

# SHIP stories

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) works to improve health through better nutrition, increased physical activity and decreased commercial tobacco use and exposure.

Schools are a key area in which the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) works to improve health through better nutrition. As of June 2011:

- Across Minnesota, more than 360 schools and 22 school districts, serving more than 200,000 students, are increasing access to local produce with Farm to School.



## “I never knew there were so many different kinds of apples,” said Winfair Elementary student

Kids at Winfair Elementary in Windom, Minnesota, are embracing Farm to School. Starting in the 2010-11 school year, 266 Kindergarten through third-grade students enjoyed locally grown or Minnesota grown sweet potatoes, apples, honey, squash, cucumbers, watermelon, sweet corn, wild rice, radishes, fresh greens and tomatoes in their school lunch program.

Farm to School Programs are designed to increase the availability of fruits and vegetables on the school lunch menu. But putting the produce out wasn't the end of the work at Winfair. Taste testing was a fun way to encourage students to try new foods, and classroom presentations were held to educate students about how food is grown. “I never knew there were so many different kinds of apples,” said one student. Added another, “I didn't know yams grew underground.” One lesson was about how bees make honey. “It's really cool to see where honey comes from,” said one amazed youngster.

To make Farm to School possible at Winfair Elementary, SHIP staff in the summer of 2010 worked with the school wellness council, local growers, University of Minnesota Extension, students, and classroom teachers to find local growers to provide produce to the school. SHIP provided equipment to make food preparation of fresh produce easier in school kitchens and software that supports healthy menu planning.

With the help of school staff, administrators, students, parents and the community, Winfair Elementary is looking forward to exciting kids with new and tasty foods for years to come.

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SHIP works with communities across Minnesota to help create real, sustainable health improvement. Find out how at [www.health.state.mn.us/ship](http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship)