

Shannon's SUSTAINABILITY SCOOP



Written by: Shannon Barlow, PPS Food Systems Literacy Coordinator, December 2024

Happy December!!!

May the spirit of December fill your work with passion, purpose, and the belief that you can do anything you set your mind to.

Celebrating Holidays All December Long! Christmas, Hanukkah, & Kwanzaa

December is a time of celebrations all around the world! Some of the most common holidays and celebrations we know of in December include Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa.

Christmas is one of the most celebrated holidays around the world. It is the day that Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ who they believe to be the son of God. Christmas is celebrated around the world on December 25th each year, although no one actually knows the exact date of Jesus' birth.

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that is usually celebrated in December as well, however the exact dates of this holiday differ year to year. Hanukkah is an 8 day celebration reaffirming the ideals of Judaism. The word Hanukkah means dedication and signifies a celebration of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Kwanzaa is unique in that it is not associated with a particular religion, but instead, celebrated by African Americans as a symbol of their unity. This holiday is a week long celebration honoring the culture and traditions of African Americans. Whether you are participating in any of these holidays or not, December is a time to enjoy the company of good friends and family, enjoy delicious food, and reflect on the previous year while looking ahead at what's to come in the new year!



Sustainability in our Schools



In the month of November, a representative from Sustainable Princeton, Jenny Ludmer, met with PPS to discuss ways in which we can make our cafeterias more sustainable. We discussed many of the things our schools are doing so well! At Riverside, Johnson Park, and Littebrook all have a system of collecting food waste in the cafeterias. This process is monitored by cafeteria aides and faculty members as well as student representatives. Students take ownership over this collection and take it upon themselves to use tools like a grabber to pull any items out of the compost bucket that are not supposed to be there. These schools even have a liquid collection bin that allows students to recycle their drink cartons after pouring out the liquid.

Some schools this year have also started using dishwashers and silverware that is allowing for less plastic use in the schools.

Looking ahead, it is the hope that we can transition all of the schools to a food waste collection system that will allow for much of our food to be diverted out of landfills. We will not only be looking for cafeterias to have these available for student use, but also kitchens to have these bins to collect food waste as they are preparing meals for students.

We have also discussed some alternatives to plastic containers and food trays with the hope that if we are able to select alternative products, we can implement them in our schools as soon as possible!

From Classroom to Community: The Gift of School Grown Lettuce



Students at Princeton Middle School had the unique opportunity to participate in some fun community service in the month of November. Earlier this year, Mr. Brickey's science classes used their hydroponic growing systems to grow pounds and pounds of beautiful lettuce that was ready for harvest in November! When all the lettuce was picked, his class along with Ms. Brennan's Kitchen Science class helped to wash and package up 25 pounds of it for donation! All the produce was donated to the Methodist Church Soup Kitchen on Nassau St. in Princeton.



GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE



WINTER SQUASH



December's Garden State on Your Plate featured produce item of the month is winter squash! In New Jersey, the main growing season for winter squash is from September to March. All winter squash varieties need to be cooked prior to being eaten and many can store for long periods of time throughout the winter!



While there are hundreds of varieties of winter squash, some of the more familiar ones might be acorn squash, spaghetti squash, and butternut squash.

SCHOOL LUNCHES FEATURING WINTER SQUASH

This month, you can look for these special winter squash dishes being offered in the school cafeterias! *Menu subject to change*

December 7th: Spaghetti Squash and Black Bean Quesadilla *MS/HS only*

December 12th: Delicata Squash Soup *ES only*

December 12th: Spaghetti Squash Pizza Nests *MS/HS*

December 16th: Parsnip & Butternut Squash Soup
MS/HS

December 16th: Roasted Honeynut Squash *ES*

December 17th: Holiday Meal at all the schools- spiral ham, mashed konignut squash with parmesan cheese & local apple crisp

PPS Partnership Highlight

SUSTAINABLE PRINCETON.

Sustainable Princeton was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2012. They work alongside residents, businesses, nonprofits and local government to make the Princeton community more sustainable

Contact Me!

Please allow 48 hours for a response!



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