



PRESS RELEASE

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CREATING PATHWAYS FOR LOCAL HEALTHY FOODS TO REACH OUR SCHOOLS

Conservation Works, the School Garden Network, Sonoma County Office of Education, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Farmers Exchange of Earthly Delights, Shared Plate Consulting, Sonoma Resource Conservation District and Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District are pleased to announce that our collaborating team has been awarded a grant of \$488,600 from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork. This grant is to expand school gardens, bring harvest-of-the-month with culturally relevant and climate smart produce to schools, provide enrichment for students through farm field trips and increase opportunities for small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, and socially disadvantaged food producers to supply our schools with locally sourced foods.

This collaborative project is the culmination of years of research, experience, and conversation with dozens of schools, businesses, farmers, parents, students, teachers, non-profits, and local governments to define the most needed actions to support Farm to School programs in Sonoma County. We believe that the combination of implementation and planning to support Farm to School programs will make farm to lunch programs the norm instead of the exception and will have long lasting effects by building capacity for school districts to continue programming without grant support. “Students learning about and eating fresh produce at school should be part of a typical day, and become a nutritional habit,” says Sue Davis of the School Garden Network.

This project will advance child well-being, economic growth, environmental resilience, and racial equity through farm to school systems that connect children to locally sourced whole foods and produce in cafeterias, classrooms, and gardens. All partners are performing several key roles in project implementation: providing teacher workshops and engaging with schools, coordinating and conducting farm field trips for school groups, hosting AmeriCorps Fellows to provide technical assistance to school garden programs, increasing garden production at schools, connecting local farmers to schools, and participating in local efforts to expand Farm To School programming.

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North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council EIN 68-0484941 is doing business as Conservation Works

This funding is essential to expanding availability of fresh foods in schools, increasing opportunities for our local small-scale farming community, and promoting urban agriculture and food systems awareness. Find out more at: <https://www.conservationworksnc.org/farm-to-school>

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