



**UNITED  
GENERAL**

**DISTRICT 304**

# Pre-Farm to School



*How did a rural hospital district become involved in a Farm to School program? It began in 2012...*

- ❧ United General received a 3-year grant for physical activity and nutrition
- ❧ Grant Year 1: assessments – showed need, interest, and readiness within Concrete School District
- ❧ Grant Year 2: built partnerships and capacity; formed Wellness Advisory Team
- ❧ Grant Year 3: Leveraged funding; received USDA F2S Planning Grant (the catalyst)



# 2013-14

# F2S Planning Grant



- .5 FTE F2S Coordinator employed by United General
- Wellness Advisory Team becomes F2S Community Advisory Team, adds partners
- ID opportunities for using locally/regionally sourced foods in school meals
- Initial engagement of local farmers
- Kitchen staff workshops to improve skills
- Began farm and ranch field trips



# Early Goals



- Transform an unused portable on elementary campus into a Farm to School classroom
- Provide container gardens for each elementary classroom to compliment but not compete with activities in the community garden
- Develop annual schedule of F2S milestone activities/field trips for all elementary students
- Develop a program to allow high school students to earn credits while working in the district kitchen
- Establish 5<sup>th</sup> Season volunteer effort to harvest, process, and store local produce for the cafeteria
- Continue integrating F2S into the Concrete Summer Learning Adventure day camp

# ...and More Goals



- ❧ Establish a year-round continuum of experiential F2S learning activities for students of all ages
- ❧ Integrate F2S concepts with classroom curriculum and summer program beginning with Dig In! (grades 5/6) in 2014-15
- ❧ Prioritize professional development for kitchen staff
- ❧ Long-range: Expand the breadth and depth of F2S by creating vocational pathways in agriculture and culinary arts for students as they progress into high school

# Helpful Tip: Get a VISTA



☞ United General received a three-year AmeriCorps/VISTA placement. This is when the Farm to School program really took off with Harvest of the Month and Taste WA Day events, growth of CAT membership...

☞ CAT Members: CSD Superintendent, School Board member, Food Services Director, Elementary Art & PE teachers, High School Vocational teacher, United General staff, Cascadian Home Farm Site Director, North Cascades Institute Foodshed Director/Chef, local farmers, restaurateurs, parents...seeking youth members!

# Program Organization



## Cafeteria



## Classroom



## Community

# CAFETERIA



- Harvest of the Month
- Food Service Staff Trainings
- Scratch-cooked locally sourced meals
- Summer Meal Program
- Taste Washington Day





# CLASSROOM



- Farm to School Portable Classroom at Elementary
- Teachers bring students for experiential lessons
- Harvest of the Month Classroom Enrichment
- School Garden installed April 2016
- Summer Program: Culinary Corner Lessons



# COMMUNITY



- Farm Field Trips
- Community Garden Classes
- Community Volunteers
- Variety of Strong Partners
- Family Events and Volunteer Days



# Tracking Indicators



- Local purchasing
- Scratch cooking
- Taste Tests
- Harvest of the Month participation
- Taste WA Day participation (including special guests)
- Food Service staff trainings
- School meal participation rates
- Food waste diversion
- Experiential learning (field trips, gardening, cooking...)
- Attendance at extra-curricular events
- Number of classes participating in F2S lessons
- Educator training





# Communicating & Marketing



- ❧ We get by with a little help from our friends!
- ❧ VISTA Quarterly reports led to Kettering Foundation research exchange; community forums
- ❧ Leadership Skagit--School Garden and expansion
- ❧ Third and fourth year half-price VISTAs; Concrete F2S featured in national AmeriCorps/VISTA grant proposal
- ❧ Widespread recognition, in-kind support from school district; school garden; portable classroom; invitation and scholarship to Edible Schoolyard Academy; staff and teacher support and enthusiasm; participation in superintendent search...



# What's Next?



- ❧ Harvest of the Month program expanded to three Sedro-Woolley schools
- ❧ F2S Implementation grant-funded culinary trainings now in demand county-wide
- ❧ F2S portable building being transformed into an Edible Schoolyard-inspired kitchen classroom
- ❧ Waiting on status of USDA Community Food Projects grant: "Growing Farm to School"
- ❧ Considering student business enterprise: "Just Ice Cream"

# Questions?

