



Happy Summer to All

Even amid all the uncertainty and changes this spring and summer, Farm to School staff has continued engaging with students and families – and noticed as much enthusiasm as ever for our Great Kids Farm resources! This spring, our team coordinated distribution of seedlings, windowsill garden STEAM kits (funded by Friends), and farm-fresh eggs and produce to our families. Beyond bringing items from our farm to our students' homes, we expanded our presence in the virtual learning space. Our staff led 36 “Facetime the Farmer” sessions with 528 students during the spring, and we helped other organizations (e.g., Baltimore Compost Collective) set up similar opportunities for students. These virtual farm field trips continue through the summer, as we partner with summer programs to bring the farm to their students, coupling virtual experiences with at-home seeding kits. Our new [YouTube playlist](#) on City Schools TV channel is an additional tool for virtual learning. This summer, with funding support from Friends, we are excited to host 10 high school students for GKF summer internships – some at the farm, and some virtually.

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Online auction coming this Fall



BIDDING BEGINS
OCTOBER 4, 2020
12 P.M. EDT

Fall Fundraising Online Auction

2020

Friends of Great Kids Farm will be hosting an online auction this fall to fundraise for our upcoming 2020-2021 school year. The auction will run from Sunday, October 4th through Tuesday October 13th and will include multiple offerings from local businesses. Bidding is easy!

Interested in donating? We're appreciative of all donations, whether they be goods, services, or just an outright donation to support our work. Reach out to Courtney Bindl at courtney.bindl@gmail.com to discuss what you can provide.



Farmer's Notes

We have lots of different growing spaces around the farm. Most of our plants are grown outside in the field in rows or squares. Tomatoes, watermelons, and cucumbers make up the majority of those spaces right now. Some plants are grown in our long hoop frames that are covered in plastic fall through spring so our seasons are extended. We can overwinter various greens this way and get a really early harvest in the spring. It also allows us to pick plants further into the fall, possibly even after a frost wipes out other plants. Our last growing space is our greenhouses. For most of the spring, we use the greenhouses for starting seedlings because it is temperature controlled and plants are protected from potentially harsh elements outside. It is a perfect place to start seeds and grow little seedlings. Another huge benefit of the greenhouse is that we grow things year round that would not typically survive a winter in our climate zone. The big greenhouse at Great Kids Farm is home to a variety of tropical plants and citrus trees. My favorite plant on the farm right now is our passion fruit. This a tropical vine plant that produces the most beautiful flower followed by an incredibly tasty fruit. We picked and tried our very first passion fruit this week. The taste was certainly tropical! It was like a combination of orange, pineapple, and kiwi with some extra sourness. The passion fruit plants are thriving in the greenhouse right now because they love the heat. If you think it is hot outside now, think about how hot it is in the greenhouse! The vines are stretching up and down the rafters of the greenhouse producing lots of flowers and fruits as it grows. Hopefully we will continue to have a harvest of passion fruit for the rest of the summer and maybe give some very lucky students the opportunity to try one themselves!

UPDATE: a Taste of Great Kids Farm

As it is everything, COVID-19 is impacting our Taste of the Farm. The event, meant to showcase food and drink from locally-sourced ingredients (including farm-fresh produce and eggs from Great Kids Farm), will be rescheduled to a later date once we can safely host our guests out here at the Farm.

As this event is our largest fundraiser, the impact to our bottom line is great. If you'd like to



support our efforts to serve our Baltimore City Public School students, please consider a donation.

For more information, please contact Nancy Wiley, Executive Director, at nancy@friendsgkf.org or 240-426-6617.

Resource Corner for Parents & Teachers

Below are some resources that we will continue to offer this Fall. These are subject to change. For more information about these resources, please reach out to our farm to school specialists at farms@bcps.k12.md.us

School Garden Support

School Garden Toolkit: Our school garden toolkit contains all the resources you need to start or maintain a school garden. [Bit.ly/BCPSSGardenToolkit](http://bit.ly/BCPSSGardenToolkit)

Garden Consults: Look up your farm to school specialist in the garden toolkit to schedule a consultation

Seedling Give-Aways: Pick-up seedlings for your school garden or classroom every spring and fall.

Classroom Activities

Activity Kits: Request a classroom activity kit on indoor gardening to bring the farm to your students.

Classroom Visits: Pending approval in district reopening plans, we'll bring the farm to your classroom.

Contact us to learn more.