

Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

DONEGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lancaster County, PA



The food service staff at **Donegal School District** in Mount Joy, PA, led by Director Kelly Price, have established a program that incorporates core elements of farm to school and creates a trusting environment for students to try new foods. “Every Name, Every Need, One Tribe” is the mission at Donegal, and Kelly says it has really made a difference. “By getting to know students’ names and building relationships with them, we have created a trusting environment. They’ll be more inclined to try the foods we put in front of them,” says Kelly.

Kelly’s initial goal as Food Service Director at Donegal was to encourage students to try new things. She noticed students were often unaware of where their food came from, so she quickly began introducing local foods, such as apples, pork and dairy, into school meals. She teamed up with Donegal’s neighbor, Hessdale Farm, a Land O’Lakes dairy farm owned by Sue and Gene Hess. Together they worked to bring local dairy items into the cafeteria for foods like homemade mac & cheese and white chicken chili. This partnership kickstarted an entire farm to school movement within the district.

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-Kelly Price, Food Service Director





In 2022, Donegal was awarded a Beef to School grant from the [Pennsylvania Beef Council](#), which allowed them to purchase beef from Masonic Village Farm in Elizabethtown, PA, at a competitive price for the farmer. Not only did the students have local beef in their cheesesteaks, tacos and beef sandwiches, but the Beef to School program, with the goals of educating students on where their food comes from and promoting PA's beef industry, extended education beyond the four walls of Donegal. Students toured Masonic Village Farm, where they had been consuming beef from. They learned everything from what the animals eat, how they are cared for and what the farm does to ensure a successful end product.



The seventh- and eighth-grade students applied their experience even further during cooking club, a program that Kelly and school food service staff designed to build confidence in and outside of the kitchen in hopes of promoting a healthier lifestyle into adulthood. During the beef lesson, students learned what the 80/20, 85/15, and 90/10 numbers on ground beef labels actually mean and made a meatball recipe.





Local purchasing of food for school meals and educating students about where their food comes from, two tenets of farm to school, are at the core of the food service program at Donegal, and it is evident in the way Kelly and her team highlight and share stories about the food that is served on a daily basis. In addition to featuring [Pennsylvania Harvest of the Month](#) items on the menu, every Friday the school gym teacher helps create Taste Buds videos to encourage students to taste the new menu item at lunch that day. The videos are aired during morning announcements, and when students enter the cafeteria, the food is available to try.

Kelly and her team have become skilled at sharing their stories with the community. The Donegal School District Food Service [Facebook page](#) is full of inspiration. “Tell your

story, put it out there. Our Facebook has become a huge part of how we communicate with the community,” says Kelly. The pictures and stories posted on social media even sparked interest from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), who wrote an article about the cooking club and Beef to School program.

“The ladies put their heart and soul into food service,” Kelly says about her staff. They’ve created a lunchroom of happy, healthy and courageous eaters who really do know where their food comes from.



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