



# MIDWEST FOOD CONNECTION

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2017

# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Dear Friends:

Our mission states, “Midwest Food Connection brings educational adventures in food, cooking, and gardening to children and their families.” Our powerful classroom teaching changes lives and improves eating habits. A recent survey of children at a diverse school showed that 80% of our students tell their families about what they learned during our lessons, and 53% had made an MFC recipe with their families. One parent reported to us: “My first grader came home telling me about a salad he made in class and then offered to make our dinner salad this evening. Great stuff!”

During the 2016/7 school year, MFC celebrated its 20th anniversary, and many of you joined us at special events and celebrations. Our excellent teaching staff of Haruko, Emily, and Molly taught at 52 schools and reached over 7,100 students. We took 13 classrooms on trips to local farms, collaborated with the Minneapolis Public Schools in teaching about school lunches, and developed a forward-looking curriculum on Climate Conscious Cooking.

We couldn't have done it without you: shoppers rounding up, individuals donating, school PTA granting funds, and most of all the members and staff of natural food co-ops making the commitment to have an impact in their communities.



Uli Koester,  
*Executive Director*



Liz McMann,  
*President*





## OUR IMPACT

Recently, a special education teacher told us about how, after our spring planting unit with second graders at Groveland Park, she saw something that “melted her heart.” She was accompanying a boy home from school and had to return back to his house because she accidentally had some of his belongings. When she got to his house she saw that he had many little cups with seeds all out on his front step and he was carefully watering them all. She said he was “the last kid she would have ever imagined doing this.”

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One of our past students and a recent volunteer recalls having MFC visit her second-grade classroom in 1999. “I remember sitting in a circle cross-legged with classmates, and I can still picture with perfect clarity the moment when the instructor sliced through a star fruit as we watched wide-eyed. It astonished me that something from nature could create such a perfect and beautiful geometric shape – and it tasted unlike anything I had experienced before! That moment of realization and appreciation has stuck with me throughout my entire life.” Reflecting on her path since that small moment of awe, she writes, “I now work in sustainable agriculture and food justice. MFC has a profound impact on the next generation, and I support their work 100%.”

***“Thank you, thank you, thank you. This program offers opportunities that are unique and important for life, and without these lessons, some students may never experience them.”***

***~ Amanda Sandoval, Windom, Minneapolis***

## WHY WE DO THIS WORK

13

Farm Trips

52

Partnering  
Schools

772

Lessons Taught

20,340

Student Contact Hours

One in five school-aged children is obese; a percentage that has more than tripled since the 1970s.

Elementary students receive an average of just 3.4 hours of food and nutrition education a year.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, only 21% of sixth graders and 15% of ninth graders report consuming five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day.

Poverty stimulates a stress response that creates a mentality of scarcity, a diminished cognitive ability to manage challenges. When asked to identify solutions to this negative feedback loop, SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) participants specifically asked for nutrition education, not just access to food purchases.

