

# FoodCorps Michigan Service Site Descriptions

Below you will find detailed descriptions of Michigan-based service sites, located in four regions of the lower peninsula:

- Central Michigan
  - Crim Fitness Foundation - Flint
  
- Metro Detroit
  - Detroit Public Schools Office of School Nutrition: Farm and Gardens Program - Detroit
  - Ferndale Lower Elementary - Ferndale
  - Wayne State University Center for Health and Community Impact - Detroit
  
- Northwest Michigan
  - Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities - Petoskey
  - Michigan State University Extension - Grand Traverse County - Traverse City
  
- West Michigan
  - Muskegon Public Schools - Muskegon
  - Operation Fit - Battle Creek

Each description includes details about the community where the service site is situated, the overall work and mission of the organization, and what an incoming service member can expect to do on a day-to-day basis at the site. We hope this document will help you to best determine where you are most interested in serving.

Please note this is a list of FoodCorps service sites for the 2018-2019 service term and is likely to change for the 2019-2020 service term. Some of the sites listed may no longer host service members next year, and new sites may come on board.

# Central Michigan

## Crim Fitness Foundation

### Flint

#### **Community Description**

The City of Flint, MI is home to approximately 99,763 people and known as the birthplace of General Motors in 1908. Flint has grown significantly over the past few years by adding restaurants and college housing. Kettering University and the University of Michigan-Flint are both based in the city, which boasts a variety of apartments and lofts. Rental prices average between \$400-\$800.

#### **Organization Description**

The Crim Fitness Foundation is committed to serving a leadership role in advancing the national agenda for improving health in our nation's communities. What does this mean? It means that the Crim believes we can be a catalyst for authentic change. Our response to the epidemic of childhood obesity is to provide physical activity and nutrition education to over 10,000 youth in the City of Flint, Genesee County, and beyond each and every day. Be part of our better future - help us fight childhood obesity, improve our community's health, and increase access to physical activity. Help us encourage an attitude of positive change and hope for the future. Together we can change health, change lives, change communities!

#### **Service Activities Description**

Our service members currently serve in 10 schools: Brownell K-2 STEM Academy, Cummings Community School, Doyle-Ryder Elementary, Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Freeman Elementary, Holmes STEM Academy, Neithercut Elementary, Pierce Elementary, and Potter Elementary. Our service members teach garden and cooking lessons to a variety of grade levels ranging from pre-K to 8th grade. They help to create a healthy environment by encouraging the establishment of gardens, whether indoors or outdoors. They provide opportunities to have students try new foods by conducting taste tests during lunch times. Our service members also reach out to the community as a whole to extend the healthy environment past school walls. They will do this through education, as well as parent and volunteer recruitment. In addition, they may attend meetings of other organizations to encourage collaboration throughout the city in an effort to create a better food system.

## **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

Service members should have experience working with youth and some gardening knowledge. In addition, candidates should have a desire to engage with the community.

**Helpful Languages:** Spanish

## **Metro Detroit**

# **Detroit Public Schools Office of School Nutrition: Farm and Gardens Program**

## **Detroit**

### **Community Description**

Detroit is experiencing a rebirth fueled by innovation and a spirit of intentionality and sustainability. The city sits on an international border with Canada separated by a strait known as the Detroit River. Along the riverfront, one can find boating, biking, and volleyball among other recreational opportunities. One of the city's jewels, Belle Isle is the nation's only free-standing island park. Belle Isle can be accessed by car or bike and offers running and hiking trails, a golf course, tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields, and fishing. The downtown and midtown communities of Detroit have been revived with the relocation of sports venues such as businesses Compuware, Shinola, Nike, Quicken Loans, and Whole Foods. Anchored by Wayne State University, Midtown Detroit is home to art and history museums, galleries, cafes, music venues, and theaters. A wide variety of locally owned ethnic restaurants can be found in neighborhoods across town. In addition, the city boasts one of the most diverse urban farming communities in the country of which including Detroit Public School Community District system is an active participant. Yes, Detroit has much to offer.

