



Farm to School Share Table Project

The Farm to School Share Table Project has been made possible by:

Frederick County Farm to School

Live Well Frederick

Rotary of Carroll Creek

Community FARE

Brook Hill United Methodist Church

The Frederick Rescue Mission,

Mountainside Education and Enrichment, and

DC Food Project.



DC FOOD PROJECT



INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF NEED

If you've ever been in a school cafeteria, you understand that an enormous amount of untouched, edible food is thrown away. In the 2018-2019 school year, [Mountainside Education and Enrichment](#) conducted food waste sorts in Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) and documented that on average around 50% of cafeteria waste is food. As [Farm to School](#) works hard to partner local farmers with our school meal programs, it is of utmost importance to address food waste and insure that our nutritious local foods produced by our hard working farmers, and other packaged edible food, don't end up in the waste stream, but rather in the hands of people that would benefit and enjoy it. It just makes sense not to throw perfectly good food away.

Food waste in schools is even more unsettling given that there is need in Frederick County and the nation. FCPS provides 11,600 students, 26% of the student population, with free and reduced meal prices. In addition, according to the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by the Frederick County Health Department in 2019, Emmitsburg, Thurmont and Frederick City had the highest percentage of ALICE households in the area. ALICE households have incomes above the Frederick Poverty Level (FPL) but struggle to afford basic household necessities, one of which is food. In the report some of the obstacles cited in Emmitsburg, Thurmont, and Frederick City are access to fresh fruits and vegetables. It's important to point out that Emmitsburg and Thurmont are rural towns surrounded by farmland. It's also interesting to note, that in Frederick County, leaders and residents often boast about the fact that Frederick County has 1,300 farms and more than 181,500 acres of farmland, yet, people struggle to access fresh fruits and vegetables. One of the problems is that much of that farmland is growing commodity crops, and not fruits and vegetables for human consumption. There is an opportunity in Frederick County. Frederick County has farmland. Frederick County has farmers and people interested in farming more acres. Might we be able to do a better job addressing food waste, connecting people to food, creating markets for the farmers and fostering a local food movement?

FCPS Food and Nutrition Services has a fruitful partnership (pun intended) with Catocin Mountain Orchard. Farmers at Catocin Mountain Orchard have been growing and providing fresh fruit to FCPS schools for more than ten years. It's a wonderful collaboration that benefits the students by providing fresh, nutritious local fruits, and also benefits the farmer and our county by providing a local institutional market. There is a great opportunity to do more of this in Frederick County and one of the ways is to bring greater awareness to food waste, health and well-being, and agriculture in our local community.

The goal of Frederick County Farm to School is to positively impact student health, student education and the economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability and consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools. In 2018, with USDA support, FCPS Food and Nutrition Services partnered with Community FARE (Food-Advocacy-Research-Education), a 501(c) 3 organization located in Frederick, Maryland, to launch its own Farm to School program for FCPS students. Community FARE and Farm to School, together are working hard to safeguard a diverse and healthy local food economy that preserves farmland integrity and biodiversity and ensures that food grown here is accessible to residents of Frederick County and its regional neighbors.

SHARE TABLE MISSION

To implement share tables at schools in order to reduce food waste while improving access to healthy foods within school communities.

PROJECT GOALS

1. To implement a common sense approach to address food insecurity among children.
2. To provide share tables at 5 to 10 schools in high need areas of Frederick City and County.
3. To increase student access to food that would otherwise be thrown away.
4. To reduce food waste from the school meal program.
5. To educate about the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables for health.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. Number of share tables introduced and implemented.
2. Number of students with access to food that would have otherwise been thrown away.
3. Average pounds of food rescued per day at schools with a share table.
4. Average pounds of food rescued per year at schools with a share table.
5. Qualitative reports of share table impact by students, teachers, staff, and administrators at schools with a share table.

