



Programming Update

*By Anne Rosenthal,
Farm to School Specialist*

Though field trips were suspended during winter months, the Farm to School team has kept busy...

Bringing the farm to schools - Staff have led sessions at 48 schools, reaching roughly 1,500 students. Teachers choose from animals, planting, tasting, and food waste as a topic of focus.

Coordinating our third annual African American Foodways Summit -

On 2/25/22, students from six Baltimore City Public high schools visited Great Kids Farm (GKF) for the 3rd annual African American Foodways Summit. Community leaders engaged students from Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women (BLSYW), Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA), The Baltimore City College (City), Paul Laurence Dunbar High School Dunbar), Excel Academy, and Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School (Mervo) in workshops on the intersections of food, race, heritage, history, and traditions. Pictured here: workshops by Marvin Hayes of the Baltimore Compost Collective, Jinji Fraser of Pure Chocolate by Jinji (above), and Kenya Miles of Blue Light Junction/Hidden Harvest Dye Garden.

When we asked students in our post-summit survey about their biggest take-aways from the event, here are a few of the responses:

·This event was a great way to connect with local businesses and agriculture-based trades that are local. I was able to take away a better understanding of what it takes to specialize in something like indigo or cocoa; it was valuable to be in direct contact with community members who are successfully working in their individual fields in an eco friendly and inclusive way.

·My biggest take away from this event was about the importance of natural resources. As I did each work shop I realized that all of our resources are connected to many different families, traditions and roots.

·My biggest take away is that Baltimore has way more to offer than we see. Down to compost up the bees, I learn so much I would love to attend again.

·There is a lot more to food in Baltimore than just eating. There is a lot more to do to help our communities.

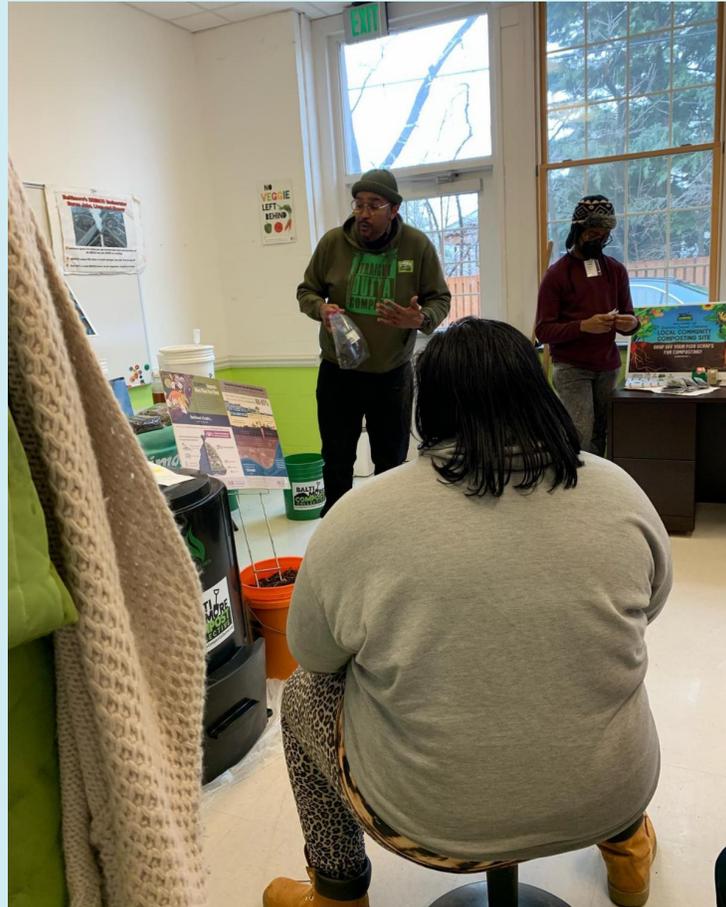
·My biggest takeaway from the event was that culture and food are very connected. I have learned that food can really reflect important things from our history and tell a story.

·I learned about the history of two things I am very interested in, and how they are tied to black history. I even made some connections that I can use to help me in the future.

Preparing for spring field trips - Our flagship GKF experience, curriculum-aligned field trips, returned on 3/17, and our trip slots (3x/week, every week) are fully booked through the end of the school year! These K through 5 trips -- including buses (thanks to Friends!) are completely free for schools.

Planning our Spring Garden Summit - This annual summit will bring together 3rd through 5th graders (who are involved in gardening at their schools) for a day of hands-on workshops at GKF.

Supporting teachers as they bring food systems' themes into their classrooms and onto their school campuses - We have continued distributing free Ag-tivity Kits (funded by Friends) to classrooms that request them; supporting school gardens with free materials and technical assistance; planning our Spring Seedling Giveaway (April 2022) for school gardens; and developing our online resources (e.g., [School Garden Toolkit](#), [Outdoor Learning site](#), and (soon-to-be-launched) Classroom Cooking Toolkit) for teachers.





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Farmer's Notes

*By James Koval,
Farm Manager*

Every year, we distribute thousands of seedlings to Baltimore City schools. These will go into school gardens or even be used in classroom activities. Baltimore City Public Schools's (BCPS) staff will be picking up these plants in late April which means I've been spending nearly every day of March in the greenhouse.

