

Newfield Community Café Harvest

Date: 6/6/2013

Location: Newfield High School Café, Newfield NY

Hosts:

- **Kaysee Bachelor**
- **Peter Hoskins**

What community partners helped to support this café?

- Newfield Central School students, staff and Newfield community members including but not limited to...
- Casey Powers, Marge Strosnider, Tammy Wilcox, Joleen Krogman, Jill Green, Deb Delorenzo, Peter Pfarrer, Barry Derfel, Forrest Cunningham Brittany Rose, and Sharon Powell
- Thanks to Tammy Wilcox for the tomato and basil plants
- Thanks to Kelsey Harris and Peter Pfarrer for some beautiful music at the evening's end
- Produce for meal donated by Eddydale Farms, bread donated by Ithaca Bakery
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins, *Better Together!* with a grant from the Park Foundation and NYSPEP

How many participants? 22 How many children? 4

What was the purpose for this café conversation?

This café conversation and dinner follows an “Eliminating Hunger Dinner” organized by Newfield High School students and staff (including current host Kaysee Bachelor) in the spring of 2012. Goals for this café conversation included raising awareness of food insecurity experienced within the Newfield community, its impact on individuals, families and children, and the desire to foster a dialogue focused on the creation of a community that truly nourishes all of its members.

What questions were asked?

Dyad question was...

1. How do you nourish your family?

People shared that it felt nice to be listened to... “as someone who likes to talk, it felt good to share, and also to listen” “it was great to open up and talk to someone that I didn’t know; it felt nourishing to have the this conversation” “I was surprised by the similarities...everyone talks about the family meal and food...I learned that we share the same challenges...it’s not “Leave it to Beaver.” “I had never talked with this person before... there is a big contrast, big differences in our family life experience around nourishment”

People shared that they nourished their families in a number of ways: by “being a family together, and becoming stronger together” “sit down family dinners- parent / child bonding” “love and affection, connection with nature, working and learning, with income for housing, by teaching positive social skills, by building community...faith, social life, friends, fun with healthy cooking”.

Whole table questions were...

2. What challenges do you and/ or your community face in providing nourishment?

“Newfield is an affordable place to live, but people need affordable healthy food options and access” “limited access to organic food...and organic food is expensive” “it’s hard to get into Ithaca, Covered Bridge market is the only place to go grocery shopping... Ithaca has the best variety, but can be challenging to get there” “everything is geared toward driving- now with higher gas costs, can’t get to stores as easily... 7-11s are thriving!” “Expensive to keep a car on the road...gas, maintenance, insurance.” “Food costs are high for both humans and animals (horses, dogs, cattle, bunnies- hay and special food and treats are expensive)” “cost of local/regional food is high”

“Challenging schedules...different work hours and inconsistent work hours, and teenagers who crave privacy from others at times” “distractions...cell phones, computer, technology separates rather than connects” “lack of time and energy...”

“Being a family- eating together, really brings people together- many of us have lost that...important to bring back so that families get reconnected...kids take that experience with them.”

“lack of knowledge about nutrition, lack of motivation to eat healthy food”

“...need to learn how to eat well when we are young to develop good habits”

“Education about nutrition is important...kids will take broccoli but throw it away, eat the chips instead” “Good nutritious food is hard for low income families to afford...people spend income on other things rather than healthy food”

“different/conflicting styles of nourishment” “people are too sedentary, don’t get enough exercise” “individual needs and preferences prevent large bulk purchases for cost savings” “food storage and safety issues”

“Big Business of food/corporate food; advertising and media make it harder to make good choices...fat, sugar and salt were scarce during evolution- we crave them, so food industry capitalizes on them” “imported food” “emphasis on protein” “The FDA is making local food producers test for all nutritional substances- bill now in Congress threatens local food movement...watch out what gov’t regulations doing/happening...” “Media is a powerful thing- says what we should have, not what we need...media is a negative influence” “media bombards us with fearful news-too much to absorb- the world is collapsing” “there is a disconnect from good food” “People feel “organic” is special. Chemically laced food is now more “normal than organic” “Cost of processed/junk food is exponentially less than fresh, whole, local food”

“People might want to grow their own food, but need to learn how” “I’d love to learn more about growing – I tried a garden once and everything died- would love to learn, have help with a garden!” “Bugs create a fear of growing...people are afraid to ask questions” “Grow something!”