IMPLEMENTATION

Through the leadership of the Frederick County Farm to School program and community partners, the Frederick County Share Table Project worked with school administrators to implement 5 share table programs between January 2020 and March 16, 2020. The Farm to School Share Table Project was brought to a halt when the State Superintendent of Schools made the important decision that effective Monday, March 16th, all public schools in Maryland would be closed in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Even with the fact that schools closed on March 16th, the Farm to School Share Table Project was able to get up and running in no time and divert thousands of pounds of food from the waste stream and give hundreds of students and community members access to food that would have been thrown away. The Farm to School Share Table Project was incredibly successful in a very short period of time thanks to the inspiration and hands on work of many.

SHARE TABLE PARTNERS

Frederick County Farm to School was able to partner with the [DC Food Project - Share Table Program](#). The DC Food Project graciously shared their Share Table Toolkit, resources, and materials which enabled Frederick County Farm to School the ability to roll out the program quickly and effectively. In addition, starting at a school where students were already familiar with sorting trays at the end of lunch as part of a compost program through [Lunch out of Landfills](#), we had student and staff buy-in from the onset.

In addition, once the Lincoln Elementary School Share Table Program got up and running and was featured in the Frederick News Post article: [Food Waste in Schools Could be Lowered](#), other FCPS schools began contacting Farm to School and the FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Department to learn more about how they could do the same at their school. Many schools already have some version of a

share table being offered, but with the leadership of the Farm to School Share Table Program, school leaders and administrators came on board to help outline the criteria to implement and align them with local health department guidelines. It's important to note that the FCPS Food and Nutrition Department is not involved in the set-up or the day to day operations of the share tables since the food shared has already left the kitchen and the serving line. However, Food and Nutrition Services is familiar with the guidelines recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture, Maryland State Department of Education and our local Frederick County Health Department and shared the guidelines for share tables in school cafeterias with all FCPS Principals.

Another reason that the program was so successful was due to the wonderful partnership with [The Frederick Rescue Mission](#). The Frederick Rescue Mission (FRM) was able to partner with the Share Table Program by providing coolers to schools and a pick-up and drop-off service at select schools. Staff from FRM would drop coolers off to select schools before lunch each day and then return to pick-up coolers filled with edible food that was shared at the feeding programs offered by the FRM. The area coordinator of FRM said that the foods provided from the schools was a blessing to their breakfast program and filled an unexpected need as they began feeding more people since another area food program had closed.

Last but not least, [Rotary of Carroll Creek](#), [Community FARE](#), [Brook Hill United Methodist Church](#), and [LiveWell Frederick](#) of Frederick Maryland provided funds to support the program administration and supplies such as banners, reproducible materials, share table carts, and food baskets. As part of the Share Table Program we are also excited about the opportunity to provide educational information from the [Live Well Frederick 5-2-1-0 Program](#) which offers tips for: (1) Eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, (2) Limit 2 hours or less of screen time, (3) Play 1 hour or more of physical activity each day, (4) 0 sugary drinks, choose more water and low-fat milk.

BUDGET

\$7,264.50

- \$2,500 Live Well Frederick
- \$2,264.50 Rotary of Carroll Creek
- \$1,500 Community FARE
- \$1,000 Brook Hill United Methodist Church
- In-Kind contributions of toolkit from DC Food Project
- In-Kind contributions of coolers, drop-off and pick-up services from The Frederick Rescue Mission
- In-kind contributions of strategic planning and long-term sustainability planning with Mountainside Education and Enrichment

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PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. Number of Share Tables Introduced and Implemented.

Share Table Schools	Share Table Schools
Implemented 2019 – 2020 School Year	Possible in 2020 – 2021 School Year
1. Lincoln Elementary School	1. Spring Ridge Elementary School
2. Waverley Elementary School	2. Thurmont Primary School
3. Monocacy Elementary School	3. Emmitsburg Elementary School
4. Glade Elementary School	4. Sugarloaf Elementary School
5. Orchard Grove Elementary School	5. Butterfly Ridge Elementary School

2. Number of students with access to food that would have otherwise been thrown away.

	Lincoln ES	Waverley ES	Monocacy ES	Glade ES	Orchard Grove ES
Student Enrollment	583	517	619	616	602

