



Vol. 4 Issue 1

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Newsletter

MFSI Announces New Youth Coordinator



Cassandra Thompson, MFSI Youth Coordinator

Cassandra Thompson, previous MFSI Communications Coordinator is now the new Youth Coordinator. She is the daughter of Eugenia “Carol” Tiger and the late Bodee Thompson and currently resides in Okemah with her 3 children she calls the “Harjo Tribe”. Cassandra is a Mvskoke citizen, of the Eco clan, the Sunday School Superintendent and teacher at Springfield United Methodist Church, Founder of the Sacred Save Project in Okemah, and is working on her Associates Degrees in Secondary Education and Native American Studies at the College of the Muscogee Nation and OSU-Okmulgee.

Ms. Thompson began working with MFSI in April 2010 and since has been able to attend many trainings, workshops and work with a wide range of farmers, ranchers and food activist. With her new skills and knowledge she has gained she has developed the MFSI Youth R.O.O.T.S. Program that she will be implementing in the Community Food Project Plans for Wilson and Eufaula. She will also be working to increase the number of young farmers and ranchers in Mvskoke Country. “I am enthusiastic about working with youth and inspiring them to get in touch with the land and what food sovereignty means. MFSI has allowed me to expand my knowledge and encouraged me to help my own community to raise the awareness of the issues we face with the environment and food issues. Youth are the keepers of our future and I’m ready to pass on the knowledge of sustainability with the help of partners, farmers, gardeners and those that share MFSI’s vision and goals.”

Cassandra will be working with all ages of youth, ages 30 or less, or if you need resources of grants, starting a garden or any information regarding MFSI. If you are a young farmer, rancher of the age 30 or less and have started a small garden in the past year you are encouraged to contact Cassandra at 918.759.8334 or at cthompson@mvsokofood.org.

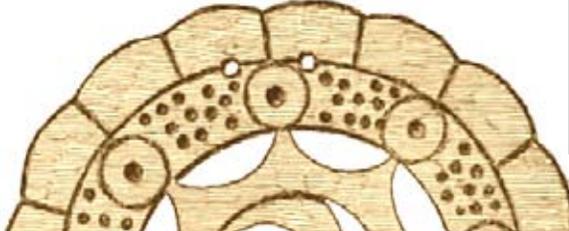
IN THIS ISSUE:

NEW YOUTH STAFF	PG 1
EARTH ELEMENTS	PG 2
HOMPETV HAYETV	PG 3
ESTE MVNETTVLKE EMVPUNVKV	PG 4
EMETVLHVMKE NAK ONVKV	PG 5
HVSE VHVMKVTKV	PG 6

MFSI MISSION:
 DEDICATED TO ENABLE THE MVSOKOKE PEOPLE AND THEIR NEIGHBORS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FOOD AND HEALTH NEEDS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

MFSI
 100 EAST 7TH SUITE 101
 OKMULGEE, OK
 74447
 918.756.5915
 918.756.5918- FAX
INFO@MVSOKOKEFOOD.ORG
WWW.MVSOKOKEFOOD.ORG
 WE ARE ON FACEBOOK
MVSOKOKEFOOD@GMAIL.COM

OFFICE HOURS:
 TUESDAY- FRIDAY
 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



MFSI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JACKSON BARNETT
LEE VASQUEZ-ILAOA
RICHARD BELCHER

MFSI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JOHNNIE BRASUELL
MCN DIABETES

SHARON IVERSON
MCN DIABETES- DIETITIAN

EMMAN SPAIN
MCN CULTURAL PRESERVATION

JOHN WEST
HORTICULTURIST

YVETTE WILEY
MCN ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DONNA WILLIAMS
PERSONAL CHEF

LOU FIXICO
MCN ELDERLY NUTRITION

STAFF

DARRELL FOX
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VICKY KARHU
PROJECTS MANAGER

