

A School that Feeds Itself!

Barnard students are learning about the impact of food deserts and the benefits of urban farming through the use of technology and sustainable gardening practices. Students grades PreK-8 all play a role in the school's weekly #TasteTestTuesdays and #FarmStandFridays.

It is through Barnard's partnership with Trifecta Ecosystem, and their vision of, "A school that feeds itself", that students learn the various responsibilities individuals and companies have in getting food from farm to table, as well as the various environmental impacts. Depending on the grade level, students work as producers, consumers, manufacturers, waste management, distributors and more. Producers help maintain and grow the produce, while manufacturers assemble the produce in upcycled plastic containers. Waste management workers reduce waste by composting organic material and facilitating "food share" tables in the cafeteria. Distributors set up taste test stations for students during lunch waves on Tuesdays, and a farm stand for families during dismissal on Fridays. All produce is grown in the outdoor raised garden beds (spring, summer, fall) or indoor aquaponics and hydroponic systems (fall, winter, spring), allowing students to experience urban farming year round.

This all ties together with a school-wide cookbook containing family-favorite recipes, written by students. Ingredients from the cookbook will be seeded, planted and harvested this spring in the school's garden. Families will have a chance to enjoy their recipes at a an end-of-year "farm to table" family potluck event!

These real-life, authentic learning opportunities not only strengthen family connections, but also help students understand the vital roles environmental education, advocacy and technology have to their future.



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