News & Updates - Nov 2022

Friends of GREAT KIDS FARM

Snapshots from the Fall

Programming Update By Laura Genello,

Farm to School Specialist

Drop in on the farm to school team in the fall, and you might find us making salsa with a 7th grade science class, planting cover crops with 4th graders on a field trip, or introducing visiting families to the farm animals during an open house. Throughout any of these programs, I'm consistently reminded of how

novel these experiences are for students.

Yesterday, I picked a stalk of celery in front of a 2nd grade class and took a bite. The kids were stunned that I ate a plant straight from the ground. Suddenly, the whole class wanted to try the celery, so we passed out samples during lunch. During a recent cooking experience in a classroom, a student told me that he loved the salsa recipe so much that he wanted to make it again when he got home. That's not to say all students love what they taste; there are plenty who say "eww gross." But, each student that comes away from a program realizing that they actually do like celery, or learning the skills to make a healthy recipe, is a win.

Thanksgiving marks the end of a very busy fall farm programming season. In the last few months, we hosted over 1,200 students at the farm on curriculum-aligned field trips. These hands-on experiences are completely free for schools, with bus costs covered by fundraising from Friends of Great Kids Farm. In addition, 103 students visited for our Good Food Fall summit for a day of food-related workshops during which students made seasonal dishes such as applesauce, cornbread, or mood-boosting trail mix. For the first time this year, we also hosted regular family open house hours on the first Wednesday of every month bringing over 250 visitors to the farm, many of whom were students who had previously visited on a field trip. Programming was not limited to the farm itself, though. We also dropped in on over 18 classrooms to work with an additional 1,200 students at their schools for programs on the farm animals, plants, or cooking.

In December, we shift gears and pause (most) on-site programming until the return of warmer weather in March. Instead, we'll spend our time running cooking programs in classrooms, and offering our support for school gardening and outdoor learning efforts across the district by providing professional development and consulting for teachers and staff.

Check out our Annual Report

(School Year 21-22)

Our latest Annual Report is hot of the press!Access the document here.

Visit us online!

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Thanks for joining us for *Flavors of Fall!*

The 2022 Flavors of Fall event on Saturday, September 17th brought more than a hundred visitors to Great Kids Farm for an evening of farm-inspired appetizers and cocktails and mocktails. Our visitors had the opportunity to take a self tour of the Farm much like City Schools' families do during Family Engagement Events, and the Great Kids Farm student interns were on hand to share their experiences here on the Farm.

We're grateful to our event sponsor, McCormick, our small plate sponsor, T. Rowe Price, and our cocktail sponsor, Wegmans. The event wouldn't have been possible without the generous donation of time and expertise from Charleen Allen and Bar 5200, and the culinary creations of Cynthia Shea, Shakera Harris and the Great Kids Farm interns.

The event and silent auction raised nearly $20,000 to help support Friends of Great Kids Farm and the important farm-to-school programming Friends funds.

Giving

Tuesday

Tuesday,
November 29, 2022

It is our goal to connect agriculture and food with student's past, present, and future through the African American Foodways Summit. This year, for Giving Tuesday our goal is to raise $3,500 so we can fully fund our African American Foodways Summit in 2023 and continue making a difference in the lives of Baltimore City Public School Students.

"My biggest takeaway from the event was that culture and food are very connected. I have learned that food can really reflect important things from our history and tell a story." Student from Foodways Summit

If you'd like to help us achieve our goal and this incredible learning experience, you can donate via our Facebook Fundraiser (click here) or through our secure portal via Bloomerang (click here).

Thank you for supporting Friends of Great Kids Farm!

Farmer's Notes

By James Koval,
Farm Manager

Now that everything is winding down outside, it is time to get the greenhouse going for winter. Our greenhouse is kept nice and warm by the sun during the day and a boiler during the night. This allows us to grow year round. The benches that are full of seedling trays in the spring and summer are converted to raised beds for fruits, roots, vegetables, and flowers. It is so nice to have this space because when the rest of the farm is starting to look brown and unexciting, the greenhouse is loaded with color and vibrancy. This allows students on field trips later in the season to see plants still actively growing.

Also, for those of you following along with these posts, we have managed to trap two groundhogs and one raccoon in just the big greenhouse. All were relocated to the other side of the creek. So far, no more critters have been disturbing the plants. Although, aphids are starting to pop back up again on the pepper plants. If it's not one thing, it's another…

The Great Kids Farm Beet

In-Person Programs Fall/Winter/Spring:

- **Farm to Classroom Experience:** Staff bring the farm to your school (classroom or club) to lead lessons on animals, planting, food waste, and/or farm-fresh cooking (preK-12)
- *[WAITLIST ONLY - SY2023!]* **Field trips to Great Kids Farm:** Free (including buses!) curriculum-aligned, hands-on learning with plants, animals, and land at the farm (gr k-5) - 1 per school per year
- Student Summits: A series of energizing workshops bringing together students from many schools: UP NEXT: African American Foodways Summit (gr 9-12, 2/24/23); Spring Garden Club Summit (gr 3-5, date TBD). **Summit Interest Form** is always live for teachers interested in updates for future summits
- High school internship program & service-learning opportunities, including Tuesday Garden Crew Volunteer Hours @ GKF: **email us**.

Virtual & Materials-Based Programs

- Facetime the Farmer: Live (virtual) visit to GKF tailored by age group and focus area
- Ag-tivity Kits: Materials and teacher resource pack to link classroom learning with hands-on experiences, including Aquaponics Kit, Microgreens Kit, Mushroom Kit, Indoor Herb Garden Kit, Worms Are Wonderful Compost Kit
- **Virtual Field Trip:** Students explore GKF at their own pace with this digital experience designed for the virtual classroom
- Video Resources: **Science-curriculum-aligned videos** and **introductory farm clips**
- **Seeds and Seedlings:** Seeds and seedlings are available for educational use in the Spring. Limited seeds and seedlings may be available in the Fall.

Resources & Services

For guidance on school gardens, outdoor learning, food education, related partnerships -- and how to connect F2S themes to curricula, review the below and email us with additional questions.

- **School Garden Toolkit**
- **Outdoor Learning Toolkit**
- **Classroom Cooking Toolkit**

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!*

For more information on joining a Friends of Great Kids Farm committee, please reach out to Nancy Wiley at nancy@friendsgkf.org.

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