



Excited by the possibilities of service with Farm to School



AmeriCorps
Wisconsin

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It is hard to encapsulate over four months of service into a few short paragraphs, but the common theme that comes to mind when I think of what quarter one has meant to me is: possibility. Starting the first quarter of service I had no idea what to expect. I have served with other AmeriCorps programs previously but was never given such as much freedom to choose the ways in which I serve.

During the first month of service, my mind was constantly going in every direction. We could do this, or this, or that... it never ended. My fellow Farm to School Specialist, Michelle, and I bounced idea after idea off one another. It seemed like the options in which ways we could serve were endless. The options quickly caught up to me though and I began to stress out. We could never accomplish everything we brainstormed and the thought of not doing enough really bothered me. Farm to School is such an amazing opportunity, not only for me, but also for the community, and I wanted to make sure I did justice to the opportunity I was given to enrich the community through such a meaningful program. I continued planning, hosting taste tests, and teaching nutrition lessons, and all the while had the thought that I was not doing enough in the back of my head.

Fast forward a couple of months and I have settled into the position. I have set clearer expectations for myself, I have formed relationships within the school, and most importantly have interacted with countless students. It is within those interactions that I am fueled and see the endless possibilities not as daunting, but exciting. I love seeing the joy on students' faces when they try new food and love it. Or the curiosity as they explore a new food and decide that maybe it isn't their favorite. I love exposing children to nutrition lessons and giving them the knowledge to make informed choices when it comes to their health and nutrition. For example, Michelle and I taught a lesson about creating healthy habits and it is one of my favorite memories of quarter one. All of the students were engaged in the conversation, but I could tell that for one student, in particular, it really clicked and within 30 minutes the way she spoke about food had changed. It is my hope that through Farm to School I am able to reach as many students as possible and that they have similar "aha" moments. Whether that be about buying local produce, incorporating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables into their diet, becoming passionate about gardening, etc. The possibility of witnessing a similar moment again gets me excited to serve every day.

As I am writing this, I am looking back and reflecting on what we have accomplished within the Oregon School District. I am really proud of the work Michelle and I have done, thankful for the staff that has opened us into their kitchens, schools, & classrooms, and excited for the upcoming months. It is also a time to center myself and my goals for the rest of the year and start planning for what is coming next. We have plans to work on the school gardens, implement composting at FES, continue teaching nutrition-based lessons, and continue running our cooking club. I am excited to see what the next quarter brings.