Harvest Dinner a Smashing Success!

On October 25th, the Community Wellness Project hosted "Eat, Think & Be Merry: A Harvest Dinner & Dessert Auction" at Finnriver Farm & Cidery in Chimacum. Working with the Port Townsend and Chimacum School Districts, this collaborative event was both a fundraiser for the school Food Service programs and an affirmation of their efforts to improve nutrition and quality in their meal programs. The evening was a festive chance to celebrate progress and generate fresh energy for district programs that teach the importance of nutritious food choices and the connection between food and farms.

Chimacum Food Service Director, Margaret Garrett, and Port Townsend Food Service Director, Stacy Larsen, worked together with Willy Ray (former Chimacum High School student, professional chef, and food program director at Finnriver,) to procure and prepare locally sourced food for over 120 guests. Guests were treated to live cello music and an inspiring speech by special guest Arran Stark of Jefferson Healthcare. Students and their supporting teachers from both districts MC’d the event, prepared dishes for the feast, served the meal, helped to coordinate the very successful dessert auction, photographed the event, promoted the evening, and grew and packaged marigold seeds given to guests as party favors. They were super stars!

Overall, thanks to ticket sales, dessert auction income and generous donations, the Harvest Dinner raised over $8,000! Proceeds were split equally between the districts to support purchasing local ingredients and additional kitchen
equipment. Thanks to the generosity of our local farms and dessert bakers, the enthusiasm of our students, the brilliance of our volunteers, and the caring community who attended— together you helped to make this a smashing success.
Chimacum Welcomes Margaret Garrett

This fall Chimacum School District hired a new Food Service Director, Margaret Garrett, who brings extensive professional experience, commitment to student wellness, and enthusiasm for connecting school food services to local food and farms. Meet Margaret:

"I was raised in a loving and giving family in a small farming and steel mill area of western Pennsylvania. As a kid I read 'Call of the Wild,' and from then on I knew I wanted a life of adventure in the wilds of Alaska. As a young woman I lived and worked in Seattle for a few years, then headed north to Akutan Bay in the fall of 1980 for King Crab season. From there I spent the next 17 years working as a cook in remote sites all over Alaska, including the Aleutian Islands, on Yukon river tugs, in southeast mining exploration camps, and finally in the oil fields of Prudhoe Bay. In the fall of 1997, I decided it was time to put down some roots, so I settled in Seattle as the Kitchen Supervisor of the Jesuit Community of Seattle University for the next 21 years. It was here I gained experience with farm to cafeteria programs.

During my time in Alaska and in Seattle, I earned a bachelor’s degree from The Evergreen State College, a master’s degree in Nonprofit Leadership from Seattle U, traveled overseas, mostly in African countries, and had a small online out-of-print and collectible cookbook store.

What drew me to the position of Director of Food Services for the Chimacum School District was the chance to work in a role that was going to have an impact on the future. Changing how and what we are feeding students, from
preschool to seniors can affect how they learn and grow. The idea of bringing locally raised fresh fruits and vegetables to the schools not only will be better for their health, but fresh food just tastes better. A local, sun-ripened tomato grown in rich soil without chemicals will always win my heart!"

Margaret, we are so glad to have you at Chimacum, leading your food services team as together you work to build a farm to cafeteria program. Let the adventure continue!

Current Projects
Local Greens at Chimacum High

In November Chimacum High School Foods Services served their first locally grown Red Dog Farm kale in the school cafeteria! High fives to Linda Boyd and the rock stars in the school kitchens, working hard to make this wonderful change. Linda, Margaret, and Finnriver's Willy Ray pictured above.
Second graders and community volunteers at CCP

Raised Beds at Chimacum Creek Primary

In 2018 a $500 grant from the Community Wellness Project to Chimacum Creek Primary School Teacher, Abby Jorgensen, went toward funding three 2nd grade container gardens. Cenex offered a discount on the aluminum troughs. Local volunteers Jussi Keranan and Eric Jorgensen helped to set them up with gravel in the bottoms for holding water, topped by rich, organic soil. Children grew pea seeds as a part of their new Math curriculum - to measure AND to eat - along with kale for weekly classroom soups and flowers which added beauty to the playground.
Another $500 grant to CCP helped classroom teachers fund the purchase of healthy snacks that energized K-2nd grade students through long mornings of learning. Pretzels, granola bars, and tangerines were some of the favorites!

Thanks to all who help make these local grants for teachers possible.

Support Student Wellness with a Year End Gift!

We know that nutrition is deeply linked to health and that health is linked to learning. We are committed to supporting local schools and their food service programs so that our students can thrive in school and in life! Your contributions to the Community Wellness Project will help us continue to offer wellness grants to local teachers, provide funding for local food procurement and school kitchen equipment, and grow school gardens at Chimacum schools. If you would like to support these efforts, we welcome donations of any amount any time! Donate Now

We’re also looking for willing hands and hearts to help with the work. Contact us today if you’d like to be a volunteer!