

## EDUCATION

### FARM FRESH: Winchester students learn about healthy options

By Jason Carmel Davis

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On the afternoon of Oct. 23, the Winchester Elementary School multi-purpose room was transformed into a farmer's market.

Several Winchester parents and their children were able to sample soups, dips, breads and fruits — all of which came from Michigan farms and restaurants. Purchases were made, and the youngsters didn't complain about the healthy items their parents bought.

A group of more than 20 Winchester moms and volunteers planned and put on the first Michigan Farm Day, an event designed to encourage a stronger connection between children and natural, locally-grown foods by hosting farm days, along with providing supplemental education supporting the effort, according to event organizer Rhonda Weber.

"We thought it'd be a good idea to bring something like this to the schools and invite the kids and parents, because if (the children) learn the benefits of eating fresh, healthy foods while they're young, they won't have terrible problems when they're older," she said.

For sale at the event were several types of apples, Bosc and Eldorado pears, banana and berry bread, fresh vegetables and soups, honey butter, pies and pumpkins and squash. Carpenter's Organic Farm in Hillsdale provided the lion's share of the produce, including a plethora of types of apples. R & B Miller Farms of Coloma, Mich. supplied the pears, while baked goods were provided by Polly's Pastries of Hiller's Grocery Markets and Achatz Handmade Pies of Macomb Township.

Weber said she believes the event was a success, as parents scooped up a number of items, leaving several tables bare. She also said she's like to take her show on the road to other schools as a way to teach children the advantages of eating healthy foods.

"Not only are these foods good for you, but I think they taste better than foods that are made with things like trans fats," said Weber, adding that no foods at the event contained hydrogenated oil or high fructose corn syrup.

"That makes it a little easier to get the kids to eat the foods when they taste good, too."

In between tastes of chicken noodle soup, Weber's daughter, Ashley, a Winchester fourth-grader, said the fact the dishes are "good for her" doesn't deter her taste for them.

"I think it's good that we have all these different foods that don't have all that fat and other things in them," Ashley Weber said. "I like all of them, and I recommend the soup."

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