



Friends  of
GREAT KIDS FARM

Annual Report

2023 - 2024
School Year



Friends of Great Kids Farm is a 501(C)(3). A copy of the current Financial Statement of Friends of Great Kids Farm, Inc. is available by writing Attention: Treasurer, Friends of Great Kids Farm, Inc., 6601 Baltimore National Pike, Catonsville, MD 21228-3908 or by calling 443-620-3453. Alternatively, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-974-5534.

Disclaimer: We use stock photos of children whenever necessary in order to ensure the privacy of Baltimore City Public School students.

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of City Schools; and the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply endorsement by City Schools.

A Note from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This past school year (2023-2024), Friends of Great Kids Farm helped connect over 13,000 Baltimore City Public School students with the Farm through a variety of programs. Students in K through 12 participated in field trips, student summits, farm family hours, and summer camp. High school interns (both camp counselors and farm interns) worked with students during summer camp, built a new pond on the Farm, and ran their own CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program for camp families and Farm neighbors, while Farm staff and FoodCorps

interns brought cooking workshops, farm animal programs and lessons on food waste into the City Schools' classrooms.

This was all made possible because of you. Thanks to your generosity, Friends provided essential resources like transportation, intern wages, materials, meals, workshop facilitators, and program supplies.

The Jill Wrigley Outdoor Classroom, dedicated this year in memory of one of Friends' founders, offers a much-needed learning space for all weather conditions and is accessible to students with limited mobility. Since its official opening, this wonderful space has been heavily used for field trips, family hours, and summits!

To ensure the long-term sustainability of these impactful programs, Friends established an endowment fund. Learn more about contributing to this fund in the letter from board president Mary Jane Namian.

I invite you to stay connected with us and keep up to date with what's going on at Great Kids Farm. Visit our newly revamped website at www.friendsgkf.org, where you can sign up for our bimonthly newsletter that focuses on the farm-to-school program's incredible work. And I welcome you to reach out and schedule a visit to the farm to learn more about investing in the future of farm-to-school education for City Schools' students.

Join us and let's make a difference together!

Warmly,

Nancy

Our Mission

Friends of Great Kids Farm, Inc. (Friends GKF) is a nonprofit organization created to support, promote and enhance the programming at Great Kids Farm and the district's Farm to School (F2S) programming in general. Friends works with Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) to bring the Farm to students and the students to the Farm, providing students hands-on opportunities to connect farm and plate, reinforce curricular concepts, strengthen environmental literacy, and promote healthy habits for the whole child.



A Note from the Board President



Recently, I joined a few Board members at the farm on a beautiful fall weekend. I took a few minutes to stroll the property alone taking in the sights, sounds and smells. The farm was full of life. There were pumpkins and flowers in the fields, plants filling the green houses, goats soaking up the sun and the chickens nestled on their eggs in the barn.

Missing were the excited voices and laughter of children as they learn from educators, explore nature, and play in the fields. Great Kids Farm is a special place by itself, but the real magic happens when the farm is full of students experiencing the sights, sounds and smells with hands-on-learning guided by the gifted and dedicated educators. Watching the magic leaves little doubt that the students' experiences with the farm enrich their lives.

I am so happy to have served on the Board of Friends of Great Kids Farm over the past seven years. The Board is made up of a wonderful group of individuals who come from diverse backgrounds and experiences and roll-up their sleeves to help ensure the students of Baltimore City can learn about where food comes from and making healthy food choices. I cannot thank our board members enough for all they have done and will continue to do, giving of themselves and having fun along the way. Together with our outstanding Executive Director, Nancy Wiley, and unyielding support from our Administrative Assistant, Jenn Harrill-Taylor, the board has worked to win grants, cultivate donors, organize events and raise awareness in order to secure the funding that the farm staff needs to make the magic happen. As I walked the property, I reflected on the ways Friends has been able to enrich the experiences at the farm: the Jill Wrigley Outdoor Classroom, electricity in the green houses, a deer fence, transportation to bring the children to the farm, summer camps, summits, provisions for school gardens and supplies to bring lessons from the farm into the schools.

We have been successful in these efforts thanks to the generous support of our donors and sponsors. We cannot thank you enough and are so appreciative for all you have done this year and over the years. As we all know, it takes money and planning to make the magic happen. Until now we have worked month-to-month and year-to-year to secure the needed funding for programming, projects and general operating expenses (mostly the salaries of our part-time executive director and administrative staff). The short-term nature of our historic funding has increased uncertainty and challenged our ability to plan. To help shore up our foundation and allow for more certainty, we have created an endowment fund. Our long-term goal is to grow the endowment to a point where it can fund our operating expenses on an ongoing basis. Our short-term goal is to raise \$300,000 toward this effort. Reaching this goal will help remove some uncertainty and help stabilize Friends' ability to support the good work of Great Kids Farm into the future. I hope you will see the importance of the endowment and will consider supporting this worthy cause.

