

Community Agriculture for Local Impact

Career-Technical Education Program News from the Six District Educational Compact



Jonathan Hunsicker (Hudson) harvests lettuce grown hydroponically; students earn 3 industry credentials for hydroponic growing through this program

Community Agriculture combats food insecurity

According to Feeding America, almost 15% of people in Summit County are food insecure. Food insecurity refers to the USDA's measure of lack of regular access to nutritional food for an active and healthy life. The students of Community Agriculture for Local Impact work to address this issue every single day by donating most of what they grow to students and families in need. Each year, thousands of pounds of corn, garlic, peppers, potatoes, eggplant, cabbage, and more are donated to Cuyahoga Falls Good Neighbors, a local food pantry. This ensures that the people who receive our donated food have options for fresh produce. The Cuyahoga Falls Fresh Farm has donated over 17,000 lbs of food to those in need since 2018.

Community Agriculture students are employed

In addition to learning about the principles of sustainable agriculture, greenhouse management, and animal science, students in Community Agriculture develop numerous employability skills that directly translate into paid employment. Each year, students participate in resume-building activities, leadership training, and interview skill development experiences. These opportunities prepare students to be hired in agriculture and related fields while they are still in high school. Since the 2024-25 school year, students have gained employment at Living City Farms, Let's Grow Akron, Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens, Dietz Floral Studio, Black Dog Baking Co., and Baker's Fresh Produce.



Desmond Crabtree (Cuyahoga Falls), Dominic Bowles (Cuyahoga Falls), and Cameron Durfee (Cuyahoga Falls) harvest heirloom tomatoes that will be sold to local business, Black Dog Baking Co.

Local establishments support program

One way that students explore careers in agriculture is by selling some of the produce they grow to local businesses in the area.

- At various times throughout the year, Fresh Farm vegetables can be found on a monthly special at HiHO Brewing Co., a longtime support of the program.
- If tacos and burritos are more your thing, during the summer, Wholly Frijoles uses the program's tomatillos, jalapenos, serranos, and other hot peppers for various salsas and sauces.
- At Black Dog Baking Co., patrons can find Farm Fresh microgreens available every day to give their sandwich a little "something extra."

In addition to these current restaurant partners, a new relationship is developing with the Culinary Arts program by supplying them with various seasonal offerings that will be used in Joshua's Restaurant at Stow-Munroe Falls High School.

As a way to demonstrate the career opportunities in small-scale agriculture, the program started a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) pilot program where a select group of customers receive a box of produce every other week from July to October. We are so grateful for all the support the community gives to the program. If any other local restaurants or businesses are looking to partner with us, please reach out to instructors **Steve McIntosh (cf_mcintosh@cftigers.org)** or **Steve Newlon (cf_newlon@cftigers.org)**.



Six District Educational Compact

Cuyahoga Falls • Hudson • Kent • Stow-Munroe Falls • Tallmadge • Woodridge

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The City of Cuyahoga Falls' Wellness Fair provided a unique opportunity for students to engage with the community and share the benefits of farming and healthy eating



Kate McDaniels (Cuyahoga Falls), Riley Paradise (Cuyahoga Falls), and Mackenzie Stumpf (Cuyahoga Falls) showcase the program at the annual Ohio School Boards Association Student Achievement Fair in Columbus

The “Community” in Community Agriculture

Local community and business partnerships are an impactful component of the Community Agriculture for Local Impact program. Partnerships with area farms, businesses, and community organizations provide valuable opportunities for students to not only learn, but also share their knowledge. Each year, students participate in engaging learning experiences at Oxbow Orchard, Living City Farms, Bay Branch Farm, and Fair View Meadow Farm. Developing quality communication skills is a highly valued skill within the program. Students frequently have opportunities to teach others about sustainable agriculture at community events, including The City of Cuyahoga Falls' Wellness Fair, the Ohio School Boards Association Capital Conference, and during educational tours they host.

What does a day in Community Agriculture look like?

No two days in Community Agriculture for Local Impact are exactly alike. On any given day, students in the program are busy caring for the chickens, cultivating culinary mushrooms, planting and harvesting fresh vegetables in the garden, and maintaining leafy greens and herbs in the hydroponics lab. The goal of the program is to teach students the skills needed to obtain a career in agriculture while also being good stewards of the environment and positive members of the community. Career opportunities include greenhouse/nursery manager, market gardener, hydroponic grower, plant and soil scientist, environmental scientist, and more! While there are times when “traditional” classroom work is done, this program is anything but “Sit and Get.” Students are outside year-round and always staying busy. **Follow us on Instagram @CFHS_Fresh_Farm**



Students plant garlic at Oxbow Orchard



The future home of the new Community Agriculture for Local Impact Fresh Farm!

New school, new Fresh Farm

The Cuyahoga Falls High School Fresh Farm was established in 2018 with a handful of volunteers and 20 raised beds. Since then, hundreds of students have learned about sustainable agriculture, and in 2023, it became a Career-Technical Education program. Current and future students are in

a very unique situation with the opening of our new 6-12 campus in January of 2026. The new farm will more than double the previous growing space, a new greenhouse will be built, the poultry operation will be expanded, and more! This upgraded learning space will provide students with an outstanding opportunity to take what they learn from classroom instruction and from our partnerships and directly apply it to the farm operation.



Ellie Armodio (Kent) introduces laying hens to younger students on a tour of the program



Mira Shearer (Tallmadge) holds one of the program's laying hens

What our students are saying...

“A potential student should sign up for this class because it is engaging and not only teaches you about agriculture, but also teaches valuable life lessons that will help you thrive as an adult.”
Damien Scott (Cuyahoga Falls)

“This program is a family of people who all want to better the world and help each other, full of love and support.”
Dominic Bowles (Cuyahoga Falls)

“It has been so incredible to see and meet so many cool people in the field of Agriculture, visit their operations, and see how they fit into our food system and world!”
Cameron Durfee (Cuyahoga Falls)

“Historically, I have not been a confident public speaker and leader, but this class has given me countless opportunities to grow in this regard.”
Eila Friel (Hudson)

“My favorite part of the class is getting the opportunity to work with my friends while providing food for people in our community.” Alyssa Lane (Stow-Munroe Falls)