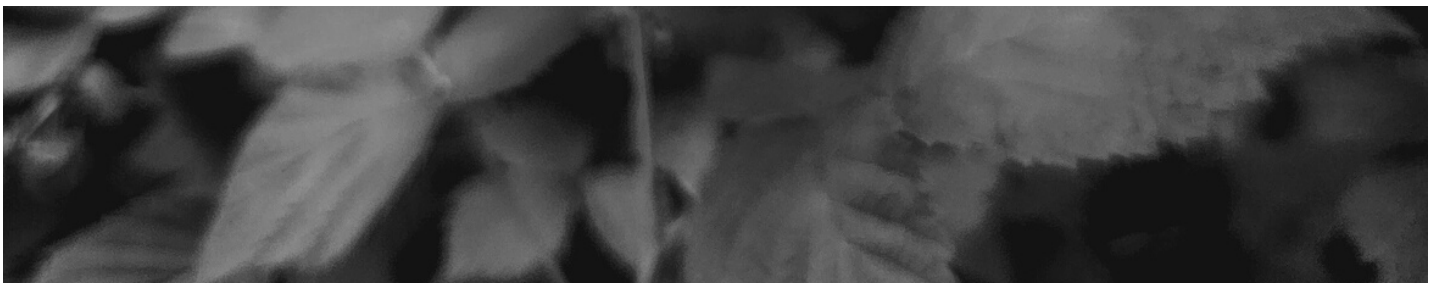


AMERICORPS FARM TO SCHOOL
END OF YEAR SERVICE STORY
WES BROSKE

MG F2S



YEAR IN REVIEW | REFLECTION | CALL TO ACTION



JULY 2023

pictured on cover: ripe raspberries at our Winnequah School - 2023



a note from Wes

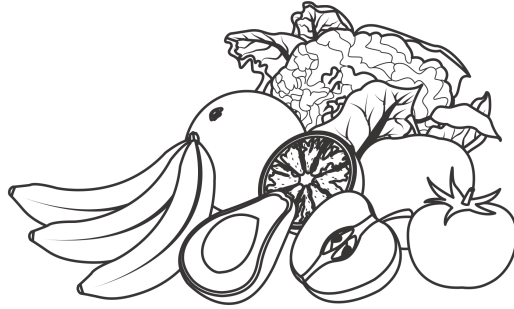
It has been my privilege to serve as the first AmeriCorps Farm to School(F2S) specialist at Monona Grove School district during the 2022-2023 school year. My hope is that the program will continue to grow, and that I have been able to build a solid foundation for others to expand upon.

The Monona Farm to School program would not be possible without our Food Service Director, Maggie. On top of all of the hard work and planning that feeding our entire districts' students requires, she was willing to sow the seeds this program at MG. This is a step beyond what many schools are able or willing to do. Our students are lucky to be served by Maggie and her amazing nutrition team.

My position would have not been possible without the collaboration of the AmeriCorps Farm to School Program.

Shout out to the fantastic program director, Kara, and the other dedicated F2S members serving throughout the state!

Wes Broske



Farm to School

Helping build and support the F2S program means a lot to me. These principles have guided my approach to the F2S effort:

Students deserve the freshest and most nutritious food possible.

Students should understand where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Students are empowered by nutrition and food education to make decisions about what they eat and that they have the ability to grow/prepare their own food.

We want and are willing to support our local community (farmers, producers, businesses).

Since the inception of our Farm to School program, we have taken action, even one small step at a time to highlight these principles.

I would like to share a bit about of this service year in the hopes that it can inspire others to support the program and help sustain it for the benefits of our kids and our community.





THIS YEAR, THE F2S PROGRAM GOT NOTICED



Fox 47 News

A Fox 47 team traveled to our Winnequah school to interview myself and a student about the F2S program and our garden efforts.

