

System Mapping Brings Food System Insight

"This group worked very hard, and brought a lot of passion and focus to the activities."

Rachel Williams, MBA,
Gift of Good Work



Led by business coach and facilitator Rachel Williams, MBA, of Gift of Good Work, five members of the JCLFSC and two guests, participated in a workshop to apply Systems Thinking tools to understanding the local food system.

The workshop introduced the principles of Systems Thinking, which approaches problem solving with a focus on patterns and relationships.

- ❖ Participants told stories to share their experience and perspectives with each other.
- ❖ They then focused on reducing the need to import food grown and produced outside of our community.
- ❖ After exploring key factors that might influence that trend, they began mapping the relationships between these factors.

Participants came away with deeper insights and plenty of questions. A second workshop to continue systems mapping is being considered.

Commercial Kitchen Update

The Commercial Kitchen Committee has been working to expand commercial kitchen options in Jefferson County, with the intention to assist in developing small food-production businesses. We first solidified an accurate list of commercial kitchen spaces in the County. We then sent a letter of inquiry to a few local restaurants to see if their kitchens could be sub-let to small businesses. The predominant feedback was there is too much potential liability and conflict from space sharing. Thus, no follow-up conversations have ensued with business owners to diversify their kitchens for sublets. The committee recently sent a letter to local community buildings (churches, fairgrounds, etc), with a check list of what is needed to become a commercial kitchen, with hopes to inspire them to upgrade their facilities to help meet the food system demand for commercial kitchens. (Find the list at www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org, click on "Food Safety" then "Commercial Kitchens".)

Advocating for Policy Changes

The JCLFSC Policy committee was established at the start of the year, and turned its attention first to influencing Port Townsend's comprehensive plan ("comp-plan") to support local food and agriculture, consistent with the Council's Strategic Principles. Committee members met with a senior planner for the City, and submitted written materials for consideration by the planning commission. In addition to staying involved with the work on the City's comp-plan, the committee will soon be turning its attention to Jefferson County's comp-plan.



Council Members

Executive Council

Judith Alexander
Jeannette Martens
Brendon O'Shea
Denis Stearns
Eric Toews

Additional Members

Steve Baker
Kayla Boyd
Lisa Crosby
Joanmarie Eggert
Tessa Gowans
Heather Graham
Kellie Henwood
Jared Keefer
Stacey Larsen
Laura Lewis
Meghan Mix

Special thanks to Mindy Dwyer for the newsletter artwork.



Getting Out of Our Silos

JCLFSC - Who Are We?

The Jefferson County Local Food System Council, a group of dedicated volunteers that represent a spectrum of experience within our local food system: farming, seed growing, value added production, nutrition and health education, government regulation, cooperative extension research and education, food law, retail sales, permaculture, institutional food service, food waste management, as well as representing the general concern of the public.



Our theme for this summer's newsletter is "getting out of our silos". The Jefferson County Local Food System Council (JCLFSC) decided to be a FOOD SYSTEM council because we knew what we each knew, but we did not know what each of the others on the council knew. And to make sound decisions relative to our food system, that knowledge needed to be balanced, and openly shared.

Since the Food Council's inception in January of 2015, during each monthly meeting we spend time educating ourselves and each other about what our local food system IS, where it shines, and where it needs to grow. Guest speakers, convene around different topics each month: saving local farmland, product distribution, food security programs such as gleaning and our local food banks, just to name a few.

We recognize that to build a strong, resilient, sustainable, healthy, accessible, and economically vibrant food system, we need to work together, in essence, getting out of our silos and sharing our collective wealth of information. It will take all of us to learn how to feed ourselves well, and provide for our community in to what we hope is a healthy future for all.

We rotate membership seats every year. We consider what sectors of our food system need representation in selecting who we invite to join the Council. If you would like to contribute as a member of our local food system, request a Statement of Interest form at jcllocalfoodsystemcouncil@gmail.com. You can submit this at any time.



Getting out of our Silos - Port Townsend School District Food Service

Silos in business move information up and down. Silos in agriculture move food vertically. For the past 30 years that is how school food service operated. Food Service was an entity all by itself, not a part of the school district or the larger community.

The food service in the Port Townsend School District is changing all that. Not only are we cooking our food from scratch, which is uncommon for many districts, but we are also reaching outside our silo to engage our local community.

This year the school has purchased over \$5,000 worth of local produce from four local farms. We also received a grant from Farm2School to purchase the NutraKids software program that helps analyze the nutrient content of the food we make in order to comply with the USDA's meal pattern requirement.

Our food service staff has had the opportunity to participate in amazing training opportunities thanks to a USDA grant that Kate Dean wrote for the School District. In June, we attended a Farm to Cafeteria conference in Madison, Wisconsin and in July, an Edible School Yard Farm to School conference in Berkeley, California. In addition to training, the grant allowed us to purchase badly needed equipment that helps the staff work with fresh produce coming from the High School's garden.

A donation from the Port Townsend Food Bank Farm and Gardens now pay the salary for Zach Gayne as the High School Gardener. Every Friday this spring, students from Jennifer Kruse's 9th grade Health classes spent their class period working with Zach in the garden, with many developing enthusiasm for the garden effort as a result.

We have great plans to further expand the garden and work on a composting system. In the spring the garden provided lettuce for the High School salad bar and food is being processed this summer for use in soups and sauces for the next school year. More veggies are planned for future years. Funding sources are still being sought for the School Gardener positions for the coming school year for both Grant Street Elementary and Port Townsend High School.



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In addition to expanding school garden work, in the next year we hope to buy two local cows for ground beef, use local salmon in our chowder, continue food and farm education in the classroom, and coordinate field trips to local farms.

One speaker at the Farm to Cafeteria conference in Madison said the food system is not broken; it is working exactly as it was designed. Industrialize the food system and keep the money in the hands of the rich. What we need is a new food system. And the Port Townsend School District is on the cutting edge of creating it and helping kids develop new and healthy relationships with food. I look forward to moving forward and building new partnerships and expanding current ones. – **Stacey Larsen, PTSD Food Services Director**

Healthy Meals at Dove House



This past year Jeannette Martens, JCLFSC member, raised \$3,900 through community donors which was matched with \$3,500 from Dove House to create a six-month pilot program called Dove House Healthy Meals. (Dove House Advocacy Services provides confidential crisis intervention and advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and general crime.) This program aimed to help teach Dove House clients how to make healthy meal choices using ingredients found seasonally at our local food banks. Jeannette created workshop style evenings at the shelter while making a three course meal for the residents to enjoy. As the pilot ended in April, there was so much positive feedback regarding its success that Jeannette and Dove House are working towards finding funding to continue the program in the future.

Student Emillia Nunn, reaching for a new start



Photograph by Nicholas Johnson

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Growing New Gardeners

In hopes of initiating a new, younger population of healthy eaters and food gardeners, JCLFSC members grew hundreds of kale, lettuce, and chard starts for dissemination to school age children. Around Earth Day, we distributed the seedlings to schools within the Port Townsend School District, through Chimacum School's horticulture teacher, through the Quilcene Food Garden coordinator, and at the Swan School. Students choosing the free, salad and greens starts were encouraged to plant them at home as a way to promote healthy eating and a love of gardening.