Thank you again to our donors, sponsors, board members and staff for all you have done and will continue to do.

Sincerely,
Mary Jane Namian

Friends of Great Kids Farm, Inc

Staff

Nancy Wiley, Executive Director

Jenn Harrill-Taylor, Administrative Assistant

Our Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Mary Jane Namian (President)
Vice President, T. Rowe Price Group

Sadé Newson (Vice President)
Assistant Attorney General, District of Columbia

J. Paul Richards (Treasurer)
District General Manager, CORT

Jennifer Grams (Secretary)
Project Manager, Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education

Jennifer Everett (Events Committee Chair)
Director, Audit Services, Exelon Corporation

Maryanne Gruys (At Large Member)
Executive Vice President, M&T Bank

Board Members

Terrell Brown (Board Member)
Artist Navigator, Baltimore Corps

Brittany Coverdale (Board Member)
Founder, School to Table

Cyrus Green (Board Member)
Vice President, Business Resilience Senior Manager, T. Rowe Price

Patrick Hanlon (Board Member)
Associate attorney, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz, PC

Len King (Board Member)
Senior Research Chef, McCormick & Co.

Mike Mascio (Board Member)
Manager, Outdoor Lighting Operations, BGE

Marie Parfait-Davis (Board Member)
Equity Specialist, Baltimore City Public Schools

Shounok Sinha (Board Member)
Managing Director, Venture Investing, Constellation Technology Ventures

Katharyn Tupitza (Board Member)
Product Development Associate Scientist, McCormick & Co.

Sharon Turner (Board Member)
Senior Development Equity Manager, Enterprise Community Asset Management, Inc.

Kyana Underwood (Board Member)
Deputy Director of Community Relations, Maryland Transit Administration

Hershel Waites (Board Member)
Vice President Sales Strategy, M&T Bank

Blake Wrigley (Board Member)
Education for Nature Program Specialist, World Wildlife Fund

Great Kids Farm

Staff

Cynthia Shea, Manager, Central Commissary
Operations and Farm-to-School
Programming

Laura Genello, Farm to School Specialist

James Koval, Farm Manager

Laura “L” Menyuk, Farm to School Specialist

Anne Rosenthal, Farm to School Specialist

Summer Staff

Kathy Peralta, Camp Director

Ray Steibert, Camp Assistant Director

Tyrek Hood, Camp Kitchen Manager

Camp Counselors

Ameara L.

Ari E.

Corey M.

Kenny (Kenneth) W.

Larry B.

Shanyia W.

Tano B.

Work Interns

Justin P.

Zack D.

David O.

Zynia S.

Tieron M.

