



Winter at Great Kids Farm

*By Laura Genello,
Farm to School Specialist*

The winter months have brought cold nights, the first snow, and a change of focus to our work at Great Kids Farm. While the Farm is no longer filled with the sounds of students discovering pollinators, planting seeds, or mimicking turkey gobbles, our team is still hard at work. These months we have been focused on promoting and distributing Ag-Tivity kits, supporting school garden projects, and planning for upcoming programs.

We're particularly looking forward to our third African American Foodways Summit this February. The theme this year is *Metamorphosis: Making Space for Change*, and as in the past a small group of high school students are helping to plan and lead the event. The Farm will welcome students from 8 schools on February 25 who will have the opportunity to explore workshops from community experts.

We're anticipating sessions from Marcus Williams of the University of Maryland on food technologies, Marvin Hayes of the Baltimore Compost Collective on transforming waste to treasure, and the John Newman Bee Company on nourishing a healthy gut biome. Throughout the day, students will explore themes of history and future, culture, agriculture, storytelling, science, culinary arts, and life in the Baltimore community.

Watch our 2020 video [here](#) to learn more. This year's summit will be in person, hands on, and experiential!

In addition, the winter is often a time when schools make plans for their school gardens. Some schools are working on revitalizing existing gardens, while many others are planning entirely new garden builds. We recently launched an [improved online resource kit](#) on school gardens to complement the one-on-one support we offer. If

outdoor school gardens aren't feasible, we are also working throughout the winter to distribute classroom [Ag-Tivity kits](#) to schools for teachers and students to experiment with mushroom growing, vermicompost, or microgreens inside the classroom.



Above image: Screenshot from the 2020 African American Foodways Summit recap video.



Above image: Chickens from the farm visit a Nathan A Pitts-Ashburton classroom.



Above image: L. Menyuk leads a plant experience at Mount Royal.

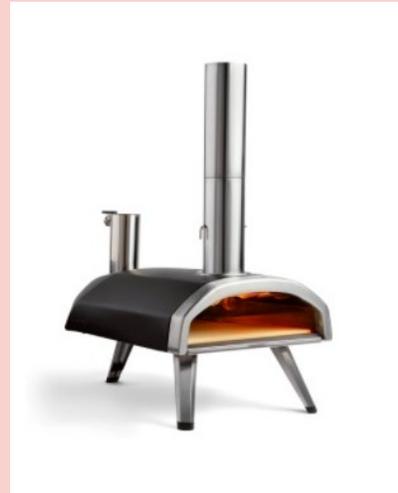
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Support our Show us the Love 2022 Online Auction!

Friends of Great Kids Farm is thrilled to announce our Valentine's Day themed auction, [Show Us the Love](#) - happening NOW and running through January 31st at 5pm. This auction has gifts for the special someone in your life - from vacation packages, jewelry, restaurant gift certificates, a pizza oven, artwork and more! Visit our [auction site](#) to start bidding now and come back often. Please share with your network as well to help make this our most successful auction yet!



Proceeds will help Friends continue to support the programs at Great Kids Farm, bringing students to the Farm and bringing the Farm to students. Thank you for your supporting farm-to-school programming and Baltimore City Public Schools students and staff.



Farmer's Notes

By James Koval, Farm Manager

You don't need to go too far to escape the freezing cold winter at Great Kids Farm. A quick walk down the sidewalk takes you to a place as lush and warm as the tropics. The greenhouse at the farm is full of greenery that would otherwise be frozen solid, dead, or dormant. We have passion fruit vines, lemon and lime trees, banana trees, and even a whole bed of turmeric.



Turmeric is a plant grown for its rhizomes that is typically found much closer to the equator than Maryland. However, our heated greenhouse gives us the opportunity to grow these types of exotic plants. Turmeric takes a long time to develop a sizable rhizome. The seed rhizomes were planted last March and they are now just ready to harvest in January. We are planning to use the turmeric for a tasting workshop within the African American Foodways Summit. So excited to see students try some turmeric... fresh from the greenhouse!

