

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

July/August 2017



The Civic Garden Center of Cincinnati provides programming through gardening and environmental stewardship. Green Girls in STEM is one of their programs offering opportunities in career exploration. *Read more about this program on page 3.*

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Congratulations to the two Ohio recipients of the USDA Farm to School Grants!

Ohio Springfield City School District Grant Type: Implementation; \$98,668

The project will identify sources for locally produced food and link them with the Springfield City School District's (SCSD) distributor and also support direct linkages between the school district and area food producers. It will pilot an innovative community-based approach to processing bulk items, such as apples, for school-based snack or after-school programs.

Columbus City Schools Grant Type: Implementation; \$99,309

The "Bigger Procurement, Smaller Bites" project involves purchasing equipment that will clean, slice, preserve, weigh, and bag local apples with the capacity to expand to additional fresh, local produce including, but not limited to, carrots, cucumbers, and squash. Ohio apples are a natural first choice in Columbus City Schools' (CCS) efforts to offer more sliced, fresh, local fruit in their cafeterias. The project will further strengthen the relationships developed between CCS Food Service and local food system partners.

Summer: A Great Time for Farm to Early Child Education

By Carol Smathers Ohio Farm to School State Lead

Children enrolled in schools that report Farm to School activities consumer more fruits and vegetables, can identify more types of produce, and are more willing to try new foods both at school and at home. Summertime provides lots of opportunities to expand Farm to School activities and bring these benefits and more students, especially pre-school age children, in our communities.

Early learning and child care centers can capitalize on Farm to School opportunities in ways that older kids' schools can't. Here is a quick look at ways those caring for young children can magnify their Farm to Early Child Education (Farm to ECE) efforts this summer in three main areas, commonly referred to as the "3 C's: COMMUNITY, CAFETERIA, AND CLASSROOM".

Purchasing local foods

"**Community**" refers to connecting with local farmers, processors, and distributor to purchase local foods.

Take information about your center to a local farmers market and tell farmers about your programs. Let them know what kinds of local foods you would like to purchase in the future.

If you get your food from a distributor, find out which foods that company buys from local sources and encourage them to add more foods that are harvested in the summer.

The new Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern goes into effect on October 1, 2017. There are many new training tools to help you update your menus in accordance with the new meal pattern. For resources on how to use and integrate local foods into your CACFP go to <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/child-care-providers>.

Serving local foods in delicious ways

"**Cafeteria**" refers to finding appealing and delicious ways to prepare and serve local foods and creative ways to promote them.

Offer taste tests before serving a new food. Let children explore what the food looks and tastes like in a raw (if safe) and cooked form. One example is beets. Children like to try them raw,

boiled, roasted, and even pickled!

Highlight a "Harvest of the Month" food throughout the year. You can have "Harvest of the Week" item in late summer and early fall. Incorporate stories, books, and math activities related to each featured food.

Find new ways to serve local foods. Provide labels or signs that indicate where the food was grown.

You could even include a photo of a farmer who helped grow the food.

Hands-on Learning Opportunities

"Classroom" includes hands-on learning activities that help children understand how food is grown, where it comes from, and why local foods are important to our diets and our communities. Farm to School "classroom" activities often expand beyond classroom walls to include school gardens and greenhouses, field trips to farms and farmers markets, and visits from farmers and chefs.

Plant a school garden! This newsletter contains links to resources and funding opportunities to support growing foods at your school. And it's not too late. A number of vegetables can be planted in Fall.

If you have limited space, use containers to grow herbs and vegetables. Grow bags are convenient and don't take up much space when the season is over.

Find opportunities for children to harvest foods.

Can they pull up carrots in your school garden, pick beans or berries at a local farm, or harvest a few pieces of fruit at an orchard?

Share your Stories!

Ohio Farm to School is looking for unique and successful farm to school activities that educators are doing across the state. Do you have an unusual source for local foods, a special recipe that uses seasonal foods, or a fun learning activity that teaches about foods grown in Ohio? If you have successes to share, please contact Amy Fovargue at fovargue.1@osu.edu. We'll be sure to share your stories to help other reap the benefits of Farm to Early Child Education.

Ohio Success Story

Oldest Community Garden Educational Program in Cincinnati Provides Programs for Youth

By Amy Fovargue

The Civic Garden Center (CGC) of Cincinnati is a non-profit organization with the mission of building community through gardening, education and environmental stewardship. It has accomplished this by supporting more than forty community gardens, delivering educational programs to schools and provided classes for all ages. CGC is one of the oldest community garden educators in the country. The center was founded in 1942 and is adjacent to the Hauck Botanic Garden.

