



**Growing Minds  
2013-2014**

**Farm to School  
Report Card**



**farm to school**  
an asap program

# About

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. ASAP's farm to school program provides resources and training to farmers, teachers, chefs, school nutrition staff, parents, and other community members to encourage schools to provide the experiential education that will ensure children know where their food comes from and develop lifelong healthy eating habits.



ASAP serves as the Southeast Regional Lead for the National Farm to School Network. To learn more about the network, visit [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org).

## Growing Minds Farm to School Conference

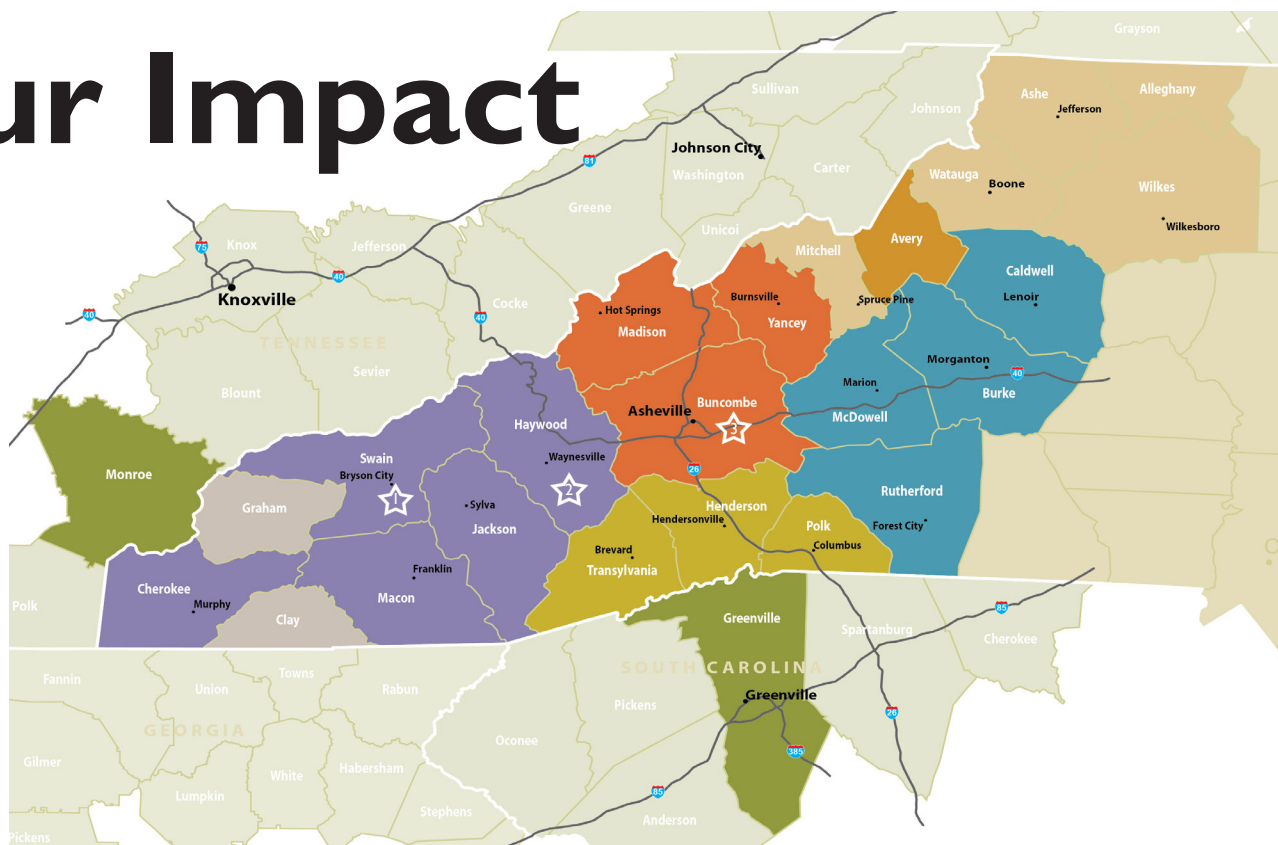


Each year we bring together teachers, early childhood educators, agriculture professionals, parents, and child nutrition staff for a day of farm to school training. Emphasis is placed on connecting classrooms, cafeterias, and communities in order to help children develop healthy relationships with food. The Growing Minds Farm to School Conference is designed to provide school staff and community members with training and resources needed to implement successful farm to school programs.