Food Corp Fellows

Jasmine Conklin

Veronica Challenger

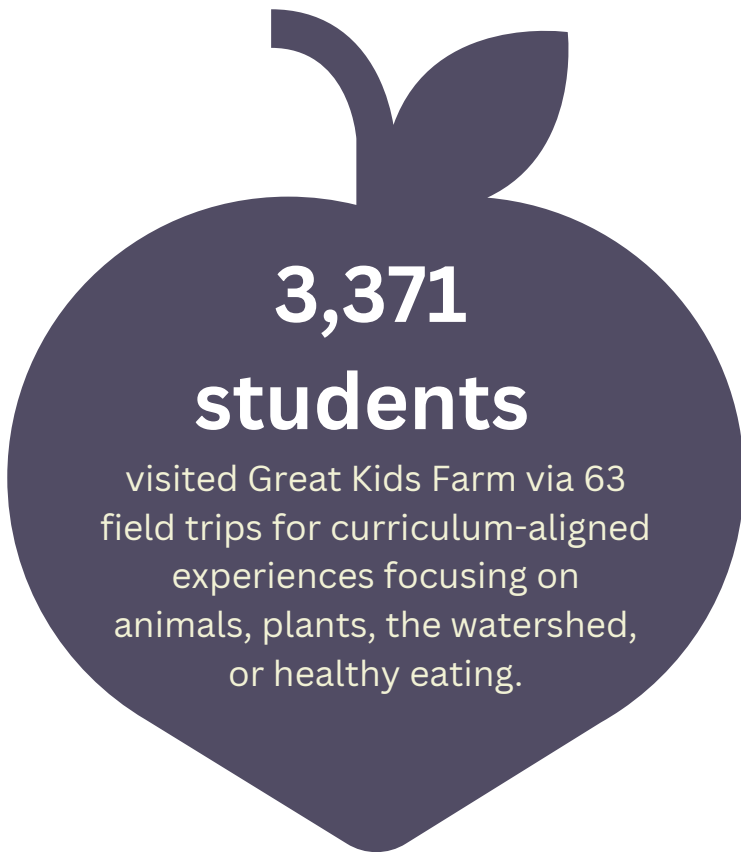
Ray Steibert



“When I first visited the Farm, I was so surprised to realize that I had unknowingly driven past this hidden gem countless times! I feel deeply connected to the Farm's mission to provide students from Baltimore City Public Schools with hands-on learning experiences that foster a connection to nature and an understanding of local food systems. Growing up in a rural area surrounded by gardens and farms, I had access to fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables through my family's garden and local markets. This perspective deepens my connection to the mission of Friends of Great Kids Farm. I was excited to join the Board in 2024 and I look forward to continuing to support this great organization.”

Jennifer Grams (Board Member)

Impact by the Numbers



- **Over 1,000** visitors explored the Farm during family farm hours
- **1,497** students participated in virtual visits via FaceTime the Farmer

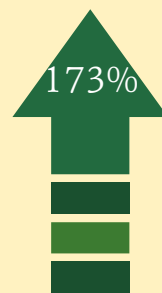
- **105** students attended Summer Camp at the Farm
- **12** students were employed in a paid internship program
- **556** students spanning grades pre-K through 12 participated in summits



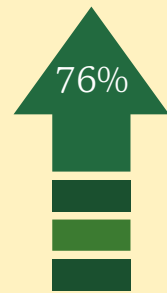
Field Trips



Farm-to-Classroom



Facetime the Farmer



Summits

Field Trips

Generous donor support allowed Friends of Great Kids Farm to provide transportation to over 3,300 students on 63 field trips to the farm. Elementary schools select from a menu of five, curriculum-aligned learning journey options including animal encounters, plants, trails and streams. Each journey features three hands-on learning activities, such as making a farm fresh salad and dressing, harvesting crops, scouting for pollinators, building a worm habitat, or petting the goats.



“This was the best run field trip I have been on in my 9 years of teaching -thank you!”

Spring 2024 Field Trip Teacher



Farm and Forest Camp



Marking the fourth year of the Great Kids Farm and Forest Camp, funding administered by Friends of Great Kids Farm helped bring 105 rising 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders to the Farm across four week-long sessions. Campers spent their days fishing in the stream, exploring trails, and harvesting and cooking products from the Farm. Seven high school students served as camp counselors, growing their leadership skills while leading clubs and craft activities.

“Our son talked daily about the different activities that were done. We didn’t know what to expect and were pleasantly surprised about how much fun he had! He talked most about the animals and opportunities to cook with the food.”

Parent Feedback on Summer Camp



Summits

Over the past year, Great Kids Farm hosted four summits, bringing 556 students from 41 schools to participate in workshops and panels focused on various themes.

The Good Food Fall Summit welcomed 125 middle school students to learn how to make pasta from scratch, while exploring the connection between food and mood.

The newest summit, Climate Change and The Food System, brought 120 5th through 8th graders to the Farm to explore the complex link between climate and food.

131 high school students explored cultural connections to the food system at the African-American Foodways Summit. Black entrepreneurs, farmers and chefs led five workshops weaving history and activism into cooking and food lessons.

Elementary and middle school garden clubs attended the School Garden Summit, with 140 students learning about soil fertility, insects, and mindfulness.



40 High school students toured Coastal Produce for a behind the scenes look at where school meals come from.

Family Farm Hours



Ensuring that as many students as possible have the chance to visit the farm, Great Kids Farm hosted seasonal Family Farm Hours to welcome City Schools' students and their families to explore the farm with a self-guided passport program. Over 1,000 visitors painted pots and planted seeds, walked the trails, pet the goats, and made farm crafts. On two occasions, Friends provided transportation to and from local schools for students and their families.

Youth Employment

Friends of Great Kids Farm funded and facilitated the internship program, hiring 12 students for paid positions. Students applied to be either camp counselors or part of the farm team.

Farm team interns spent their days caring for crops, soil and animals and refined their skills with power tools, tractor, and landscaping equipment. Students gained leadership and business experience in marketing summer produce bags for sale to camp families and farm neighbors. Students set pricing, tracked sales and expenses, designed packaging, and harvested and cleaned produce each week.