Starting seeds should be a simple task. All you need to do is fill a tray with soil, make a tiny hole, and then plant your seed. But I have found over the years that there are always things to make this process more complicated. One of the biggest challenges has been mice. They come out at night and get into the newly seeded trays and snack on the seeds. They especially like pepper seeds. I have set up traps. I have sprayed a repelling spray that is the foulest smelling thing on this planet. I have even set out separate feed on the ground to distract them. They are still getting into the trays. If anyone has any solutions, I am all ears!

Despite the troublesome mice, we will still have plenty of seedlings to distribute this spring. It is so nice that winter is behind us and I look forward to a wonderful growing season!

A Note from Nancy Friends' Executive Director

Friends is only as strong as our funders: Our corporate donors, our grantors and special event attendees and participants, and, perhaps most importantly, you help us continue to be able to fund the impactful farm-to-school work being done at Great Kids Farm (GKF) and in Baltimore City Public Schools' classrooms.



Since our last newsletter in January, your dollars have helped to support and fund the African American Foodways Summit held at GKF on February 25th. You can read more about this amazing event in Anne Rosenthal's piece above. Your dollars have also provided the necessary funding for the farm-to-school staffs' Spring Garden Summit to be held here at the Farm in May, bringing together more than 100 Elementary School students for a day of hands-on and highly interactive learning, community and connection.

Help us continue supporting the amazing programming by making a donation today. We are currently working on funding the GKF intern program, the summer camp programming, as well as busing for next year's field trips so that kids don't miss out on this wonderful programming for lack of transportation. We're all about access to education! Join us with your support by [making a secure donation here](#). **And, if you can, please consider becoming a recurring monthly donor. As little as \$30 a month can fund a bus full of students over the course of a year!**

Programming By the Numbers

Fall 2021

Number of students who came to the Farm on field trips in Fall 2021

1,143

Number of students reached through In-school Farm to School sessions

1,489

Number of students who attended the Fall Summit (3rd - 8th grades)

195

Number of students who attended the
African American Foodways Summit (High school)

56

Number of students reached through Facetime the Farmer sessions

255

Board Member Spotlights



Mary Jane Namian

Vice President & General Manager, Investment Specialist Group, [T. Rowe Price](#)

Why do you support the Farm?

About five years ago my kids were in high school and I finally had some time on my hands to support the community. I investigated a number of organizations but chose Friends as it was the perfect intersection of things I cared about – supporting Baltimore City kids, good health and nutrition, outdoor activities and a small hands on organization that helps at the ground level - no pun intended ;). I am so glad I got involved. It has been a pleasure

to be a part of Friends and watch the farm's programs grow and impact more and more kids.

How else are you involved in your community?

My other community activities also involve Baltimore City kids and outdoor open space. I am an instructor in T. Rowe Price's Money Confident Kids program where we teach kids about the importance of setting goals, budgeting, saving and investing. My husband and I have also been very involved in the formation of Hillside Park- soon to be a new 20 acre public park

in Baltimore city across the street from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and Western High School. I cannot wait to see that park full of nature trails and activity.

Deb Sharpe

CEO of [Sharpe Educational Consulting, LLC](#)

Why do you support the Farm?

It is so important for children to learn about healthy food options and healthy living overall. As a retired 30 year educator from Baltimore City Public Schools, I personally know the tremendous value children receive when they have meaningful learning experiences beyond their day to day environment and GKF offers that great experience.

How else are you involved in your community?

I support and volunteer with non-profits for children and youth educational programs, food pantry, mental health counseling, and spiritual growth and development. I am also an active lifetime member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



Resource Corner for Parents & Teachers

SPRING EXPERIENCES

2022 School Garden Summit [NEW]: If you're interested in bringing a group of 8-10 students (3rd-5th grade) for a day of hands-on workshops at Great Kids Farm (GKF), complete [this application](#) by 3/30/22. Summit will take place on Wed, 5/11/22 (rain date: 5/25/22) and will include lunch and transportation to/from the Farm. We will review your application and respond by mid-April.

F2S Experience @ School: F2S staff bring the Farm to your classroom or club at your school to lead lessons for any grade on animals, planting, and/or farm-fresh cooking.

K-5 Field Trips to Great Kids Farm (GKF) are booked through June 2022, but please submit a request if your school has not yet signed up and you'd like to join the wait list and get word first when Fall 2023 bookings open!

Facetime the Farmer: Cozy up with our animals and greenhouse plants during a live virtual visit to GKF tailored by age group and focus area.

ONGOING - SUPPLIES & OTHER OFFERINGS

Spring 2022 Seedling Giveaway [NEW]: [Request form](#) now LIVE for staff interested in free seedlings (available late April) to plant with students.

Ag-tivity Kits: Materials that link classroom learning with hands-on experiences, including Aquaponics Kit, Microgreens Kit, Mushroom Kit, Indoor Herb Garden Kit, Worms Are Wonderful Compost Kit, plus raised beds, seedlings and more!

School Garden Toolkit and video tour: Find resources and tips from other teachers in this toolkit, and email farms@bcps.k12.md.us with additional questions/needs related to school planting.

- **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**
- **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!

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

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