

# FY2024 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

<b>Organization Name:</b>	Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)	
<b>Project Name:</b>	Preserving Farmland through Farm to School Connections	
<b>Reporting Quarter:</b> (Check one)		Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023)
		Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023)
	X	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024)
		Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024)

## Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

<b>Quarter 1</b>	<p>Quarter 1 activities focused on engagement and planning for the year ahead with Buncombe County Schools and Asheville City Schools. We provided all schools access to a variety of our farm to school resources, including seeds, Lending Library (books), Lending Kitchen (cooking equipment and supplies), Meet Your Farmer video series, lesson plans, and other materials on our website. We provided free passes to all staff and discounted passes to all families for ASAP’s Farm Tour, which was a great opportunity for making and deepening connections between farmers and consumers. In addition, we have been working with School Nutrition administrative staff from Buncombe County Schools to support farm to school districtwide. This included connecting them to local farmers to procure tomatoes and beef for school meals, and providing farmer promotional materials for social media and cafeterias. We are also supplying recipe cards featuring local crops and “I Tried Local” stickers to be distributed to all cafeterias.</p> <p>We met with administrators and champions at 5 Title I schools to identify needs, assets, and goals, and are in the process of attending school wide staff meetings to introduce our program. We are preparing to provide customized resources and training to help these schools implement farm to school activities and engage their students, families, and local farmers. We are also scheduling quarterly cafeteria promotions beginning in October to celebrate National Farm to School Month. We are providing promotional banners highlighting WNC farms that will be displayed in cafeterias, and are identifying Buncombe County farmers that could attend these events and provide taste tests of their products.</p>
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<b>Quarter 2</b>	<p>In Quarter 2 we continued to provide broad farm to school support across Buncombe County. Through a monthly outreach email, we again provided all schools access to our resources, including seeds, books, cooking supplies, Meet Your Farmer videos, lesson plans, and other materials on our website. We formed a relationship with the Healthful Living Curriculum Specialist at Buncombe County Schools, and are working with her to integrate farm to school into Health &amp; Physical Education courses.</p> <p>Quarter 2 also focused on deepening relationships with the 5 Title I schools we are providing customized support to. We attended staff meetings at 4 schools to introduce ourselves and our program. We visited cafeterias at 3 schools and did a taste test with all students using products from the local farmer that we connected the school with. For example, we paired Claxton Elementary with Flying Cloud Farm, and we served samples of salad made with their kale. We will continue to support these partnerships through coordination of farm field trips, farmer visits to the schools, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes for staff and families. Promotional banners highlighting WNC farms were distributed to 4 schools and hung in their cafeterias. We provided mini-grants to 2 schools to support their farm to school efforts. We attended a family carnival event at 1 school where we engaged students and their parents with an interactive activity and ASAP materials promoting local food and farms.</p>
<b>Quarter 3</b>	<p>In Quarter 3 we met with principals of the five Title I schools receiving targeted support to finalize plans for spring activities, including training and workplace wellness opportunities for teachers, final taste tests with students, and family / community events. We did taste tests with all students at 4 of those schools, again using products from the local farmer that we connected the school with. We also provided promotional materials to those schools, including cafeteria banners highlighting WNC farms and classroom connections for our taste tests. We delivered two virtual statewide trainings focusing on our new farm to school toolkit, and two elementary school teachers from Buncombe County attended as guest speakers to talk about their farm to school work. We distributed resources to educators, including mini-grants, hard copies of our new toolkit, and mushroom growing kits.</p> <p>We continued to provide broad farm to school support across Buncombe County through monthly outreach emails and other communications sharing our free resources available to all schools. Also promoted was ASAP's CSA Fair, an event where both educators and families could meet farmers and sign up to participate in Community Supported Agriculture. At the district-level, we met with the Healthful Living Curriculum Specialist to discuss farm to school in Health and Physical Education classes, as well as the School Nutrition Director to continue discussions around local food procurement for student meals.</p>

Quarter 4	
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## Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data)				Progress
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
# teachers trained/provided with resources to implement Farm to School programming	75	0	3	14		17
# kids/consumers reached with promotions/activities	26000	26000	0	0		26000
# of school staff provided with workplace wellness offerings	75	0	0	0		0
# Buncombe County farms and market outlets supported/promoted	130 farms & 180 market	136 189	0	0		136/ 189

### Comments:

The majority of training, distribution of resources, and workplace wellness offerings will occur from April - early June to coincide with the growing season and accommodate school schedules / availability.