### **Organization Description**

In 2012, Detroit Public Schools Community District, along with community partners, kicked off an extensive farm to school initiative to create school gardens throughout the city. This program expands teacher access to real-life laboratories to engage students in lessons about healthy eating, nutrition, and concepts around growing food while increasing school access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Each site features raised beds constructed by students from the Drew Transition Center. This revolutionary project makes DPSCD one of the largest school

districts in the nation in which food services, site management, and curriculum are working collaboratively to ensure students are able to learn academic content in a real-world context related to gardens. We currently have 80 active schools in our school garden program, a two-acre farm to school production farm, and programming that includes academic standards based field trips to the farm, family farm days, and school farm stands.

### **Service Activities Description**

Service members are involved in hands-on nutrition-based lessons with students; and assist in the creation and sustaining of a healthier school/community environment. We are intentional about placing service members at schools that are active in our Detroit School Garden Collaborative and have a foundation of community engagement that are welcoming of service members. Dependent upon their skills and interests, service members will be placed at one of the following sites: Carstens Academy, Dixon Educational Learning Academy, Mackenzie Elementary-Middle School, and Spain Elementary-Middle School.

### **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

Strongly interested in service members with experience working with children, whether in a traditional classroom setting or informal settings (i.e. babysitting, camp counselor, etc.). Gardening, nutrition, and farming is certainly a plus, but not required as long as the service member has an interest in all three.

Detroit Public Schools Community District utilizes a structured environment. While we certainly value and encourage creativity and independence within our internal staff, it is important to note that service members are working within a large bureaucracy. It is a priority that applicants interested in this position can thrive in policy based working environments. Our district is made up of majority low-income students as well. Therefore experience in urban settings, specifically in social services or education based sites is preferred.

**Helpful Languages:** Spanish

# Ferndale Lower Elementary

## Ferndale

### **Community Description**

The Ferndale Elementary Lower Campus serves approx. 450 students from kindergarten-2nd grade. The school brings students and families together from 4 different Oakland County communities - Royal Oak Township, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge and Ferndale that make up Ferndale Public Schools. Approximately 60% or more of our student population receive free or reduced school breakfast and lunch.

Our campus is designed with the young child in mind. It is a school where children feel safe, loved, included, and empowered, as well as experience joy and happiness. It is a school where play is valued as part of the learning process; a school where music, movement, outdoor learning, art and logic are embedded into everyday learning.

### **Organization Description**

As a primary school, Ferndale Lower Elementary is designed with the young learner in mind. Teachers use curriculum and learning techniques based on brain-research that enhance visual learning and include music and movement while taking into consideration the individual strengths and needs of each child. Additionally, the program's reputation for excellence is based on a philosophy that fosters independence, promotes self-directed learning, and provides instruction in a project-based environment. Students attending Ferndale Lower Elementary School transition to Ferndale Upper Elementary School for grades 3-5.

### **Service Activities Description**

FoodCorps service at Ferndale Lower Elementary consists of the following activities in partnership with school staff and supporters:

- Investigating how breakfast/salad foods are selected in the cafeteria and working with the food service provider to incorporate healthier items in school meals;
- Implementing a process for school-wide healthy food taste testing;
- Continuing the development of a food garden/tower garden for education at Ferndale Lower;
- Designing and piloting ways for teachers to create healthier classrooms environments;
- Engaging with the school and broader community through programs and events to promote activities and behaviors centered on wellness and healthy eating.

## **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

As a primary school, it is important for our service member to be able to relate to our young learners and know how to engage them in learning.

# **Wayne State University Center for Health and Community Impact Detroit**

## **Community Description**

Detroit is in a revitalization phase attracting new residents each day. There are multiple efforts throughout the city to improve Downtown. Wayne State University is located in Midtown Detroit, which also has a strong growth rate. The city is home to a newly developed riverfront as well as Belle Isle Park, a 982-acre island park in the Detroit River. Not all who work in Detroit live in Detroit, and the suburbs are easy to navigate and close via freeways. Nearly 46% of Detroit youth are either overweight or obese, a rate that is much higher than the national average of 34%. Also, nearly 30% of families in Detroit experience food insecurity. Schools are an important location to launch obesity-prevention initiatives, as children spend approximately half of their waking hours in school.

