“I can have a much healthier life by eating local foods and I plan on it being that way.”
— Charter School 5th Grader —
DEAR FRIENDS,

The 2012-2013 school year marks our sixth year working with the schools and farms on Martha’s Vineyard to bring healthy food and garden-based learning to island children. It has been another wonderful year of growth for us, as we expand and deepen our program on the Vineyard while developing new partnerships to spread the Island Grown Schools model beyond our shores.

We are proud to serve 2,430 students, ages two to eighteen, at all seven K-12 schools and at six preschools on the island. We are now able to interact with almost every school-aged child in the community.

We have installed and support learning gardens at all thirteen schools, lead classroom lessons to bring a food and nutrition focus to existing curriculum, and work with cafeterias to incorporate local and student-raised foods into school meals. This year, for the first time, all seven public schools used local produce throughout the year, served local fish, and some began sourcing healthy, humanely raised island grown meat.

The more we do this work the more we see its power to transform—to improve the health of the community, deepen children’s connection to the natural world, and carry forward the vibrant agricultural heritage of the Vineyard.

IGS is a true community effort, continually being defined and developed by islanders of all ages; by teachers, farmers, school chefs, parents, grandparents; by people from every island town. Together we get to be a part of something that is creating real and positive change, starting in our community and radiating out from here, and this is a gift, and a joyful responsibility. We look forward to continuing to grow this work with you.

Sincerely,

NOLI TAYLOR
Island Grown Schools Director
JUNE, 2013
“The willingness of IGS to invest time and energy, along with their tireless enthusiasm, have led us on a five year journey from a school with no kitchen, low student lunch participation, and limited community involvement with our food program to a school with a vibrant garden, a kitchen to be proud of, high student and staff participation, and active community involvement.”

— MARY BOYD —
Assistant Principal, West Tisbury School
Personally, I think it’s better being down here than being in the classroom.”

— Oak Bluffs Elementary School Student —

Planting peas in the garden.

N E W P R O J E C T S
— of the —
2012-2013 School Year

IGS educator Meg Athearn plants leeks in the Chilmark School garden with her daughter, 1st grader Clara Athearn.

PHOTO: RANDI BAIRD
FIRST HARVEST OF THE MONTH PROGRAM IN MASSACHUSETTS

This year, we pioneered the first Harvest of the Month program in Massachusetts. School cafeterias featured the crop of the month at least twice on the lunch line, IGS staff led taste tests and classroom lessons, and we offered recipes in English and Portuguese to families to help them try these foods at home. We are now working with the Massachusetts Farm to School Project to share our resources with 50 other school districts starting their own Harvest of the Month programs throughout the Commonwealth next year.

CAPE & ISLANDS FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

We formed the Cape and Islands Farm to School Network to support new farm to school initiatives across our region. Seventy-five people from dozens of schools across the Cape and Islands joined us for the pioneer meeting of the network in January. We then brought four Vineyard cafeteria directors to the Cape to help lead a follow-up training for cafeteria staff and farmers. There are three more network workshops and another regional conference planned for the 2013-2014 school year.

LOCAL MEAT PILOT PROGRAM

We started a local meat pilot program to bring healthy, humanely raised, locally grown chicken, beef, and pork to school meals. The Up Island Regional School District served as the lead for the pilot, using 50% locally grown meat in their new meals program. Together with our farm partners, we learned important lessons about how to make this work for both farmers and cafeteria staff. In another component of the pilot, MVRHS kitchen staff purchased a whole cow from a local farmer, allowing them to serve locally produced meat for the first time in the school’s history. We are now planning to expand this program to all schools over the coming two years.

OUTREACH TO FAMILIES

What happens around the table and in the kitchen at home has a great impact on children’s lifelong eating habits and health. To support the school-to-home connection, we offered a series of cooking workshops for caregivers (including parent/child workshops for preschool families) with nutritionists Josh and Prudence Levy from Vineyard Nutrition, reached out with Harvest of the Month recipes and newsletters, and helped publish Vineyard Family Cooking cookbook in collaboration with Vineyard Nutrition and Mass in Motion.

CAPACITY

IGS now has a staff of eight, plus two high school work study students and two interns. We developed new partnerships with local, regional, and state-level businesses and non-profit organizations that we hope can help sustain and grow our work. And we created a new website to help share resources and stories from our community with others.