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## Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 16,250	\$ 1,813	\$ 4,063	\$ 5,250		\$ 5,124
Training	\$ 2,125	\$ -	\$ 496	\$ 113		\$ 1,516
Travel	\$ 225	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ 18		\$ 189
Client Support	\$ 1,400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 1,400
Building Maintenance	\$ 4,000	\$ 304	\$ 912	\$ 1,075		\$ 1,709
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ 24,000	\$ 2,135	\$ 5,471	\$ 6,456	\$ -	\$ 9,938

**Comments:**



# Carrots





## Meet Your Farmer: Smallholding Farm



Farmers Daniel Bryant and Ellie Goldstein grow carrots at Smallholding Farm in Burke County, NC.

“Winter is my favorite time to grow carrots because the flavor just gets so sweet,” says Daniel. “That happens after the frost,” explains Ellie. “They just instantly get the sucrose and they get very, very, very sweet.”



Scan to watch  
a video with  
the farmers!

One of the greatest gardening thrills is feeling a “pop” as you pull a homegrown carrot out of the earth. Carrots grow underground, and the part we typically eat is the root. Traditionally, the root, leaves, and seeds were all used in cooking as well as for medicine. Some people find grated carrots soothe a burn! You can eat carrots raw and cooked. The world’s largest carrot was 19 feet long!

### Where did carrots come from?

Carrots were first found in the Himalayan mountains, in what is now Iran and Afghanistan. These early carrots were purple and sometimes pale yellow. Orange carrots were cultivated by the Dutch around the 17th century. They became popular in the U.S. after World War I.

### Why are carrots good for us?

Orange foods help us see in the dark! Carrots can help lower our blood pressure and risk of diabetes. They also give our skin a healthy glow.

### How do we grow carrots?

**Planting:** Because carrots grow in the ground, a rich, fluffy soil is ideal. Add compost and other organic material to help with aeration. Carrots can tolerate sun and shade. You can direct sow carrot seeds beginning in early spring and, in some places, all the way through fall. Seeds germinate best when the soil is moist and cool. Carrots need consistent watering. It can take up to two weeks for seeds to germinate, so be patient! Make sure to control weeds while waiting for germination.

**Growing:** Gently mulch the soil around the carrots to retain moisture, speed germination, and block the sun from hitting the roots directly. Carrot seeds are small and are often planted too close together. That’s fine—just thin the seedlings to one to three inches apart.

**Harvesting:** Carrots are usually harvested in the spring and fall, but are sometimes available year-round from storage. After about 90 days from direct seeding, carrots will be ready to harvest, but you can wait longer. Gently brush the soil aside to select brightly colored, firm, well-shaped roots, and look for fresh, green leaves. Carrots can be covered with mulch and left to “store” in the ground all winter.

**Storing:** If kept cool and dry, picked carrots will keep fresh for four to six weeks. If they do become limp, you can revive them by placing them in cold water in the refrigerator for one to two hours.



# Lesson Plan: Roots and Shoots

★ *Reach for the Stars Curriculum Alignment: Activity 3 Local Food Classroom Cooking/Taste Tests with Young Children*

## Objectives:

- Children learn that carrots (and other root vegetables like radishes or turnips) grow underground and the part we eat is the root.
- Children learn the difference between the root (the part that grows underground) and the shoots (the green part that grows above the ground).
- Children taste different root crops and notice the difference in the flavors and use words to describe the flavors.

