



A SUMMER YOUTH INITIATIVE OF FAYETTE COUNTY'S FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

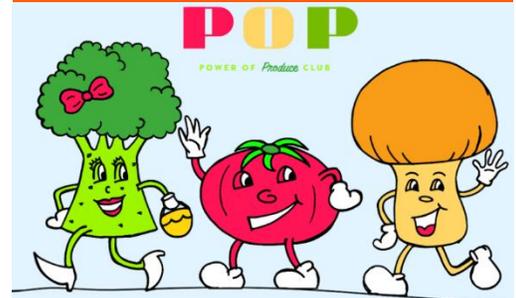
The Power of Produce (POP) Club started as a national program to increase youth involvement at local farmers markets by creating interactive activities and distributing vouchers in order to incentivize healthy food purchases among children. Kentuckians rank 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for obesity and diabetes; studies reflect that an increased diet of fruits and vegetables result in lower sugar consumption and better overall health. (CDC, 2014) Therefore, FoodChain's Farm to School Council decided to bring this widely celebrated national initiative to the Lexington Farmer's Market this year.

Throughout the summer, we were at the market for 8 weeks to engage kids with agriculture- and food-related activities, taste tests of a variety of different fruits and vegetables grown in Kentucky,

and to pass out \$2 vouchers (POP Bucks) to be spent on any fruit/vegetable at the market. The number of POP Club participants exceeded original expectations with more than 250 children and families involved in the program for the summer. There was an average participation of 52 kids each week.

Upon registration in the Club, participants received reusable shopping bags to further persuade utilizing vouchers. The activities offered included: peach salsa demonstration by a local chef, a farmer's market scavenger hunt, thank you cards for farmers, facts/myths surrounding beekeeping, and more. As an incentive, "prizes" of jump ropes and Lexington Farmers Market t-shirts were given to all children who participated in at least half

# Power of Produce Club



SUMMER 2017 EDITION



the summer activities (having 4 of 8 stamps in weekly Passports).

There were 63 children that achieved this participation goal and are now more likely to share healthy food opinions with their families thus eliminating the stigma of fresh food (vegetables in particular) deemed “gross” among youth.

For the entire program, 91% of participants, or nearly 230 children, redeemed their POP Bucks for fresh, local produce. These vouchers increase economic confidence among children, the amount of fresh produce in homes, knowledge and familiarity with local items (i.e. kohlrabi), and economic stability of Kentucky farmers. Local producers received almost \$900 this summer through POP Bucks redemption. This has a direct impact to our local farms along with our local economy.



The Power of Produce Club was incredibly successful this summer in its pilot year, and FoodChain plans to continue to grow in upcoming years. This work was made possible through strong community partnerships between FoodChain’s Farm to School Council, Lexington Farmer’s Market, Fayette County Cooperative Extension, Old Union Christian Church as well as many individual supporters and volunteers.

Without these partnerships this program would have never been possible. If funding allows, the Farm to School Council hopes to expand the POP program next year, offering additional weeks of programming enabling a greater impact on Lexington youth and Kentucky farmers. If you are interested in helping support this program, please email [info@foodchainlex.org](mailto:info@foodchainlex.org) for sponsorship and donor opportunities.

