



To continue our advocacy work through the summer and into the fall,

RFKM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

Donate through Network for Good:

www.tinyurl.com/RFKMdonate

Remember to put "RFKM" in the designation box

RFKM is a project of IPHI, the Institute for Public Health Innovation



RFKM VICTORIES!

We have accomplished many things this year that we can all be proud of. Most notably: MCPS removed products from cafeteria lines and vending machines that were in violation of state nutrition guidelines. It was through our investigation and advocacy that these products were identified, analyzed and the request made to have them removed. Our advocacy also resulted in increased transparency and better communication – two of our first priorities. Elementary parents can now see a blurb on the monthly menu stating that a) à la carte snacks are being sold in the cafeteria and b) it is possible to limit à la carte purchases on your child's account. Our third victory is the agreement that MCPS will run a trial of healthier vending and à la carte snacks at Takoma Park Middle School in the fall. Details are still being worked out as to what the healthier snacks will be and how the success of the trial will be measured. For more details on our progress, see the [Priorities page](#) on our website. Many thanks to all our members for their dedication in bringing healthier food to children in MCPS.

A la carte options

Did you know that in addition to healthy meals, many schools offer a la carte options? All snack foods and beverages sold are in compliance with the MCPS Wellness Regulations (<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jpgra.pdf>). For information about your schools' offerings or if you wish to limit student purchases, please contact your school cafeteria manager.

RFKM Made Reuters & Wash Post

Reuters and the Washington Post called for our comments on the new USDA Smart Snacks Rule. Lindsey's son Max and Karen were quoted in an article sent out worldwide. We've seen our name now in the Bangor Daily News, The Bayou Buzz, the Chicago Tribune, the India Times and the Oregon Herald!

RFKM: MISSION & PRIORITIES

Welcome to the 3rd issue of RFKM's newsletter. We are a grass-roots, parent advocacy group promoting delicious, fresh, whole and nutrient-rich foods in MCPS. We now have parents representing 70 schools – almost 35% of MCPS' 202 schools – and over 440 supporters. If you support our mission, please email us at realfoodMCPS@gmail.com. For more information on our mission and priorities, visit www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org.

Tony "Cafeteria Man" Geraci to speak at RFKM School Food Forum

In conjunction with Montgomery Victory Gardens, RFKM is hosting a Fall School Food Forum on **Saturday Nov. 2**. Nationally known expert on school food reform, **Tony "Cafeteria Man" Geraci**, will be the keynote speaker. We are hoping to start an exciting community-wide conversation about how to improve school food. Please **save the date** – advance registration information will be available in September. The event will run from 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. and lunch will be included. We are working hard through the summer to finalize our plans, so stay tuned for more exciting news as our School Food Forum shapes up.

RFKM Recipe Contest on May 18

RFKM held its first recipe contest to create a healthy school lunch on May 18. Children, parents, chefs, educators and friends submitted their recipes and the five finalists served their entries at Piney Branch ES. The final judges were the school children, who awarded first place to Marina Bowsher for her Turkey Wrap with mixed veggies, apple and popcorn. Visit our [web site](#) for pictures of the event and recipes of the top 5 entries.

July-August 2013

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RFKM ACTIVITIES

June

- Jun. 29 - RFKM Member gathering and discussion of school food, Dawson's Market, Rockville Town Square

August

- Aug. 1 - RFKM Representative Training, Takoma Park, 10 am - 1 pm
- Aug. 24 - MCPS Back to School Fair, 11 am – 2 pm
- Aug. 26 - School Starts

September

- RFKM Member gathering and discussion of school food (TBA)
- Sep. 23-27 - MCPS: Home Grown Lunch & Eat Lunch with Your Child Week

October

- Oct. 6 – RFKM exhibit at Takoma Park Street Festival, 10 am – 5 pm
- Oct. 17 – RFKM presentation to Women Business Owners of Montgomery County (WBO)
- Oct. 24 – Food Day

November

- Nov. 2 - RFKM School Food Forum, 9:30 am - 2 pm

RFKM IN THE NEWS

Washington Post 6/27/13

<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMPost130627>

Reuters 6/27/13

<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMReuters062713>

Also picked up:
Bangor Daily News
Bayou Buzz
Chicago Tribune
India Times
Oregon Herald

Sherwood HS Warrior 6/6/13

<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMSherwood0613>

Northwood News 6/13, p.11

<http://tinyurl.RFKMNorthwood0613>

Washington Post 5/17/13

<http://wapo.st/18PUXXs>

RFKM Representative Training

From 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on August 1, RFKM will be holding a training for our school representatives. All interested members are welcome and encouraged to attend. We will be working on school-based advocacy strategies such as presenting RFKM's work to your PTA, how to survey your school food environment, changes you can make to the local school food environment, starting a Wellness Committee, and dealing with opposition. We will also be discussing the USDA Meal Regulations for the 2013-2014 school year, as well as current and proposed competitive food standards.

