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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Local Food Institute 2009: Participants Come to Asheville to Study Our Local Food Economy

**ASHEVILLE, NC (September 3, 2009)** – This month, people who want to learn how to build their local food economies are coming to Asheville to study our “Foodtopia,” and learn from Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP). ASAP, a nonprofit organization credited with sparking the local food movement in Western North Carolina, is hosting The Local Food Institute September 24-27, 2009. The Local Food Institute is an intensive, immersive two and half day program with a packed schedule of classes, field trips, presentations, and of course, local meals.

Over the weekend, you’ll see participants walking around downtown, visiting Isaac Dickson Elementary School for a firsthand look at a successful Farm to School program, Greenlife Grocery to study how retailers can work with local foods, and Asheville City Market to learn about how farmers can market directly to consumers. They’ll discuss Farm to Chef connections while dining at restaurants that feature local products including The Market Place, Early Girl Eatery, Laurey’s Catering and Gourmet To Go, and Posana Café, as well as a school cafeteria. They’ll also address economic development and other topics in classroom settings.

Participants will interact with farmers, tourism professionals, teachers, community organizers, wholesalers, and farmers market managers, and they’ll work with ASAP staff to apply ideas to their own communities. “ASAP is recognized as a national leader in our field, and we’ve received many requests for information,” ASAP Program Director Peter Marks says. “So we’re pleased to bring people here for a firsthand experience of our food system and our community, which has had a strong focus on local food and farms for longer than many.”

Why do communities want to build and expand local food economies? When people eat local food, they eat fresher, better tasting, and healthier food. Choosing local food helps farmers stay in business. Local farms preserve agricultural skills and heritage, as well as scenic farm land. Buying locally keeps money in your community, and strengthens your economy.

Read more about the Local Food Institute, the local food movement, and ASAP at [www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org).

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## **ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT**

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming and to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement.

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