



To continue our advocacy work through the rest of the year,
RFKM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!
 Donate through PayPal:
<http://tinyurl.com/n9dv7gl>
 As of September 18, 2013, RFKM is a project of
 Chesapeake Institute for Local Sustainable Food
 and Agriculture (CILSFA).

School Food Forum held on Nov. 2 a big success

The School Food Forum: "Creating a Vision of Fresh, Real Food in MCPS" brought together experts and stakeholders to move the conversation forward on improving school food. Over 150 people attended, including county councilmembers, state delegates, one state senator, plus representatives from many other legislative offices.

Representing MCPS was Board of Education Vice-President Philip Kauffman; he was quoted in the Gazette on Nov. 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."

County Councilmembers Valerie Ervin and George Leventhal spoke, along with Marla Caplon, Director of MCPS' Division of Food and Nutrition Services, Lisa Lefferts, Sr. Scientist with Center for Science in the Public Interest, and Shivani Narasimhan, M.D. from Annapolis Endocrinology Associates.

A panel titled "From Farm and Garden to School" addressed school gardens and horticultural education. It included Karla Kratovil, Jill Coutts, plus Kathy Lawrence of School Food FOCUS, who addressed national efforts to improve school food through procurement policy changes that promote farm-to-school.

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. (For more on the Forum, see our [website](#).)

Membership Growing by Leaps and Bounds

RFKM is now up to over 900 supporters with members in 113 of MCPS' 202 schools – a very respectable 55.9%. Our goal is to have a member in every school by the end of this school year. You can help by spreading the word in your school and community and advocating for better food for our kids everywhere. We need a large, engaged membership to effect change in MCPS.

List of a la carte items on RFKM Website

The 2013-14 à la carte list is now posted on our website with ingredients and nutrition facts for each item. While not all snacks are sold at all schools (principals and cafeteria managers can pick and choose), parents will be able – for the first time - to see the world of junk food available to their kids in MCPS.

RFKM: Mission & Priorities

Welcome to the 5th issue of RFKM's newsletter. We are a grass-roots, parent advocacy group promoting whole, delicious, fresh, and nutrient-rich foods in MCPS. For an updated list of our priorities (and to read Lindsey and Karen's testimony to the School Board), visit our website, realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org.



Tony Geraci, Director, Nutrition Services, Shelby County Schools*

RFKM ACTIVITIES

November

- Nov. 2 – School Food Forum: Creating a Vision of Fresh, Real Food in MCPS
- Nov. 12 – Interview on "Forward Motion", Montgomery Community Media
- Nov. 19 – Presentation at Action for Healthy Kids Breakfast Summit, USDA, Beltsville

December

- Happy Holidays!

January 2014

- Jan. 25 – RFKM Representative Training (TBA)

February 2014

- Feb. 22 – RFKM Member Gathering (TBA)

RFKM IN THE NEWS

11/25/13 – Churchill HS Observer
http://issuu.com/thechurchillobserver/docs/november_2013

11/6/13 - Gazette
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMГаз131106>

10/30/13 - Washington Post
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMPost131030>

10/30/13 - The Gazette
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMГаз131030>

10/30/13 - Montgomery Sentinel
<http://montgomerycivic.org/files/fedcorner20131010.pdf>

10/9/13 - PreventObesity.net
<http://preventobesity.net/inside-track-october-10-c>

*Photo of Tony Geraci by Karen Allyn of Montgomery Community Media's "Forward Motion"

RFKM Presents to the Community

During October, RFKM exhibited at the Takoma Park Street Festival, gave a presentation to the Montgomery County Pediatric Society, testified at an MCPS Board of Education meeting, held a training for RFKM school reps, and presented to the Women Business Owners of Montgomery County (WBO).
Quite a month!

RFKM Reps Are Doing Amazing Work at Their Schools

"I introduced myself to the PTA President at North Chevy Chase ES and told him about our mission. He asked me if I would be interested in being the RFKM Rep for the PTA. I attended my first PTA meeting and did a brief "infomercial" on RFKM. I was able to meet the class reps from all of the grades, and I gave each one a copy of the "Healthier Party Plan" and the "Alternatives to Rewarding Children with Food" to distribute to their homeroom teachers. The PTA also donated \$250 for the School Food Forum. Lastly, I read the RFKM PTA Pledge to the group, and the PTA President signed it! My next goal is to follow up on conversations about dedicating one of the four PTA community-wide meetings this year to school food. The purpose would be to educate the school community, raise awareness about the food being served in the cafeteria, and discuss potential small changes that can be made. We also brainstormed ideas about purchasing lunch from the cafeteria the day of the "School Food Meeting" and having it on display that evening for the parents to see, and possibly showing excerpts from the documentary "Two Angry Moms..."
Sandi Jordan, RFKM Rep

Let's Keep the Conversation Going!