“The next time I’m feeling sick, instead of going to the nurse, I’m going to go outside and eat from the garden.”

— MVRHS STUDENT —
“IGS is known as a state and national leader in comprehensive farm to school programming. Their programming stands out as a model of innovative education initiatives and creative local foods procurement.”

— KELLY ERWIN —

Executive Director, Massachusetts Farm to School Project

IGS Program Director Kaila Binney leads a field trip with preschoolers from Island Children’s School at the Allen Farm.

PHOTO: ELIZABETH CECIL
Julia Silva, Edgartown Kindergartner, holding just-laid eggs from the FARM Institute.

Photo: Elizabeth Cecil

“Oh, so that actually works!”

— Grace Preschool Student

Looking at peas he’d helped plant sprouting out of the ground.
This was our first full school year partnering with six island preschools: Island Children's School, Grace Preschool, Martha's Vineyard Community Services Preschool, Chilmark Preschool, First Light Child Development Center, and Vineyard Montessori. We also worked with Head Start, giving us the opportunity to connect with a total of 170 children, ages 2-5 years. We did planting experiments, helping children learn about seeds and what plants need to grow, led farm field trips, and worked with Vineyard Nutrition to offer cooking workshops with families. The preschoolers also took part in the Harvest of the Month program through sensory activities involving the featured crop: During beet month we painted with the magenta juice we squeezed out of the beet, in seafood month we tasted and observed different types of seaweed, and in squash month we made Butternut Squash smoothies (a big hit!).

“Isn’t it amazing that these flowers turn into strawberries?”
— CHILMARK PRESCHOOL STUDENT —

TISBURY

Harvest of the Month taste tests have become a beloved institution this year at the Tisbury School. School-wide taste testing happens almost every month for 300 students, and at each one 40-60% of students experience a food they’ve never tasted before. In the classrooms, fourth graders did a whole unit on soil, making compost, testing soil, and planting in the garden. Second graders took Tisbury School’s first gleaning field trip to the Bayes-Norton Farm just up the road from the school. Our after school garden club is more popular than ever, with 30 students signed up for the spring session.

“I never knew I liked this until I tried it!”
— TISBURY SCHOOL KINDERGARTENER —
At salad greens taste test.

MVRHS

This was the first full year of an on-site garden program at MVRHS. Island chefs partnered with Culinary Arts students to prepare two delicious dinners using produce from the high school garden and island farms to raise funds for the new garden. These events provided the means to purchase fruit trees, berry bushes, a large strawberry patch and asparagus galore. Our collaborative teen summer program with the FARM Institute, the Farm Project, maintained the garden over summer vacation, and throughout the school year our two wonderful work-study interns built hoop houses, planted trees, shoveled compost, and kept the garden growing.

The cafeteria staff made good use of all the produce from the garden, and offered monthly Harvest of the Month taste-tests. The salad bar included island grown greens throughout the winter and spring, while school meals integrated local produce weekly. And for the first time in history, MVRHS served island grown beef to its students—a practice the staff is hoping to continue and expand upon next year.

CHILMARK

Every student at the Chilmark School took part in gardening activities this year, from growing sprouts in sunny classroom windows to holding math class in the well-used school garden. Teachers integrated lessons on biology, measurement and the scientific method in their garden projects. This year also marked the start of the in-school lunch program, delivered daily via the new West Tisbury School kitchen. Students, staff and families now have access to a viable, local and seasonal foods-based lunch option, and the first hot lunches ever served at school. Lunch sales have gone from around 6 lunches a day to between 20 and 50 lunches a day—in a school with just 50 students!

“I like to learn to pick the peas. Peas are yummy to snack on while you are picking.”
— CHILMARK SCHOOL KINDERGARTENER —
This year, we worked each week with the Kindergarten, First and Second grades, taking care of the garden, learning in the classroom, and going on field trips from Katama to Aquinnah as we explored the changing seasons on the farm. The Second graders also maintained the school compost, using waste products from local businesses - including coffee grounds from Mocha Mott’s and peanut shells from Offshore Ale – to create soil. Middle school students took the opportunity to fulfill community service hours by working in the garden and greenhouse, and starting seeds for the successful annual plant sale. Home Economics classes planted, harvested, and cooked with Harvest of the Month crops, and every month the cafeteria opened its doors to allow us to host a Harvest of the Month taste-test for the entire school.

