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January 8, 2016

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Trustee Jay Hansen

Re: Proposed Food Literacy Center operation of urban farm
program at Leataata Floyd Elementary School

Dear Trustee Hansen:

On behalf of Valley Vision's Board of Directors and staff, I would like to express our support for the Food Literacy Center proposal to operate the urban farm and garden program at Leataata Floyd Elementary School.

Valley Vision has had the opportunity to facilitate the Healthy Foods Task Force for Sacramento City Unified School District for the past five years. The school district has made great strides in increasing the quality of food served to students and the opportunities for nutrition education including through use of school gardens. However, gardens are often difficult for school site and district staff to maintain in addition to their other responsibilities.

This 2.5-acre farm will be open to students in both the elementary school and Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School. Students will be able to grow a variety of healthy food in an effort to increase their understanding of nutrition and agriculture. Amber Stott and the staff of the Food Literacy Center are well-suited to lead this charge and provide these students with the best learning experience in this vital educational realm. The Food Literacy Center has been a valuable district partner for several years, providing cooking and nutrition programs at six SCUSD after school programs. They are also partners in the district's recently awarded federal Farm to School grant.

Despite promising trends and new practices concerning nutrition education and the importance of exercise, young people are still dealing with a serious epidemic of obesity, early onset diabetes, and other often preventable health issues. Exposing students to better options early in life will increase their chances of developing healthy habits while young that will continue with them into adulthood.

The student population at Leataata Floyd Elementary School is made up solely of residents of the Marina Vista and Alder Grove public housing communities. The Food Literacy Center has a proven track record of bringing successful food literacy education to low-income students in Sacramento. Evaluation data from three years of implementation at a similarly enrolled school in South Sacramento yielded the following results:

- 87% of students could provide an example of a healthy vegetable on a campus where year one students reported never having seen broccoli or plums.
- 91% of all students responded “yes” to the statement “healthy snacks taste GOOD!”
- 80% of students know how to make a healthy snack and read a recipe.
- 87% of students know how to save money while selecting foods that are also good for them.
- 80% of students know how to read a nutrition label.

Additionally, the Choice Neighborhood Initiative Planning Process, in which Valley Vision was a participant, included a community survey that reflected poor health status as a major issue in the Marina Vista and Alder Grove communities. This project will support increased investments in community building resources that will provide benefits to families in these neighborhoods.

Valley Vision is also engaged with the Greater Broadway Partnership, which has participated in discussions about the vacant land next to Leataata Floyd Elementary School. We have seen numerous conversations start and falter regarding developing this land into an urban farm. We feel strongly that the Food Literacy Center has the organizational capacity and both internal and external support needed to make this project happen and see it through.

Sincerely,



Bill Mueller, CEO
Valley Vision