

Real Food for Kids - Montgomery



RFKM WINS COMMUNITY GRANT FROM TAKOMA PARK

Many thanks to the City of Takoma Park for awarding a grant to RFKM from its Small Community Grant Program to support our upcoming activities. Special thanks also to [CHEER](#) (Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research) for partnering with us on our screening of *Cafeteria Man*.

REAL FOOD FOR KIDS-MONTGOMERY: Mission & Priorities

Welcome to the first issue of the *Real Food for Kids - Montgomery* (RFKM) newsletter. We are a grass-roots advocacy group promoting delicious, fresh, whole and nutrient-rich foods in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). We look forward to having **you join this important effort**. Formed in October 2012, we already have parents representing 40 elementary, middle, and high schools - almost 20% of MCPS. In the future, we hope to have at least one

parent representative in each of the 202 schools in MCPS. To find out if your school has a representative, [send us an email](#). An RFKM Representative is responsible for sharing important information about RFKM via their school listserv and other communication channels within the school community, such as the PTA. For more on our mission and priorities, visit www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org.



The Next Step: PTA Advocacy

This month, we are asking you, the members of RFKM, to connect with your local PTA.

- 1. E-mail us:** We will designate a single RFKM Representative from each school to take the lead. To be that representative, please e-mail us at realfoodmcps@gmail.com to let us know. If your school has more than one RFKM member, we will put you in touch with the other members.
- 2. Meet with your PTA president:** Schedule a meeting with your PTA president (and with other RFKM members from your school, if possible) by March 22, the last day of school before spring break. At that meeting, introduce RFKM and share your reasons for joining and any concerns you have about the food in your school. Ask that RFKM be allowed to give a brief presentation at the April or May PTA meeting. Below are some talking points for meeting with your PTA President.
 - RFKM is a grass-roots advocacy group promoting whole, delicious, fresh foods in MCPS; we want to share our mission and concerns with the PTA.

- We are concerned about the added sugars, refined white flour and artificial additives (dyes, flavorings, preservatives & sweeteners) in the processed food & snacks in MCPS.
- Snack foods in the cafeteria allow children to eat unhealthy "meals" (photos on our web site) using money parents put in their lunch accounts - without parents' knowledge or permission.
- A la carte and vending items for sale in schools, and teachers rewarding children with food and candy in the classroom, undermine parents' efforts to make healthy food decisions for their families.
- A school district of MCPS' size, resources, expertise & reputation should be leading and not lagging behind in the national movement to improve school food.

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**MARCH 2013
Vol. 1**

RFKM ACTIVITIES

February

- RFKM presented at the Historic Takoma/TPSS Co-op film series/discussion on Farms, Food, & Public Policy
- Justin Koritzinsky, a senior at Walt Whitman High School, published an article about RFKM: "Takoma Park parents protest school lunches" in the ["Black and White"](#) (2/7, p. 3)
- RFKM shared our work with the Montgomery County Food Council's *Healthy Eating Working Group*
- RFKM testified before the Takoma Park City Council about our organization and to advocate for our grant application. We were subsequently awarded a grant to support our two spring activities!

March

- RFKM signed on to a petition from the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) to FDA to limit added sugars
- March 15 - *Cafeteria Man* screening at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave., 7:30 p.m.

April

- April 13 - Member gathering (TBA)
- April 14 - Deadline for submission for recipe contest (details TBA)
- April 21 - RFKM exhibit at Takoma Park Earth Day Festival, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

May

- May 18 - Recipe Contest Tasting Event at Piney Branch Elementary School, Takoma Park, 12 - 2 p.m.

Current Advocacy Opportunity

The USDA has released its [new proposed rules](#) for competitive foods sold in schools. Send your comments to us by March 25 if you would like input on RFKM's recommendations.

We will be formulating comments based on our members' input to submit to the USDA by the April 9 deadline.

MCPS Wellness Policy

Wondering how MCPS determines the foods sold in schools - see the [county's wellness policy](#).

Friends, Partners, and Like-Minded Organizations

[Brickyard Farm](#)

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

[CHEER](#)

[Food Research And Action Center](#)

[Feingold Association](#)

[Institute for Public Health Innovation](#)

[Montgomery Victory Gardens](#)

[PreventObesity.net](#)

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

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

PTA Advocacy, continued

3. Schedule a presentation: If you are willing to make a presentation on RFKM's behalf, please schedule it and send us the time and date. We can provide you with a Power Point presentation. If you prefer to have a member of the RFKM leadership team make the presentation, contact us with all the relevant information, including the PTA contact person.

Your work at the local level to build momentum is essential to our success.



RFKM's 'Inaugural' Event! Screening of Cafeteria Man

Join us for our first public event, a screening of the documentary film *Cafeteria Man*, on Friday, March 15, 2013 at 7:30 in the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Richard Chisolm, the film's Emmy award-winning director, will be a featured guest.

Cafeteria Man follows Tony Geraci, former food-service director for Baltimore City's public schools, as he gradually transformed its school food from pre-plated and processed to locally-grown and freshly prepared. Despite substantial institutional resistance, he introduced school vegetable gardens, student-designed meals and meatless Mondays, and helped create a citywide culinary vocational training program. Geraci shares the screen with parents, teachers, administrators, farmers, chefs, and students who all worked to create change.

The screening of *Cafeteria Man* is an opportunity for MCPS parents, students, local politicians & school officials to come together to advance the conversation on school food reform. It provides many practical possibilities for improving the MCPS food: how it might be healthier, fresher, supportive of local economies, cost effective, and more fully part of the schools' educational mission.

Karen Devitt, RFKM's co-founder along with Lindsey Parsons, chose *Cafeteria Man* because of its empowering tone and similarities between Baltimore City and MCPS. "It's going to take a village to create real change in MCPS cafeterias. I hope the film will inspire many to join us on this journey."



Bridging Interests: RFKM & Real Food For Kids in Fairfax, VA

For more than two years, JoAnne Hammermaster has been working tirelessly with other parents to improve Fairfax county school food through the organization she co-founded and now presides over, "Real Food For Kids" (RFFK). One of their many accomplishments includes removing a high percentage of artificial additives, dyes, and preservatives from school food. "We wouldn't be where we are today without the support of the school board and parents throughout the county", says Hammermaster. Check out RFFK's website www.realfoodforkids.org to see their progress. JoAnne has been a strong supporter of our efforts and an inspiration to us from the start. Thank you, JoAnne!

Say No To Aspartame in Milk

The dairy industry wants to be able to add synthetic sweeteners to milk and other dairy products without having to tell the consumer. They have asked the FDA to change their rules governing what is allowed. Please [sign this petition](#) from SumOfUs.org to tell the FDA you don't want anything in your milk but milk.

Calling All Students! RFKM Opportunities

RFKM wants to hear from you. **Tell us what you like or don't like** about the snacks and lunch in your school and send us photos of your school food. If you could change one thing about your school lunch experience what would it be? Share your story with us and let us know how we may be able to help. If you agree with our mission and priorities, like us on [Facebook](#), [e-mail us](#), or join our [Yahoo group](#) to become a member - tell us your school and grade.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

- Timeline of School Food Reform Efforts in MCPS: 30 Years & Counting
- Spotlight on Snacks: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You