Camp counselors led student groups at the Great Kids Farm and Forest Camp, fostering growth through serving as mentors, developing club activities, leading craft lessons, and managing camp aftercare programs.



“I choose to [serve on Friends of Great Kids Farm board] because I am deeply committed to supporting Baltimore's youth through access to fresh, healthy food and hands-on agricultural education. Great Kids Farm and the F2S programming not only nurtures students' physical health but also empowers them with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about food, sustainability, and their environment. By continuing my involvement, I hope to contribute to the long-term growth and success of a program that is transforming lives, enhancing academic achievement, and fostering a more sustainable community.”

Sadé Newson (Board Vice President)



Jill Wrigley Outdoor Classroom

This year, we proudly unveiled the Jill Wrigley Outdoor Classroom, a project made possible through generous donations honoring the tireless dedication of our longtime volunteer, Jill Wrigley. This versatile space has quickly become an integral part of the Farm, providing a vibrant outdoor learning environment. While still in development, with plans to include electricity and plumbing for an outdoor kitchen, the classroom is already enhancing our programs and fostering deeper connections with the land. We are grateful to all who contributed to this meaningful addition, ensuring Jill's legacy inspires future generations.



A Special Thanks to our Generous Donors

\$500-\$999

- Catonsville Women's Giving Circle
- Giant - Community Bag Program
- David Blythe
- David Warshaw
- Exelon
- Eleanor Tippet
- John Meyerhoff & Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff
- Karen Stokes
- Kurt Davis and Mark Paul Lehman
- Ira Miller
- Kyana Underwood
- Laurie Scudder
- Luca DiMambro
- Martha Barss
- Maryanne Gruys
- Michael Mascio
- Michele Conner
- NeighborWorks Capital
- Paul and Karen Richards
- Shounok Sinha
- St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church

\$1,000-\$4,999

- Aldi
- Andrew Castor
- Annie and Christopher Umbricht Goodwill Donor Fund
- Canusa
- Chris Everett
- Constellation Energy
- COPT Defense Properties
- Enterprise Community Partners, Inc
- Ingredient
- Institute of Real Estate Management Maryland Chapter
- Johns Hopkins University & Medicine
- Jen Everett
- Joseph Alpert
- Laura Chambers
- Patrick Hanlon
- Stoney Run Friends Meeting
- The Herbert Bearman Foundation, Inc.
- Under Armour

\$5,000-\$9,999

- The Nestico Family Charitable Gift Fund
- Nora Roberts Foundation
- Ravens Foundation
- The Israel and Mollie Myers Foundation, Inc.
- Wegmans

\$10,000-\$19,999

- John Kevin and Mary Jane Namian
- Katherine Hancock Porter and Philip Porter
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- McCormick & Company, Inc.
- Power for Good Foundation
- Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation
- Thomas Wilson Foundation

\$20,000 +

- The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
- The Henry and Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation

Thank you to our Volunteers

**This list includes those who came out more than once or more than 5 hours in one month*

Rebekah Kaufman
JoAnne Kraus
Jacqueline (Jackie) Dailey
Laurie Scudder
Kurt Davis
Sydney Wallace
Chloe Farrell
Laura Van Faasen
Andrea Deering
Isabel Hewitt
Ron Rhodes
Keri Wheelwright
Smriti Rhodes
Aureliane Tchamdja
Ann Burns
Lisa Reichenbach
Lanease Paul
Anita Pilch
Anna Wilt
Vanessa Kelly
Sharon Adesina
Oli Baldev
Max Huck
Jeff Byerly
Calder Huck
Dario Rodrigues
Fin Kelly
Grace Kelly
Maisie Kelly
Tavia La Follette
Diego Carino
Hieu Do
Elizabeth Ludwick

Adara M
Diane Esteban
Reese Burke
Diana Valencia
Fin Jenkins
Nora Kelleher
Lisandro Mendez Byerly
Lindsay Mann
Sarah Hansen
Ella Gensheimer
Megan Long
April Gibson
Alexander Bishop
Thomas DeMenthon
Henry DeMenthon
Dahlia Pousson
Megan Fine
Len King
Keli Keener

Shan Huangfu & sons
Ed Mihok
Sydney Spencer
Sam Edelstein
Mariana Cardenas
Amelia Johnston
Uche Ejimofor
Tracey Duval
Sophia Kotschoubey
Katie Q
Emilia R
Denise Reid
Madison T
Ugo Njoku
Adele Ma
Portia White
Clare Audy & sons
Julie Everett



Stay connected with us!

@friendsgkf



Check out our refreshed website at friendsgkf.org