## **Organization Description**

The Wayne State University Center for Health and Community Impact improves youth health through school-based programs that drive changes in knowledge, awareness, and behaviors related to physical education and activity, nutrition education, and healthy eating for students, families, and communities. The Center for Health and Community Impact is part of the Wayne State University College of Education. The Center plans, implements, and evaluates healthy eating and physical activity programs. The program which involves FoodCorps service members is Building Healthy Communities, which provides healthy eating education and physical activity programs in schools throughout Southeast Michigan. The Center uses a whole-school approach in the BHC model.

## **Service Activities Description**

Schools with which FoodCorps service member serve are located in the city of Detroit. For the current service term, the service member is assigned to Bow Elementary and New Paradigm Glazer Academy. Service members help to implement the Building Healthy Communities program which is a comprehensive, healthy school transformation program reaching elementary schools throughout Michigan to improve the physical activity, nutrition, and academic achievement of Michigan children. This healthy school transformation gives students, teachers and administrators the tools they need to change the school environment through healthy living activities and education. These evidence-based, best practices engage principals, classroom teachers, P.E. teachers, school staff, and parents to provide consistent messages and educational opportunities that help children to make healthy choices. Each component plays its own role in helping transform schools into healthier places for children to learn. These components include principal engagement, classroom education on healthy eating and physical activity, quality physical education, active recess, student leadership teams, and an after-school healthy kids club.

## **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

Time management/project management skills are of major importance when serving with schools. This site needs individuals who can work autonomously and who have the ability to be assertive without conflict. We believe the actual teaching skills will continue to improve as a service member gets experience. Cultural sensitivity and a basic understanding of the Detroit area and low SES needs are also important.

**Helpful Languages:** Spanish or Arabic

# Northwest Michigan

## Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities

### Petoskey

#### Community Description

Rural northwest lower Michigan, where our service member will live, is a diverse agricultural area featuring immense natural beauty. Groundwork Center maintains offices in Traverse City and Petoskey. Though the central office is located in Traverse City, the service member may choose to live in a community closer to the schools they serve, which would mean working out of our Petoskey office. With a year-round population of just under 6,000, Petoskey is home to restaurants interested in promoting locally grown foods; several breweries and wineries utilizing locally grown products, and a strong tourism economy. Northwest lower Michigan's topography is noted for its forests, clean rivers, and magnificent Lake Michigan shoreline. Opportunities for biking, hiking, boating, and beaches are abundant. This rural region shares a diverse agricultural heritage, a legacy of seasonal, low-paying jobs, and a large population of "working poor" families. The percentage of students receiving free and reduced price school lunches ranges from 50 to 96 percent, and the number of students per school district ranges from 153 to 2,021 to 10,000. These districts - along with the students and their parents - have embraced farm to school as a way to provide healthy food to kids while investing in the local economy. The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities will do what it can to support our service member in their search for housing.

#### Organization Description

The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities (formerly known as the Michigan Land Use Institute) works to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build community. We raise awareness and support for cleaner energy, more local food, and expanded transportation choices. Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities' Food & Farming program was launched in 2002 to grow jobs, save farmland, and build healthier communities through a strong local food economy. It is comprised of five primary components: 1) Farm to School, which includes a partnership with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District to integrate cooking, gardening and nutrition lessons into existing curriculum, and "coaching" for regional schools, helping them create healthy school food environments for their classrooms, cafeterias and communities; 2) 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids and Farms, the state pilot program providing reimbursement for school food service directors serving Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables and legumes; 3) Food Access, which promotes healthy, local food in food pantries, meal sites and baby pantries across a 10-county area; 4) Farms, Food & Health which connects local food to healthcare and

wellness; and 5) Farmer Support, which includes our membership as a Grassroots member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and outspoken advocate for local food systems. Groundwork serves as the lead communications advocacy organization for the 10 Cents a Meal pilot program and is a supporting partner of the National Farm to School Network.