They offer several programs for youth to learn about gardening and beyond. The CGC provides The Green Learning Station. A place where all generations can get hands-on experience and support in using environmentally responsible methods to grow gardens anywhere and everywhere: yards, rooftops, walls, patios, driveways and parking lots. It teaches about planting with the environment in mind, including; gardening techniques that maximize water usage and space; natural insect, disease and weed control, and the health and economic benefits of locally grown food.

Green Girls in STEM

An innovative program CGC offers to high school girls looking for experiences to help determine their career path called, Green Girls in STEM. They learn about the environment and how they can make a difference in their community. Kylie Johnson the Green Learning Station Coordinator said, "A favorite part of my job, is working with these high school girls and giving them the resources they need so they can succeed and gain confidence, being a woman in the science field, I have experienced discrimination, so I want the young women to know their voice can be heard."

The students work alongside educators and STEM professionals to engineer solutions with composting, food production, storm water management and water quality problems. Field trip excursions include trips to local natural areas, labs, businesses, and community gardens. Some graduates of the program have come back to serve as mentors. This program is sponsored by a grant from Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee.



Summer Sprouts

Another program they offer is for eight-12 year-olds in a garden to table experience called Summer Sprouts. Each week they explore a different part of the plant life cycle and share a snack prepared from the garden. Each child must be accompanied by an adult, which helps them develop healthy habits at home together.

School Programs

Teachers looking to engage their students with project-based learning can bring their class to the Green Learning Station's STEM field trip and curriculum is a resource for middle and high school science teachers. The activities are based on Ohio science standards; the program introduces students to urban environmental issues and gives them the knowledge and skills to work towards solving them. The field trips (and transportation to them) are offered at no charge. In addition, they have a variety of free curriculum resources available on their website, which can engage your students in taking action to improve the sustainability of their school or community. One lesson includes food systems. If a class is interested in growing food at school, or exploring how to purchase local food for the school cafeteria, you should look through the lessons in this section. They will guide students through a process of examining where the food served in the school cafeteria comes from, calculating the energy use associated with transporting that food, and looking for better options. Students can explore the possibility of starting a school vegetable garden, and will go through the planning process to design and possibly build one.

Heartland Farm Beginnings® Training Course offered by OEFFA

A year-long farmer-led training and support program is designed to help early career farmers, committed to creating a sustainable farm business, achieve their goals. The intensive, ten-part workshop series will enable farmers, with at least one year of production experience, to develop a whole farm plan through realistic goal setting, financial management, and assessment of resources, skills, and markets. Early career farmers will also receive the business planning tools necessary to successfully implement their plan. Through Farm Beginnings®, participants will:

- Learn critical farm management skills such as creative financing and innovative marketing strategies
- Craft a tailor-made farm business plan
- Join a vibrant network of local family farms
- Receive one-on-one feedback from a farmer engaged in a similar enterprise

Applications are now being accepted, and must be postmarked by September 15, 2017. Request a free application packet with detailed information about the program <http://policy.oeffa.org/applyhfb>

ALDI Smart Kids Program

This program makes \$100-\$5K grants to organizations that promote kids being healthy and active in the geographical areas where ALDI stores are located. Applications are open Feb. 1 - Dec. 15 of each year on a rolling basis. <https://corporate.aldi.us/en/corporate-responsibility/aldi-smart-kids/>

4-H Project Green Teacher

Are you involved with a school garden in central Ohio? Then consider an educational program for afterschool personnel, educators and others who are engaged in, or would like to learn more about gardening as a context for learning. It's a ten-week program that leads to a Project Green Teacher certification and the potential to earn up to 26 contact hours. The school garden conference and the school garden bus tour have additional fees beyond the \$150 program fee.

COST: \$150 plus additional fees for two optional events Register online at: go.osu.edu/pgt2017

On-going resources:

- Finding local farms, buyers, or restaurants that purchase/ serve local foods, visit **Ohio MarketMaker**: www.ohiomarketmaker.com
- Finding farms in and around Ohio that sell directly to the public through local farmers' markets, CSA's, and on-farm sales, visit **OEFFA's Good Earth Guide** <http://www.oeffa.org/search-geg.php>
- GroundWorks Community** URL: www.edweb.net/schoolgardens
- Ohio Proud** is a resource for identifying local farms and food producers: <http://www.ohioproud.org/>
- National Farm to School Network** <http://www.farmtoschool.org/about>



OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Through the Looking Glass

2017 School Garden Conference

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



The fifth annual school garden conference will be hosted by OSU Extension, Franklin County on Friday, October 13th, 2017. The location is the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center at 2201 Fred Taylor Drive, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210. Educators, afterschool personnel and others are invited to attend. Whether you are a new or experienced educational gardener, don't miss the 2017 school garden conference!

Nationwide & Ohio 4-H Center, 2201 Fred Taylor Drive, OSU
Cost: \$60 includes lunch and materials

Register online at: go.osu.edu/sgc2017



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Thank you to all of our partners and supporters!



Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

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