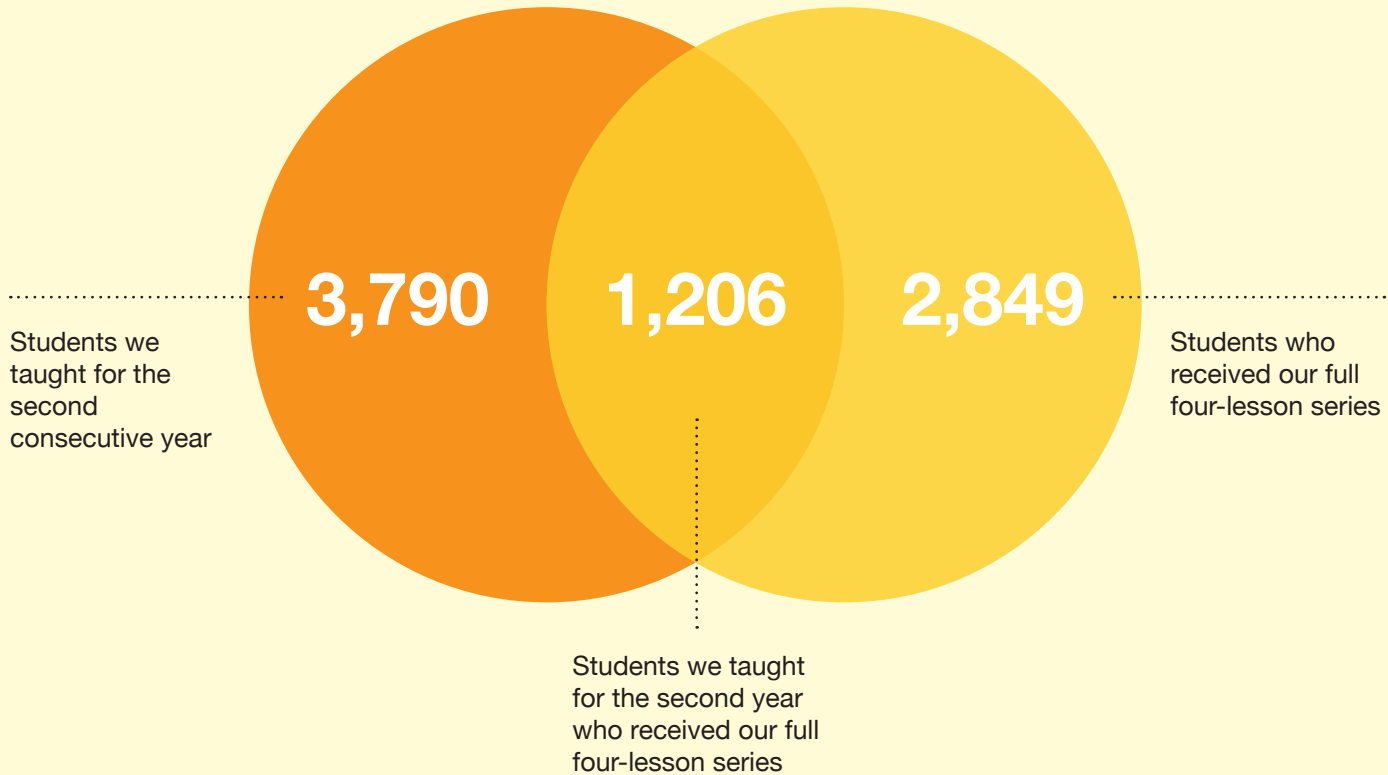
Our lessons address many other needs in our schools:

- life skills education
- outdoor learning for children
- teaching environmentally-friendly shopping
- validation of children's home traditions
- building food community across cultural boundaries

*"I am happy that you all make a difference and my children bring home what they have learned to share with me to remind me how important it is to stay healthy and happy"*



## Total number of students taught: 7,118



***“This class brings a level to our curriculum that is missing. Healthy eating and living needs to start in early years when habits are established.”***

***~ Marianna Tennyson, Horace Mann, St. Paul***

## Free & Reduced Schools

Schools where we  
taught in 2016-17

52

Schools where 50%  
of students qualified  
for free or reduced  
lunch

26

Schools where 75%  
of students qualified  
for free or reduced  
lunch

14

Revenue \$182,074

Expenses \$182,440

Food Co-ops

130,150

71.5%

Individuals

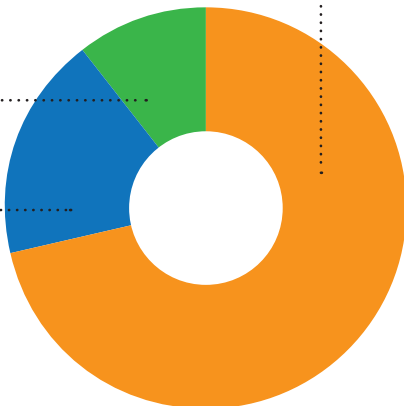
33,088

18.2%

Schools

18,836

10.3%



Marketing

\$6,048

3.3%

Admin exp

\$12,745

7.0%

Teaching exp

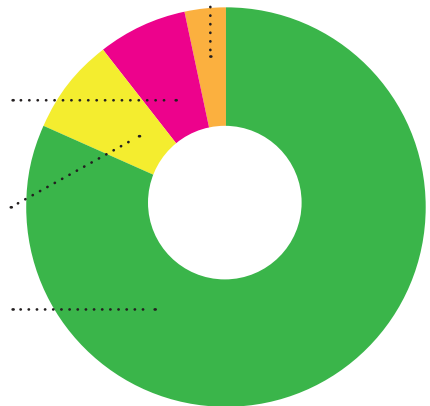
\$14,576

8.0%

Salaries

\$149,071

81.7%





Midwest Food Connection  
P.O. Box 18749  
Minneapolis, MN 55418

We are  
grateful to these  
natural food co-ops  
for their generous  
support!

For the 2017/8 school year,  
we welcome Eastside Food Co-op  
as our newest sponsor.

[contact@midwestfoodconnection.org](mailto:contact@midwestfoodconnection.org)  
[www.midwestfoodconnection.org](http://www.midwestfoodconnection.org)  
(651) 373-9878

Photo credits: Molly Sowash

### Contributions:

Over \$35,000



\$25,000 - \$35,000



Mississippi Market  
Natural Foods Co-op

\$15,000 - \$25,000



Wedge COMMUNITY CO-OP

