



Programming Update

By Laura Genello,

Farm to School Specialist

Did you know that ants are farmers, or that baby goats inherit the trait for horns from their parents? Did you know that eating a rainbow of fruits and veggies can help us stay healthy, or that food is an important component of culture? These are just a few of the topics we have been exploring this year with students through our virtual and kit-based programming.



A few weeks ago, we welcomed some new residents to Great Kids Farm (the Farm): 7,500 red wiggler composting worms. These worms will be converting food waste into soil as they await their new homes in classrooms and student homes around Baltimore City. As part of a city-wide [partnership with National Resource Defense Council](#) to reduce food waste we created over 100 worm composting kits to help students and teachers bring hands-on agricultural topics to life during this period of distance learning. Interested teachers and students can request kits here:

<http://bit.ly/GKFclassagkit>.

These vermicompost kits are part of our ongoing efforts to get hands-on activities out to students. Since September, through funding from Friends of Great Kids Farm (Friends), we've distributed over 4,000 plant-a-seed activity kits to 2nd graders at 69 schools across Baltimore City. We are over half-way to our goal of getting a plant-a-seed kit into the hands of every second grade student.

Our virtual programs continue to be popular as well. We've run 119 FaceTime the Farmer

<http://Bit.ly/GKFfacetime> virtual field trips for 2,600 students since September. In addition to these

live trips, we are working on creating video series to align with academic topics in a variety of subjects, including: science, health, and social studies. These short videos will help students form a connection to the farm throughout their academic experience. We have also collaborated with the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries ([link](#) and [link](#)) and University of Maryland Extension-SNAP-Ed ([link](#)) to bring perspectives from the Farm to their virtual programs related to literacy and nutrition.

While our audience continues to focus primarily on elementary school students, we are looking forward to our upcoming African American Foodways Summit, a program made possible through funding from Friends. Students from twelve high schools have been offered a spot in this unique virtual event that will focus on cultural connections between food and music, and food and mood. For the first time, this event is being co-developed by a group of high school students, and we can't wait to see what they come up with.

In addition to student-centric programming, our team has also been working on supporting teachers, preparing for a return to in-person learning. We have just launched an online toolkit of [outdoor learning resources](#) and will be co-hosting professional development sessions this month on outdoor learning. We hope that bringing students outside can provide teachers with another educational strategy to help mitigate the risk of Covid-19 while creating an engaging learning environment.

Although this school year has been challenging, it has also presented an opportunity to explore new ways to reach students. We look forward to incorporating some of these new tools into our permanent programming even after a return to in-person learning.

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Farmer's Notes

By James Koval, Farm Manager

Winter is a great time to tackle some indoor projects. Brayden, one of the Farm's Friends-funded interns, and I have been working on updating and reorganizing the lobby of the Bragg building. We built some shelving units made from upcycled parts. The lumber came from old wooden trusses and the metal poles came from the fence in the woods we have been tearing down. Brayden got to use a variety of tools and a

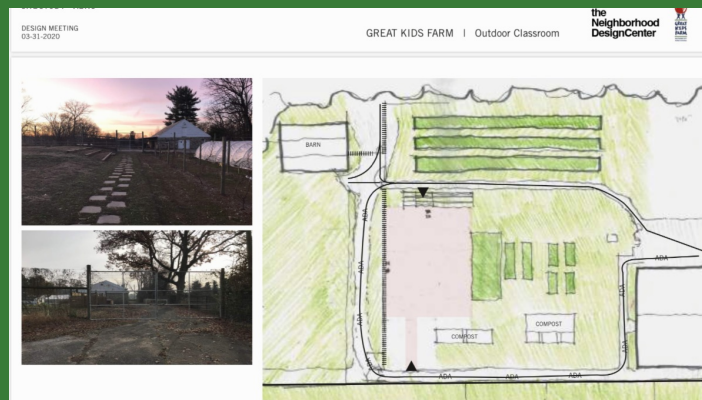


creative spirit to put together these shelves.

Aside from the construction projects, we are going to set up displays to make the lobby more engaging and interactive. Even when we don't have live chicks, we will keep the baby chick home set up so visitors can see where and how tiny chicks live before moving to the barn. We will also have a raised bed demo to show how gardening can be done in small spaces. Lastly, we will set up a fish tank to mirror what our stream ecosystem looks like. All of this will hopefully make the lobby a more welcoming and exciting entryway!

The Jill Wrigley Memorial Outdoor Classroom

We continue to fundraise and are getting closer to reaching our goal to complete Phase One of the Jill Wrigley Memorial Outdoor Classroom. To learn more about the project or if you'd like to support us, [please visit this site](#). Thank you for your support!



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.

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 the Farm staff and the Baltimore Office of Sustainability.

Environmental Literacy: Digital Resources

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

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