In 2013 we had 180 attendees from 10 states.

For information on registering or sponsoring the conference, visit: [www.growing-minds.org/farm-to-school-conference](http://www.growing-minds.org/farm-to-school-conference).

# Our Impact



Students at Mountain Discovery Charter School in Swain County planted a garden with support from GM farm to school funding.

Jonathan Valley Elementary in Haywood County hosted a farm to school day, where students went on a farm field trip, sampled local kale pasta, met their Child Nutrition Director's goats, and did an apple taste test.



Growing Minds staff and interns conducted monthly taste tests of locally grown products in two Buncombe County schools.

## By the Numbers:

**12,464**  
individual children

had  
**40,704**  
farm to school experiences  
in

**20**  
Appalachian Grown counties

## School Gardens

School gardens are an excellent tool for experiential learning and nutrition education! Through our trainings and seed give away program, we help individuals to establish farm to school gardens and to integrate gardening into state and national curriculum. We emphasize how to sustain a garden program by involving community partners, such as parents, farmers, college students, and agricultural professionals.



### By the Numbers:

**7,860** children  
received

**547** seed packets  
at

**40** sites

in  
**11** counties

## Local Food in the Cafeteria

We connect farmers, distributors, and school food leaders to ensure students have access to healthy local food. We work with Child Nutrition Directors who want to procure and serve local food, provide resources to highlight locally grown food served in the cafeteria, and help community members understand how school food works.



### By the Numbers:

**16,045**  
taste test experiences  
through

**39** taste tests

in

**4** \*  
school districts committed  
to serving locally grown  
fruits and vegetables

\* Local food is being sourced by a larger number of school districts, but we only captured data for four.

## Cooking in the Classroom

Growing Minds trains teachers and chefs in organizing successful cooking classes, demos, and tastings for children of all ages. Through these experiences, students form positive lifelong eating habits. Children get excited about eating their fruits and veggies—from spinach to melons—when they’ve prepared recipes themselves.



### By the Numbers:

**13,942**

recipe cards distributed

**30,129**

“I tried local...” stickers distributed

**1,109**

people trained in farm to school, including cooking with children

## Farm Field Trips

Growing Minds supports farmers and teachers who want to make farm field trips possible for students. Through our workshops and trainings, teachers and farmers get the resources they need to create lasting, hands-on learning experiences.



### By the Numbers:

We connected

**575** children

with

**7** farms

on

**10** trips

in

**5** counties

# Special Projects

## Mills River Elementary Henderson County

Mills River is the model site for our USDA Farm to School Grant funded project. Students and teachers at Mills River Elementary School spent the 2013-2014 school year connecting to farms in their community through taste tests, cooking classes, and other farm to school events. A highlight of the year was “Giving Thanks for Farmers Day,” a school-wide event that brought nine local farmers into the school for an afternoon of appreciation.



### By the numbers:

**575** students  
impacted

**40** teachers  
trained

**7** school-wide  
taste tests



## Fairview Elementary North Buncombe Elementary Buncombe County

After realizing that cafeteria taste tests provide the most bang for our buck, we declared 2014 as “the year of the taste test.” These two schools were selected by Lisa Payne, Buncombe County’s Child Nutrition Director, to receive monthly taste tests of locally grown, seasonal products.

### By the numbers:

**1500** students  
impacted

**5¢** - average cost per  
child per taste test

**\$26.89** - average cost  
per taste test

In working with Western Carolina University and Lenoir-Rhyne University, ASAP has integrated local food and farm to school experiences and training into university undergraduate and graduate curricula. The local food activities and trainings students experience through Growing Minds at University (GM@U) have built the capacity of future teachers, registered dietitians, and health professionals to incorporate local food and farm based experiences in their work.

## Project Goals:

### Higher Education System:

Local food/farm to school is institutionalized into university / community college curriculum (post-secondary education, nutrition and dietetics), and students are provided with resources and training to prepare them to integrate local food- and farm-based practices into their future professional teaching or nutrition-related careers.

