

# School cafeteria staffs learn how to cook local-sourced dishes

WESTMINSTER — The Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center (SVAHEC) and its 30+5 program recently sponsored a Vermont Food Education Every Day (VTFEED) workshop at the Bellows Falls Union High School.

This training was designed to familiarize cafeteria staff with the cooking and handling of fresh produce and whole grains along with incorporating new foods into existing dishes. At this hands-on workshop, participants transformed fresh, local, and seasonal products into the following tasty menu items: vegetarian lasagna, assorted mashed winter squash, and whole grains with seasonal vegetables. Participants also learned bulk cooking techniques for vegetables that preserve and retain freshness and color.

Ten cafeteria associates from the local cafeteria service provider, Café Services, and the Regional Café Services manager, John Kenyon attended the four hour training. Café Services has committed to the continued improvement of school foods through the increased use of local products.

Beginning this fall, 30+5 will

offer hands on cooking experiences to elementary school youth in both Springfield and Bellows Falls. Each month, Nancy Schaefer and daylyn finnegan, the 30+5 program staff, will visit elementary school classrooms to help them prepare cafeteria taste-tests featuring fresh produce. Since school foods are a large portion of the calories consumed by youth, the 30+5 program focuses on the nutritional quality of school foods; additionally 30+5 encourages and assists schools to increase physical activity options for youth.

To help the schools provide meals with fresh produce, 30+5 is asking community members with surplus produce in their gardens to donate extra fresh produce to their local school cafeteria; please check with your school cafeteria service manager to see if they can utilize your produce.

Nancy Schaefer, Coordinator of the 30+5 program said, "Schools in Springfield and in the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union will gladly accept donated produce; monies saved by these donations will help them to purchase more fresh fruits, and veg-



Submitted photo  
**Saxtons River cafeteria staffers Peter Allison, Linda Kinney, John Ayer, Abbie Nelson, Catrina Kingsbury prepare a dish at a recent VTFEED training session.**

etables during the rest of the school year."

If you would like more infor-

mation contact Schaefer at 802-885-2126, Ext. 206 or nschaefer@svahec.org.