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**REAL FOOD FOR KIDS PARTNER WITH LOUDOUN AND FAIRFAX PUBLIC SCHOOLS’
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES**

[Real Food For Kids](#), a Northern Virginia-based school-food advocacy organization, has partnered with Loudoun and Fairfax County Public Schools’ Food and Nutrition Services to help the school systems provide more fresh, unprocessed foods to K-12 lunch plates. Real Food For Kids will help introduce Fairfax County kids to more fresh tastes from local farmers’ offerings to help popularize newly visualized salad bars. In Loudoun County, the organization will help develop farmer relationships and enliven and expand school gardens so they can serve as exciting nutrition and education tools.

“Many food-and-nutrition service directors are deeply concerned with the health and wellness of their students and are thinking outside the box to deliver fresh, less-processed foods,” says Real Food For Kids’ Executive Director Jenny Hein. “Thankfully, our region boasts two of our country’s most creative and progressive food and nutrition service directors, Rodney Taylor in Fairfax and Dr. Becky Bays in Loudoun. Their presence demonstrates that Northern Virginia is leading the way in the school food movement. “

Taylor, a noted pioneer and expert in farm-to-school dining programs, joined Fairfax County Public Schools in September 2015 after great success in the Riverside Unified School District in Riverside, CA. He brings innovative ideas and a strong focus on farm to school and salad bars, and will introduce more vegetarian options for the students. He has asked Real Food For Kids to help coordinate salad bars in all schools in Fairfax County. The group has some experience in this realm. It advocated for and helped create the successful Statesmen Station fresh food bar at Falls Church’s George C. Marshall High School in 2013. Real Food For Kids offered to assist the food service program to develop more local farmer relationships. Last fall, they helped connect Taylor to Chris Guerre of Maple Avenue Market Farm in Great Falls, Va., who has been supplying produce to Arlington Public Schools for several years. Guerre made his first delivery to Marshall High School in October 2015.

“FCPS’s food and nutrition services department is delighted to partner with Real Food For Kids,” says Taylor, “to ensure that our students have access to nutritious meals that promote life-long healthy eating behavior.”

As part of a Loudoun County School Nutrition Services \$45,000 USDA Farm-To-School Planning grant, Real Food For Kids, DC Greens and the Loudoun County Health Department will develop a district-wide Farm-to-School action plan. They will help teachers develop a garden plan, coordinate plantings at five Loudoun County public school gardens and conduct lunch-time tastings for students and teachers from the gardens’ bounty. Another component is to connect with local farmers for potential farm-to-school sourcing opportunities.

“A goal of our partnership with Real Food For Kids is to expand the school garden programs and train teachers to involve students in garden-related lessons in math, history, science and, of course, nutrition,” says Dr. Bays, “Most important is to give every child in Loudoun county the tools to make the connection between healthy food and a healthy life.”

Real Food For Kids is primed to support the great work these two leaders are spearheading in Fairfax and Loudoun counties. The non-profit is a key player in the collaboration among area businesses, local farmers, county schools, other non-profits, and community stakeholders to bring about meaningful changes in the foods served to our children at school.

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About Real Food For Kids As the local face of the national school wellness movement, Real Food For Kids is committed to working collaboratively to increase the quantities of healthy foods in public schools and supporting programs that educate students and their families to make healthier lifestyle choices. Real Food For Kids aims to find innovative ways to bring more fresh, less processed foods to students. Go to www.realfoodforkids.org for more information.