



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Farmers & Chefs Partner to Bring Fresh, Organic School Lunches to West Contra Costa Schools for One Week**

*January 25, Sausalito* Imagine if elementary school students were served fresh, made-from-scratch, organic food, grown by local farmers, for lunch everyday. Students at two public schools in **West Contra Costa School District** will get that experience later this month during the weeklong farm-to-school food event hosted by **The Conscious Kitchen, a program of the nonprofit organization Turning Green.**

The event will bring together local chefs and farmers with students to serve breakfast and lunch every day during the week of January 30 at **Peres Elementary in Richmond, CA** and **Madera Elementary in El Cerrito, CA.**

The Conscious Kitchen partners with schools to shift the paradigm around food service based on five attributes: fresh, local, organic, seasonal, and non-GMO (FLOSN). The program aims to demonstrate that serving fresh, healthy, nutritious meals has tremendous benefits to student health, classroom outcomes, environmental impact and community building.

Established in 2013, the program runs full time in the Sausalito Marin City School District, earning the unique recognition of becoming the first organic, non-GMO school district in the country.

The one-week demonstration in Richmond and El Cerrito is the first time the program will be brought to West Contra Costa Unified School District, where 70 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. The demonstration is the first step toward the goal of a full transition to The Conscious Kitchen framework for the two schools. For more info, see [consciouskitchen.org](http://consciouskitchen.org).

“We are eager to try the Conscious Kitchen school food pilot in our district to increase healthier food options, which we know is important to the education, growth and development of our students,” said **Lisa LeBlanc, Associate Superintendent, West Contra Costa Unified School District.**

“Working together with the community, we will demonstrate that serving the highest quality fresh, local, organic, seasonal and non-GMO food to children in a school setting is feasible within school budgets while exceeding USDA nutritional guidelines,” said **Judi Shils, Founder and Executive Director of Turning Green.**

The project also has the support of the **University of California, San Francisco, Family Health Outcomes Project**, which will work with the school district to gather data and analyze the impact. Behavioral and academic issues are often associated with nutritional

deficits or food insecurity. Teachers and administrators in the Sausalito-Marín City School District have reported a reduction in behavioral issues and increased attention span in students since The Conscious Kitchen program was established in their schools.

### **Typical Conscious Kitchen Breakfast and Lunch**

A Conscious Kitchen lunch includes a main course, side dish, fruit, and milk or water at an average food cost of \$2.00. One such scratch cooked meal includes barbecue chicken drumsticks, brown jasmine rice, cauliflower, and seasonal fruit. A Conscious Kitchen breakfast includes a main course, side of fruit, and milk or water at an average cost of \$1.35. A popular breakfast is a Yogurt Parfaits with Conscious Kitchen Granola and Cinnamon Applesauce.

Prominent Bay Area chefs will participate in the event, planning and serving a meal based on the FLOSN framework and sourcing ingredients from local farmers, ranchers and purveyors, supporting the local economy.

A key to the success of the Sausalito-Marín City School District program has been partnering with local chefs, including Justin Everett, Executive Chef of Cavallo Point Lodge.

“After more than three years of developing this program in the Sausalito-Marín City School District and knowing that it works and makes a big difference in the lives of these kids, I’m very excited to see it expanding across the Bay Area,” Everett said.

### **Participating chefs**

**Justin Everett** – Executive Chef, Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito, **Suzette Gresham** – Co-Owner / Executive Chef, Acquerello in San Francisco, **Mark Dommen** Chef/Partner, One Market in San Francisco, **Pam Mazzola** – Chef/Partner, Prospect in San Francisco, **Jason Fox** – Executive Chef, Commonwealth in San Francisco, **Daniel Tellez** – Executive Chef, Copita in Sausalito, Chef Juan Chel – Executive Chef, Fonda in Albany, **Arnon Oren** – Owner, Oren’s Kitchen in Richmond, **Massimo Covello** – Chef/Partner, Radici in Berkeley, **Tera Ancona** – Chef/Owner, Cibo in Sausalito, **Ethan Howard** – Pastry Chef, Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito, **Al Baylacq**– Owner, Good Earth Natural Foods in Mill Valley, **Marcelo Mino** – Manager, El Cerrito Natural Grocery Annex in El Cerrito

“Serving fresh, scratch cooked meals to school children is remarkably gratifying as a chef. When students understand where their food comes from, how it’s prepared, and why we choose local, organic, seasonal food grown and raised with respect for the land, they develop a deep connection to their food that translates to lifelong healthier habits,” said Conscious Kitchen Executive Chef Guillaume Pfhäl.

### **A Taste of The Conscious Kitchen Partners**

A Taste of The Conscious Kitchen is made possible by the generous support of the following partners: Cavallo Point Lodge, Clif Bar, Dr. Bronner’s, EO Products, Good Earth Natural Foods, Klean Kanteen, RW Garcia, El Cerrito Rotary Club, First Dollar Foundation, Julie and Will Parish, and Eve Niquette.

### **Special thanks to the following in kind donors**

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Cayson Designs, Clover Organic Milk, Crow Canyon Home, Eco-Products, Edison Grainery, El Cerrito Natural Grocery, Full Circle Home, GreenShield Organic, If You Care, Lundberg Family Farms, Marin Cheese, Mary's Organic Chicken, Nutiva, Pacific Gourmet, Repurpose Compostable, Rock Island, Rudi's Organic Bakery, Silver King, Simply Organics, Shady Maple Farms, Straus Family Creamery, US Pure Water, Williams Sonoma

### **About Turning Green**

Established in 2005, Turning Green, is a student-powered non-profit with global reach that advocates socially responsible and environmentally sustainable choices. Founded by a mother-daughter team, Judi Shils and Erin Schrode, Turning Green's mission is to engage youth in green living, empowering the next generation to sustain a healthy and just planet. Turning Green's pillar programs include: the [Conscious Kitchen](#) (the first organic, non-GMO school food program in the country, featuring fresh, local, and sustainably-sourced ingredients), [Project Green Challenge](#) (a 30 day challenge that engages students in conscious living), the [Conscious College Road Tour](#) (a nationwide tour to activate students on college campuses) and [Internships & Fellowships](#) that foster our future leaders.