## Materials:

- Carrots and other root vegetables, such as radishes or turnips, purchased from a local farm or farmers market, enough for each child to have one of each. You could also use different color carrots instead of several types of vegetables.
- Plates
- Scissors
- Placemats or tablecloth
- Knife (for adult use)
- Cutting board
- Magnifying glass (*optional*)

## Activity Directions:

1. **Wash hands.** Children should wash their hands before and after all farm to school activities.
2. **Observe root vegetables.** Show the children a carrot and have them help you label the parts of the plant they see (roots and shoots). Ask them which part of the plant they eat. Encourage them to think about other foods they eat that might also grow underground. Show them other root vegetables and continue the discussion about plant parts (roots and shoots) and which part of the plant they have eaten. At this point, you can introduce to the children that they can eat the leafy greens (shoots) of all of these root crops.
3. **Explore root vegetables.** Pass out one of each vegetable to each child along with a pair of scissors and a plate. Encourage the children to experiment with cutting the shoots from the roots. Ask them questions about the difference between the roots and shoots. What's the same? Children may use a magnifying glass, if available.
4. **Match roots and shoots.** Have the children try to match the roots with their shoots. You can leave your examples from the beginning of the lesson on display for them to reference.
5. **Prepare vegetables for a taste test.** Following this activity, wash and cut the root portions of the carrots, radishes, and turnips into bite-sized pieces. If your turnips are large, you may want to peel them. The skin is edible, but may be bitter. Smaller white turnips do not need to be peeled.
6. **Taste and vote.** Offer a taste test of each root vegetable. Invite a discussion about the flavors and textures they are tasting, offering words like "crunchy," "cold," "sweet," "bitter," "spicy." At the end, have the children vote for their favorite root vegetable.
7. **Optional: Make roots and shoots art.** Use the leftover plant parts, such as the leaves or trimmed root pieces, for an art activity. Let the children paint with the shoots and make stamp collages with the roots.



## Read a Book Together



### *The Imperfect Garden* by Melissa Assaly

What does a two-legged carrot taste like? What about a crabby-faced apple? Follow Jay and his mother through the seasons as they see how the food they grow in their garden often looks different than the fruits and vegetables in the grocery store.

#### Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever helped in a garden? What did you do?
- Mom tells Jay that “having a green thumb” means being a good gardener. What does that saying make you think about?
- What’s the strangest looking fruit or vegetable you’ve ever eaten? What did it look like? How did it taste?







farm to school  
an asap program



Substitute dried  
cherries or craisins  
for raisins.

# Apple Carrot Salad

Cooking Time: 10 minutes • Serves 4-6

- 3-4 local apples (if possible, use a variety of apples that are different colors)
- 3 local carrots
- ¼ cup raisins
- Juice from 1 lemon
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt

## Step 1

Wash apples and carrots.

## Step 2

Grate or cut the carrots into bite-size pieces. Core the apples, then cut them into any type of bite-sized pieces, such as cubes or sticks. **Kids can:** Cut quartered apples into smaller pieces.

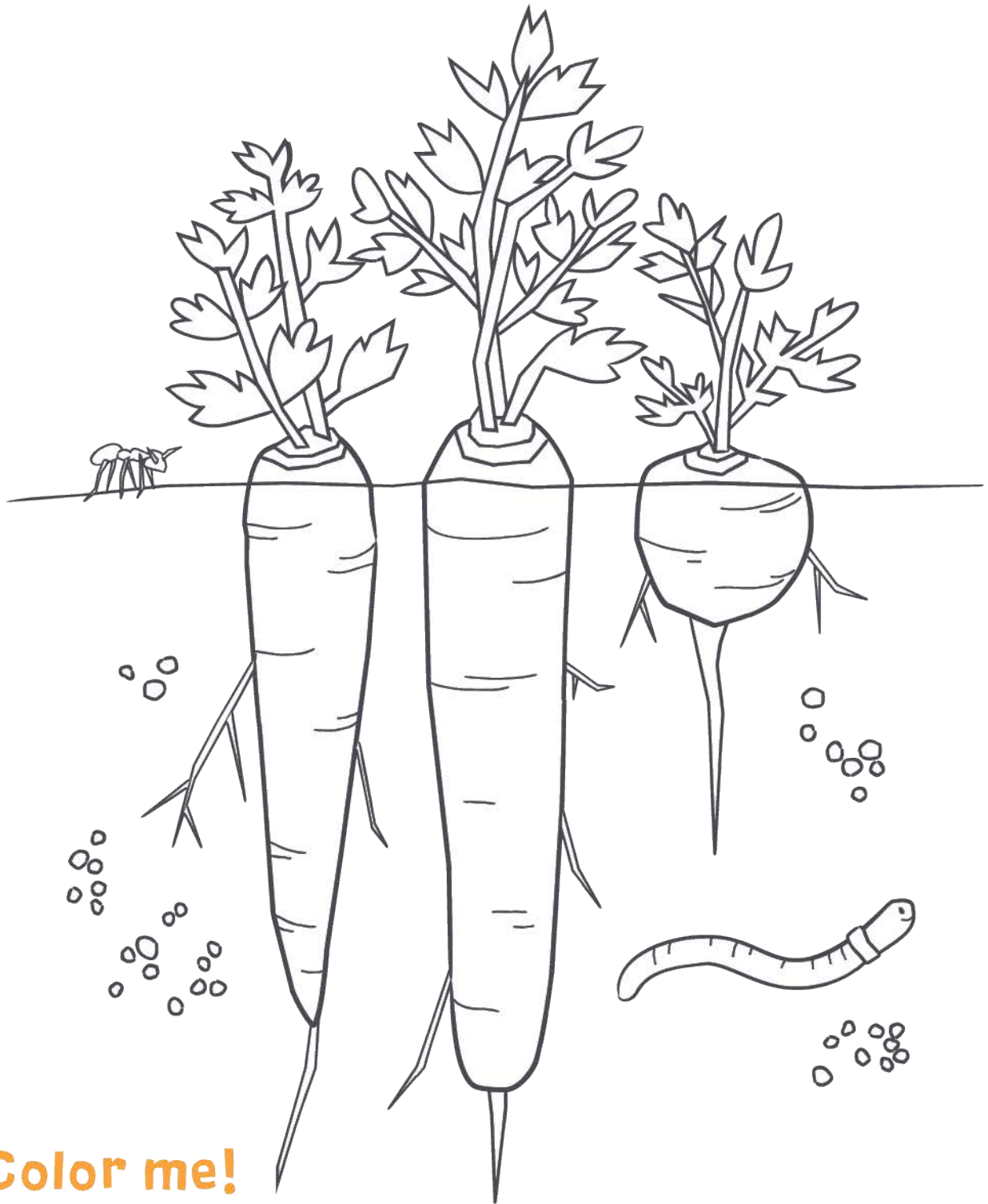
## Step 3

Place apples, carrots, and raisins in a large bowl. Add lemon juice and yogurt. Stir gently to mix it up. Enjoy!

Orange foods help us see in the dark • Lowers blood pressure and risk of diabetes

Growing Minds is a program of ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project), a nonprofit based in Asheville, North Carolina, serving the Southern Appalachian region. ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.

Find more recipes and resources at [growing-minds.org](http://growing-minds.org).



## Color me!

You might think all carrots are orange, but the first carrots were actually purple and yellow. Carrots can also be red or white.





Debbi Timson <dtimson@asapconnections.org>

## New Year, New Growing Minds Resources!

1 message

[ASAP] Debbi Timson <dtimson+asapconnections.org@mnbc.email>  
Reply-To: Debbi Timson <dtimson@asapconnections.org>  
To: dtimson@asapconnections.org

Thu, Jan 18, 2024 at 2:53 PM

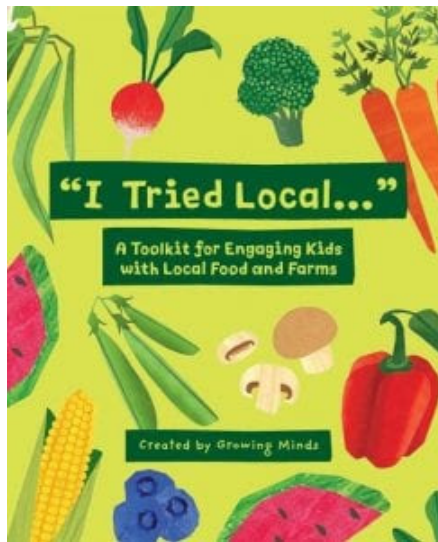
View as Web Page



Monthly News | January 2024 | [growing-minds.org](http://growing-minds.org)

### New from Growing Minds!

### Grants



We are excited to announce the launch of our new farm to school resource: **"I Tried Local..." A Toolkit for Engaging Kids with Local Food and Farms**. It is designed for use in early care and education (ECE) through second grade, and is divided into 10 units based on crops growing locally in North Carolina. In each unit you will find:

- An overview of the crop, including geographic and cultural origins, nutrition facts, and growing tips.
- A lesson plan that aligns with educational standards.
- A video from our Meet Your Farmer video series showcasing a North Carolina farmer growing the crop.
- Children's books with discussion prompts.
- A fun coloring page.



