



ENSURING THAT EVERYONE HAS ACCESS
TO AFFORDABLE, NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND
INFORMATION TO MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 25, 2017

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Pennsylvania Farm to Early Care and Education Champion Awardees

The Food Trust Awards \$7,500 in Mini-grants to Organizations Throughout Pennsylvania

The Food Trust is excited to announce this year's recipients of the **Pennsylvania Farm to Early Care and Education Champion Award**. Recognized for their commitment to teaching young children about growing food and connecting them to their agricultural communities, awardees were selected through a competitive proposal process and will receive \$500 each to support various programming efforts.

[Read the full press release here.](#)

Angels' Place, Inc. (Allegheny County, PA)

Angels' Place serves the children of single-parent families on the Northside of Pittsburgh. As part of their self-sufficiency model, Angels' Place centers each feature gardens, which families tend to from seed to harvest. Classroom curriculum, planting activities and fresh food taste tests support children's exposure to nutritious foods, teach them how foods grow and teaches them that eating nutritious foods will help them grow up to be healthy and strong.

Blair Christian Academy and Child Care Center, Inc. (Philadelphia County, PA)

Blair Christian Academy and Child Care Center is a private preschool that engages children and families in farm to ECE through farm field trips to Johnson Farms and Awbury Arboretum, collaboration with Penn State Cooperative Extension's master gardener program and parent engagement activities in their garden. The child care center will use award funds for their "Pre -K Project G.R.E.E.N" project, purchasing additional tools for their garden and funding excursions to nearby farms so children can connect with local agriculture.

CAP Child Care Center (Lancaster County, PA)

CAP Child Care center is a child care program with Head Start funding that has been engaged in farm to ECE activities since 2009. The center grows a variety of vegetables and harvests about 30 large bags of sweet concord grapes each year. Spring lesson plans revolve around gardening and farming in all classrooms. In May 2017, CAP opened a new nature playground, "Nature's Classroom". The center will use grant funds to purchase a worm farm (vermicomposter) to make good use of the kitchen scraps from

their onsite kitchen and to educate children about decomposition and the important role worms play in gardens.

Columbia Child Development Program – Berwick Head Start (Columbia County, PA)

A robust garden program is growing at Columbia Child Development Program in Bloomsburg, PA. In addition to designing, planting, harvesting and eating vegetables grown in the on-site garden, preschoolers participate in farm field trips, classroom garden parties and garden-related activities throughout the year. As a Head Start program, these farm to ECE activities are reaching students and families who may not always have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Creative Play Day School (Chester County, PA)

Culturally relevant farm to ECE activities are top of mind at Creative Play Day School in rural Toughkenamon, PA. Creative Play Day School's garden strives to grow food that the children, many of whom are from immigrant families, see daily in their school and home environments. An upcoming project is a salsa garden, complete with a new composting program.

Denise K. Cressman Family Child Care (Montour County, PA):

Denise Cressman has been nurturing young children at her family child care center for over 25 years. In rural Montour county, Denise has established an organic vegetable garden as the centerpiece for good nutrition and parent engagement strategies. The garden allows young children to learn to grow and taste fresh garden vegetables, and it allows parents to take fresh foods home as well as enjoy on-site during special locally grown dinners in the summer months.

Early Literacy Academy (Philadelphia County, PA)

Early Literacy Academy conducts a variety of interactive classroom activities that introduce topics related to fruits, vegetables and farming. They have a farmers market dramatic play area where students learn to select healthy meal options and host family engagement activities where a chef prepares foods for children and caregivers to taste. The center has also partnered with Common Market to serve farm fresh and locally grown foods and acts as a farm share location so that families have greater access to fresh produce.

Easter Seals of Southeastern Pennsylvania (Montgomery County, PA)

Easter Seals of Southeastern PA provides a wide array of care services to differently abled children in Montgomery County. They serve locally grown food snacks, conduct hands-on gardening sessions with preschoolers and develop lesson plans for a green curriculum. Each October, they coordinate an annual "Green Fall Festival" where children and families learn how to protect the environment by recycling, reducing and reusing. The funds would be used to make their garden wheelchair accessible and to fund costs of travel and educational farm to ECE activities.