- **Lincoln Elementary School:** All food collected was donated to The Frederick Rescue Mission.
- **Waverley and Monocacy Elementary Schools:** Food was on Farm to School Share Table during lunch time and students were permitted to select food and consume at lunch. Any food that was left over after all of the lunch periods was donated to The Frederick Rescue Mission.
- **Glade Elementary School:** Food was on the Farm to School Share Table during lunch time and students were permitted to select food and consume at lunch. The school was working on establishing a partnership with [Blessings in a Backpack](#) for any of the food that was left over on the share table at the end of the day/week.
- **Orchard Grove Elementary School:** This elementary school collected foods leftover from breakfast and donated food to The Frederick Rescue Mission. Opening a share table in the school cafeteria was the phase II plan.

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Number of items in total at each school and daily average.

	Milks		Fresh Fruit		Fruit Cups		Frozen Fruit		Craisins	
	SUM	AVG	SUM	AVG	SUM	AVG	SUM	AVG	SUM	AVG
Lincoln (38 days)	2,508	64	922	26	206	9	567	33	76	25
Waverley (14 days)	371	27	71	9	84	9	21	7	25	4
Monocacy (14 days)	598	43	259	22	189	24	109	22	23	23
TOTAL Items	3,477		1,252		479		697		124	

3. Average pounds of food rescued per day at schools with a share table.

	Milks (0.65 lbs.)	Fresh Fruit (0.3 lbs.)	Fruit Cups (0.2 lbs.)	Frozen Fruit (0.2 lbs.)	Craisins
	lbs. per day	lbs. per day	lbs. per day	lbs. per day	lbs. per day
Lincoln	42	8	2	7	*
Waverley	17	3	2	1	*
Monocacy	28	7	5	4	*
TOTAL Pounds	87 (~10 gal)	18	9	12	*

*weight unavailable

4. Estimated average pounds of food rescued per year at schools with a share table.

It's important to note that the total pounds below reflect total pounds if that particular food were offered each day. For example, milk is offered each day and based on the amount of milk we collected at each school each day, it is estimated that 15,660 pounds of milk. For example, if only fresh fruit was offered each day, potentially 3,240 pounds of fresh fruit would be thrown away each year.

	Milks	Fresh Fruit	Fruit Cups	Frozen Fruit	Craisins
	lbs. per year*	lbs. per year*	lbs. per year*	lbs. per year*	lbs. per year
Lincoln	7,560	1,440	360	1,260	*
Waverley	3,060	540	360	180	*
Monocacy	5,040	1,260	900	720	*
TOTAL Pounds	15,660 (~1,821 gal)	3,240	1,620	2,160	*

*weight unavailable

**One gallon of milk weighs around 8.6 pounds

***One school year in Maryland is 180 days

5. Qualitative reports of share table impact by students, teachers, staff, and administrators at schools with a share table.

Students at each school reported that they enjoyed volunteering at the share table and helping to collect food. Teachers openly shared with Share Table Coordinators how happy they were that something was being done about food waste. Many of the teachers in the cafeteria would ask questions

and assist with helping the students understand what foods were okay to take to the Share Tables. In addition, the Frederick News Post and Scholastic Magazine published excellent articles about the Farm to School Share Table Project.

Articles:

[Food Waste in FCPS Could Be Lowered with the Idea of Giving Back](#)
[Scholastic: Fighting Food Waste](#)

CONCLUSION

In the near term (2020-2021 and 2021 and 2022 school years), Farm to School is hoping to roll out Share Table Programs at all FCPS Elementary Schools with the endorsement of the FCPS Superintendent, the Food and Nutrition Services Department as well the Frederick County Public Health Department. We recognize that with the emergence and new realities of coronavirus, it is critically important stay in tune with all changing federal, state and local guidelines for health and safety. Rescuing edible food from the waste stream has always been important but with the recent health and economic crisis of this coronavirus pandemic it is absolutely critical that Share Tables become an important and expected component and practice associated with school meal programs.