H. JUNE MARSHALL
COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

RITA WILLIAMS
EDUCATION & POLICY COORDINATOR

DICEY BARNETT
OFFICE MANAGER

CASSANDRA THOMPSON
YOUTH COORDINATOR

MELODIE SIVADON READER
COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING & RESEARCH
COORDINATOR

SUE WHITE AND
GEORGE AUTAUBO
NICOA

Earth Elements Market & Bakery

By H. June Marshall, Community Coordinator

Dacey Barnett and I traveled to Lexington, Oklahoma on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, to tour entrepreneur April Harrington's business EEMK. April has a five-acre farm and a 2,300 square foot building that houses the store front and production area (kitchen) where value-added food products are concocted, prepared, packaged, labeled, and put out front so customers can come in and browse such as Dacey and I did. April has been in business for twelve years and will continue either at this location or another in spite of challenges she faces with the state wanting to widen the highway that runs right outside her business. She is optimistic that she will continue to provide healthy, locally grown food for her neighbors no matter where she is located.

Her foods are simply processed and prepared that does not take away from the delicious flavor of the locally grown fruits and vegetables. She does business with approximately fifty farmers. She stated that forty-four percent of all the ingredients she uses come from Oklahoma. Her food labels are unique in that the ingredients are designated locally grown and/or chemical free, and her over 300 products displays this label. I asked her how she comes up with her many recipes. She stated that her staff uses the tried and true recipes, but often times will experiment with new recipes. I bought her squash and hamburger casserole. Dacey and I both shopped and took home shopping bags full of healthy foods for our pantries (whole wheat pizza dough, honey wheat crackers, sand plum jelly, locally grown wheat flour, pickled jalapenos, burritos). They were getting ready to process pumpkins. Their back area was loaded with these beautiful orange pumpkins.

April began with a small kitchen in 1999, expanded it in 2004, and finally rebuilt it in 2007. Customers can rent kitchen space to prepare their own food products either hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly. She currently has four renters who utilizes her kitchen. She gives training to the customers before they begin their food preparation journey. She continues to provide educational awareness to adults and children.

The kitchen had many food prep work stations, two mixer areas, pizza prep area, food pantry, spice rack, numerous racks, stoves, ovens, cold storage rooms, and freezers. April's staff fluctuates with the growing seasons. We saw four people working while we were there. They are getting ready for Thanksgiving; I know I will be going back to get prepared pumpkin so I can make my pies and breads.

We appreciate the hospitality extended to MFSI. We informed April that Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative has been blessed to have been awarded a grant from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program that will involve equipping the Wilson Indian Community Center kitchen in compliance with state and federal regulations in order to process garden produce into value-added products for retail sales. We wanted to see how other businesses were flourishing using Oklahoma-grown produce, and also plan on touring another kitchen in Durant. Lexington is not too far from Norman, just south of Noble. Visit EEM, 9600 Pecan Tree Circle, Lexington, Oklahoma 73051, telephone: 405.872.3722.

Hompety Hayety- To Make Food



Traditional Luck for 2011

Taken from: <http://wilstar.com/holidays/newyear.htm>



Traditionally, it was thought that one could affect the luck they would have throughout the coming year by what they did or ate on the first day of the year. For that reason, it has become common for folks to celebrate the first few minutes of a brand new year in the company of family and friends. Parties often last into the middle of the night after the ringing in of a new year. It was once believed that the first visitor on New Year's Day would bring either good luck or bad luck the rest of the year. It was particularly lucky if that visitor happened to be a tall dark-haired man.

"It was said that eating black-eye peas would bring you good luck for the whole year if that was the first thing you ate on New Year's Day. Along with rice and cornbread Dicey Okis ce!"

Traditional New Year foods are also thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes "coming full circle," completing a year's cycle. For that reason, the Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune.

Many parts of the U.S. celebrate the new year by consuming black-eyed peas. These legumes are typically accompanied by either hog jowls or ham. Black-eyed peas and other legumes have been considered good luck in many cultures. The hog, and thus its meat, is considered lucky because it symbolizes prosperity. Cabbage is another "good luck" vegetable that is consumed on New Year's Day by many. Cabbage leaves are also considered a sign of prosperity, being representative of paper currency. In some regions, rice is a lucky food that is eaten on New Year's Day.



