

## Programming Update

*By Laura Genello,*

*Farm to School Specialist*

“Can chickens fly?”

“Why do goats have horns?”

“How do the plants get pollinated in the greenhouse?”

These are a few of the questions we answer from students during our [FaceTime the Farmer](#) virtual field trips. Since

September, we’ve spoken with 1,500

students on over 65 virtual field trips. These half hour sessions are flexible, allowing us to work with any grade level and make connections between the farm and various subjects: from math to history. On these virtual trips we get a chance to meet the goats, collect eggs from the chickens, plant a seed in the greenhouse, and talk about our favorite foods. The program gets high marks from teachers for engaging content. In fact, 59% of teachers who responded to our FaceTime the Farmer survey say that their students are more engaged during these virtual field trips than they are in a typical online classroom. In addition to this live trip, our pre-recorded [virtual 2nd grade field trip](#) has seen over 475 site visitors since it launched in September.

Of course, it’s difficult to replicate the hands-on nature of an experiential field trip on Zoom. Thus, activity kits have become a core part of our programming. This year, we’ve distributed over 2,500 herb garden activity kits to the 2nd graders at 36 schools, and more

kits go out every week. We're grateful to an incredible team of volunteers who have been instrumental in assembling and delivering these kits. Our goal: to deliver kits to all 6,000 2nd grade students this year. In addition to these simple seed planting kits, our team is working on more sophisticated kits that explore topics like aquaponics (raising fish and plants together), vermicompost (composting with worms), and indoor mushroom growing. We hope to distribute these kits to older students in school green teams and clubs. While we have funding for some vermicompost kits, we are seeking additional funds for aquaponics and mushroom growing kits so that we can meet the demand of over 20 teachers who have requested these kits for their students.

We're incorporating both these approaches, virtual learning and activity kits, into the plans for our 2nd African American Foodways Summit this winter. This event will build off the foundation of the summit we held on the same theme for high school students last February, but instead, it will take place online, with students receiving materials that they can use to complete hands-on activities at home.

Finally, we continue to explore new ways to reach students. We just launched a new ["goat storytime"](#) program in which we read a picture book not to a room full of students, but to a barn full of goats. We broadcast these readings on Facebook Live, so that students and families can tune in. Although we don't have students visiting in person, the farm has plenty of activity these days with teams of volunteers assembling kits, plans being laid for the new outdoor classroom space, student interns helping out on weekends, and staff leading virtual field trips.

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## Farmer's Notes

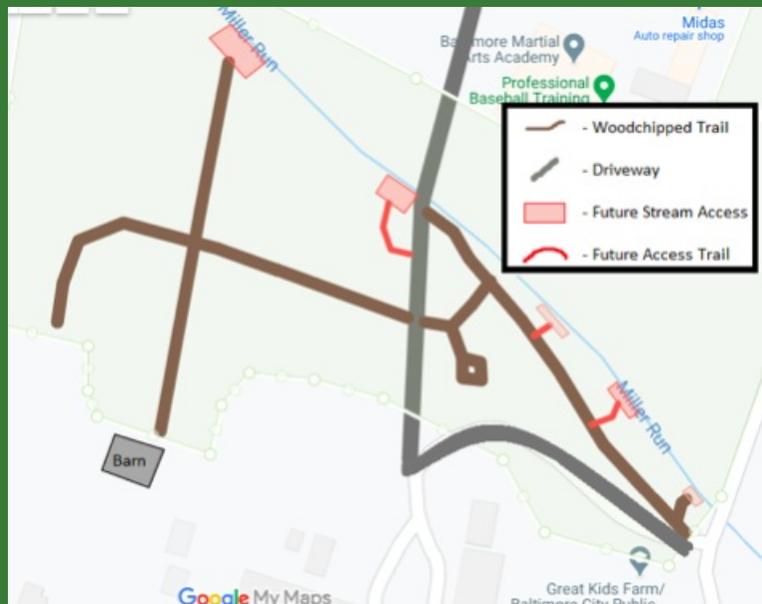
*By James Koval, Farm Manager*

The stream that runs through the woods at Great Kids Farm is such a wonderful asset. We have it featured in our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field trips to teach students about the importance of water and aquatic life. We also offer 9<sup>th</sup> grade students the opportunity to do their MWEE trips onsite to do water quality tests and hands-on experiments.

While we have some trails established and maintained, there is still lots of work left to do to make a more welcoming and accessible space. We have been steadily clearing pathways from the main trail to the stream. The goal is to have a series of access points to the stream. These will allow students to get to their testing sites with ease and will hopefully encourage more trips in the future. We will also build a gathering space along the driveway that can be used to deliver instruction, house materials, and offer shelter.



Below is a simple map of the current and future trail system in the woods. By spring 2021, we will have a series of access points on the stream and new trails. We are excited for students to return to the farm to enjoy all the improvements!



# GIVING TUESDAY

Credit: [givingtuesday.org](https://givingtuesday.org)

## Giving Tuesday 2020

As you're considering where you would like to make a donation during this year's Giving Tuesday campaign on December 1st, please consider Friends of Great Kids Farm. Donations will be applied to our fundraising for the Jill Wrigley Memorial Outdoor Classroom Project. The urgency of this project has been enhanced by COVID and the

need to provide more covered outdoor space for our students visiting and learning at the Farm. The final project will provide enhanced and safe learning opportunities for our Baltimore City Public School students. You can [learn more and donate here](#).

## *A Note of Thanks and Gratitude*



This has been a difficult, challenging year for everyone. Yet, here at the farm, we have been able to adapt and continue to find ways to serve our students. So we would like to especially thank you, our community of donors, volunteers, parents, and teachers, who believe in the mission of the farm. We are grateful for all of you and could not do what we do with your support. We wish you all a safe, restful, and relaxing holiday. Thank you!

## 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](mailto:farms@bcps.k12.md.us) or visit our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

### **Gardening & Greening with Students...Virtually!**

Check out this list of resources for [virtual gardening & greening with students](#). You will find resources and activities here for pre-K through high school students! Compiled by GKF staff and the Baltimore Office of Sustainability.

### **Environmental Literacy: Digital Resources**

Here is a list of [environmental literacy resources](#) compiled by Maryland State Dept. of Education. This list also includes activities for pre-K through high school students.

**Also, check out our [Youtube channel!](#)**