The West Tisbury School inaugurated its new school kitchen this year, after island builders, electricians, plumbers and more donated countless volunteer hours over the summer to complete construction. State Representative Tim Madden came to the ribbon cutting in September. The new meals program now serves almost 200 lunches, made from between 25-75% locally grown produce and meat, each day. Kindergarten teacher Teri Mello continues to spearhead the school’s garden program, with every elementary grade level participating, producing an impressive bounty of food to contribute to the school lunches.

Meanwhile, teachers and an average of 200 students each month embraced Harvest of the Month. Art classes produced big, beautiful collage posters of every featured crop of the year to hang in the cafeteria. And library staff developed a literacy component to Harvest of the Month, displaying books for different grade levels on each month’s crop in the library, and reading stories to the younger students during library time.

This year Charter School students put their newly-refurbished greenhouse to good use, growing pea shoots and salad greens for the school cafeteria and seedlings for the garden through the winter and spring. The kindergarten and first grades installed three new raised beds to work in just outside their classrooms, so that recess time literally revolves around the garden. An Artist in Residence program with our IGS school coordinator gave students a chance to get out, work in their on-site garden, and meet island farmers each week. And in June, our Assistant Coordinator offered a two-week Project Period focusing on Farming and Photography for 14 students. They went on eight farm field trips, investigating island farming from a farmer’s point of view, and capturing whatever peaked their interest through the lens of a camera. They also spent time every day in the school garden, and were transformed into avid gardeners, looking forward to a summer of tending and harvesting.

IGS programming remains deeply integrated into the curriculum and culture of the Edgartown School at every grade level, K-8. This level of programming is made possible in part by the school’s financial support of their IGS coordinator, whose salary they support. The cafeteria features garden-grown produce regularly throughout the year, and every grade level spends time in the garden and greenhouse. This year, IGS partnered with local chef Robin Forte to work with the Edgartown School preparing three or four taste tests each month for the Harvest of the Month program, which were wildly popular among the students. Next year, Robin will support taste testing at more island schools, and her recipes will be featured throughout the year in Harvest of the Month materials in schools and grocery stores.

“It’s a lot easier to learn it hands-on than just sitting in the classroom.”

— EDGARTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT —

In math class, learning about circumference in the school garden.
“IGS has brought to our students, staff, and the broader community an appreciation of good quality meals and how to source them locally, while creating lessons for students at all levels and in all subjects.”

— DR. JAMES WEISS —
Superintendent, Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools
IGS REVENUE

- Foundations: $87,560
- Individual Donors: $42,668
- Business Contributors: $13,142
- Consulting & Speaking Fees: $2,630

Total: $146,000

IGS EXPENSES

- Garden, Curriculum & Taste Test Support: $109,357
- Administration: $17,276
- Local Food/Cafeteria Support: $12,264
- Regional Leadership: $7,103

Total: $146,000
None of our work would be possible without the generous contributions of these supporters.

**2012-2013 DONORS**

None of our work would be possible without the generous contributions of these supporters.

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- Vineyard Gardens
STAFF & INTERNS

NOLI TAYLOR
Island Grown Schools Director

KAILA BINNEY
Program Director & School Coordinator
at Oak Bluffs & Regional High School

EMILY DUNCKER
Preschool Coordinator and Program Administrator

MELINDA RABBITT DEFO
Edgartown School Coordinator

NICOLE CABOT
West Tisbury School Coordinator

SAM GREENE
Charter School Coordinator

LIZZY BRADLEY
Chilmark School Coordinator

ELISSA LASH
Tisbury School Coordinator

ERIN BLOCK
Program Assessment Intern

KRISTIN HURLEY
Intern

DESHAWN JAMES
High School Work Study Intern

COURTNEY COLLINS
High School Work Study Intern

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Our volunteer advisory committee members work regularly with our Director on fund development, strategic planning, and staff support.

CAROL KENNEY PhD, MARY KENWORTH State Road Restaurant,
SARAH MCKAY Cronig’s Market, LEA DELACOUR

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