Herald Independent

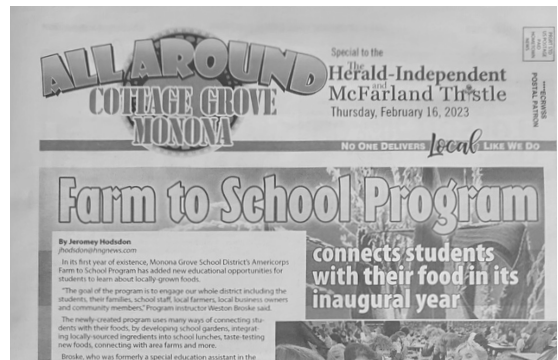
The local paper ran a story about the first year of our F2S program and its plans for the future.

The S-Files Podcast

Serve WI shares stories of AmeriCorps members and volunteers serving throughout the State through podcast interviews.

Local Monona Radio

An radio interview on the VMO show highlighting the F2S program and promoting our Chili Lunch event, that was broadcast throughout the late winter/early spring.



If you are less familiar with our Farm to School program check out [this website](#), and visit the [school nutrition page](#).

Throughout the year I was able to serve in different capacities at each of our schools (some more than others), working with students and behind the scenes. This service ranged from in classroom lessons, to supporting and providing resources to procure food items from local farmers. Every day is different, and I am only able to highlight a few accomplishments in this format.

Here is some data from the 22-23 school year.

A LOOK BACK ON 22-23 THROUGH THE NUMBERS



400+

students received nutrition lessons

70+

classroom lessons taught



40+

Local food taste tests

30+

hours spend in gardens with students



30+

Lunch items featuring local products at each of our 7 schools

12

district-wide or school specific F2S events



60+

staff or community volunteers

9

months of regular educational newsletters, documents, resources, and posters



What the numbers don't capture.

The data is important. It is exciting to look back at what was accomplished this year and the impact that this program can have on our schools. These numbers help sustain this program on a larger scale and help to fund projects like it throughout the state. But it doesn't paint the whole picture.

For me, the real excitement comes from the little interactions with students: the joy of trying something new, the curiosity, and the openness to share. I love the things that students are thrilled to tell me. Whether it is in the classroom, in the cafeteria, out in the garden, or just passing in the hallway, I listen to everything:

"When are we going to have the chili again?"

"I have a book at home that shows where all different foods come from that I think you would like"

"I can plant this on my own because I garden with my Grandma every summer"

"I am still using the sourdough starter we made in class"

"This is the first time I've tried raspberries"

"Come look at our plants that sprouted in the classroom!"

"I already eat all the food groups every day"

"What city did the carrots we tried come from?"

"Why are tomatoes in the vegetable group if they are really fruit?"

"I didn't like the radish, but I tried it"

"When I grow up I am going to have my own garden"

"Why isn't candy part of any of the food groups?"

"Are you a farmer?"



It is our job and privilege to engage with every one of these statements and questions.

Food is important.

Education is important.

Connecting these things to each student's experience is important.

I hope that our F2S program can thrive and become fully integrated into the district and community culture.

**TO DO THIS, WE NEED SUPPORT GOING FORWARD!
EVEN THE SMALLEST EFFORT COUNTS.**

A CALL TO ACTION

Here are just a few ways YOU can support the F2S program:

Meet and get to know our new Farm to School specialist at the beginning of the 23-24 school year.

They will be your go-to F2S resource throughout the year.
Send them questions, concerns, and suggestions!

Parents/Caregivers: Stay up to date with F2S by viewing our monthly newsletter that is posted within each school's virtual newsletter (+[Website](#)).

Talk to your students about school lunch and F2S lessons/activities.

Check school lunch menus and have your kids try new local items.

Talk about food at home and prepare meals together.

Staff: Work with your F2S specialist on collaborative projects.

Be open to nutrition lessons taught by them!

Volunteer a few minutes of time for F2S events or get involved in the garden.

Get excited about foods/nutrition! Open discussions on the topic and encourage students to try new local lunch items.

Bring students out into the garden if your school has one!

Community Members: Volunteer time to help maintain school gardens and help with F2S activities. Support local farmers and producers.



WES BROSKE

AMERICORPS FARM TO SCHOOL SPECIALIST

MONONA GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT 22-23