Board Member Spotlight

Maryanne Gruys

Senior Vice President and Head of M&T Business Capital, M&T Bank

Why do you support the Farm?

I support the Farm because I am passionate about education, wellness and sustainability. It is wonderful to support and promote the dedicated



Farm educators in their mission to connect farm to table and help develop healthy habits for the children of Baltimore City.

How else are you involved in your community?

I am a Board member of an organization focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, have served as the Co-chair of both the Wellness and Staff Appreciation Committees for my children's schools and volunteer at soup kitchens in Baltimore City.

Shoun Sinha

Senior Investment Manager, Venture Investing, Constellation Technology Ventures, [Constellation Energy](#)

Why do you support the Farm?

The Farm provides an incredible learning platform for the children of Baltimore city. The diverse programming enables a hands-on approach towards environmental literacy while promoting healthy nutrition concepts. Having grown up in a dense urban environment I've experienced first-hand the gap that exists in inculcating broader environmental literacy, especially for students in urban districts. The Farm's unique mission to help young students make a connection between farm and plate is very compelling.



How else are you involved in your community?

I'm also a member of the board, helping support various initiatives, at the William E. Baer School Partnership Board. The mission is to support the needs of the students of the Baer School. The school, a Baltimore city public school, is one of the very few educational institutions that specifically serves children with multiple and often severe disabilities. I'm passionate about helping society mitigate the impacts of climate change and as a venture capital investor focused on energy and sustainability I consider myself fortunate to be able play a role in enabling a cleaner and greener planet. I also deeply care about improving the lives of shelter animals and often volunteer at local shelters while advocating for more rescues and adoptions.

Resource Corner for Parents & Teachers

WINTER HIGHLIGHTS! Sign up now!

- **F2S Experience @ School:** F2S staff bring the farm to your classroom or club at your school to lead lessons to any grade on animals, planting, and/or farm-fresh cooking. Animals sessions not available December-February.
- **Facetime the Farmer:** Cozy up with our animals and greenhouse plants in during a live virtual visit to GKF tailored by age group and focus area.
- **Ag-tivity Kits:** Materials that link classroom learning with hands-on experiences, including Aquaponics Kit, Microgreens Kit, Mushroom Kit, Indoor Herb Garden Kit, and Worms Are Wonderful Compost Kit.

COMING SOON – SPRING 2022:

- **K-5 Field Trips to Great Kids Farm (GKF) [SPRING 2022]:** Only 10 slots still available...so book now! FREE (including buses) curriculum-aligned, hands-on learning with plants, animals, and land at the farm. Limit 1 trip per school per school year.
- **2022 School Garden Summit:** Applications not yet open, but complete [this summit interest form](#) to be the first to hear about event details
- **Spring 2022 Seedling Giveaway:** Request form not yet open, but complete [this interest form](#) to be the first to hear about event details

ONGOING SUPPORT/RESOURCES

- **School Garden Toolkit and video tour**
- **Video Resources:** [Short SABES-aligned videos](#) and [introductory farm clips](#)
- **Virtual Field Trip:** Students explore GKF at their own pace with this digital experience designed for the early elementary virtual classroom and especially good for the 2nd grade science unit What Do Plants Need?
- **Outdoor Learning Website**
- **GKF Site Use:** Request to host an event or meeting at the farm
- **List of virtual and in-person F2S experiences**
- **Service-Learning Opportunities @ GKF:** [email us](#)
- **Consulting & Professional Development:** [email us](#) if you'd like support with:
 - School gardens and outdoor learning
 - Food education
 - Connecting F2S topics to curricula
 - Incorporating F2S themes into school-wide family events
 - Connecting with local farms, gardens, and food- or nutrition-related organizations

For more information about educational resources, please reach out to our farm to school specialists at farms@bcps.k12.md.us or visit our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information. And be sure to follow us on social media!

Facebook @friendsgkf **Instagram** @friendsgkf **Twitter** @friendsGKF