



PROGRAMS TO CONNECT SCHOOLS & FARMS THROUGH FOOD & EDUCATION

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For Immediate Release

Green Mountain Farm-to-School Mardi Gras Benefit Dinner
at Jay Peak Resort a Huge Success!

March 4, Jay Peak - Community members gathered together on Wednesday for a local food benefit dinner for Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) at Jay Peak Resort during their legendary Mountain Mardi Gras week. Dinner guests celebrated not only Mardi Gras but also the story behind the meal: the land and people that produced the food, the way in which it traveled to get to the table, and the value of consuming local foods that promote the health of the community and the local economy.

"We at Green Mountain Farm-to-School were very pleased to partner with Jay Peak Resort to put on this dinner, reflecting our shared interest in supporting local farms and promoting the health and wellbeing of our community. It was a great opportunity to us to gather together with community members, share a delicious locally grown meal and highlight the educational efforts of GMFTS," says Katherine Sims, Green Mountain Farm-to-School Executive Director. "We really appreciate the tremendous effort by Jay Peak Staff to make this event a success."

For the dinner, New Orleans Chef Mark Uddo brought his experience and expertise to Jay Peak and joined forces with Cheryl Ward, the Jay Peak food service staff, and GMFTS to create a healthy and savory New Orleans inspired meal that incorporated locally produced foods from over 20 different Vermont farms. The dinner showcased the wide variety of local foods available in Vermont in February including such dishes as broiled wild Memphremagog perch, roasted root vegetable ratatouille with root vegetables from Pete's greens and the Intervale Community Farm, a Vermont Soy grilled tofu, Butterworks Farm soldier beans and mushroom ragout and Champlain orchards apple-banana foster over Stratford Organic Creamery ice cream. Even local beverage items were offered including Snow Farm Vineyards wine, Vermont Cranberry Company cranberry juice, Champlain Orchards apple cider, and Green Mountain Coffee Roasters coffee.

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The Benefit dinner showcased the work Green Mountain Farm-to-School is doing in schools around the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont to promote the health and well being of Vermont's children, farms and communities by providing programs that connect schools and farms through food and education. What began as a single school garden in 2005 has grown into a nonprofit organization providing comprehensive farm-to-school services for seven schools in northern Vermont with plans to expand statewide. Please visit www.greenmountainfarmtoschool.org for more information and participating schools and farms.

This spring, through fundraising efforts like the dinner at Jay Peak, GMFTS aims to create gardens at 10 more schools, grow 2,500 lbs of fresh, organic food for the school cafeterias and enroll 600 additional students into the GMFTS Sprouts afterschool program.

In addition to the Mardi Gras meal, a Mardi Gras mask contest was also held to highlight the educational efforts of GMFTS. Thanks to the collaboration of the GMFTS' Kristen Bowlin, Katy Kavanagh of Alexandra's in Newport and art teacher Anna Bogert, students from 5 Northeast Kingdom schools designed Mardi Gras masks decorated with seeds from the High Mowing Seed Company. The masks were used as center pieces for the dinner and guests voted on the top mask from each school with winners to receive a complimentary lift ticket to Jay Peak.

All together the Mardi Gras Benefit Dinner was a great success! It brought together over 135 guests and raised over \$ 3,800 for GMFTS. Thanks goes out to all of the participants and a Jay Peak Resort for their support of Green Mountain Farm-to-School!