#### Growing Minds Farm to School Mini-Grant

*Deadline: January 31, 2024*

We will award early care and education (ECE) centers and K-12 schools throughout the 23 westernmost counties of North Carolina, up to \$500 to provide children positive experiences with local food and farms. [Learn more and apply here!](#)

#### 2024 USDA Farm to School Grant

*Deadline: January 24, 2024*

USDA will award up to \$12 million to eligible entities to implement farm to school programming. [Learn more here.](#)

Lending Kitchen Kits Available!

- A recipe featuring local produce that can be made in the classroom or shared with families.

You can move through the units in any order that makes sense based on your growing region, curriculum, or program structure. The toolkit also has a plethora of additional resources around how to implement farm to school with gardens, classroom cooking, farm field trips and farmer visits, and local food in meals or snacks.

"I Tried Local..." can be used on its own or as a companion piece to the [Growing Minds Farm to Preschool Toolkit](#), published in 2016 with a second edition in 2020. The Farm to Preschool Toolkit includes lesson plans, activities, and recipes for tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, potatoes and sweet potatoes, apples, greens, strawberries, squash, and berries.

The Toolkit is available as a free digital download [HERE](#). Check out a few examples below with our Meet Your Farmer video, recipe, and children's book.

## "I Tried Local..." Training

Growing Minds will be offering **virtual trainings** over the coming months to support educators and others interested in using this Toolkit. All are welcome no matter what your experience with farm to school is! You will:

- Learn about the different components of the Toolkit.
- Hear success stories from farm to school champions across the state.
- Brainstorm ways you can start using it in your classroom.

Our first session will be held on **Tuesday, February 20, from 3:30-4:45 pm**. Register [HERE](#) to reserve your spot! The next session will be on Wednesday, March 20, time TBD.

If you attend one of the trainings and are an educator in North Carolina, we will send you **a hard copy of the Toolkit for FREE**, so make sure to note your school's address in the registration form.

## "I Tried Local..." Meet Your Farmer Videos

The "I Tried Local..." [Meet Your Farmer videos](#) showcase North Carolina farmers that grow each crop. While educators, children, and families can't always visit a wide variety of farms, these videos bring the farmers to you.



Our latest video is [Tierra Fértil Coop](#). A Hispanic, worker-owned farm cooperative in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Meet coop members Maria and Delia and hear how this project stemmed from personal and collective dreams of promoting access to resources and the capacity to produce food and stimulate food justice and racial equity in the local food and agricultural system. [View here](#).

Visit our office to check out one of our cooking kits filled with everything you need to whip up a [Growing Minds recipe](#) with your students. We also have [cooking promotional materials](#), including printed recipe cards for you to share with families, "I Tried Local..." incentive stickers for taste tests, and Kids Cooking Bingo cards.



Our office is located at [306 West Haywood Street, Asheville, NC 28801](#). We are open to the public Tuesday through Thursday from 9am to 5 pm. Give us a call at 828-236-1282 or email us at [growingminds@asapconnections.org](mailto:growingminds@asapconnections.org) to schedule a time to drop by.

## News and Resources



### Seeking A Growing Minds Intern Approximately 10 hours weekly, mid-February to the end of May

The Growing Minds Intern will assist with implementation of ASAP's Farm to School program. Activities will include traveling with a team member to schools in the WNC region to deliver training to teachers and engage students around gardening, cooking, and other farm to school components. The Intern will also spend time in the office preparing and organizing materials and resources, as well as completing other various project needs. [Learn more and apply here!](#)

### Farm to School Support for ECE Community College Programs

Are you an instructor or student of an Early Childhood Education program at a NC community college? We'd love to connect! We have a variety of resources that can

**Farmer Connections:** If you're interested in purchasing local food, having a farmer visit your classroom, or setting up a farm field trip, we can connect you with farms in your area. Connect with us at [growingminds@asapconnections.org](mailto:growingminds@asapconnections.org)!

