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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Farm Field Trips and Cooking Classes at Brush Creek Elementary

ASHEVILLE, NC (October 6, 2008) -The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) Digging potatoes, making pesto—these activities are a part of the hands-on education third graders at Brush Creek Elementary School in Marshall, NC are getting through the Growing Minds program. Growing Minds, the Farm to School program of the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), works with farmers, educators, and communities to get local food into cafeterias and encourage farm field trips, experiential nutrition education, and school gardens. Growing Minds is collaborating with Brush Creek Elementary to provide positive experiences with fresh local foods for kids, helping to form lifelong healthy eating habits.

This fall, third graders are taking field trips to Madison County farms: Doubletree Farm, owned by Cathy and Andy Bennett; Palmer Ford Organics, owned by Will Osborne; and R-Farm, owned by John Rowling. At Doubletree, students saw demonstrations of how draft horses are used and how sorghum is grown. At Palmer Ford Organics, they participated in grinding corn into cornmeal. R-Farm provided the opportunity for kids to harvest potatoes and squash.

The day after each farm visit, students participated in cooking classes with chefs from Zuma and French Broad Taqueria. They learned how to turn fresh ingredients into salsa, potato salad, and pesto. Brush Creek students also had a tomato taste testing. You'd be surprised how many kids will try—and like—vegetables in this context," says Molly Nicholie, Program Coordinator at ASAP.

Field trips and special classes like these are needed, Nicholie says. "Even though this is a rural area, younger generations may have little direct involvement with farms and don't necessarily know where it comes from, beyond the grocery store." Farm to School programs reconnect kids with their food, showing them how it grows, introducing them to the farmer who grows it or letting them grow it themselves, and giving them ways to enjoy fresh produce.

ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project is a nonprofit organization that supports farmers and rural communities in the mountains of Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians by providing education, mentoring, promotion, web resources, and community and policy development. ASAP's mission is to create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable and health-promoting.

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