



St. John's Students Connect the Dots of Environmental Sustainability, Wellness and Supporting the Local Economy ▶

Information for

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Prospective Students | Apply Now | Academics & Schools |
| Current Students | Undergraduate Admission | Visit Us |
| Parents | Graduate Admission | Campuses |
| Faculty and Staff | Transfer Admission | Residence Life |
| Alumni and Friends | International Admission | Financial Aid |
| | | Global Studies |

Upcoming Events

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| JUL | Student Wellness - Mindfulness Meditation - Queens Campus | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| Jul 1 | Jul 2 | Jul 3 | Jul 4 | Jul 5 | Jul 6 | |
| All Upcoming Events ▶ | | | | | | |





St. John's Students Connect the Dots of Environmental Sustainability, Wellness and Supporting the Local Economy

July 01, 2009

It's summer and one of St. John's University's [sustainability initiatives](#) include serving wonderful, fresh Long Island produce in all of its dining areas.

Thanks to partnerships with produce distributor, J. Kings, and Long Island farmers, Chartwells, St. John's partner in providing dining services on its three New York City campuses, is able to acquire fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to serve to the University community.

In late June, students working as Sustainability Coordinators received a "cook's tour" and a first-hand look at two Long Island farms that provide fresh produce for St. John's kitchens. They were accompanied by Thomas Goldsmith, St. John's Director of Environmental & Energy Conservation, and Chartwells chefs and managers. Also in the group was Chartwells Nutritionist Mary Ellen Bingham, who is assigned full-time to St. John's and provides nutritional advice/counseling to members of the University community at various campus locations.

Serving fresh food starts with the farmer, who informs the distributor of what produce will be ready for harvest one week in advance. The distributor in turn provides the harvest information to Chartwells Chef Vince Picciotto, who decides what will be on the menu for the following week.

Chef Vince places the order, the farmer picks the crop on a particular day specifically for St. John's and the produce is delivered within 30 hours of harvesting (as opposed to six or more days when produce is transported from farms on the west coast). It all adds up good taste, peak freshness, student wellness and less impact on the environment.

A Day on the Farms

During the June tour, Joel Panagakos from J. Kings played host and guide, giving the group a new appreciation of sustainability through locally grown produce. The morning was spent on the Dear Run Farm in Brookhaven with owner Bob Nolan. For two hours, Bob walked the St. John's group through his fields of all types of lettuce while explaining details of planting, growing and harvesting. "The taste was very good" says Sustainability Coordinator Ivelin Spasov.

The afternoon was spent on the family-owned Fox Hollow Farm, located in Calverton. After a fabulous, healthy lunch, owner/farmer Jeff Rottkamp provided the group with a wealth of information about everything from cultivating the land and planting to pollination and sustainable insect control. They walked through fields of strawberries, string beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers and squash.

Truly, Chartwells is truly living up to their slogan "Eat – Learn – Live," not only by purchasing locally grown in-season produce from Long Island farms but also by then showing St. John's students how to "connect the dots" of environmental sustainability, their own wellness and supporting the local economy.

Director Goldsmith reports that plans are underway for additional Sustainability efforts on St. John's campuses. In the meantime, watch for information regarding National Wellness Week, September 21-25, and the Wellness activities planned around it at St. John's.