- 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

Inspired by CSPI's Food Porn, we have our own list spotlighting the **Most Unwanted** foods at MCPS. Today's winners are:

SideKicks Smooth-Frozen Juice. Listed on menus as "100% Fruit Juice Sorbet", this frozen concoction is sold in a round 4.4 oz. plastic cup in two flavors: Blue Raspberry Lemon and Kiwi Strawberry. It contains white grape and/or pear juice from concentrate, **artificial flavor, artificial color**, plus a few other ingredients. Nowhere mentioned are actual kiwis, strawberries, raspberries or lemons. It has **19 grams of sugar** - as much sugar as a Hershey's chocolate bar - and 80 calories. Sidekicks look a lot like dessert: colorful, sugary, and frozen. Due to the presence of fruit juice concentrate, it qualifies as the fruit component of a reimbursable school meal. This goes against the USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans which recommend that we eat mostly whole fruits, rather than drink *juice*, to get our daily servings of fruit, not to mention CSPI's recommendation to avoid all artificial food dyes. There is one flavor of sidekicks sold without food coloring. However, that flavor is not offered in MCPS.

Nestle's Nesquik Chocolate Milk

Sold in 16 ounce plastic bottles in vending machines in secondary schools, this product contains **300 calories** and **48 grams of sugar** - 11 teaspoons - as much as 2 Snickers bars. 26 grams of this sugar occur naturally, and 22 grams (5.24 tps.) are added. Whether you count total or added sugar, this product contains a lot of both.

Sugar content in dairy products is not regulated in schools, which is why you find items with such high sugar content. The 22 grams added to this chocolate milk have 88 calories, or 12.6% of the USDA calorie limit for a middle school lunch (700 calories). A child who drinks this at lunch ingests more added sugar than is recommended by the USDA, AHA, and WHO (5%-10% of calories.) Given the epidemic rates of obesity and diabetes in the US today, we expect MCPS not to offer this type of sugary product to our kids.

Take Action: Ask your cafeteria manager to **block your child's account** from purchasing a la carte snacks. Meet with your principal and cafeteria manager and request that these **unhealthy products be removed** from the cafeteria line and vending machines at your school.

THE UNQUESTIONED ANSWERS*: Kids won't eat healthy food. Not So!

Apparently they will. And sometimes it's surprisingly easy to get them to do so.

On Sept. 26, Lindsey, Karen and Gordon Clark of [Montgomery Victory Gardens](#) had lunch at Silver Spring International MS, followed by a 2nd lunch at Sligo Creek ES. Here are excerpts from Lindsey's follow-up letter to the principals of both schools.

"Thank you for welcoming us to your cafeterias. After seeing the lines firsthand, I started researching some of the information on helping kids make better choices that are within your control as the school principal (most of this applies to the middle school since there are so many more choices...).

Some of the information I found (from <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/ideas>) includes:

Moving and highlighting fruit increased sales by up to 102% (putting fruit in nice bowls or on colored cloth or near the register, as well as at the start of the line, etc.; moving unhealthy items away from the register limits their sales)

Naming vegetables and displaying the new names with the foods increased selection of vegetables from between 40%-70%

Placing white milk first in the lunchroom coolers resulted in an increase of up to 46% in white milk sales (removing or limiting access to chocolate and "strawberry" milks is also a good idea)

The first of a **highlighted entrée** on the lunch line has an 11% advantage over the second option

The number of students consuming "healthy items" increased by 35% after the introduction of a **"healthy choices only" convenience line**

I was especially discouraged to see French fries and Cheez-Its being put on my plate as the default options when I already had a pile of pasta on my plate...you could **limit French fries** to one day a week and not have them in two different locations in the cafeteria line, which would push kids to select healthy fruit and vegetables instead.

Overall, my general impression was that the line was too busy with options to encourage kids to make the right choices. What might help would be to have a **sample healthy meal** with the best options for the day put together...on the top of the line with a big message about it being an example of a healthy, balanced meal."

*A regular column in which we dispute statements heard frequently as to why food in MCPS' schools can't be improved.

Next Up: Is fresh, healthy food too costly?