



**RFKM RECIPE CONTEST!**  
 May 18, 12-2 pm

**RFKM Signs Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement with IPHi\***

*\*RFKM is a project of the Institute for Public Health Innovation*

**REAL FOOD FOR KIDS-MONTGOMERY: Mission & Priorities**

Welcome to the 2nd issue of RFKM's newsletter. We are a grass-roots, parent advocacy group promoting delicious, fresh, whole, and nutrient-rich foods in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Formed in October 2012, we now have parents representing 54 elementary, middle, and high schools – over 25% of

MCPS' 202 schools. We hope to have at least one parent representative in each school. Send us an email at [realfoodMCPS@gmail.com](mailto:realfoodMCPS@gmail.com) if you'd like to be a representative or to connect with other members at your school. For more on our mission and priorities, visit [www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org](http://www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org).

**Earth Day in Takoma Park**

Join us to celebrate Earth Day in Takoma Park at the inaugural TKPK Earth Day Festival, Sunday April 21st 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Grant and Carroll Avenues in Takoma Park. We'll be among 35+ green businesses and organizations at the event's Green Solutions Fair: [www.tkpkearthday.org](http://www.tkpkearthday.org)

**Join Us for our First Recipe Contest!**

How about creating your own recipe for a fresh, whole, delicious school lunch? Enter our contest for cash prizes and a chance to have your winning recipe submitted to MCPS. This contest is open to kids, parents, chefs, educators, and friends. The deadline for submission is May 8. Mark your calendars for the final tasting and judging event to be held at Piney Branch Elementary School in Takoma Park from noon-2 pm on Saturday May 18 (in celebration of Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution Day on the 17<sup>th</sup>). Please bring your children to taste and pick the winning entry! This event is made possible through the generosity of the City of Takoma Park Small Community Grants program. For recipe guidelines and submission information, see RFKM's website: [www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org](http://www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org).

**Meeting & School Food Discussion**

On Saturday, April 13, at Pizzeria Da Marco in Bethesda, RFKM members gathered to share their experiences navigating school food menus, trade ideas for healthy kid snacks, and discuss all the new ideas their school's wellness committees have put into place to keep their schools healthy. Members also discussed strategic ideas for RFKM, including opportunities to increase communication and transparency among those involved in MCPS food production, provision, and policymaking; ways to best influence policy to eliminate items that contain harmful ingredients and to improve the nutrient-content of food; and ideas about how to improve food culture at schools and in their communities. Stay tuned for details about the next gathering!

**Cafeteria Man Screening**

On March 15, RFKM held its inaugural event: a screening of the documentary film **Cafeteria Man**, followed by a Q&A with director Richard Chisolm. A substantial crowd of almost 100 people, including about 20 students and a representative from Congressman Chris Van Hollen's office, nearly filled the

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**April-May 2013**  
**Vol. 1**

**RFKM ACTIVITIES**

**March**

- March 12 - RFKM provided comments to MCPS Board of Education and Supt. Joshua Starr
- March 15 - Cafeteria Man screening, Takoma Park Community Center

**April**

- April 1 - RFKM started 2 initiatives in MCPS: PTA Outreach and Flyers in Backpacks
- April 7 - RFKM attended & provided comment to Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board discussion on food & hunger
- April 13 - RFKM Member gathering and informal discussion of school food. Pizzeria Da Marco, Bethesda
- April 21 - RFKM exhibit at Takoma Park Earth Day Festival, 10 - 4 pm

**May**

- May 8 - Deadline for entry submission to RFKM Recipe Contest
- May 18 - RFKM Recipe Contest, Piney Branch Elementary, 7510 Maple Ave, Takoma Park, 12 noon - 2 pm

**June**

- RFKM Member gathering & discussion of school food (TBA)

**RFKM IN THE NEWS**

- Washington Post 4/15/13: <http://wapo.st/129Hnem>
- Washington Parent mag 4/13: <http://www.washingtonparent.com/article/1304/good-stuff.php>
- Letter-to-the-editor, Washington Post 3/24/13: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/cutting-out-the-junk-food/2013/03/22/bb6e7a2e-917b-11e2-9173-7f87cda73b49\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/cutting-out-the-junk-food/2013/03/22/bb6e7a2e-917b-11e2-9173-7f87cda73b49_story.html)
- Walt Whitman High School "Black and White" 3/18/13: <http://www.theblackandwhite.net/2013/03/18/inaugural-real-food-for-kids-event-examines-bcps-move-toward-nutritious-food/>
- Gazette 3/12/13: <http://www.gazette.net/article/20130312/NEWS/130319902/0/gazette>
- Washington Post 3/12/13: <http://wapo.st/ZGOBNa>

## PTA OUTREACH

Last month we asked our school representatives to reach out to their PTA's. We've since had 2 presentations at PTA meetings, with 4 more scheduled. Keep up the good work!