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APPENDICES

Letter from FCPS Food and Nutrition Services

Dear Principals and Assistant Principals,

The issue of food waste in schools has recently become a widely discussed topic throughout the United States, Maryland and locally in Frederick County. Share tables are one popular way to help decrease food waste. Our Farm to School partners, PTAs and other local organizations have shown interest and taken initiative in starting share tables in schools, and many have come to the Food and Nutrition Services Department for guidance and advice about which foods are safe to share. The Food and Nutrition Department is not involved in the set-up or the day to day operations of the share tables since the food shared has already left the kitchen and the serving line. However, we are familiar with the guidelines recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture, Maryland State Department of Education and our local Frederick County Health Department and would like to share these guidelines for share tables in school cafeterias.

Proper signage should be available to students and staff so they know what can be shared.

SHARE (during breakfast or lunch)	NEVER SHARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food or beverages (referred to as just food from this point forward) should be commercially prepared and prepackaged food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food with opened containers or without intact/sealed wrapper or container.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food shared can be perishable or nonperishable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food that is partially eaten.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially prepared and prepackaged food that was brought from home or provided from school kitchen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food made at home (unless it is commercially prepared, prepackaged and unopened.) Ex. You cannot share a ham and cheese sandwich that you made at home and packed in a plastic sandwich bag but you can share an unopened Lunchable kit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit can have an edible skin only if there is a sign directing students to wash the fruit prior to eating the shared fruit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit with a skin that is peeled can be shared and eaten without washing it. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a <i>best practice</i> to have a pan of ice on the share table for dairy such as milk, cheese sticks and yogurt. Many kitchens have ice machines and can provide a pan of ice to the share table staff or volunteers before meal service. 	

How to help eliminate food waste

- Students are NEVER required to take milk or chocolate milk, yet unopened milk containers are often taken with a meal and discarded. Even if the milk is shared, it still may not be taken by another student and will be discarded after the meal. Kitchen staff, teachers, volunteers and other school staff should NEVER make a child take milk. Milk is available as part of the child's meal only if they choose to take it.
- Students are required to take a ½ cup of fruit **OR** a ½ cup of vegetables with their meal. They are allowed to take both but they are NOT required to both. Only 1 must be taken to make their meal reimbursable. Kitchen staff, teachers, volunteers and other school staff should NEVER make a child take both a fruit and vegetable that is not wanted.

After Meal Service

- After meal service, commercially prepared and packaged nonperishable food can remain on a share table for students and staff to eat throughout the day (you may want to move this food outside of the cafeteria to a share table in a high traffic area).
- Any perishable food that remains on the share table after meals service must be discarded.

Donating Food

- If there is a volunteer or staff member available to coordinate this, food can be donated to a local nonprofit organization or shelter.
- Food that will be donated can include commercially prepared and prepackaged food that is perishable or non-perishable. Perishable food must be controlled for time and temperature and should only be donated within 4 hours from the start of the meal shift.

Sharing Food during Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) classroom breakfast program

- Food served in the classroom during MMFA classroom breakfast program or during a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack or supper follows the same guidelines as food shared in the cafeteria. See the table above with SHARE and NEVER SHARE foods.
- After the meal, the *nonperishable* commercially prepared prepackaged food left on the share table can be discarded or moved to a new location. A new location may include but is not limited to
 - o The main office
 - o The health room
 - o A centrally located share table in a high traffic area at the school
- Donating share table food after MMFA classroom breakfast or CACFP snack or supper should be limited to only **nonperishable** commercially prepared and prepackaged foods since time & temperature control of foods left on a share table is variable and cannot be guaranteed.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

Barbara A. Brookmyer, M.D., M.P.H. • Health Officer

November 14, 2019

Alysia Mason Feuer, MPH, RD
Farm to School Program Director
Community F.A.R.E.
P.O. Box 340
Walkersville, MD 21793

Dear Ms. Feuer:

I write on behalf of Frederick County Health Department (FCHD) Division of Environmental Health Services, in regards to the Farm to School Program proposal to establish a "Share Table" Program to reduce food waste and fight hunger within Frederick County Public Schools.