Just Like Home, LLC (Jefferson County, PA)

This family-centric, in-home day care teaches children and their families about growing food through fruit and vegetable gardening. With the award funds, the program plans to expand its garden and purchase farm to ECE learning materials including books, toys and pretend play items for the children so that they can learn about healthy eating and meal choices, all year round.

Methodist Services (Philadelphia County, PA):

Located on the Northwestern edge of the city of Philadelphia, Methodist Services Early Childhood Center serves approximately 80 lower-income children and their families through innovative “farm to ECE” activities. An active two-acre farm is located on-site and provides many opportunities for children and families to engage with agricultural production in an urban setting. Farm-fresh taste tests, farm field trips and cooking classes for families are just some of the ways in which Methodist Services works to connect children and families to sources of fresh, healthy foods.

Seton Hill Child Services (Westmoreland County, PA)

A non-profit agency predominantly serving low-income families throughout Westmoreland County, Seton Hill Child Services Greensburg Center serves 110 toddlers and infants. They started a small raised bed garden for children to take care of and help plant. When they first started the garden, each parent received a letter about gardening and a packet of seeds to start their own garden at home. Their Head Start center in Latrobe is located only one block from the local farmers market, so children take a walk once per week to pick out new vegetables to try for lunch the following day. They hope to incorporate lessons on how other plants grow, nutrition and the insect life around gardens.

Somerset County Head Start – Conemaugh Township Center (Somerset County, PA)

Surrounded by a community of farming families, Somerset County Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts classroom currently serves 34 students. The neighbors have donated a space on their farm for the classroom to utilize to create a garden. They harvested asparagus and plan to use more vegetables from their garden in their meals. Families are invited to join a cooking workshop and to visit the garden throughout the summer months. They aim to create a sustainable garden to engage children and families in learning about growing vegetables, preparing healthy meals and preserving food.

The Growing Place Child Care Center (Monroe County, PA)

The Growing Place (TGP) is a high-quality early care and education center located in the rural West end of Monroe County. Located in what was originally a PA German (PA Dutch) farming community, TGP has several staff and children who come from farming families or have farming connections. It participates in the PA Keystone STARS quality initiative and boasts a STAR 4 rating. Serving approximately 430 children aged eight weeks through 12 years in Working Parent, Preschool and PA Pre-K Counts programs, TGP is committed to supporting the unique and individual needs of each family. TGP has a long tradition of

incorporating the area's agricultural significance into its curriculum and family engagement. Currently, TGP recognizes the community's agricultural connections in four ways: in the nutrition program, classroom, garden and community. TGP will use award funds to implement agricultural education through "Farmer for a Day," a hands-on learning experience at the county agricultural fair.

The Willow School (Montgomery County, PA)

The Willow School serves children from infancy to school age in a largely underserved urban community. For the last three years, they have partnered with a local grocery store and Philabundance to offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to our families weekly. The Willow School participates in a healthy food program (CACFP) and offers fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis donated by a local super market. The school has partnered with families to plant an outdoor vegetable garden and windowsill herb gardens.

TLC Learning Center (Allegheny County, PA)

TLC Learning Center is a small center serving low-income families located on the North side of Pittsburgh. They have been gardening for four years and incorporate STEM into Farm to ECE activities by exploring the growth cycle of a seed and studying plant's needs. They have planted tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, pumpkins, zucchini, cucumber, onion, oregano and parsley.

About The Food Trust

The Food Trust, a nonprofit founded in 1992, strives to ensure that everyone has access to healthy, affordable food and information to make healthy decisions. Our Farm to Early Care and Education Awards program is made possible through generous funding by the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**. To learn more about The Food Trust's farm to school work, visit thefoodtrust.org.