



Learnings from the Field



Beech Grove City Schools

Beech Grove, IN

District Enrollment:

3,117

Production Model: Contracted

Food Service Management
Company

District F/R: 71%

School Year Implemented: 2016

District ADP: 72%

No. of Grants Awarded: 3

Horney Park Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 69%

School ADP: 98%

Central Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 73%

School ADP: 97%

South Grove Intermediate School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 74%

School ADP: 97%

Project Description



In a pursuit to familiarize students with an array of fresh fruits and vegetables, Beech Grove City School District held a weekly farmers market at three of their elementary schools in Beech Grove, Indiana. The markets lasted six weeks and were setup during lunch. Taste tests of up to five varieties of fruits and vegetables were available each week, three of which were hot options, and many of which were locally grown. Students were able to try kale, snap peas, grapefruit, beets, jicama, kale, bok choy, and many others. A crowd favorite was the brussels sprouts. The district's local 4-H club, Perdue Extension, provided educational resources to pass out to students at the farmers markets.

In an attempt to get students on board with the farmers market fruits and

vegetables, food service staff offered various preparations of a certain item so the students could find a version that they enjoyed most. For example, when tasting beets, they first offered samples of beet juice. After tasting the beet juice, students were not big fans of the deep red vegetable. However, once they were offered samples of beet chips, they loved beets and were more willing to try the juice version again.



Towards the end of the grant period, a recipe competition was held amongst the students. The winning student made “nutmegalicious apple muffins.” She wants to be a baker when she grows up. As the winner of the competition, the student got to spend time with a local chef and pick their brain about all things cooking.

Throughout their programming, students were sent home with a bag of produce from the farmers market each week to share with their families along with a newsletter that included preparation tips and nutrition facts. Beech Grove is an urban district with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The district’s Resident Dietician, Tarrah McCreary, was inspired by the way

the fresh produce was able to impact the students and their families. Ms. McCreary offered advice to future recipients of the grant, “Identify what the need is in your community and use this grant to really teach the kids something. Whether it’s something big or small, you never know how you can impact these little ones’ lives. This grant helped to spark new farm to school action in our district.”

Successes

- Students loved trying new foods and continue to request things like brussels sprouts and beets.
- Strategic partnerships with staff, parents, local chefs, Perdue Extension, and more created community buy in and forged a movement behind the project.
- Not only were students positively impacted by the farmers market offerings, so were their families.

Challenges

- It was a challenge to procure local produce because of the timing of the grant.
- Staffing the farmers markets.

For resources related to Project Produce, visit www.thelunchbox.org.

