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UNH Nutrition Students Bring Healthy Food – And Producers – To Dover High

April 21, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Five nutrition majors from the University of New Hampshire are combating unhealthy eating and youth obesity by going into the belly of the beast: the high school cafeteria. For their nutritional science field internship, the students have partnered with Dover High School to bring local farmers and chefs into the lunchroom to help students experience fresh, healthy, local food up close.

“We’re trying to open kids’ eyes to healthier options that are local,” says Lauren Goldthaite, ‘13, one of the interns.

Over the course of the spring semester, three local farmer/producers and three chefs are visiting the high school to showcase a range of healthy, local foods -- from local yogurt, seasonal vegetables, and maple popcorn to gourmet meals from some of the Seacoast’s hottest chefs. David Tuttle from Riverside Farm in North Berwick, Maine, and Mary Brower from Rollinsford’s Brookford Farm have visited already; future guests are chef Evan Hennessey of Flavor Concepts catering service (April 29), Black Trumpet Bistro chef Evan Mallet (May 13), Debra Locke of Sugarmomma’s Maple Farm in Northwood (May 27), and the “Soup Guy” chef Curtis Gould (June 10).

The guests reach out to the Dover students in a range of ways. Tuttle, from Riverside Farm, set up a mini farmers market in the cafeteria showcasing the winter crops he grows, while Brower brought a five-gallon bucket of her farm’s yogurt and distributed it to students in compostable cups. Hennessey will work with Dover’s cafeteria staff to scale up his chicken stir-fry recipe to cafeteria proportions.

“The students get pretty excited about what’s coming up next,” says Sarah Iske, ’13, adding that the interns have learned to proactively engage the high-schoolers in their presentations, reaching out to them at their lunch tables with food samples and conversations about healthy eating. “They’re always interested, but some of the kids are stubborn or just too cool.”

The UNH students, working with hospitality management and EcoGastronomy dual major lecturer Amy Winans and clinical assistant professor of nutrition Joanne Burke, say they’ve also picked up valuable skills in communication and organization along the way. In addition to the lunchtime visits, they coordinated public film screenings of two food-related films – “Food, Inc.,” and “Two Angry Moms” -- at Dover High.

Dover schools director of nutrition services Mark Covell lauds the interns for helping him move forward a healthy eating agenda. “The interns from UNH give us the opportunity to go in directions we’d like to go but don’t have the staff,” he says. “I can’t say enough about them. They’re doing a fabulous job.”

In addition to Goldthaite and Iske, UNH students participating in the internship are Vivien Fam, ’11, Erin Greenhalgh, ‘11, and Kim Mayo, ‘13.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Photographs available to download:

http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/apr/bp21brookford_02.jpg
Caption: L-R: UNH nutritional science interns Lauren Goldthwaite and Sarah Iske; Mary Brower of Brookford Farm; UNH students Vivien Fam, Kim Mayo, and Erin Greenhalgh
Credit: Dover Foodservice staff

Caption: Riverside Farm set up a “farmers market” in the Dover High School cafeteria as part of a project coordinated by nutritional science interns from the University of New Hampshire.
Credit: Dover Foodservice staff

Reporters and editors: To learn more about this project, contact Amy Winans at 603-834-5273. To visit Dover High School during one of the events, contact Dover schools director of nutrition services Mark Covell at m.covell@dover.k12.nh.us or 603-516-6962.

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