



Programming Update

By Anne Rosenthal,

Farm to School Specialist

Summer is off to a great start on the Farm. It's been a joy to welcome students back – even in this crazy heat! With the support of our high



school interns, we've already hosted two field trips and almost a full week of our very own Great Kids Farm and Forest Camp. In the first session of our camp, 19 3rd - 5th graders have caught fish in our stream, met the animals, jumped through sprinklers, created plant collages, made popsicles and salsa, and much more! Thanks to funding from City Schools and Friends, the camp is free for all students, and optional bus transportation is provided each day from a school downtown. Our second week of camp will run the last week of July, and on non-camp weeks through early August, we're slated to host several other student groups, including a few that focus on students experiencing homelessness.

Looking toward the new school year, we are excited to ramp up our in-person programming, as health/safety protocols allow. We are exploring ways to accommodate more students per year – leveraging partnerships with universities, creating opportunities for various grades and disciplines, adjusting the trip timeframe, etc.

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Farmer's Notes

By James Koval, Farm Manager and the summer interns



We have been having a great summer so far with our high school interns. They have been out here regularly for almost a month now. Most days we have been planting out in the fields. However, we also have had our fair share of barn and garage work. It has been great teaching the interns a variety of new skills and watching them continue to master different equipment. Rather than me going on about everything we did, here are some snippets from three of our interns.

“I’ve been having a wonderful time at the Farm so far. We’ve been able to plant different kinds of pumpkins. I’m very excited to see them fully grown. I was able to wash eggs and help around in any way I can. I’ve been able to water the greenhouse every morning and check on our

animals.” - Lauren

“Great Kids Farm is a place to learn and explore things you never learned or knew about, working here is amazing and wonderful, I never thought I would learn as much as I do know from working here. The Farm is a place where you can find happiness, love, and peace in my perspective. If I could have this job forever I would because it’s great working here and fun. I would recommend people to bring their kids here and see new things.” – Big Rezz

“What’s even better than planting is looking after the animals. I can’t express the joy in my heart when I step through mounds of goat poop or am pecked at by a chicken. The goats are cute which is a bonus but the chickens are best. They squawk and wail like music to my ears, and there’s no better task than shoveling the manure laden straw out of the coop come cleaning time. The smells that arise are delightfully pungent.” – Justin



**Great Kids Farm's
New Mission Statement**

Baltimore City Public Schools' Great Kids Farm (GKF) programming staff are always looking for ways to further engage Baltimore City Public Schools' students, support the staff and students, and further the students' education both in and out of the classroom. They are always innovating ways to improve! To better clarify their efforts, they have updated the mission statement for GKF and the school district's evolving Farm to School (F2S) program:

The Baltimore City Public Schools' Farm to School (F2S) program promotes experiential education that connects students to nature and food systems. In every grade band, our programs and services focus on three core areas: (1) food education for lifelong healthy habits, (2) nature-based exploration for wholeness and academic enrichment, (3) food system engagement for active citizenship, leadership development, and career skills. Meaningful F2S experiences are transformative for students' academic success and their social, emotional, and physical wellness. Additionally, they empower youth to understand, engage with, and co-create their food system in ways that can improve food security and sovereignty, while also preparing youth to be systems thinkers and social changemakers.

As we always have, and with your support, Friends of Great Kids Farm will continue to enhance, promote and support the programming at GKF and the district's F2S programming.



Save the Date: *Flavors of Fall* Saturday, October 2 4pm - 6:30pm

We're excited to announce **Flavors of Fall**, a benefit hosted by Friends of Great Kids Farm (Friends) on Saturday October 2nd at 4pm EST on the grounds of Great Kids Farm (GKF) in Catonsville. We're excited to share with our guests the fruits of the labor of the amazing Baltimore City Schools' student interns who are currently participating in the Farm to School (F2S) programming.

As it was for so many, this past school year was unique for GKF, and their talented educators pivoted to provide at-home and virtual experiences for the students. GKF has started to open for some socially-distanced on-site programming, including GKF's internship program and summer camps for City Schools' student groups. Having a small group of interns this year has provided GKF a unique opportunity. The Farm manager suggested that the interns could use the time this summer to help plan for the produce that Friends could then utilize for **Flavors of Fall**.

