

Friends of GREAT KIDS FARM



Programming Update

*By Laura Genello,
Farm to School Specialist*

Last week, 120 students from five schools gathered at Great Kids Farm for our first-ever Climate and Food summit at Great Kids Farm. Students explored the intersection between climate change and the food system through workshops on pollinators, composting, soil management, local food systems, activism, and plant-based cooking.

The day began with a passport challenge activity. Students braved the snowy

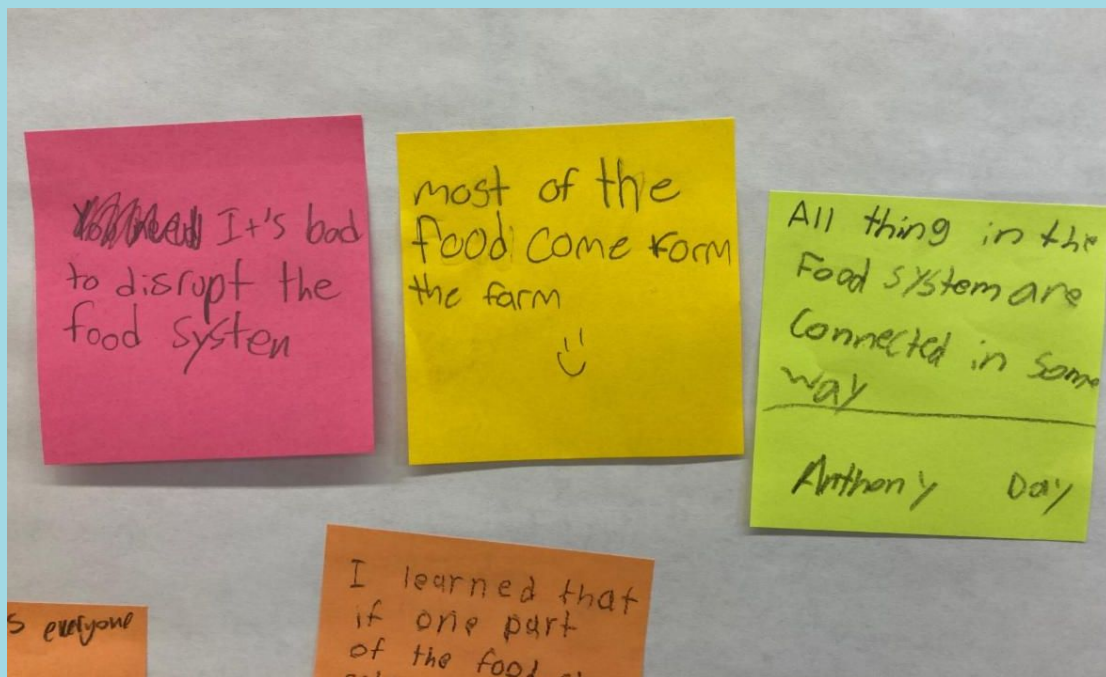
walkways to visit six stations around the barn, greenhouses, and classrooms to learn about all the ways in which the farm intersects with a changing climate: from the feed we give our animals to the way we manage our soils. Students at

Hamilton Elementary left with a box of farm prizes for successfully completing all passport challenges, while students from Holabird took a bonus-prize back to school: two chickens to add to their school flock.

After the passport activity, students headed to a series of hands-on workshops that explored their chosen topic in greater depth. As they left each workshop, students jotted down key takeaways, including:

- *“I learned that if one part of the food chain collapses, they all fall down.”*
- *“People who start with low power can still make change.”*
- *“I learned that blueberries are good for your memory.”*
- *“That a teaspoon of soil has 1 billion organisms.”*

We always love reading what students take away from the workshops, and these notes give us plenty of inspiration for planning next year’s climate summit.



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Jill Wrigley Memorial Outdoor

Classroom Update!

We're so excited to let you know that the **Jill Wrigley Memorial Outdoor Classroom** has been installed and is ready for our spring field trips beginning on March 12, 2024! We are working with the City Schools' staff and making plans to build out the classroom with furniture, materials, and supplies to make the space a wonderful addition to the Great Kids Farm farm-to-school programming. Stay tuned for more updates and pictures!



