NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Friends of GREAT KIDS FARM

Pumpkin Soup and Applesauce: November Programming Update

By Laura Genello



The mornings are really starting to feel like fall on the farm. Dry leaves crunch underfoot, and the fields are white with a layer of frost. But by mid-day, the ice has melted, and students are running around in t-shirts and enjoying the last of the farm's watermelon. Every day seems to challenge the last for having the nicest weather, and this gorgeous fall has made for a perfect field trip season. We've hosted over 40 field trips on the farm, bringing out over 2,500 students.



Our programs have always involved cooking or tasting items fresh from the farm. However, this year we've been featuring a different fruit or vegetable every month on our field trips to highlight the changing seasons.

In September, we learned about the corn we grow on the farm and made popcorn or corn tortillas. In October, students made their own apple sauce from locally grown apples, and in November, they've made pumpkin soup and seasoned butternut squash.

It's hard to believe that we have only two weeks of field trips left. After Thanksgiving, we'll transition from seeing students on the farm to visiting them in their classrooms. We'll also be hosting our Climate X Food summit on December 16 and 18 th . This year the event will be tailored to a high school audience, who will visit for a day of hands-on workshops on the intersection of climate change and food. While our spring and fall field trips host elementary schools throughout the city, our winter summits will provide an opportunity for every interested high school to visit. The fall foliage and 60 degree days may eventually come to an end, but the farm to school activities will keep going all winter long.





Consider Giving to Friends on Giving Tuesday

Your support goes a long way! Every contribution, big or small, plays a vital role in nurturing the growth of Great Kids Farm. As a non-profit organization, we rely on the generosity of partners like you to cultivate educational experiences, foster environmental stewardship, and empower the next generation of learners.

To make a donation, click here.

To learn more about the giving or volunteering at the Farm, click here.

Farm Fest 2026

Thanks to everyone who came out to Farm Fest 2026. We had another beautiful fall day at the farm. This year, over 400 kids, parents, teachers, and school staff attended. Guests had a taste of the learning opportunities and fun activities Great Kids Farm provides. Thank you to all our generous sponsors and donors, including Wegmans who provided a delicious taco bar lunch. This year, Friends added a shuttle adding more access points, and the Farm staff planned engaging activities for all. It was great to see our community out on the Farm enjoying the Farm we love.

We are already looking forward to next year and we hope to see you there!





City Schools Pardons a Great Kids Farm Turkey!

Great Kids Farm's Tom the turkey, and Farm Manager James Koval, participated in Baltimore City School's annual turkey pardon last week. This event was put on by City Schools' CEO Dr. Jermaine Dawson and his team, this year taking place at Glenmount Elementary Middle School. Check out this coverage below:

- WBAL-TV
- Baltimore Sun (Facebook and Instagram)

FARMER'S NOTES

Things are slowly winding down here at the farm. It has been so beautiful this fall. I can't remember more perfect fall weather. As I am writing this, we still have not had a frost that killed our plants. We are still harvesting peppers and tomatoes in the middle of November. Crazy! But some spaces of the farm, like the watermelon patch, have been cleared and seeded with winter rye and crimson clover. Those are the go-to cover crops. They protect the soil through winter and add nutrients and biomass in the spring.



Fall at Great Kids Farm



Another fun addition to the farm has been this little cinnamon tree. A lot of the recipes we use in the fall contain cinnamon. We do applesauce, pumpkin muffins, and roasted butternut squash. Cinnamon is such a familiar spice to the kids but where it comes from is not. Cinnamon is the bark of a particular tree. Our tree is much too small and young to provide us with any cinnamon, but it works perfectly as a teaching visual. And you can even smell the bark and stems to prove this tree is the real deal!

The greenhouse is such a necessary component of our work at the farm. In the spring it is full of seedlings. But now in the fall and winter, it allows us to grow and keep alive plants that wouldn't survive otherwise in Maryland. The cinnamon tree gets to hang out with lemon, lime, mango, and banana trees. These are surrounded with passion fruit vines. The greenhouse is a very wondrous space and such a lovely luxury in winter time!



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION | MASTER GARDENER

The University of Maryland Extension (UME) in Baltimore City is facing a significant funding challenge that could affect the continuation of important educational programs and community services. Master Gardeners have been an important partner for GKF events and for school gardens!

They are asking Baltimore City leadership to restore $175,000 in annual local funding that has historically supported Extension programs serving residents throughout the City. They encourage Baltimore City residents to: Contact their Baltimore City Council Member, Representative, The Mayor's office, and City Council President, and encourage them to support the restoration of $175,000 in annual funding for Baltimore City Extension. Residents can use or personalize this message:

I am writing to express my support for restoring $175,000 in annual local funding for University of Maryland Extension in Baltimore City. These programs provide valuable educational resources that benefit residents, families, and communities. I respectfully ask City leadership to help restore this funding and ensure that Extension can continue serving Baltimore City.

PARENT / TEACHER RESOURCES

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMITS (grades 9-12): This winter, we are offering 2 summits for high school students, and both include 2 date options for participating groups. Our single application -- live NOW! -- allows you to apply to both summits simultaneously. However, schools will only be selected to participate in 1 summit day. Each school can bring 10-15 students in grades 9-12, plus 1-2 adult chaperones. Transportation and catered lunch are provided for both staff and students. Details on summits are in the application, but key dates are:

Climate x Food Summits (December 16, 18 - APPLY ASAP)
African American Foodways Summits (February 24, 26 - APPLY BY 1/15/27)

SPRING FIELD TRIPS TO GKF (grades K-5; 1 per school per year)

- SIGN UP NOW for curriculum-aligned, hands-on learning with plants, animals, and land at the farm (buses included)

OTHER IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

- **Farm to Classroom Experience:** The staff bring the farm to your school (classroom or club) to lead lessons on animals, planting, and/or farm-fresh cooking (all grades) - BOOKING NOW for Winter 2026.
- Complete this Summit Interest Form if you'd like to be notified when applications open for Spring Garden Club Summit (grades 3-6) and the NEW Latinx Foodways Summit (grade levels TBD)

VIRTUAL & MATERIALS-BASED PROGRAMS

- Ag-tivity Kits (PreK-12): FREE hands-on kits to link classroom learning to food system themes.
- Facetime the Farmer (PreK-12): Live (virtual) visit to GKF tailored by age group and focus area
- Video Resources: Science-curriculum-aligned videos and introductory farm clips
- Virtual Field Trip (target audience: K-5): Students explore GKF at their own pace with this digital experience designed for the virtual classroom

SCHOOL GARDEN SUPPORT

- SEE BLURB TOWARD TOP OF NEWSLETTER FOR GARDEN-RELATED SUPPORTS.

For guidance on outdoor learning and food education, review the below and email us with additional questions.

- Outdoor Learning Toolkit
- Classroom Cooking Toolkit

All Farm to School offerings are listed at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/farm-school. General Farm to School email is farms@bcps.k12.md.us.