

**Letter From Dorothy - Fall 2011**  
**Make Every Day Food Day**

**Hello Everyone,**



The first national Food Day will take place on October 24th and organizers hope for it to become a yearly event that celebrates and supports efforts to make positive, sustainable and healthy food changes in our communities, homes and schools. While each RI town, school, farm, food organization or individual will decide how to mark the first Food Day in their own unique way, I'd like to propose that in RI schools we strive to ***Make Every Day Food Day*** as we select, prepare and serve meals, snacks and drinks to our RI schoolchildren in lunchrooms, classrooms, afterschool programs and childcare centers.

For the growing bodies of children of all ages, good food isn't just fuel to keep them playing, learning and going all day - good food is one of the building blocks for brain development, strong skeletal and muscle growth and can help set the stage for lifelong heart health and proper body weight. Using national Food Day as a springboard and inspiration, I encourage interested teachers, parents, school administrators and students themselves to think about what the bigger and longer-reaching meanings of Food Day could be for RI schools and for RI schoolchildren's health.

Could Food Day help all us ***push for less processed foods*** to be served in our school cafeterias? We saw several districts last school year come up with delicious menu items for special events - many of which were cooked from scratch on-site using whole, real foods. Could Food Day encourage more of us to see what we can do to ensure that these types of menu offerings don't just occur for the special "healthy" days or the "wellness" weeks, but instead start to become more of the norm on school menus? Our Kids First chefs have developed dozens of recipes specifically for school cafeterias, using items on-hand and easily and economically available. Please reach out to us here if we can help direct some of those recipes towards your school.

Could Food Day help all of us ***ask for more RI Grown foods*** to be served in our school and childcare facilities? I recently heard that Learning Brooke, a childcare center in Cranston, has started serving their students RI Grown fruits and veggies for daily snack. This facility didn't just start ordering from Confreda Farms because they wanted to support their local farming economy - they also knew that locally grown foods taste fresher and better. What better way to help introduce some of our youngest palates - the toddler to 6 year olds - to eating yummy and healthy foods than to give them a RI grown apple, RI grown carrot or a RI grown squash? I encourage other childcare facilities in the state to do the same and to let us know when you do! Farm to School should be for pre-schoolers as well!

Finally, I'd like to direct everyone to some of the recent Farm To School data we've posted on our website (<http://www.kidsfirstri.org/newfarm2.html>), including RI Grown Pounds Purchased organized by school district and RI Grown Purchases by product and farm name, also broken out by district. Check it out to see how your school district is doing in supporting local farms and serving RI foods to RI students.

Here's to every day being a FOOD DAY -

Eat Healthy, Be Healthy!

*Dorothy Brayley*

Executive Director, Kids First