



RECEIVES GRANT TO PROMOTE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension's Department of Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) have chosen nine schools to receive \$7,500 mini-grants for programs to help students eat more fruits and vegetables, learn about good nutrition and promote locally grown produce. Mount Prospect Elementary School in Basking Ridge received their check at a recent school board meeting.

The two-year grant project centers around obesity prevention through planting a school garden, educating school food service personnel to serve healthy breakfast and lunch foods to kids and integrating nutrition education in the classroom through Rutgers faculty, staff and trained School Wellness volunteers; as well as, the classroom teachers. The school must use their mini-grant to promote fruit and vegetable consumption through fun, interactive lessons and activities, which will link classroom education to the foods served in the cafeteria, including food tastings, promotion of locally grown produce and strategies to engage families and the community.

A school garden will be planted and maintained by school personnel, students and parents during the school year and over the summer. They are required to grow at least three different vegetables that will be harvested and sampled by students.

We know children are more likely to eat foods they've had a part in growing, so this grant provides hands-on lessons on where our food comes from along with cooking demonstrations and nutrition education in classrooms and the garden. Our aim is for youth to make healthier food choices when snacking or at meals and to appreciate locally grown produce and a healthier lifestyle.

Daryl Minch, MEd, FCHS Educator of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County, along with Corey Wu-Jung, MS, RD, Northern NJ Coordinator for the grant are delighted to be working with the Mt. Prospect Elementary School grant team leaders, Kathryn Paul and Kathie Immerman along with the administration, faculty, parents, food service staff and students on this NJ Department of Agriculture grant, *Grow Healthy* New Jersey Garden-Based School Wellness Team Nutrition Grant Program. After a rigorous review, Mt. Prospect was selected based on their commitment and potential to provide their students, staff, families and broader school communities with the best possible opportunities to improve their health through improved nutrition and physical activity.

The mini-grant is part of a \$340,250 Team Nutrition Training Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to train foodservice professionals, increase fruit and vegetable consumption, and promote locally grown produce in school meals.

For more information on the State School Nutrition Policy, visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/childadult/school_model.html.

For more information on the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/childadult/fruitandvegetable.html.

For more information on the New Jersey Farm to School Program, visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/childadult/farm_to_school.html.

To find out about Rutgers Get Moving Get Healthy New Jersey program, visit www.getmovinggethealthynj.rutgers.edu/.

To find out more about Family and Community Health Sciences, visit www.njaes.rutgers.edu/fchs