### Preschool/Elementary Education System:

Head Start and elementary school “learning labs” are model local food and farm to school environments (weekly local food tastings, monthly local food cooking classes and school garden sessions) where higher education students have the opportunity to observe how local food activities impact children.

### Community Support System:

The community support system includes local farmers, Cooperative Extension, parents, and other community members who are actively engaged in creating, supporting, and sustaining local food- and farm-based programming.

## By the numbers:

### In 2013-2014...

University students had **1317** farm to school experiences.

**83** nutrition, education, and Dietetic Interns from WCU and LR participated in farm to school activities at learning labs and area schools.

Together they logged **675** volunteer hours conducting farm to school activities at **11** WNC schools.

### Since the project began...

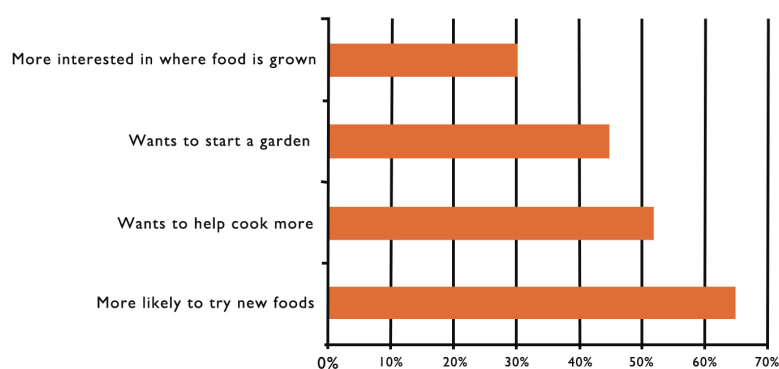
**15** WCU education and nutrition students have conducted research through the project.



# Family Survey Results

*Our special projects not only help teachers to provide farm to school experiences to their students, but they also give us the opportunity to see how farm to school impacts students and their families.*

## My child's behavior changes:



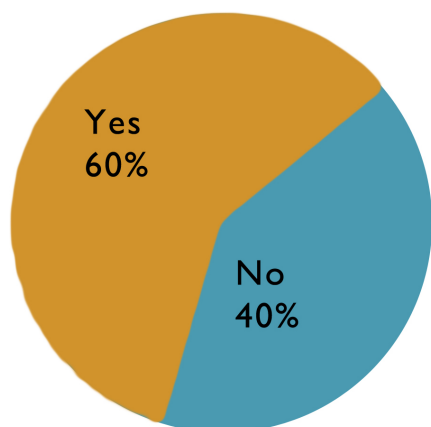
“My child was very excited about the activities, especially the taste testing! She now enjoys foods I never thought she would try, much less eat.”

- Elementary school parent

“He loved learning about apples, thought the apple corer was awesome and told me he wants to make his own applesauce. He told me it's better than what we buy at the store.”

- Preschool parent

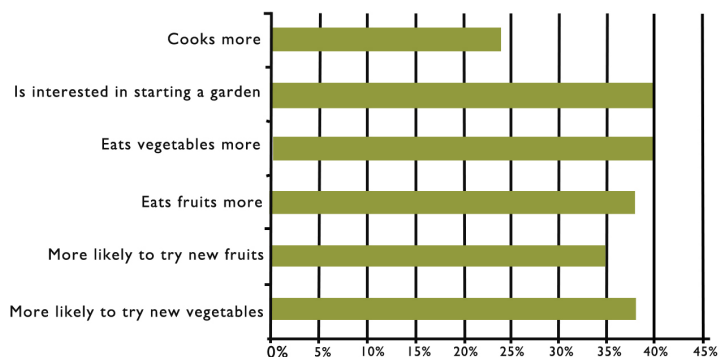
Have you noticed a difference in your child's attitude about food?



“My kids have been more interested in what I buy in the fruits and vegetables department. They want more fresh foods, that they liked, and they enjoy coming up with their own recipes.”

