

Annual National Conference 2019
Local Produce from Aquaponic Greenhouse
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Ideas@Work education sessions are intended to inspire and encourage innovation in school nutrition through peer-to-peer learning and engagement.

Affiliation or Financial Disclosure



- Mark Balfour Director of Food Services & Greenhouse Operations
- Stacey Snyder Asst. Director of Food Services & Greenhouse Operations
- Webster Central School District
- No Disclosures



The Big Idea



- Provide students locally grown food year round, in Upstate New York
- Avoid the “California Affect”
- Teach students where their food comes from
- Hands on learning experience for students

A Bit About Our District



- Webster Central School District, Webster New York
- Suburb next to Rochester NY Population 44,700
- 8,300 students
- 22 % Free and Reduced
- 2 High Schools
- 2 Middle Schools
- 7 Elementary Schools



Planning



Exploration of Aquaponics

- Initial plan was for a small 10x10 hydroponic system
- PBS documentary on not for profit greenhouse
- Visited Greenhouses across the country
- Began research for greenhouse construction
- Met with:
 - Buildings & Grounds
 - Morrisville College (SUNY)



Implementation – What?



Implementation of Aquaponic Greenhouse for Webster Schools

- Cost analysis of ROI, construction and operation costs
- Reviewed local and State regulations concerning produce and fish farming
- Presented the plan to senior administration and the Board of Education
- Sourced aquaponic greenhouse vendors



Implementation – How?



- Broke ground October 2016
- Began operations in February 2017
- April 2017 added first of 4 tanks of fish
- September 2017 began slowly adding plants
- March 2018 full production
- April 2018 began to add student participation



Results



- Harvest 360 heads or 60-80#'s of lettuce & other vegetables per week
- 40 tours on average per year
- Environmental Club and science classes
- Harvest 600 fish annually
- Saved roughly \$40,000 on lettuce in one year
- Not affected by the lettuce recalls
- Unprecedented access to students



Results



- Positive impact on students' attendance
- Positive P.R. in the community
- Build better rapport in the district community
- Board of Education Recognition
- Sourcing of products and distribution of fish, fish sourcing



Your Turn



- Cost analysis
- Available space
- Water quality
- Source local vendors



Tips & Pointers



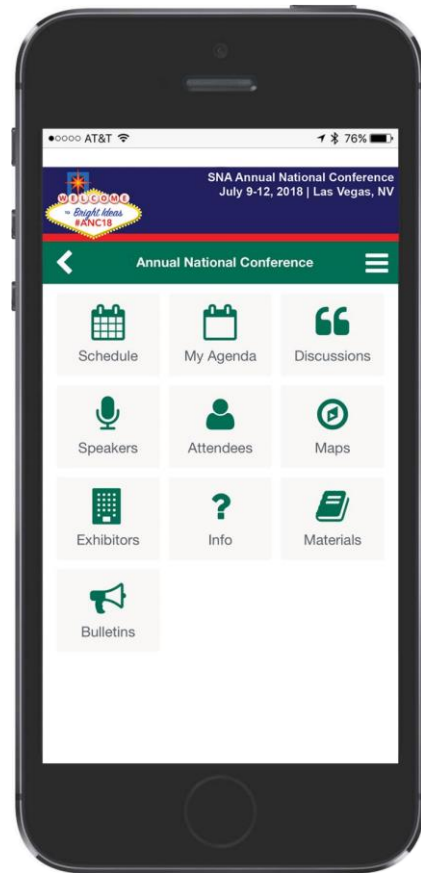
- Do your research
- Receive input from different perspectives
- Remember: this is a 7 day a week operation
- Welcome outside groups into your facility



Closing Thoughts



Evaluate This Session



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Thank you!

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