

An interview with Ann Cooper, professional chef and founder of *Lunch Lessons*- an organization established to bring health literacy and sustainable foods into elementary and middle school cafeterias.

**Q:** Tell us about your mission and your philosophy.

**Cooper:** I am striving to change children's relationship to food.

Our Mission: to teach every child to seek, grow, prepare and eat nourishing, delicious and sustainably grown food: empowering them to make choices that have a positive influence on their personal health, family, community and surrounding environment.

**Q:** How would you attempt to implement more sustainable food programs in existing Schools?

**Cooper:** I characterize this as similar to a three legged stool: Delicious/nutritious food in the cafeterias, hands-on experiential learning in cooking and gardening classes and food, nutrition, and environment education linked to the core curriculum.

**Q:** Do you have any suggestions for those (parents/teachers/students) who might want to start to implement more sustainable practices in their schools?

**Cooper:** The first anniversary of the congressionally mandated School Wellness Policies is upon us. I challenge parents, teachers and students to work with their school boards and administrators to be updated on the status of the policies and to demand a report from the wellness committees and the Nutrition Services Directors as to the status of the implementation of the policies. Don't allow the Wellness Policies to be collecting dust, they are meant to be implemented, to be "living documents" and to ensure the present and future health of our children.