

Edible Schoolyard NYC announces Board Chair transition

NEW YORK (May 9, 2022) -- Following twelve years of service, John S. Lyons will step down as Chair of the Board of Directors of Edible Schoolyard NYC (ESYNYC). He will remain a director of the Board and closely involved with the organization. Jim Head, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of MultiPlan Corporation, was elected as the new Board Chair.

“All of us in the Edible Schoolyard NYC community are tremendously grateful to John for his incredible vision and service as the Founding Board Chair of our organization,” said Executive Director, Shanon Morris, MS, RD, CDN. “Under his leadership, ESYNYC grew from one school garden in Brooklyn to a network of 10 public schools across the city, serving over 3,500 students today.”

“It has been a joy to support Edible Schoolyard NYC and work with our staff, schools, students, and communities,” shared John Lyons. “I am so proud of what we’ve done together, and inspired by what’s to come under the leadership of our new Executive Director and Board Chair.”

John Lyons founded Edible Schoolyard NYC in 2010, inspired by his deep involvement and support of the Edible Schoolyard Project in Berkeley and the Chez Panisse Foundation. John worked to establish a strong public-private partnership with the school community at P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini elementary school in Gravesend, Brooklyn; local elected officials, including the former Brooklyn Borough President; and key supporters to transform a cement parking lot into a half-acre, organic school garden. Today, the garden grows fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers, includes a customized kitchen classroom and greenhouse, a hoop house, and a brood of a dozen chickens. The garden is a centerpiece and mainstay of the P.S. 216 community, and a thriving Edible Schoolyard NYC Demonstration Site, showing what is possible when students and families are offered robust edible education programming.

In 2013, under John’s leadership, the Edible Schoolyard NYC team and Board established a second Demonstration Site at PS/MS 7 Samuel Stern school in East Harlem. More recently, ESYNYC also established a Network Schools model which currently serves five public schools, is providing outdoor learning support that serves three public schools, and developed and expanded professional development offerings for educators across the city.

“The success of our organization today is a true testament to John’s leadership, the dedication and talent of our staff, as well as the partnership of our school communities, Board, Associate Board, and supporters,” said Jim Head, new Board Chair of ESYNYC. “We’re positioned to become an even stronger partner to our school communities and support edible education and its impact for years to come.”

Edible Schoolyard NYC’s (ESYNYC) mission is to support edible education for every child in New

York City. Founded in 2010, ESYNYC partners with NYC public schools, particularly those in underserved NYC communities disproportionately affected by food system inequities. Together with schools and community partners, ESYNYC seeks to cultivate healthy students and communities through hands-on cooking and gardening education, transforming children's relationship with food and promoting healthier school environments. In the 2021-22 school year, ESYNYC is working with ten schools, serving 3,500 students from PreK to 8th grade in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx. In addition to hands-on work within public schools, ESYNYC is also committed to providing professional development, resources, and tools to support other educators throughout New York City to bring edible education to their classrooms.

To learn more, visit edibleschoolyardnyc.org and follow Edible Schoolyard NYC on Instagram and Twitter, @esyndc.

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