## VIDEOS WE LIKE

Follow the footsteps of a boy trying to escape a world where processed food is killing his neighborhood:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu8QthlZ6hY>

*Friends, Partners,  
and Like-Minded  
Organizations*

[Center for Science  
in the Public Interest](#)

[CHEER](#)

[Feingold Association](#)

[Institute for Public Health  
Innovation](#)

[NANA \(National Alliance  
for Nutrition and Activity\)](#)

[Montgomery Victory  
Gardens](#)

[PreventObesity.net](#)

[Real Food for Kids  
\(Fairfax\)](#)

[Share Our Strength](#)

[The Six O'Clock Scramble](#)

### Let's Keep the Conversation Going!

- Come to our events
- Introduce RFKM to your PTA
- Like us on [Facebook](#)
- [Tell your friends & family](#) about us and forward them our newsletter
- [E-mail us](#) to add your name and school to our list of supporters

## Cafeteria Man Screening *cont.*

auditorium in the Takoma Park Community Center. The evening brought parents and students together to learn, share concerns, and brainstorm ideas. While MCPS does not currently seem driven to make the kind of bold reforms that Geraci made, Chisolm emphasized that parent activism is just as important in creating change. We're on our way: that night, RFKM added 25 new supporters from 11 schools to its ranks.

## Snacks in MCPS

Did you know that MCPS schools sell snacks in the cafeteria line? That middle schools average 6 vending machines, high schools 11? That snacks sold during the lunch period don't appear on any menu? That your child can purchase snacks without your knowledge (the mysteriously vanishing lunch account...)? That you can block your child's account from purchasing snacks?

**RFKM's informal survey** of snacks in one middle school revealed the following: Rice Krispie Treats, Welch's Fruit Snacks, Fruit by the Foot, Doritos, Cheetos, Pop-Tarts, flavored water (20 g of sugar, 80 calories, artificial sweetener), 7 kinds of ice cream, 5 kinds of cookies, juice with 43 g of sugar (more than 2 chocolate bars!), etc. The 29 items surveyed contained: artificial color (16), artificial flavor (15), chemical preservatives (12), MSG (7), & refined white flour (7). Four items contained over 40 ingredients each. These snacks are called **competitive foods** because they compete with the main lunch, & they are big business. In 2010, MCPS took in almost \$7 million from the sale of a la carte & snack items.

**What You Can Do: Notify your cafeteria manager that you want your child's lunch account blocked** from purchasing snacks (explain to your child that you want them to eat a healthy meal at lunch time. Junk food is not smart food!)

**Set up a meeting with your principal & cafeteria manager.** The selection of snacks at each school is decided primarily by the principal. Bring other RFKM or wellness committee members with you to the meeting. The objective is to discuss the current snack offerings at your school & to propose healthy alternatives.

**Help us find healthy alternatives** that we can propose to replace 'risky' snacks.

**RFKM is now taking an inventory** of all snacks being sold in MCPS, both in the cafeteria line & vending machines. The inventory will include nutrition facts & ingredients. Snacks containing ingredients with documented health, behavioral, and cognitive risks will be flagged, with relevant citations in the medical literature provided.

## School Food Reform Efforts in MCPS

Many thanks to Aviva Goldfarb and Carrie Witkop for their work on school food reform in MCPS over the past years, starting in 2006 up until the present. Their efforts laid the groundwork for much of the progress we've made since our start in October of 2012. Of most significance, it is due to them that one week of the school year – Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week - local produce is served in MCPS cafeterias and in all school cafeterias in the state of Maryland. Thank you Aviva and Carrie!

## A La Carte Options Mentioned on April Elementary Menu

In case you didn't catch it, there was a box on the back of the April elementary school menu mentioning the existence of à la carte options sold in MCPS. This was a first, positive development due to our advocacy work. We hope to see a mention of the ability of parents to restrict à la carte purchases on future menus, as well as a mention on middle and high school menus. But we are thankful to Marla Caplon, Director of Food & Nutrition Services, for this first, positive step.

## National Advocacy

RFKM formulated comments on the new proposed rules for competitive foods in schools & submitted them to the USDA on April 9. To view our comments, see: <http://www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org/RFKM%20Competitive%20Foods%20Comments.pdf>. While we applaud the effort to create stronger guidelines for school snacks, we believe the proposed rules do not go far enough in certain areas. These include: excessive sugar in juice & dairy products; continued lack of regulation of chemical additives; possible introduction of artificial sweeteners; & possible introduction of caffeine in high schools. We also stated our desire that oversight, accountability, communication, and transparency processes be instituted or strengthened.

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

- School-Based Wellness Committees