

VOICE OF THE EXPERT:

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FLAVOR

Katie Sudler, Community Education Director

Like the broad world of food and beverages, careers in the industry are as varied as they are satisfying. While some follow a path as chefs, restaurateurs, purveyors and growers, others find reward in a career centered on developing packaged products.

Combining the art of creation with the science of formulation, food scientists explore the best of both worlds as they elevate the eating and drinking experience. Food scientists can help ensure future innovation, too, through example and education, including introducing young people to the idea of jobs in food science. Meanwhile, food scientists also play an increasingly important role in bringing awareness to food and flavor science, ultimately leading to more informed consumers.

For those that have pursued a career in food, fostering vocational awareness through mentoring and educating others can be a rewarding experience.

Katie Sudler is the founder and director of the McCormick Flavor Solutions Community Education program. With a background in both food science and education, she is eager to spread the word about rewarding careers in food.



Why is it important to educate the community about the food and flavor industry?

As people are interested in the 'how' of the food they consume, education creates transparency. Also, adults and students may not be aware of the many potential career avenues ranging from product development to sensory testing to manufacturing.

“Essentially, it is about making flavor understandable, accessible and exciting!”

Engaging the community by interacting with schools and community groups is a forum for learning and understanding more about the science behind food and flavors. It builds a pipeline for future food scientists, flavorists and other fun food careers in our industry.

How and why do you work with educators?

Teachers are hungry for information (no pun intended) and can be a positive voice for the industry! They reach hundreds of students each year and bring new life to the science and information shared with them.

Sharing interactive demonstrations and lesson plan is a way they can expose their students to careers in food in an engaging manner. Teaching and learning are multifaceted, and we show educators that all subjects are important.



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How do employees spread the word about the benefits of working in our industry?

Whether helping launch a future career in food or creating a more informed consumer, our Community Education program would not be possible without the support of our employees. Each person that engages in these activities helps deliver valuable expertise, gives their time, and offers career insights to students and teachers.

We encourage employees to seek opportunities to share their knowledge and experience. For example, various events throughout the year allow employees to engage with students. It is so much fun to see the joy this brings to both the employee and the student!

How can I extend this outreach and share my passion?

Look for similar opportunities in your community and ways to have more transparency to what the food and flavor industry is all about. You'd be surprised how open teachers and other community members are to learning from you. Possibilities include presentations to teachers and students, job shadow/internship opportunities, events at teachers' conferences, middle and high schools, colleges/universities, and other community events.

About our Community Education Program

Established in 2012 by FONA, the program seeks to make flavor understandable, accessible, and exciting. For more than a decade, the program has enhanced transparency by teaching others about food waste, packaging and nutrition and helped lift the industry by encouraging others to join the profession. The program includes outreach to educators as well as those in areas where we live, work and source.

13th year of the program in 2024

496 education events hosted or attended

+1.5k teachers reached

22k people engaged

“As members of the food industry, we can all play a role in planting the seed of food science knowledge to develop the future leaders.”



Inspired to share your passion and knowledge to shape the future of food?

Click for food science resources or reach out to Katie to learn more.

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