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Drew Blakenbaker [00:00:03] Well. I would say the biggest impact the Farm to School Institute has had the regular availability of Montana grown food for our Montana kids.

Nick Giacamino [00:00:24] Before the institute. You know, you go to conferences and you hear about everybody's, you know, ten year journey style farmers school. And it just seemed like insurmountable. But when you have a whole team of people, we have people who are just doing a lot of good stuff for farm school. So I think we've been able to put together something pretty good in, you know, one year. The thing I think about most after the Institute is. How simple it made it.

Lauren Vick [00:01:04] So it was a great opportunity to come together as a group and make make sense of what we've been wanting to do all along.

Nichole Piper [00:01:12] Our kids love doing the taste tests. It's just it's a fun way to get them exposed to different types of foods and more local foods I like.

Lauren Vick [00:01:27] The kids had the opportunity to plant their own little things, all types of vegetables and fruit to take home and provide for their family. They're just really excited about the things that they can make and the things that they can eat off of our garden.

Grace Nichols [00:01:43] I'm just so impressed by how involved everyone is. And it's not just like teachers, but it's members of the community and its food service directors and it's local farmers.

Amy Harvey [00:01:56] It's really great to see this many people here, and there's definitely a buzz that things are happening again and that we're going to have a garden and there's a lot of community excitement about that.

Jay Stagg [00:02:14] Someone could definitely just go and read a book on how to start a farm to school program. But there's so many little things to think about. And having a coach who's experienced a lot of procurement issues, gardening issues. You just kind of you get that extra little help and you don't waste time doing something that would be fruitless.

Robin Vogler [00:02:37] I do feel like it is valuable information supporting your community farmers. It's providing the best possible products for the kids. I feel like everything about this has good intentions and good outcomes, so I'm proud to be a member of it and I hope to continue.

Grace Nichols [00:03:05] I honestly think without the Farm to School Institute, I wouldn't be involved in farm to school at all. But when I heard Hamilton was doing farm to school, I was like, I need to be part of this.

Jay Stagg [00:03:15] So I think not only has our team learned a lot, I actually have learned a lot also.

Drew Blakenbaker [00:03:21] We were basically at 0% of our dollars being spent on Montana food, and now we're shooting for close to 10%. That was always my hope is that we could actually get more local food on our tip on streets.

Amy Harvey [00:03:37] The farm to institute really helped us get going. And lead us in the right direction. There's been lots of talk of doing farm to school in Hamilton for many years, and certain things had started happening like a garden that was kind of started about eight years ago, but then abandoned. And the Farm to School Institute was the perfect time to bring our team together.

Grace Nichols [00:04:01] It's amazing. Like we had a bunch of really old trees and now it's just clear it's going to be a garden in like two months or something. It's crazy. Like after those two articles were in the newspaper, I got like 5 to 10 phone calls of people just saying how interested they were in farming school. It's really cool to see a community come together for something that seems kind of small. I don't know. I think it's awesome.

Nick Giacamino [00:04:32] When we went to the institute and as a team. And found our roles. And I think we got lucky with a lot of the people that, you know, are on our team.

Drew Blakenbaker [00:04:43] Kind of the all four components of it. Between the garden here today, getting kids out here working. And the soil and teachers being able to incorporate it in their classrooms. Our amazing feature is dept being able to buy local food now.