

PILOT LIGHT

Pilot Light's Journey from 2010-2020

January 2010 - The founding chefs - Jason Hammel, Paul Kahan, Matthias Merges, and Justin Large - attend *Chefs Move to Schools*, a program that was part of Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Campaign. The chefs were inspired to work with schools to assist students in making healthier choices through education.

April 2010 - The chefs partnered with educators and Principal Bogdana Chkoumbova to launch the first Pilot Light program at Disney II Magnet Elementary School, a public school in Chicago.

April 2012 - Pilot Light receives 501 (c)(3) status.

September 2013 - Pilot Light hosts its first fundraiser, a Back-To-School Block Party at The Publican Restaurant in Chicago.

September 2014 - Pilot Light expands to five new partner schools in Chicago, providing teachers with curriculum and partnerships with chefs to support classroom learning.

October 2014 - Pilot Light's first Feed Your Mind Gala is held at the Chicago Cultural Center, raising \$180,000 for program growth and expansion.

August 2015 - Joined Sister Cities Chicago at the Milan Expo to demonstrate the Pilot Light model of food education to Italian families.

October 2015 - Joined with the USDA and Chicago Public Schools to serve as a school lunch paired with classroom curriculum to 390,000+ Chicago Public School students.

February 2017 - Partnered with Chartwells K12, a school food provider, to pair school lunch and classroom curriculum at schools nationwide, starting with the Noble School Network in Chicago

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June 2017 - Pilot Light teachers advance their first advocacy projects, driven by student interest and research conducted by Pilot Light on food-related challenges in underserved Chicago communities, including access to healthy food, food waste, and childhood obesity.

July 2017 - Pilot Light awarded our first grant from the Chicago Blackhawks Foundation to support the expansion of our program into classrooms on Chicago's south and west sides.

August 2017 - The Institute for Food Education expands, reaching approximately 1,500 students on a daily basis.

September 2017 - Pilot Light expands to eight Chicago schools, providing teachers with curriculum and partnership with chefs to support classroom learning. Additionally, mobile teaching kitchens are built for two South Side schools with support from Abt, Trucom, and the Rebuilding Exchange in Chicago.

October 2017 - Pilot Light hosts its Food Education Summit in partnership with the University of Chicago Community Programs Accelerator to create Food Education Standards for grades K-12.

March 2018 - Pilot Light releases its inaugural Food Education Standards to support K-12 teachers and like minded organizations with program implementation.

July 2018 - Pilot Light awarded USDA Farm to School Implementation Grant to expand our partnership with Chartwells K12 and the Noble Network of Charter Schools to create appealing healthy dishes featuring locally-grown food, serve them in the school cafeteria, and pair them with food education lessons delivered in the classroom.

July 2018 - Pilot Light partners with the Chicago Blackhawks Foundation to host Healthy Hawks. Under the guidance of a Pilot Light teacher, students create a nutrient-dense snack while making connections to their own daily decision-making. Following the making of the snack, the students went through guided exercises. The program encourages students to think critically about the ways in which their food choices impact themselves, their families, and the people of their communities while also trying new foods. Following the inaugural year, Pilot Light runs the program in the summer of 2019 (in person) and 2020 (virtually).

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August 2018 - Pilot Light is a recipient of the Englewood Quality of Life Fund to help support the development of the community garden at Bass Elementary School in the 2018-2019 school year. Teachers will be able to use the produce grown in the garden in classroom recipes and lessons, furthering the students' understanding of the impact and value of gardening to grow deeper connections to their community.

August 2018 - June 2019 - Pilot Light trains and supports 65 teachers across all K-12 subject areas in 15 Chicago schools through the Institute for Food Education.

March 2018 - Pilot Light's Institute for Food Education was honored with the Society for Public Health Education's Clarence E. Pearson Program Excellence Award honoring "outstanding contributions to the practice of health education."

November 2018 - Pilot Light hosts three On the Table events in Chicago Public Schools. Events included discussions and hands-on cooking demonstrations with parents, teachers, and community members at schools and a community cooking class at Washburne Culinary and Hospitality Institute followed by the creation of a Memo to the Mayor – a real and tangible way to share our ideas about important issues with Chicago's new mayor Lori Lightfoot and her administration. Events were supported by The Chicago Community Trust.

January 2019 - Pilot Light awarded Chicago Housing Consulting Services Grant to extend its "Love Lunches" program at Claremont Elementary in the West Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. The student-envisioned project, "Love Lunches", came out of a community inventory that identified an increase in the number of homeless families in the area. Students planned and sourced 500 healthy lunches, packaged them, and delivered them to local homeless shelters and food pantries with hand-written notes sharing what they have learned about healthy eating.

March 2019 - Pilot Light is accepted in the 2019 cohort of University of Chicago's Community Programs Accelerator and receives a grant from the Institution for Translational Medicine at the University of Chicago for two Pilot Light high schools on the south side of Chicago to use their Food Advocacy projects to create Food Education & Advocacy Videos, focused on raising awareness around food issues they identified in their local community.

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April 2019 - Pilot Light welcomed representatives from partner organizations to The Future of Food Education, a breakfast designed to foster conversations and visioning around a food educated Chicago. Hosted at the University of Chicago's Polsky Center and in partnership with its Community Programs Accelerator and organizations across Chicago.

June 2019 - As part of their 6th grade Food Advocacy Project, Ray Elementary students and their teacher Vicki Drewa made history when they [took a trip to the Chicago City Hall](#) to submit their ordinance to ban polystyrene use in Chicago restaurants along with former Illinois Governor, Pat Quinn. In January 2020, Ray Elementary students [returned to City Hall](#) express support for the introduction of the "Plastic-Free Water" ordinance, which includes a ban on polystyrene, to the Finance committee at a press conference hosted by the Illinois Environmental Council.

September 2019 - Pilot Light welcomes their inaugural cohort of 13 [Food Education Fellows](#) from schools across Chicago.

November 2019 - As a partner of the Community Programs Accelerator at the University of Chicago, Pilot Light connected with the Harris School of Public Policy's Harris Policy Labs to develop a strategy for getting the Food Education Standards curriculum into schools at the policy level. With their analysis, the team developed recommendations, a list of legislators and policy makers for next steps into an advocacy plan.

December 2020 - Pilot Light launches the [Food Education Center](#) to serve as a digital hub for K-12 grade lessons, supporting materials, and community advocacy plans that integrate food education into the classroom. Lesson plans are created for and by teachers and aligned with Common Core State Standards for education as well as Pilot Light's Food Education Standards.

January 2020 - Pilot Light partners with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and FoodCorps to host a reception for the Whole Child Convening in Menlo Park, CA on teaching the whole child through food education. Participants tasted their way through mini-lessons led by each of the Founding Chefs and a Pilot Light staff member.

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March 2020 - As a response to COVID-19, Pilot Light launches the *Family Meal* initiative to provide out-of-work hospitality workers with stipends to develop short videos and recipes that accompany [Common Core-aligned family lessons](#) created by teachers for teachers and families alike to use during this time of remote learning.