VIDEOS WE LIKE

Animated video about sugary beverages, from CSPI: www.therealbears.org

Ron Finley, an urban guerilla gardener in LA: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez7z7_ap74w

Friends, Partners, and Like-Minded Organizations

[Brickyard Educational Farm](#)
[First Bites](#)
[Montgomery County Food Council](#)
[Montgomery Victory Gardens](#)
[Real Food for Kids \(Fairfax\)](#)

Let's Keep the Conversation Going!

- Come to our events
- Like us on [Facebook](#)
- [Tell your friends & family](#) about us
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) @[realfoodMCPS](#)
- [E-mail us](#) to add your name & school to our list of supporters

RFKM's Most Unwanted List

One popular feature in [CSPI's monthly Nutrition Action Healthletter](#) is "Food Porn". We've created our own **Most Unwanted List**. Here are our top 2 contenders.

STRAWBERRY FLAVORED MILK: Given out with free breakfasts and sold at lunchtime, these 8 oz. plastic jugs contain 22 grams of sugar, artificial strawberry flavor, propylene glycol, Red Dye #40, vitamin A palmitate, and vitamin D3. Here's what CSPI has to say about artificial food dyes ([Food Dyes: A Rainbow of Risk](#), CSPI, 2010, p. vi): "Because of those toxicological considerations, including carcinogenicity, hypersensitivity reactions, and behavioral effects, food dyes cannot be considered safe. The FDA should ban food dyes, which serve no purpose other than a cosmetic effect...companies voluntarily should replace dyes with safer, natural colorings." The following companies have dropped dyes from their products in the EU, but not in the US: Coca-Cola, Mars, McDonald's, Nestle, Kraft, Kellogg and ASDA/UK Wal-Mart.

WELCH'S FRUIT SNACKS: These "gummy" type snacks are sold in 0.9 oz. packages in the cafeteria line in all schools. They are also handed out to kids in classrooms during events such as MSA testing – without parents' knowledge. These snacks contain: juice from concentrates, corn syrup, sugar, modified corn starch, fruit purees, gelatin, citric acid, lactic acid, natural and artificial flavors, ascorbic acid (vit. C), alpha tocopherol acetate (vit. E), vit. A palmitate, sodium citrate, coconut oil, carnauba wax, Red dye #40, Yellow dye #5 and Blue dye #1. The front of the package is festooned with pictures of strawberries, grapes, oranges, etc. and the words: "Made with REAL Fruit". How much real fruit can there be in the 5th ingredient of a 0.9 oz. snack? April's elementary lunch menu contained an ad for Welch's in the guise of nutrition information.

TAKE ACTION: 1) Until MCPS offers healthy snacks, ask your cafeteria manager to block your child's account from purchasing à la carte snacks. 2) As long as sugary, artificially pink milk is on the menu, ask your cafeteria manager to put a note on your child's account "White Milk Only". 3) If your child is in a school that serves free breakfast, ask the teacher to allow your child only white milk. 4) If your child attends a school where unused lunch products are put out on a "Share Table", ask the principal and cafeteria manager to ban the chocolate and strawberry milk from the share table due to health concerns. 5) If your child attends a school where Welch's Fruit Snacks and other types of junk food are handed out in the classroom without your knowledge, ask the principal and your child's teacher to follow the MCPS Wellness Policy and stop handing out food/candy in the classroom.

BRIDGING INTERESTS: CSPI

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a non-profit education and advocacy organization focused on improving the safety and nutritional quality of foods, was founded in 1971 by Michael Jacobson, Ph.D. and two other scientists. CSPI works to educate the public, advocate government policies that are consistent with scientific evidence on health and environmental issues, and counter industry's powerful influence on public opinion and public policies.

David Kessler, past FDA Commissioner, credited CSPI with "one of the greatest public health advances of the century" by promoting the importance of the link between diet and health to government, industry and the public.

CSPI's website includes a family-friendly section **Chemical Cuisine** which describes and rates chemical additives in food. Their monthly **Nutrition Action Healthletter** has almost one million subscribers in North America.

SMART SNACKS IN SCHOOLS: GREAT NEWS!

For the first time in over 30 years, the USDA has issued updated guidelines for competitive foods in schools. (Competitive foods are snack and à la carte items sold in competition with the main lunch. In 2010, MCPS took in almost \$7 million from the sale of these items.) The new guidelines will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. Margo Wootan, CSPI Director of Nutrition Policy, has this to say about the new guidelines: "...children will be protected from the sugar drinks and junk food that tempt them through school vending machines, à la carte lines in cafeterias, and school stores and snack bars. USDA's action is much needed given children's generally unhealthy diets and high rates of obesity." RFKM applauds the effort to create stronger guidelines for school snacks, but we believe the proposed rules do not go far enough in the following areas: excessive sugar in juice and dairy products, continued lack of regulation of chemical additives, allowance of artificial sweeteners, and the allowance of caffeine in high schools.

THE UNQUESTIONED ANSWERS

We have heard the following statements multiple times since RFKM started:

- *Fresh, healthy food is too expensive.*
- *Kids won't eat healthy food.*
- *If the FDA says chemicals in food are safe, then they must be okay.*
- *Schools won't make enough money without vending machines and à la carte snacks.*

RFKM will address these claims in future issues.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

- The Truth on Juice