## "I Tried Local..." Recipe of the Month



Lion's Mane Crab Cakes  
Makes 6 cakes

### Ingredients:

1–2 local lion's mane mushrooms (about 8 ounces)  
1–2 tablespoons butter or oil  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
1 ½ teaspoons Old Bay seasoning  
¼ cup onion, minced  
1 cup panko breadcrumbs, divided  
1 green onion, thinly sliced  
Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

- Kids can:** Shred lion's mane mushrooms into half-inch pieces using their hands.
- Heat butter or oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté mushrooms until lightly browned. Cool uncovered in the refrigerator.
- In a bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, egg, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, Old Bay seasoning, and minced onion.
- Add lion's mane mushrooms to the bowl and mix gently to combine. Stir in half of the panko, green onion, salt, and pepper. Divide into six equal portions and form each into one-inch-thick patties. Refrigerate for at least 10 minutes.
- Place remaining half cup of panko on a plate and coat the cakes.
- Heat butter or oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Fry cakes until golden brown and crisp, about three to four minutes per side. Serve two or three cakes per person.

## "I Tried Local..." Farm to School Book of the Month

**Green Is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors**  
by Roseanne Thong

easily be integrated into courses, or we can provide a presentation to your class on farm to school. We are also forming a [cohort of student teachers](#) to implement our new "I Tried Local..." Toolkit in ECE classrooms this spring and offering a \$500 stipend! Email [growingminds@asapconnections.org](mailto:growingminds@asapconnections.org) by February 2 if you are interested in any of these opportunities.



### Prioritizing Well-Being Among School and District Staff, Educators, and Administrators

January 25, February 22, March 14, and April 11 at 4 p.m. ET.

Health and well-being are fundamental to our success in educating youth, engaging families, collaborating with colleagues, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

[Learn more and register here](#) for the four-part learning series with Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools.

## CEFS



NCSU | NCA&T | NCDA&CS

### Summer Internship Opportunity:

*Deadline: February 16, 2024*

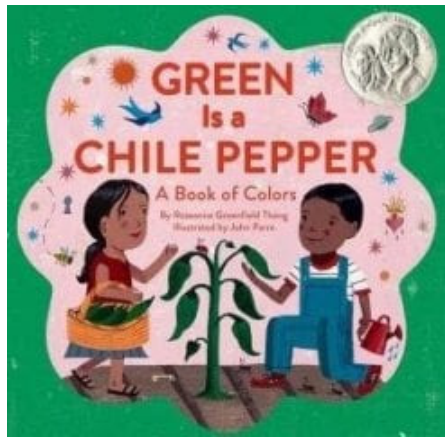
The Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) is recruiting for the 2024 Farm to ECE Food Systems Internship. Interns will have the opportunity to learn about agriculture and local food purchasing and promotion by working with the child care community in six locations across North Carolina. [Learn more and apply here.](#)



### Are You a Farmer or Childcare Provider? Your Opinion is Needed!

[NC Farm to Preschool Network](#) partners are exploring the creation of an interactive statewide mapping system to connect childcare providers and farmers for easier purchasing and selling of local foods. We are currently in the surveying stage where we would like to gather the opinions of childcare providers and farmers. Please take five minutes to complete this [short survey](#).





Cultural traditions can be joyful, delicious, and colorful! Join the party with this Mexican family and learn how all the colors of the rainbow fit into their lives. In this lively picture book, children discover a world of colors all around them: red is spices and swirling skirts, yellow is masa, tortillas, and sweet corn cake. Many of the featured objects are Latino in origin, and all are universal in appeal. With rich, boisterous illustrations, a fun-to-read rhyming text, and an informative glossary, this playful concept book will reinforce the colors found in every child's day! [Read aloud on YouTube.](#)

### Connect with Us



[appalachiangrown.org](http://appalachiangrown.org) | [asapconnections.org](http://asapconnections.org)  
| [growing-minds.org](http://growing-minds.org)

Growing Minds is a program of ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project). ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.

**DONATE**

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) • 306 W. Haywood Street • Asheville, NC 28801

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