

## 2010 Local Food Institute Speaker Biographies

**Maggie Cramer** serves as ASAP's communications coordinator and is responsible for the management of all organizational communications, including maintaining relationship with media outlets and coordinating communications with local and national media, assisting in the development of ASAP materials, such as e-newsletters and print publications, and managing and expanding the ASAP website. She brings to the position five years of experience in the communications field. She's written for a variety of publications on staff and as a freelancer, as well as written for and maintained publications' web and social media sites. Maggie most recently served as managing editor of a regional health and green living magazine.

**Charlie Jackson** is the Executive Director and one of the founding farmers of ASAP. He is a nationally recognized expert on developing and implementing local food campaigns and producing local food guides. He has coordinated major conferences and events and trains farmers in marketing and farm profitability. He is an author of the groundbreaking local food and farm assessment *Growing Local: Expanding the Western North Carolina Food and Farming Economy* (2007). As Executive Director for ASAP, he has grown the organization to be one of the premiere groups in the nation working on redeveloping local food systems and centering local economic development on food and farms. He has been responsible for the successful development and implementation of programs in farm to school, farm to hospital, farm to chef, direct sales, regional branding, farm tourism, and more. He is the founder of numerous farmers markets and farmer associations, a community organizer, and a researcher on local food system development. He has a background in Internet Technology and has a Masters degree in American History with a concentration in environmental and agricultural history.

**Emily Jackson** is the founder and director of ASAP's Growing Minds Farm to School program. Emily has steered ASAP into the national farm to school arena and ASAP now serves as the Regional Lead Agency for the National Farm to School Network. As Regional Lead, Emily coordinates farm to school training and technical assistance, advocacy, and policy work for Western North Carolina and a six state area while working to shape national farm to school policy. She is currently directing a research project that is measuring the impact of farm to school programming on children's motivation to consume fresh fruits and vegetables and increase their overall interest in healthy, locally grown food. She is a former K-6 educator and farmer.

**Peter Marks** is the director of ASAP's Local Food Campaign. In this position, Peter oversees ASAP's overall marketing campaign, produces the *Local Food Guide* and Local Food and Farm Map, *Mixing Bowl*—ASAP's farm to business trade directory, and coordinates ASAP's annual Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference. Peter also works closely with tailgate and other direct-to-consumer markets on marketing and promotions, best market practices, regulation, and market management. Peter has over nine years of experience in business and market planning. Prior to joining ASAP, he was the co-owner of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, a pioneering heirloom-focused seed company located in Mineral, VA. Most recently he was the Center Director for the Mountain Microenterprise Fund in Asheville, NC, a leading nonprofit organization focused on small business development. There, and now at ASAP, he

taught business planning, bookkeeping, marketing, and one-on-one counseling to help individuals achieve their goals of economic sustainability through entrepreneurship.

**Molly Nicholie** is ASAP's Growing Minds Program Coordinator and part of the ASAP Health and Wellness team. Molly's background is in environmental studies and education, and she has been designing and implementing experiential educational curricula for K-6 classrooms for over 10 years. Now in her 5th year with ASAP, Molly coordinates and implements farm to school programming and the health and wellness components of ASAP's innovative Farm to Hospital program. Molly and her family live and farm in Yancey County.

**Megan Ray** is ASAP's farm outreach and retail coordinator and in this position serves as a connection between local farmers and markets for their products. Megan works closely with local retailers, distributors, and institutions to gain a better understanding of the requirements farmers will need to meet to sell to them and to help solidify solid partnerships. She administers ASAP's local branding program, Appalachian Grown, and works with farmers on marketing strategies. Prior to coming to ASAP, Megan worked for Earth Fare, a regional natural food store with 16 locations and helped to establish local food campaigns, open new stores, serve as a community liaison, and managed a \$50,000 yearly giving program. She also worked at the City of Greenville, South Carolina, as a special events/marketing Coordinator.

**Lee Seabrook** is the marketing coordinator at ASAP. She is working to unify the brand standards, enhance marketing materials and displays, develop new campaigns, and create visual solutions for print and web. Lee is also working with restaurants to promote their use of local foods. She has enjoyed a career in graphic design for more than 20 years. Her concern with food issues led her to pursue internships at small farms with the intent of broadening her knowledge of sustainable food production. Concurrently she worked with those farms on improving their marketing strategies. At ASAP, she is able to pair her design skills with her interest in small scale farming and local food economies to better serve the design and marketing needs of the organization.