

JERSEY FRESH™

Farm to School

A Quarterly Newsletter from the NJ Department of Agriculture
Farm to Everything Program

BEST OF FARM TO SCHOOL AWARD 2021-2022



Farm to School can be summed up into three easy to remember words – Community, Cafeteria, & Classroom. Three Bridges Elementary School embodies these three elements. From the moment you drive up to the school, you can see the garden framing the back of the school with a nearby outdoor classroom for learning.

Inside, the cafeteria is serving a locally sourced meal and the smell of fresh cooked basil from the garden fills the room. The corner of the cafeteria is framed by a growing tower of lettuce. As you walk down the hallway, you view a small courtyard titled "Sensory

Garden" there you will find fresh herbs for children to see, taste, touch, and smell. On the day of our visit, the third grade class was outside for their science lesson, where they were dissecting and categorizing seeds. When asked about their lesson, one student remarked "I'd rather be outside learning any day." We think this



student & Three Bridges Elementary is onto something great!



JERSEY FRESH FARMER AWARD 2022

“Swiss Chard, Swiss Chard, We Love Swiss Chard.” The students and staff welcomed back their beloved farmer with a creatively crafted chant. The seeds Farmer Shannon had donated to the school in the spring, had grown into delicious Swiss chard for the students to enjoy. If one were to have witnessed the scene of excited students chanting, while Farmer Shannon walked into the local elementary school, you would know you were looking at the recipient of the “Jersey Fresh Farmer Award” for 2022.

Farmer Shannon Higginbotham, of Cheyenne’s Road Market, has spent the past 15 years volunteering at local schools teaching students about agriculture, health and wellness, gardening, animals, and agriculture science. As you tour Farmer Shannon’s farm, her passion for educating becomes evident. Farmer Shannon

talked about her daughter and namesake of the farm, Cheyenne. Cheyenne has a passion for animals and is currently studying to become a veterinarian. And what better way to encourage your child’s interest in animals than to bring them on the farm. On the tour, Farmer Shannon pointed out Cheyenne’s Christmas present, Rudolph, that glanced our way and continued to munch on hay. Our guided tour continued as Farmer Shannon educated us on agricultural life, such as how farmers know the seasons based on the changing of the leaves, rather than a date on the calendar. Mid-hayride Cheyenne caught up with our tour and as the tractor turned the corner, Cheyenne’s beloved brown cow caught site of her and ran excitedly to the tractor stopping just short of the fence. The cow’s excitement was a clear indication of the passion both Farmer Shannon and her daughter Cheyenne have for farming and animals.

We believe Farmer Shannon herself, summed up why she was chosen as the Jersey Fresh Farmer of 2022, “I am so passionate about teaching students about farming, agriculture, healthy eating, and produce. They are our next customers, our future farmers, and the next generation.”



TOP TOMATO WINTER 2022

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE MAKING A
DIFFERENCE IN FARM TO SCHOOL

Meet Bridgette Byrd!

Bridgette is a FoodCorps AmeriCorps Service Member at the Greater Newark Conservancy where she has embarked upon a year long journey in supporting local Newark schools, providing experiential project-based learning dedicated to healthy kids, food nutrition, and food justice. In her role, she supports academic and social and emotional needs by collaborating with classroom teachers to build on classroom learning, often highlighting Farm to School lessons and utilizing the Conservancy's nearby Hawthorne Ave. Farm. In the school cafeteria, classrooms, and even on the farm itself, taste tests are integrated to expand food access, exposure, and distribution.



Outside is Bridgette's classroom of choice! Within her first few weeks of service, Bridgette organized a 2022 September Fall Festival at the Hawthorne Avenue Farm, involving various community volunteers and local organizations, who all came together to help with farm activities and to serve fresh, locally sourced recipes to nearly 500 students! In October, Bridgette was invited to participate with Hawthorne Ave. School's 7th Annual Hawthorne "Shake Up" celebration, where she supported their day of fun exercise activities with tasty fresh fruit and vegetable stations!

In this first semester of the school year, Bridgette has made it a priority, as often as possible, to give students the opportunity to enjoy outdoor learning experiences in school gardens and on the urban farm cultivating various crops, harvesting produce, and tasting freshly grown fruits and vegetables.

As one student joyfully said it perfectly, "Am I eating healthy?...YES! I'm gonna eat healthy every day!"

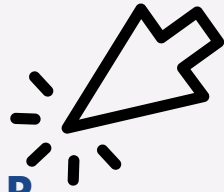
Local Food for Schools



The NJ Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Food & Nutrition has been awarded **\$4,983,590** through the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)'s new Local Food for School Cooperative Agreement Program for the **purchasing of domestic local foods for distribution to schools**. The agency has sub awarded the funds to schools participating in the National School Lunch Food Distribution Program.

FIND OUT MORE

- [LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS PDF](#)
- [LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS WEBINAR](#)
- [ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT ESTIMATED ALLOTMENT](#)

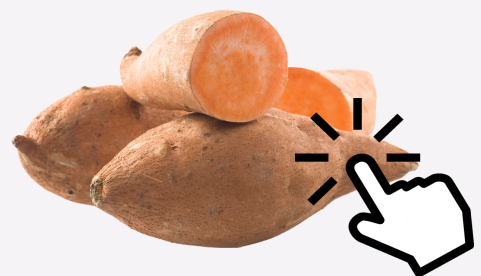
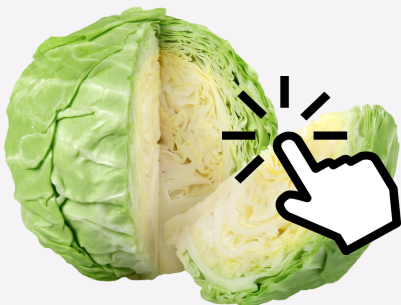


Jersey Tastes! Monthly Activity Center

December

January

February



NJ DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD & NUTRITION
JERSEY FRESH FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

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