Farmer's Notes

*By James Koval,
Farm Manager*

Nothing too noteworthy at the farm this winter. Everything is dormant and tucked away until spring. The chickens are barely laying any eggs and the goats rotate between sleeping and munching on hay. It has already been much snowier and colder than last winter, and the goats



have been snuggling extra close to each other to stay warm. We moved their huts inside the barn so there is extra warmth and protection from the elements. They are getting unlimited amounts of hay to keep their bellies full too.

We are still a few weeks away from starting the very first seedlings of 2024. *Lisianthus* is one flower that we start in late January because it takes almost three months to go from planting the seeds to moving the seedlings outside. But it is worth it because they are such pretty flowers! We will also be starting trays of kale, spinach, and some mixed greens soon because they're cold

tolerant enough to get planted outside in March. As I am typing this, it is snowing outside, making it very hard to picture a green landscape full of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. But it will be here soon enough!





22-23 School Year Annual Report



We had many wonderful things happen at Great Kids Farm during the 2022-2023 school year! We are proud to present our annual report so you can read about them and the good work of Friends and Great Kids Farm. Here are a few impact stats that we'd like to highlight. See the link below for the full report.

At the Farm

3,047 students visited Great Kids Farm via field trips for curriculum-aligned experiences focusing on animals, plants, the watershed, or healthy eating

87 students attended Summer Camp at the Farm

13 students were employed in a paid internship program

316 students spanning grades prek through 12 participated in summits

900+ visitors explored the Farm during monthly family farm hours

In the Schools

4,398 students were visited by Farm staff who ran cooking lessons, planting programs, and conducted animal visits

Online

548 students participated in virtual visits via FaceTime the Farmer

The Great Kids Farm Beet

TWO Farm to School Sessions on 1/26/24 systemic Professional Development day - both from 12:30-3pm

- **Incorporating Indoor Gardening into the Classroom - IN PERSON @ Great Kids Farm - 12:30-3:00pm.** In this hands-on session, we'll explore how to create a simple indoor garden, and practice integrating garden creation and maintenance into academics. Open to all educators interested in or currently practicing indoor gardening as a way to connect to academic topics.
- **Using your Outdoor Garden: Outdoor Classroom Management and Lesson Development + Hampden Garden Tour - IN PERSON @ Hampden EMS: 12:30-3:00pm.** In this hands-on session, we'll discuss the tools needed to learn outside, practice the classroom management skills needed to effectively bring classes outside, and begin to devise lesson plans which effectively use time and space...plus we'll tour the school garden at Hampden! Open to staff at schools with school gardens who want to develop or hone their skills and practice of outdoor classroom management and lesson development.

For more info and to register, visit the catalog when it's available @ <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/o/inside/page/professional-development>

Winter Student Programs - FREE FOR ALL CITY SCHOOLS

- **Farm to Classroom Experience (MANY JAN/FEB SLOTS OPEN):** Staff bring the farm to your school (classroom or club) to lead lessons on animals, planting, food waste, and/or farm-fresh cooking (pre-K-12)
- **Student Summits:** Full-day events featuring hands-on workshops bringing together students from many schools. Applications will open 1-2 months before each summit, but our [Summit Interest Form](#) is always live for teachers interested in updates for future summits.
 - **APPLICATION LIVE NOW (due 1/24): African American Foodways Summit** (gr 9-12) - 2/23/24: Apply to bring 10-12 high schoolers for a day of hands-on learning with African-American leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and experts in all that is African-American+food+culture.
 - **SAVE THE DATE: Spring Garden Club Summit** (gr 3-5) - 4/24/24
- **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 (Pre-K-12)
- **Facetime the Farmer:** Live (virtual) visit to GKF tailored by age group and focus area (Pre-K-12)

Involved in cooking or food education at your school? [Email Anne](#) to connect with the City Schools Food Ed Network, which meets quarterly.

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

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