Cassandra Thompson (Back row, center) with other Native American delegates at Terra Madre in Torino, Italy



A sweet gift made from the heart Cranberry Lip Gloss

Microwave one tablespoon Sweet Almond Oil, 10 fresh cranberries & 1 teaspoon honey until mixture starts to boil. Gently crush berries & stir well. Strain liquid through a fine sieve to remove any solids; pour into containers. Sweet Almond Oil can be found at the Nutrition Shoppe in Okmulgee.

new people it has shown me with knowledge, skills and commitment you can become a leader for your own community. You can also go back to living simple and the materialistic world is always the most fantastic when comes to the earth's natural resources and wanting to be healthy. With my new founding knowledge I have began a movement in my own community to raise awareness of these issues with the Sacred Save Project. I feel blessed to also use my skills- knowledge of the land, using natural resources, gardening, etc- to work with youth at MFSI. I look forward to the changes we can make together to make our lives sustainable for our families and children. To you, my friends and family, I hope your New Year's Resolution includes something that will make your life better and blessed. My New Year's resolution that gives me my drive to make a positive change in my community includes the words of Mahatma Gandhi- Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. MVTO!

MFSI Reflections

Cassandra Thompson, MFSI Youth Coordinator

For the short time I have been at MFSI, I have been able to attend workshops and trainings which include: Langston University, Women's Ag Conference, Permaculture Design Course in New Mexico, travel to Italy with the Slow Food Movement and more importantly get connected with many inspiring Farmers, ranchers, cooks, environmentalist, and food sovereignty activist. This food movement is the beginning of something bigger and yet so simple. By attending these events and meeting

Este Mvnettvlke Emvpuvkv - Youth Speaks

A New Youth Program coming soon!

Cassandra Thompson, Youth Coordinator

MFSI is working on a youth initiative to get more youth involved in Agriculture. If you would like MFSI to come and present or work with your youth on a garden or farming techniques, please call MFSI and we can schedule an event in your area.



MFSI to host 3rd Annual Food Sovereignty Symposium

Melodie Sivadon Reader - Communications, Marketing & Research Coordinator

MFSI will host their 3rd Annual Food Sovereignty Symposium Feb. 18 - 19, 2011 at the Mound Building located at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Complex, Hwy 75 and Loop 56, Okmulgee, Okla. Speakers for the two-day event include: Jackleen de la Harpe, Sue Gray, Louie Hena, Dine Inc., Steven Bond, Duane Meadows and Randall Ware. Tribal delegates, along with area farmers, ranchers and county officials will also speak at this event. Food and Fitness vendors will be located in the mound building foyers. The theme this year is "Food & Fitness." For more information, please call (918) 752-6113 or email mreader@mvsokokefood.org. To become a vendor, please call (918) 759-8334 or email cthompson@mvsokokefood.org.



MFSI Announces New Staff Member

Mvsokoke Food Sovereignty Initiative announces the new Communications Coordinator Melodie Sivadon Reader. The position was formerly held by Cassandra Thompson. Reader will also take on the additional responsibilities of MFSI Marketing and Research Coordinator. Previously, she worked for Muscogee (Creek) Nation Communications Department as Senior Writer for the *Muscogee Nation News*.

"I really love writing, gardening and music," said Reader. "Those are my passions. I am glad to have the opportunity to be out in the community working with our farmers, ranchers and backyard gardeners and help provide the resources they need to become more sustainable."

Reader was raised in a farming community and has many years of gardening experience. She also worked with her parents at their farm and garden retail store for over 20 years before coming to work for MFSI.

"My family had a farm store on 11th and Memorial for over 50 years and I basically grew up in that store," said Reader. "I loved each spring when the chicks, turkeys and rabbits would come in and then late spring and early summer, when the greenhouse would be full of tomatoes, pepper, squash, cucumber and herbs. It was a great atmosphere to be in and I learned so much from my grandparents, parents and the gardeners who came in on a day-to-day basis."

Working at MFSI in communications, marketing and research will enable Reader assist socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and backyard gardeners throughout Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

"When I was little, I remember planting lots of different vegetable and fruits," said Reader. "We had several acres of garden and my chore was to help maintain the garden and keep the weeds and pests under control. We had a large family and had to be self-sufficient. My goal is to help make area farmers and ranchers self-sufficient through sustainable agriculture, bring in more young people and make farming, ranching and gardening a viable occupation for the next generation."

