

COLLEGE of FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, *and* ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



October, 2018 Newsletter



Sign up for the crunch today, no matter how many are in your group. Be a part of Ohio's crunch by registering [here](#). We have more than 195,000 individuals registered. Can we break the 200,000 mark and double last year's count? I think we can!

Thank you, to [DNO Produce Inc.](#) of Columbus for donating more than 1300 individual bags of sliced Ohio apples to Columbus area YMCAs and Head Starts so that they can crunch. Tell us your Apple Crunch story!

Happy Farm to School Month!

The National Farm to School Network asks you to celebrate by taking the pledge: Pledge to *get informed*, *be inspired* and *take action* for farm to school in October, and you'll be entered to win support for farm to school activities at the school or early care and education site of your choice! [Take the pledge here](#).

Farm to School Month Kicks-Off with FY 2019 Farm to School Grant RFA Release

FY 2019 Farm to School Grant RFA is Now Available!

USDA announces the official release of the FY 2019 Farm to School Grant Request for Applications (RFA). Farm to School programs support local communities through a variety of activities, including taste tests, farm visits, local purchasing, and farmers and producer training.

USDA will award up to \$7.5 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the Farm to School Grant Program in fiscal year (FY) 2019. Each grant helps implement Farm to School programs that increase access to local food in eligible schools, providing students with quality meals at a reasonable cost while also supporting local producers. In FY 2018, USDA awarded 73 grants across the United States.

The RFA includes three tracks—Implementation, Planning, and Training. These will support a variety of projects and implementation stages. The Grant RFA can be found on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Complete applications must be submitted on grants.gov by **11:59pm ET on December 4, 2018**.

The Ohio Success Story

Mount Vernon High School Students Enjoy Foods that they Grow



Community Roots, a local program in Mount Vernon, OH supports the research showing individuals that spend increased time with nature can receive the following benefits:

- Lower blood pressure
- Lower rates of aggression
- Lower incidence of mental health issues 2
- Reduce Incivilities (vandalism, foul language use, etc.)

According to their director Kim Frye, their organization's goal is to produce small crops of vegetables and herbs that are served in the high school cafeteria and to use the garden as a trauma-sensitive STEM education tool.

Their site formerly known as the Glass Gardens Greenhouse, has about six acres within the city of Mount Vernon. The Community Roots organization seeks to support local food production as members of the Knox County Local Food Council. Their produce is

sold to restaurants and the high school. They also provide lessons to meet science education standards.

When asked what inspired Kim to lead the Farm to School efforts, she said, she had noticed the high school had a greenhouse that was not being utilized. She also knew the faculty member in the Social Emotional Disabilities classroom and was familiar with their instructional challenges and it seemed like a good fit for a Community Roots project (therapeutic gardening with a focus on STEM education).

Kim works weekly in the classroom developing the garden curricula and working with the special needs teachers to find ways to incorporate trauma-sensitive teaching techniques into gardening work.

The local health department would like to expand the project into the mainstream classrooms. Currently, we are thinking about how we can develop a curriculum that K-12 teachers could easily implement to support their science classes, Kim said.

We have one Community Roots volunteer who is a retired food service manager from the school. Nancy Bevan, is very supportive of local food procurement. She has identified that her biggest challenge for local food procurement in the school was the lack of labor in the kitchen to prepare the foods. She is currently on our local food council and has recently brought up this labor issue, so we are starting to work on that as a food community, Kim added.

The Farm to School activity that made her most proud was when she found a way to empirically test the school garden produce. We tested [red versus](#) green jalapeños for spiciness/heat by using the two different colored peppers to make two separate salsas and then conducted a single blind taste test in the school with faculty, administration and students. I had one of the science teachers tell me, I did more hands-on STEM activities with this project than he gets to do with his mainstream classes!

Kim explained, “Mark Kime the current food service director at Mount Vernon High School is very creative in finding ways to use small batches of produce for special meals. One of his methods is to prepare gourmet lunches for students who are recognized for academic achievements; he sets a formal table for them in the cafeteria during their lunch period and serves them a special meal which he incorporates the produce we grow. He also prints signs to advertise when the cafeteria is serving local food or farm to school produce.”

Ohio Food Policy Summit- Action Item

A Statewide Food Policy Advocacy Committee is being formed. The leaders intend to hold monthly meetings via phone calls. For those interested in being involved contact Michaela Oldfield, michaela@greenumbrella.org director of [Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council](#).



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