Friends exists to help support the educational programming and experiential learning at the Farm. This year's **Flavors of Fall** Benefit will provide a journey from Seed to Plate directly resulting from the Farm's programming. Our guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails made from the bounties of this year's harvest while learning more about the experience GKF provides for the students. A silent auction provided for by generous donors will be held at the event. **Tickets can be purchased here**. Individual tickets are \$50 and all proceeds will benefit the mission of Friends.



Board Member Spotlight

This month, we have a special board member spotlight! **Whitney Burton**, who has been a valued board member of Friends for over five years, will continue her board service from overseas as she moves on to another adventure. We thank her for her commitment to Friends, the farm to school programming we support, and the students of Baltimore City Public Schools. We wish her the best of luck on her new journey. Read on to learn more about Whitney.



How long have you served on the board? 5 years and 5 months

Why did you choose to support the farm? My passion is supporting the development of community-driven and youth-centered programming. Working with the Farm to increase its opportunities for students and address some of the barriers students faced for continuous engagement of the farm, utilization of the internship opportunities, etc. felt like a good fit.

What is one highlight/fond memory of serving the farm? My fondest memory was giving two tours to the same kindergarten class over the course of a school year. The students were so bubbly and excited to attend their first school field trip in the fall. I think they had a fun outing and while they were appropriately engaged for their developmental stage, they mostly ran around (too cute). In the spring it was amazing to see how much they had grown as students. I still got questions about if fairies lived in the veggie patch, but they also could describe how adding rosemary and the other herbs that we were smelling could change the taste of their food.

What is the next step on your life's journey? This fall I'll start a Ph.D. program in Taiwan that will focus on leveraging healthcare-based artificial intelligence programs to increase youth/young adult self-efficacy and youth-driven healthcare programming.

Whitney also wanted to share: The Farm has amazing eggs! If you catch GKF at your local farmer's market, I would highly suggest getting a dozen or two. Also, GKF's social media was a lifesaver this last year. As we were couped up at home, watching the live stream with (Farm Manager) James and the animals would occasionally be the highlight of our week. Even now as the state is re-opening, we're still watching the posts.

Resource Corner for Parents & Teachers

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.

FREE SUMMER TRIPS

The Farm offers free visits for summer programs serving City Schools youth! Request a trip [here](#).

FREE MATERIALS *(available for schools AND summer programs serving City Schools students)*

Free Ag-tivity kits for all grades: A limited number of aquaponics kits and vermicompost (worm) kits are ready for distribution (free) as teaching tools! Read about the kits [here](#) and request [here](#).

Take-home herb garden kits: If you'd like take-home herb kits for participants in your summer program, please email farms@bcps.k12.md.us (while supplies last!).

School garden support: We are here to help with your garden if you need tips on closing it for the year or caring for it over the summer! Reach out to your school's specialist to request help or learn more. For the quickest reply, look up your specialist by school in [this directory](#) or email farms@bcps.k12.md.us

DIGITAL EXPERIENCES/RESOURCES

What's Cookin'? With [free produce boxes available](#) at many school meal sites and other hubs city-wide (and continuing thru the summer!), we and our partners are sharing some of our favorite veggie-based recipes [here](#).

FaceTime the Farmer sessions for all grades! Sign up [here](#), and we can customize the visit to your classroom goals.

Digitized version of our classic Farm field trip. This experience aligns with the 2nd grade "What Do Plants Need?" science unit, but many elements of the [digitized trip](#) could complement learning for many disciplines and grades, and teachers can use at their own pace.

School Garden Toolkit: Tips and links related to all types of school gardening [here](#).

Virtual Resource Toolkit for Green Teams [here](#). Find ideas for activities for your garden or green team/club.

Virtual, in-person, and professional development experiences related to gardening, greening, and food [here](#). Send us other relevant experiences (farms@bcps.k12.md.us) so we can share them with others.

Great Kids Farm YouTube channel. Videos [here](#) show students "what's GROWin' on" at the farm. If you have ideas for content to align with your curricular needs, please fill out [this form](#).

Social media: Now serving up daily doses of animal videos – plus [math challenges](#) and more for your students!

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