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## **Garden-based nutrition curriculum helps student volunteers implement innovative solutions to hunger in their community**

*The Campus Kitchens Project and Sodexo release nutrition curriculum to help kids explore food systems from seed to plate*

**March 25, 2015 – Washington, DC** – The Campus Kitchens Project, a national organization that empowers student volunteers to fight hunger in their community, today announced the release of “Sowing Seeds for Healthy Kids,” a garden-based nutrition education curriculum developed with support from Sodexo. The curriculum helps student volunteers from across the country implement innovative models that fight hunger and food waste in their community by serving as a tool to educate young children about food systems.

“[Sowing Seeds for Healthy Kids](#),” which can be found on The Campus Kitchens Project website, includes six lesson plans, an integrated discussion guide of gardening and nutrition topics, and a variety of additional resources. The curriculum provides nutrition information to empower students to make healthier choices and lessons which teach students that healthy eating and food access are issues that they can address on a community level. It also includes a pre- and post-test for those implementing the program to evaluate changes in students’ knowledge and behavior.

The Campus Kitchen at Northwestern University, in partnership with the Sodexo District Dietician, conducted a pilot implementing the curriculum in the fall of 2014 and saw promising results. Eighty-five percent of students in the pilot program increased their knowledge about lesson topics, and almost 70 percent reported preparing recipes and snacks from the curriculum at home with their families. The success of the pilot has encouraged student volunteers with the Campus Kitchen at Northwestern University to expand its implementation to more partner sites.

“Programs like this represent an excellent model for ways we can enhance the performance and well-being of nearly 16 million children at risk of hunger in this country,” said Robert Stern, chair Sodexo Foundation. “Sowing Seeds for Healthy Kids provides them with the information and resources they need to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Perhaps even more important, it can affect positive behavioral changes where healthy choices become second nature.”

“Sowing Seeds for Healthy Kids” demonstrates how The Campus Kitchens Project collects best practices from student volunteers around the country and uses them to develop and pilot shareable resources that other Campus Kitchens and community organizations can use to address root causes of hunger and

poverty. At each of the 43 Campus Kitchens nationwide, students lead efforts to combat food waste and hunger by collecting surplus food from on-campus dining halls, community gardens, restaurants, and grocery stores and transforming it into healthy meals. In the last academic year, Campus Kitchens across the country rescued more than 823,549 pounds of food and served 293,963 meals to 12,006 clients.

“Our nation’s schools are a powerful ‘test kitchen’ of new ideas in the fight against hunger,” said Laura Toscano, director of The Campus Kitchens Project. “Our work and partners like Sodexo allow us to collect promising practices emerging in local communities, and create proven effective resources that can be implemented nationwide and even beyond our network.”

“Sowing Seeds” was developed as a follow-up to The Campus Kitchens Project’s classroom-based curriculum “Building Blocks for Healthy Kids,” released in the summer of 2013, and represents best practices from student volunteers at current Campus Kitchens including the Campus Kitchen at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Campus Kitchen at Gonzaga University, the Campus Kitchen at Baylor University, and the Campus Kitchen at Augsburg College.

Since 2001, Sodexo and Sodexo Foundation have supported The Campus Kitchens Project in its mission to share high school and college on-campus kitchen space, recover surplus food from cafeterias and engage student volunteers to prepare and deliver meals to millions of community members.

#### **About The Campus Kitchens Project**

Founded in 2001, The Campus Kitchens Project is a national organization that empowers student volunteers to fight hunger in their community. On 43 university and high school campuses across the country, students transform unused food from dining halls, grocery stores, restaurants, and farmers’ markets into meals that are delivered to local agencies serving those in need. By taking the initiative to run a community kitchen, students develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills, along with a commitment to serve their community, that they will carry with them into future careers. Each Campus Kitchen goes beyond meals by using food as a tool to promote poverty solutions, implement garden initiatives, participate in nutrition education, and convene food policy events. To learn more about our work or bring The Campus Kitchens Project to your school, visit [www.campuskitchens.org](http://www.campuskitchens.org).

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