight gain, and diseases such as diabetes - no longer called "adult onset" because it's so common in young people. Not only our health depends on these changes but so does our economic future. Let's do the right thing by our kids."

- an RFKM Supporter