

“Can We Provide Better for Our Children?”

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In our western culture we have a rather **strange relationship with food**. Food has become “fast” and disposable. We suffer from higher-than-ever rates of obesity and decreasing life expectancy.

Why is it that our food has lower nutritional value as compared to not that long ago?

Why do we celebrate “celebrity chefs” and have cooking channels on TV, and yet we don’t make the effort to prepare home-cooked meals nor sit down to eat together. A strange relationship with food indeed!

Please especially ponder these next 3 questions:

-Do we know **where** our food has been grown? (*Locally? From across the country? Some other country?*) Do we care?

-Do we know **who** grew our food? (*A local farmer with whom we have a relationship? A farm-worker who toils for inadequate and unjust pay?*) Do we care?

-Do we know **how** our food has been grown? (*Conventionally? —i.e.: with chemicals. Organically?*) Do we care?

And, why is it that during a spiritual retreat--the meals are not considered part of the retreat, but rather seen as some kind of addendum at best?

Why do we feed to our children in school “food” that is not tasty nor nutritious? By this injustice what are we teaching them?

I am so pleased that in least one of the states where our Presentation Sisters minister there has been and continues to be *much* energy around healthy food in schools: **California!** Here are two examples:

At **Mt. Diablo School** near San Francisco, the “*lunch menus are filled with California-grown fruits and vegetables, grass-fed meats and recipes that defy the stereotype of inedible school food.*” (And, at Mt. Diablo

School, 96% of the pupils are minorities!) Please take some time to see the great photos and read this amazing article on Mt. Diablo School at [No more nuggets? School lunch goes farm-to-table — for some | AP News](#)



Edible Schoolyard: Alice Waters and schoolchildren who know where their food comes from!

Some 20+ years ago I visited the “motherhouse” of the healthy food movement in schools: the ***Edible Schoolyard*** in Berkeley. A run-down MLK Junior High was transformed by the installation of an on-campus garden. Students now learn firsthand where their lunch comes from: the “edible schoolyard”! This outdoor environment hosts many of the classes and the students also learn how to prep & cook the food, set a table, serve the dishes and engage in meal-time conversation. I hope you want to learn more at <https://edibleschoolyard.org/berkeley> and watch these very short videos at <https://vimeo.com/33568272> and <https://www.pbs.org/video/inside-california-education-edible-schoolyard/> (begins at 1:55)

This amazing project in Berkeley inspired me to found the ***Children's Discovery Garden*** in Godfrey, Illinois. Other adults helped organize and we became known as the "Community Cultivators". School-children came to this learning garden and had first-hand experience with seeds, soil and sunshine. The state of Illinois presented the *Governor's Hometown Award* to the Children's Discovery Garden in 2004.



Discovery Garden in La Vista Park, Godfrey, Illinois - founded by the author

Lent is a time where we typically become more conscious of at least some of the food we consume/or abstain from. During this Lent and beyond, let us resolve to both eat more locally, healthfully and mindfully.

Let's progress from a strange to a *healthy* relationship with food, especially with our children!