“Food consciousness” “...we need to create a sense of community identity around food- local pride (quality-it’s a commitment), it takes a community to raise a child – include student help in creating identity. “Not enough music, dancing, conversations like this, in Newfield...we need a space where art can happen” “Community is only as good as how it welcomes newcomers. Every person is a resource...”

3. What can we do **together** to create a community that nourishes its families and children?

“Identify actual needs (and what we have)...what would it take to feed town of Newfield- get info/statistics from food pantry, see if local producers can help feed “our” community- provide fresh produce” “find ways to coordinate efforts so that we could be more effective...better communication about programs currently available” “identifying and limiting waste” “support local farms” “community land to farms...potted gardens, fishing ponds, local beef, chicken, venison, education on meat substitutes” “identify models for inspiration and guidance” “support local business like Early Bird Farms and Little Tree Orchards, and the farmers market at the Newfield Fire hall”

“Education- start young! People might have fear about reaching out and asking about growing...may have failed once...hard to reach out- but if more people knew what they were doing they could help each other” farm tours and garden tours...bring people out (by bus!) to Nancy’s garden to learn...experienced people could show and teach others” “workshops...focus on student and community food production” Hold master composter groups and share info for landowners”

“The school could hire a farmer to grow/raise a product to sell for school fund raisers or grow their own items (with a focus on healthy food vs. current unhealthy food fundraisers) ” “3rd graders plant in the spring and the next 3rd grade class could harvest in the fall” ““Linda Poppleton’s school garden with Newfield recreation campus...rehab the library gardens ” “Hold student field days to learn about gardening, etc...and have students involved in “making the community” “focus on the importance of school and what and how students learn” “encourage volunteerism in school programs during the summer” “support a summer food program- the community could provide food through local farms or grants” “Teach children about community resources” “ The CCETC Rural Youth Services afterschool program (which nourishes the souls of youth not involved in other programs) has been cut from the Newfield town budget (county match program with a minimum of \$7000-could be program generated, sponsored by businesses and individual donations)- we need a fall community forum regarding this issue...”

“Welcome newcomers into the community” “Remove barriers to what supports and resources are currently available. Remove the stigma of free resources and services. Change sense that it might be awkward to go to an event like this. Shift the idea that a community dinner is for “those in need” to a “community event” that all can be part of.” “Newfield builds bridges.” “Get involved in Newfield’s new comprehensive plan.”

Harvest

“We should do this once a month...it was a wonderful evening!” “Tonight’s theme of nourishment was broader than just food...nourishment is the cornerstone of what’s important to many people. Food brings us together- everybody has to eat! I like to eat, but I don’t know how to grow anything....”

“Healthy land and water- the beautiful environment that is Newfield- we must protect it and advocate for it- educate ourselves about what may impact it.”

“Community and food is the cornerstone of family. We need a piece of ground to be a community garden/plots...we need to share our knowledge (perhaps at Bridge Park...with a gazebo?)” “Bridge Park is the heart of Newfield; a place to host music and movies, bring people together. People who can’t or don’t want to garden can still compost-community compost- bring a bucket, take a bucket”

“The Newfield Comprehensive Plan; read it, approve it, implement it. Many of the suggested action steps in the plan are similar to the thoughts expressed tonight. It can be found on the Newfield Town website, and there are hard copies in the library and town hall. Come to the public hearing on July 2nd, held before the plan is officially adopted by the town board. The plan forms the baseline for what the town does- needs to be in place before other things can happen. The town board will review proposals based on the plan- will assist in getting grant monies.

“What were some highlights, insights, themes from the café?”

- “Newfield is an affordable place to live, but people need affordable healthy food options and access.”
- People need access to information/need to share their knowledge about nutrition, gardening, as well as info on resources and supports that already exist locally.
- “Tonight’s theme of nourishment was broader than just food...nourishment is the cornerstone of what’s important to many people. Food brings us together- everybody has to eat!”
- “We need to create a sense of community identity around food- local pride”
- “We should do this once a month...it was a wonderful evening!”
- “Many of the suggested action steps in the new Newfield Comprehensive plan are similar to the thoughts expressed tonight”

What’s next for this café community?

- Email summary of meeting will be shared with cafe participants and others
- Community dinner organizers will meet and discuss the “harvest” from tonight’s café and...
- Newfield High School principal Barry Derfel will bring interested community members together to help plan next steps.

Who will you share this harvest with?

- With café participants, the Newfield community, Newfield Town Board, with CCE-Tompkins, and with Liz Belsito (Elizabeth.belsito@ccf.ny.gov) of the NYS Community Café Project.