MFSI Emetvlhvnmke Nak Onvkv- MFSI Community News

A Great Year for MFSI

By Cassandra Thompson, Youth Coordinator

MFSI has had an eventful year. Full of new connections, wonderful accomplishments and good harvest. We have been able to go to trainings, send local farmers and ranchers to trainings, help the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establish a Food and Fitness Policy Council, and MFSI has been represented locally and nationally in 2010. We even got more staff and moved to a bigger office!

As we reflect on our accomplishments and lessons learned, we take our friends and ambitions to do even more in 2011. We look forward to our annual symposium which will be on the date of February 18th-19th. Our mobile resource unit has been to Okmulgee, Hughes and Okfuskee Counties and will be on the road to visit McIntosh and Creek Counties in the spring. The National Food and Fitness Run/Walk has become a domino effect in Okfuskee County and our hope is that it empowers other communities to organize their own in conjunction with the 2011 Food and Fitness Run/Walk.

Wilson Indian Community has made big leaps with the help of MFSI and the Community Food Project Grant with activities such as: Community garden, their greenhouse is up, establishing a farmers and ranchers group, and now they are working toward a certified kitchen. Eufaula Indian Community will be able to collaborate with the Wilson Indian Community and MFSI to get their garden up and going by the spring.

One of MFSI's major goals is to get youth involved in agriculture. We have aspirations to help youth start youth gardens and do small workshops to help them dig in to the ground, grow their own food and gain an interest in farming or ranching. Cassandra Thompson will be the new Youth Coordinator who will be presenting and organizing activities in the communities. She is excited and motivated to get youth involved in MFSI Youth ROOTS program.

Through MFSI's educational meals, the after school program incordination with Indian Health Resource Center, and all our events and activities we will continue to make an impact on our food for our health and sustainability.



Hvse Vhvmkvtkv- Calendar

January 18th-19th

Southern SAWG Conference- Practical Tools & Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms. Info: <http://www.ssawg.org/>

January 25th

Solar Power Generation USA. More info: www.solarpowercongress.com

January 28th-29th

OASDFR Outreach & Food Heritage Class. Free USDA Grant Info @ Tractor Supply & Spirit Bank, Bristow, Okla. Info: mreader@mvsokofood.org or 918.752-6113

February 18th-19th

MFSI Food Sovereignty Symposium at Mound Building at MCN Tribal Complex. Theme: Food & Fitness. Booth space available. Info: mreader@mvsokofood.org or 918.752.6113

Visit our website Calendar to see upcoming events and find us on Facebook!

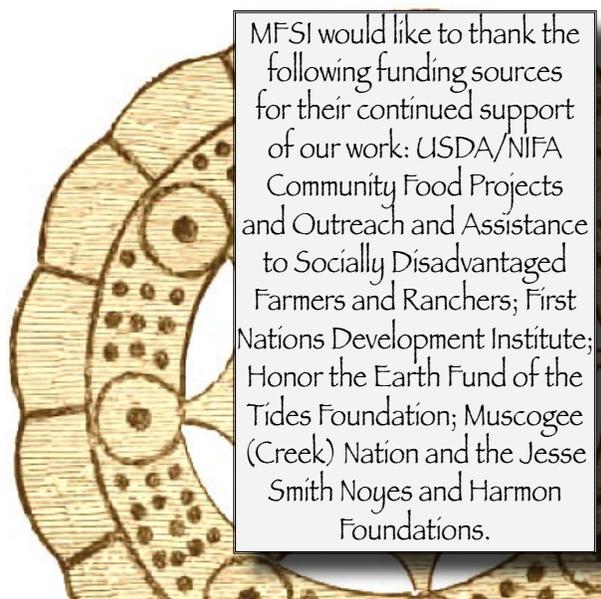


Stream radio on our web site. Native American language, gardening & farming tips, Native American music & more...



MFSI
100 East 7th Suite 101
PO Box 813
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Visit www.mvsokofood.org for updates on trainings, events or sign up to get the newsletter by email.



MFSI would like to thank the following funding sources for their continued support of our work: USDA/NIFA Community Food Projects and Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers; First Nations Development Institute; Honor the Earth Fund of the Tides Foundation; Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Jesse Smith Noyes and Harmon Foundations.