- Elementary school parent

## Our family's changes:



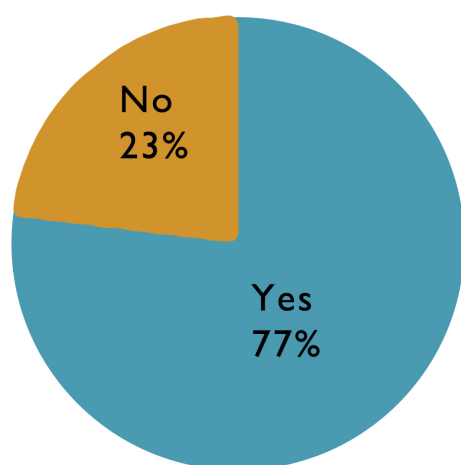
“She tasted some new things and got very excited every time there was a recipe. She even had us make some of the recipes at home. As a result, we’ve made her own recipe notebook at home.”

- Elementary school parent

“Since participating in farm to school three years ago, I began gardening at home. I took a larger step and have maintained a plot at the community garden now for two years. I have learned so much about gardening through experience. It all started by realizing that, if children ages 5-8 can get vegetables to grow then I surely can, too!”

- College student

Has your child had an impact in how your family eats or thinks about food?



“She learned life cycles of several plants and animals along with many interesting facts that our family was able to learn FROM HER! She was always super excited each time she tried food that was offered by ASAP in the cafeteria at lunch time and any dishes that were a result of cooking activities.”

- Elementary school parent



Growing Minds @ Market (GM@M) is a space at a farmers market set aside for children and families so that children can engage in fun projects focused on local food and farms. In other words, it's ASAP's Growing Minds program at tailgates instead of schools. Activities include fresh local food tastings, local food and farm-based art crafts, and physical activities and games.

The 2013 season saw expansion of GM@M to West Asheville Tailgate Market and North Asheville Tailgate Market.

### By the numbers:

At Asheville City Market...

**11** community partners

**471** kids

**379** parents

At all GM@M locations...

**2133** total participants



## Growing Minds @ Market Manual

Our Growing Minds @ Market manual was published for the 2013 market season. This manual makes it simple to implement a children's activity area at your local tailgate market. From tips and tools to activity lesson plans, it's all here. Manual information outlines the benefits of bringing children's programs to your market and provides suggestions for different ways to sustain them. It is a great resource for Girl Scouts, after school programs, and other community settings.

A free copy of the manual is available to tailgate markets in the AG region. Not an AG market? They can be purchased for \$15.

# Get Involved

Want to support farm to school in the Southern Appalachian region? It's easy to get involved with Growing Minds. Simply log on to our website: [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org) and get started!

There you will be able to:

- Download ready to use lesson plans with supporting materials
- See examples of farm to school in action on our blog
- Learn more about our annual conference, including how to become a sponsor
- Find out how to donate and support our work
- Sign up for our monthly farm to school enews and our bi-monthly Southeast enews
- Contact us for farm to school presentations and consulting



get  
Local  
@school

Our Get Local @ School materials are an effective strategy for introducing local, seasonal fruits and vegetables to students. These materials complement the lesson plans and other activities available on our website.

Class sets of materials are available for FREE to individuals in the AG region. If you are outside our region please contact us for pricing and availability.

### Fresh Tomato Salsa

**Ingredients**

- 1 green pepper
- 2 pounds ripe local tomatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 jalapeno pepper or other hot pepper (optional)
- 1 clove garlic (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste

**Directions**

Remove seeds from green and jalapeno peppers. Chop the green pepper, jalapeno, and onion and place in a large bowl. Dice the tomatoes, removing the stem and hard center and add to green pepper mixture. Finely chop cilantro and garlic. Mix all ingredients in your large bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Find more recipes at [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org)



## By the numbers:

**2,758** subscribers: Farm to School Monthly enews

**3,785** subscribers: SE bi-monthly enews

**40,953** unique users on [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org)

**136,056** web page views

**30,129** "I tried local..." stickers distributed

**13,942** recipe cards distributed

# Looking Ahead

## Highlights of the upcoming year...

- expansion of Growing Minds @ University to work with more Dietetic Intern programs
- expanding the Growing Minds @ University model
- expansion of monthly taste tests
- creating more farm to school resources
- farm to school conference in November
- continued emphasis on farm to preschool
- another fantastic season with Growing Minds @ Market



## Let us hear from you!

[www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org)  
[www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org)

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**Asap**  
Local Food  
Strong Farms  
Healthy Communities