While Groundwork is based in Traverse City, in 2016 we opened a satellite office in Petoskey in order to better serve the residents of the northern portion of our 10-county primary service area. Our service member will work out of the Petoskey office with the Groundwork's farm to school program, helping schools serve locally grown foods by connecting them to farms and related resources. Our service member will also meet and collaborate with many other community organizations with which the Groundwork Center collaborates, including Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD), the local Michigan State University Extension, the Local Food Alliance of Northern Michigan and nonprofit organizations including the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, Crosshatch Center for Art and Ecology, and North Central Michigan College which also have programs that serve farmers and gardeners. Our service member will travel to schools in up to two rural school systems in two counties that share a diverse agricultural region.

### **Service Activities Description**

Boyne Falls Public Schools is a small K-12 school located in a rural community approximately 30 minutes south of Petoskey. We added Boyne Falls as a new FoodCorps school in FY2017, having previously worked with them indirectly through grants aimed at improving school cafeteria infrastructure and promoting a healthy school food environment. Chef Nate, the food service director at Boyne Falls, is an enthusiastic supporter of farm to school initiatives. The school has a small hoophouse just behind the cafeteria, which grows produce that is featured on the school lunch line. Roughly 65% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch, and school administrators including the superintendent, principal, nurse and teachers have expressed creating a healthy school food environment as a primary goal. Pellston Public Schools is a small K-12 school located in a rural community approximately 20 minutes south of Mackinaw City. We added Pellston as a new FoodCorps school in FY2018, having previously worked with them indirectly through our community partners in the region. Our service member serves closely with the Food Service Director to help show the value of introducing students to new, healthy recipes in the classroom as well as through monthly cafeteria taste tests. The school has many supportive teachers and administrators. In addition, parents and community advocates have expressed interest in building a school garden.

### **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

Northwest Lower Michigan is full of immense natural beauty, so a love of the outdoors will definitely make you feel at home here! Our region is also characteristically rural, with many

charming small towns brimming with great restaurants, breweries and wineries due to the large volume of tourists that flock to the region each summer. An appreciation for winter is also a must. Our spring frost date often falls after June 1st, so experience growing in hoopouses and utilizing season extension techniques will help you embrace growing up north.

**Helpful Languages:** Anishinaabemowin, Spanish

## **Michigan State University Extension - Grand Traverse County**

### **Traverse City**

#### **Community Description**

Traverse City is a vibrant community. This metropolitan area is home to a strong and growing community with a diverse economy, breathtaking natural beauty and a hub for arts and culture. Centered near the 45th parallel, the area enjoys a temperate climate, moderated by the Great Lakes and other bodies of water. The climate, rolling hills, and predominantly sandy loam soils are ideal for growing fruit crops such as cherries, apples and wine grapes. Hops, berry crops, vegetables, field crops, livestock, dairy production and agro-tourism are also part of the very diverse and vibrant agricultural scene in the region. The spectacular natural environment, neighborly communities, miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, many small lakes, and rural areas minutes from the city center offer allows for endless outdoor recreation. Consider checking out the 2018 New York Times 36 Hours in Traverse City feature to learn more.

We asked FoodCorps service member Erin Baumann to share what attracted her to make the move from Minnesota to Michigan. “I had never been to Traverse City before arriving for my first day of service. What attracted me to the area was the wide variety of opportunities. Traverse City and the surrounding area has everything you need--a large enough city to provide all the amenities you could want, but a small enough city to get to outdoor spaces within a ten-minute drive.” Traverse City has served as a FoodCorps Michigan service site since the launch of the program nationally during the 2011-2012 service term.

#### **Organization Description**

Michigan State University Extension works to help improve people's lives by bringing MSU's vast knowledge and resources directly to individuals, families, communities, and farms. With a

presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. True to our land-grant mission and our position as a top global research university, Spartans work to advance the common good with an uncommon will.

Health and nutrition is one of four organizational program areas. Michigan State University Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. FoodCorps complements our mission to promote and foster a culture of health where people live, learn, work and play.

### **Service Activities Description**

Our service member will serve Traverse Heights Elementary in Grand Traverse County and Suttons Bay Elementary in Leelanau County. Traverse Heights is situated in the city limits of Traverse City and is under the leadership of a principal who is enthusiastically committed to school wellness and is one of our biggest supporters. Traverse Heights has a greenhouse on the school grounds and is staffed with school kitchen personnel who are open and receptive to enhancing the health of the cafeteria. Suttons Bay Elementary was added as a site in 2018 and has shown to be an excellent partner with opportunities for big impact.

