

*Connect the Dots Childhood Wellness through Nutrition Group*

Meeting Notes: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Attended: Martha Tarbell, John Kenyon, Carolyn Scully, Barbara Bye, Marie Alfieri, Hans Estrin, Anita Carlson- Allen, Jeanice Garfield, Nancy Schaefer**

**1. School Garden Grants-** Nancy S and Martha Tarbell updated the group on plans to start gardens with youth and teachers and Elm and Union St schools; they are looking at applying for a Burlington Community Garden Grant to be shared among both schools. Nancy S will attend a pre-grant workshop and find out if the grant requirement regarding square footage of beds can be counted collectively, in addition they need to find out if this grant has a time commitment for completion of the garden and if those involved can honor it. Many of the school staff are excited about having a garden and the opportunities it will present. The school garden group plan to start gardens this Spring 2011 regardless of this grant; they just might have to start out doing less. If they decide to go for the grant it will be submitted by March 15, 2011 and notification will be received by April 12, 2011.

**2. School Garden to Plate Coordinator:** Both Springfield and Bellows Falls schools expressed interest in having an individual help teachers incorporate the school gardens into the school curriculum and to incorporate garden foods into the school cafeterias. At this meeting we discussed the possibility of writing a grant for this position; originally the group hoped to apply for Food Corp/ Farm to Plate funding, but this proposed source fell through.

The group also discussed the possibility of combining this position with health education for elementary school youth, as it was noted in a Nutrition Committee Meeting that the Springfield Nutrition Policy mandates nutrition education, but it is not offered at this time. Nancy Schaefer will discuss this option with Johanna Harpster, Frank Perrotti, Vince Hawkins, and the 3 elementary school principals and ask if they have a need to fill this gap and if the potential of a combined position is feasible.

Marie Alfieri, GM Springfield Food Coop suggested we look into funding from the USDA, Farm to Plate Initiative; she will send the group info on this. Marie also suggested to the group to vote on this year's Farm Bill as this bill helps to decide which crops are to be subsidized, she will keep folks informed. Nancy S hoped that this vote could present an opportunity to help subsidize small farmers rather than large agri- businesses.

**3) Hans Estrin / Local Food Network in Springfield:** Hans will arrange deliveries to schools in Springfield as soon as produce becomes available from the local farmers in his network. Barbara Bye RD, from Springfield Medical Care Systems is also interested in procuring local produce from this service as is the Springfield Food Coop. Hans will pilot a new program which Cafeteria Services, the school food supplier plans to participate. This program will involve the flash freezing during harvest time of local produce and offering it at a reasonable cost to Café Services, to use throughout the

year. Youth will be involved (service learning opportunity) in the production of the frozen product; Martha Tarbell has applied for funding for a freezer for this produce.

Nancy S asked Hans if local pea sprouts and other sprouts will be carried , as 30+5 found that school kids enjoy eating sprouts. Hans will look into carrying sprouts; Café Services expressed concern over the fragility and contamination record of sprouts. It was countered that the Chester Sprout company has not had any reported health violations, in addition small produce companies and home growers are less apt to be sources of contamination. Jeanice G suggested kids grow sprouts in classrooms, possibly a project to combine with the garden or the proposed garden to cafeteria plate. Jeanice also suggested that the local prison become involved in growing foods and mentioned a successful program in another Vermont correctional facility.

**4.Update on Nutrition Policy for preschool and childcare centers:** Tracey was not able to attend today's meeting. Tracey was hoping to work on a nutrition policy for youth in preschool and childcare settings. Nancy S mentioned the new Childhood Reauthorization Act has made policy changes for before and after school settings in addition to school food; the following link will take you to this new Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/>

Written comments can be sent to the Department of Agriculture; on the first page it explains how and where to send your comments.

**5. Policy update on the Attorney General's Healthy Weight Initiative:** The proposals have been brought to the legislature: The sugar sweetened beverage tax bill (SSB) - (H151) and a tax on candy (H98) have been assigned to Ways and Means. Complete Streets (H198) is in Transportation.

**6. Other News:** Barbara Bye offered to review nutrition components for a health education curriculum, should one be desired by the school districts and she offered to assist Tracey Binnet- Perrin with the proposed childcare center nutrition policy. Nancy S reminded the group that the 30+5 program will end in May 2012 and in effort to keep these work groups sustained and effective she suggested members of this group take turns to co-chair future meeting, Martha Tarbell will co-chair the next 2 meetings. **The next meeting will take place in April in Bellows Falls; it will be a working lunch, date, and time to be announced. Please send Nancy S your preferences and agenda suggestions.**