FCHD is responsible for enforcing the Code of Maryland Regulations for Food Service Facilities (COMAR 10.15.03) within Frederick County, MD. In accordance with COMAR 10.15.03, FCHD does not regulate commercially prepackaged food that are not potentially hazardous or raw agricultural products (i.e. whole, unprocessed produce). Therefore, FCHD would not be in opposition of these foods being placed on a Share Table within schools to allow students the opportunity to have access to foods that would otherwise be thrown away.

However, the exception being produce with consumable skin (e.g. apples, pears, grapes, etc.). When such food items are considered "ready-to-eat", they are required to be washed and may not be further handled after washing. Produce with consumable skin, if allowed, must be identified as items that are not ready-to-eat and require further washing prior to eating.

FCHD commends you in reducing food waste in our community and fighting hunger within Frederick County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Wendy Cochran, LEHS/REHS
Food Program Manager
Environmental Health Services
Frederick County Health Department

Barry Glotfelty • Director



Environmental Health Services • 350 Montevue Lane • Frederick, MD 21702
Phone: 301-600-1029 • Fax: 301-600-3111 • MD TTY: 1-800-735-2258



Principal Letter from F2S

Dear FCPS Principal,

Frederick County Farm to School was launched in July 2018 with initial support from USDA Farm to School Grant Program to Community FARE (Food.Advocacy.Research.Education), a 501(c) 3 organization in Frederick, MD and is working in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS).

The Farm to School Share Table Project began in January 2020 with funding from Rotary of Carroll Creek, Brook Hill United Methodist Church, LiveWell Frederick, Community FARE and in partnership with the DC Food Project and Mountainside Education and Enrichment, Lunch out of Landfill Program.

The Farm to School Share Table is a place where students can place unopened and/or sealed food that they choose not to eat during school breakfast and lunch in a basket or cooler, providing an opportunity for students, staff and the school community to have access to food that would otherwise be thrown away. While serving a greater need for nutrition within schools and the community, the Share Table will also help the reduction of food waste.

As per the USDA, using “Share Tables” is an innovative strategy to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods and reduce food waste in the National School Lunch Program.

The Frederick County Farm to School Program has sought guidance from FCPS Food and Nutrition Services and Frederick County Health Department regarding food sharing in an effort to ensure safety guidelines are met.

I would be happy to meet with you to share more information and provide resources for beginning a Farm to School Share Table at your school. By preventing edible food from going to waste at school, we are able to set an example for our students and provide an opportunity to learn how everyday behaviors impact the environment and community. Check out the great article about the Share Table Project printed in the Frederick News Post: [Food Waste In Schools](#).

Growing for a Healthier Tomorrow,
Alysia M. Feuer, MPH, RD
Farm to School Project Director

Teacher & Staff Information Sheet Provided by F2S

What is the Share Table?

The Share Table is a place where students can place unopened and/or sealed foods that they choose not to eat during school breakfast and lunch, providing an opportunity for other students to take additional helpings of food that would otherwise be thrown away. While serving a greater need for nutrition within schools, these tables will also help in the reduction of food waste. At the end of each week, any leftover food will go to participating local charities.

How teachers and staff can help?

As teachers and staff, you already go out of your way daily for your students. It is our intention that the Farm to School Share Table Project will not increase your workload or responsibilities. Below is a breakdown of how you can help:

Breakfast & Lunch

- Teachers/Staff on duty in the cafeteria during breakfast/lunch hours can check baskets after each school meal
- Move unopened/uneaten/sealed food to the main Share Table location outside of the cafeteria for easy accessibility throughout the day
- Ensure the food being moved follows the guidelines for appropriate foods to be shared
- Place food in the baskets as labeled

We invite your feedback and collaboration with this program to make it a success. It is our hope that this program will improve the health, behavior and achievement of your students. Thank you in advance for your help!

For more Information, please reach out to Farm to School Frederick County
Farm2schoolfrederickcounty@gmail.com | www.frederickmdfarmtoschool.org

Farm to School Share Table Banners

Option 1



Option 2



Option 1



Option 2



Example of Share Table Signs



Unconsumed Fruit

Some Examples:
Apples, Bananas, Pears,
Uncut Oranges

Please Wash Prior to Eating