At both sites, the service member coordinates and delivers monthly cafeteria taste tests featuring vegetables seasonal to Michigan; provides direct service work in partnership with classroom teachers to conduct engaging classroom and garden based education; and works with the school community/team to enhance the culture of health - including professional development for staff and participation in school-wide events. The service member shares impacts of service to the school and broader community.

### **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

**Interests/Knowledge:** Food and nutrition, food systems, gardening, general cooking, institutional food procurement, and education.

**Skills:** Communication - written and verbal, application of food and nutrition/systems information into exciting and interesting learning opportunities, youth engagement, conflict management, and facilitation.

**Helpful Languages:** Spanish

## West Michigan

## Muskegon Public School District

## Muskegon

### **Community Description**

Our district serves both the urban core and the surrounding city areas including the shorelines of both Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake. We have plentiful natural resources and boast terrific outdoor activities during all four seasons. We struggle economically as we have not fully transitioned away from our manufacturing base and economic challenges correlate along strong racial disparity lines. We have a history of lumbering and manufacturing that often exploited our natural resources and we are well on our way to changing our relationship with our small piece of the planet.

### **Organization Description**

We founded the first public school in Muskegon County in the mid-1850's; and currently serve the urban core of the city of Muskegon. Our district is home to more than 3,600 students most of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. We have more than 350 district staff members and multiple partnerships with community based organizations including non-profits, governmental and community health agencies.

### **Service Activities Description**

Our service site member engages with a team whose current efforts are focused at Muskegon Middle School and Lakeside Elementary. In addition, we partner with an urban farm that is across the street from our Moon Elementary School. The partnership between our food service company and our local growing community will be a focus area along with strengthening the connections between our food (e.g., farming and its consumable products) and our curriculum.

### **Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

We prefer someone with strong communication skills, as we currently have a large community based collaborative made up of diverse partners. Applicants should be self-directed and possess a willingness to learn, as well as the ability to network and work with different community partners.

**Helpful Languages:** Spanish

# Operation Fit

## Battle Creek

### **Community Description**

With a population of over 51,000 residents, Battle Creek is, perhaps, best known as the headquarters for Kellogg's and the home of Sojourner Truth during the last years of her life. Overall, the city inhabitants have a level of education slightly above the U.S. average for cities and towns. Of adults 25 and older, 21.55% have at least a bachelor's degree. The per capita income in Battle Creek is \$22,040; and a median income of \$38,216. Nearly 21% of the population live at or below the poverty level. An ethnically diverse city, 71% identifying as white; 18% as African American; and 6.7% as Hispanic or Latino.

### **Organization Description**

Operation Fit is a program developed by the collaborative efforts of Bronson Battle Creek, Battle Creek Community Foundation, Regional Health Alliance, community agencies, organizations, and the philanthropic community working towards decreasing the rates of childhood obesity in the Battle Creek Area.

Operation Fit develops a consistent message throughout a child's life. The school environment will be a positive influence in the development of behavior leading to a healthy lifestyle. In addition, Operation Fit engage parents to continue the message at home.

The goal of the Operation Fit program is to increase time of physical activity, improve nutritional habits, and develop a greater knowledge of healthy lifestyles for students and their families in Calhoun County.

### **Service Activities Description**

Our service members serve at four Battle Creek schools: Dudley STEM Elementary, LaMora Park Elementary, Post-Franklin Elementary, and Valley View Elementary. At these sites, service members are involved in hands-on nutrition-based lessons with students; and assist in the creation and sustaining of a healthier school/community environment. In addition, they may assist with morning movement and active recess; oversee staff and student wellness teams;

collaborate with school staff and students to implement healthy lifestyle initiatives; be involved in health-related after-school programs; work with food directors and lunch staff on creating a healthy lunchroom environment; and conduct monthly tastings and healthy snacks projects.

**Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences**

- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong interpersonal and networking skills amongst diverse constituent groups.
- Highly organized and able to manage multiple projects simultaneously.
- Ability to set priorities, work to timelines and within budgets.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision.