



RFKM Starts 2ND Year

Now that a new school year has started, we'd like to thank all of our members and supporters for their dedication to bringing healthier food to the children in MCPS. We have made some remarkable strides and created a lot of momentum. We are looking forward to another great year. Two of our most recent successes:

The MCPS School Board agreed to delay turning on vending machines until 30 minutes after the school day. Lindsey was quoted in the Post "The students at MCPS will no longer have easy [access to sugary sodas, candy](#) and other unhealthy items immediately after school. This will no doubt have a positive effect on many children."

Whole Foods Market - Silver Spring chose RFKM for their fall "5% Day". RFKM will receive 5% of the net proceeds from sales on Sept. 18. Thank you to Whole Foods for this great vote of confidence, which will provide us with badly-needed funds to continue our advocacy work and sponsor such events as the upcoming School Food Forum.

Lists of a la carte Snacks to Be Available on RFKM Website

We are in the process of summarizing the 2013-14 a la carte snack lists for our website. These lists, along with ingredients and nutritional facts, will be available soon for snacks sold in MCPS cafeterias. 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 get a good look at the world of junk food available to their children at school.

Note: In our previous newsletter, we announced the addition of a blurb on the elementary school menu about a la carte options and the ability of parents to limit student purchases. Also available and not widely known is the ability to get a print-out of your child's lunch purchases from the cafeteria manager. Not currently known is how far back this information goes and how detailed it is.

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

RFKM and Montgomery Victory Gardens (MVG) are hosting a School Food Forum on **Saturday Nov. 2 from 9:30 am-2:00 pm**. 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. Your presence in large numbers at this forum will be a strong message to MCPS. Please see our [website](#) for details and to register. A fresh, locally-sourced and delicious lunch is included. Location: Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, Silver Spring.

Bridging Interests: MVG

Montgomery Victory Gardens (MVG), a partner in the mission for healthy food for our kids, was founded in 2009 by Gordon Clark, a tireless promoter of all things green. MVG promotes local food and a more sustainable Montgomery County by teaching kids and adults how to grow food and by supporting local farmers. MVG played a lead role in changing MCPS policy to allow vegetable gardens in schools. This past year, MVG compiled a detailed survey of 36 MCPS schools with edible gardens. See the story in the Post: <http://tinyurl.com/MVGPost130801>. Among other things, we are grateful to Gordon for planting the seed that has become the School Food Forum. Check out their website at: www.montgomeryvictorygardens.org.

RFKM: Mission & Priorities

Welcome to the 4th 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 87 schools – 43% of MCPS' 202 schools – and over 600 supporters.

Sept-October 2013 Vol. 1, Issue 4

RFKM ACTIVITIES

September

- Sept. 18 – 5% Day at Whole Foods Market - Silver Spring
- Sept. 21 - RFKM Member gathering and discussion of school food, Riciuttis, 3308 Olney Sandy Spring Road, Olney, MD, 4-6 pm
- Sept. 23-27 - MCPS: Home Grown School Lunch Week

October

- Oct. 6 – RFKM exhibit at Takoma Park Street Festival, 10 am – 5 pm
- Oct. 13 – RFKM Representative Training, 2-4 pm
- Oct. 14-18 – National School Lunch Week
- Oct. 16 – National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day
- Oct. 17 – RFKM presentation to Women Business Owners of Montgomery County (WBO)
- Oct. 24 – Food Day

November

- Nov. 2 - School Food Forum: Creating a Vision of Fresh, Real Food in MCPS. Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, 15300 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, 9:30 am - 2 pm

RFKM IN THE NEWS

Fox News 8/6/13
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMFox130806>

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Patch 8/6/13
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMPatch130806>

Washington Post 8/5/13
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMPost130805>

CBS DC 8/2/13
<http://tinyurl.com/m6clrag>

Washington Post 6/27/13
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMPost130627>

Reuters 6/27/13
<http://tinyurl.com/RFKMReuters062713>

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

RFKM Representative Training

On Sunday Oct. 13 from 2-4 p.m. RFKM will be holding a training for our school representatives. We encourage all interested members to attend. We will work 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 at the local school level, starting a Wellness Committee, and dealing with opposition. RSVP realfoodMCPS@gmail.com

RFKM Interns

We were so lucky this summer to have two bright, motivated interns working for us. Rising college seniors Mary Kate Roth and Jade Zheng came with stellar credentials and a willingness to perform a variety of tasks. They did research, clerical work, community outreach, and went to meetings with school food advocates, MD State Del. Jeff Waldstreicher, County Councilmember George Leventhal, VP of Best Buddies Int'l Lisa Derox, and the School Food Forum committee. Thank you both for helping the cause of real food for our kids!

Videos We Like

Real Food For Kids (Fairfax) video on their new Marshall HS café: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAxifMX5Br68&feature=youtu.be
4th grade student's film about food in his school cafeteria: www.yuckmovie.com

Friends, Partners, and Like-Minded Organizations

[Brickyard Educational Farm](#)
[Whole Kids Foundation](#)
[Action for Healthy Kids](#)

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 created our own list spotlighting our **Most Unwanted** foods at MCPS. In our last issue we profiled Strawberry Milk and Welch's Fruit Snacks. Up next:

Very Fine Grape Naturally Flavored 100% Juice Blend.

Sold in cafeteria vending machines, this beverage contains 170 calories and a whopping 43 grams of sugar from pear and apple juice concentrates. This is more than 10 teaspoons of sugar, as much sugar as in 3 servings of raw apples and pears, without the other benefits that come from eating fruit in its unprocessed state. It contains more calories and sugar than a 12 oz. can of Coke. 100% juice products have come under scrutiny in recent years due to the high concentration of sugar in these drinks targeted mainly to kids. Nutritionists, pediatricians and endocrinologists have been sounding the alarm over the increasing rates of obesity/diabetes in children, and the link to overconsumption of juice and juice products. School food guidelines make a distinction between 'naturally occurring' vs. 'added' sugars. Sugar in 100% juice falls into the first category and is therefore not regulated the way 'added' sugars are. However, according to medical and scientific experts, the body makes no distinction between types of sugar. And high levels of sugar in the diet – from any source – can lead to a multitude of health problems. In the amounts served to children in schools via flavored milks, fruit juice concentrates, snacks etc. the level of sugar in their diets is dangerously high. In his book, [Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us](#), (Random House, 2013, p. 134), author Michael Moss has this to say about fruit juice concentrates: "...concentrate is now being added to a staggering array of products, from fruit leather to pastries to cereal to almost any sweet product that the manufacturer wants to link to the healthy image of fruit... it is made through an industrial process...including any or all of the following steps: peeling the fruit, thereby removing much of the beneficial fiber and vitamins; extracting the juice from the pulp which loses even more of the fiber; removing the bitter compounds; adjusting the sweetness through varietal blending; and evaporating the water out of the juice. At its extreme, the process results in what is known within the industry as 'stripped juice', which is basically pure sugar, almost entirely devoid of the fiber, flavors, aromas, or any of the other attributes we associate with real fruit. In other words, the concentrate is reduced to just another form of sugar, with no nutritional benefit over table sugar or high-fructose corn syrup.

Rather its value lies in the healthy image of fruit that it retains."

TAKE ACTION: Talk to other parents at your school, the principal, and cafeteria manager and ask that this product be removed. Work in your school to make water free and accessible to kids.

THE UNQUESTIONED ANSWERS: *If the FDA says chemicals in food are safe, then they must be okay. Not so!*

According to the article "Who Decides which additives are safe to use in your food?" it's usually the company manufacturing and selling the additive that makes this decision!

More than 10,000 additives are allowed to be used in foods in the U.S. and 43% of those are considered "Generally Recognized As Safe" or GRAS.

The FDA list of GRAS additives is a Rogue's Gallery of chemicals that includes: BHA, BHT, Monosodium Glutamate, Calcium Propionate, Sulfiting agents, Sodium Benzoate, Propylene Glycol and Propane.

In 1997 the FDA decided that food additive manufacturers could decide if the new chemicals they develop are safe, and that while the companies *should* let the FDA know – but they didn't have to!

A study published online August 7 in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* took a hard look at how the food additive industry decides if an additive is GRAS. Researchers, led by Thomas Neltner, food additive expert with the Pew Charitable Trust, found that about 1,000 new additives were never submitted to the FDA; they then analyzed the 451 voluntary notifications that were submitted in the years between 1997 and 2010. According to Neltner, "At least when you put a new chemical on the market, you have to notify the EPA. But there's no requirement that you notify the FDA when you make a new food additive."

The FDA criteria for calling an ingredient GRAS is that there is "a reasonable certainty in the minds of competent scientists that the substance is not harmful under the intended conditions of use." So who are those scientists? In the 451 cases investigated, the researchers found that in 22.4%, the safety assessments were made by an employee of the chemical manufacturer; 13.3% were made by an employee of a consulting firm hired by the additive manufacturer; and in most cases (64.3%), it was the decision of an expert panel hired by either the additive company or by their paid consultant.

The investigators found many of the same people who were hired to be on these panels had served as paid consultants for those additive industries, leading to charges of widespread conflicts of interest.

This piece was excerpted & edited for brevity from an article in the Sept. 2013 issue of *Pure Facts*, the newsletter of the Feingold Assn. of the U.S., www.feingold.org. Many thanks to Jane Hersey for her work over the years in advocating for safer food for children. See www.School-Lunch.org.

In our next Issue: Chemical Additives in MCPS Food