



Food for Life at Hampstead Hill Academy



Overview

Food for Life is a multi-faceted, sensory-based food education program that encourages healthy food choices by providing students and families with enjoyable experiences growing, cooking, and eating nutritious foods. Hampstead Hill Academy is a pre-K through 8th grade public charter school in East Baltimore operated by the Baltimore Curriculum Project (www.baltimorecp.org). The program has received national attention as a model of holistic nutrition education programming in a public school setting.

Initiated in 2004 as a grant-funded project,

the program has grown to touch every student at the school during the school day and in after school clubs and events. A full-time, teacher-level Food for Life (FFL) educator is a permanent position at the school, and a kitchen classroom serves as a base for the classes, clubs, and activities that comprise the program.



HHA students met First Lady Michele Obama during an invited visit to the White House for a youth town hall meeting on childhood obesity in April 2010.



Classroom Instruction

In-school food education classes are the heart of the Food for Life program. Each student at Hampstead Hill Academy attends FFL class as part of their resource class rotation. The FFL approach to food and nutrition education is founded in the principles of the Food is Elementary curriculum designed by the Food Studies Institute (www.foodstudies.org).

The hands-on activities, tastings, and food preparation activities engage the students' senses and provide positive experiences with fresh, nutrient-dense foods. Students learn basic nutrition concepts and food skills while preparing recipes from a diversity of cultures, gaining experience and familiarity with colorful whole foods.



Food for Life Programming

Classroom Instruction

Organic School Garden

Garden Club

Culinary Arts Club

Community Dinners

Parent and Community Engagement

Healthy School Environment

Partners

The Food for Life program would not exist without the generous support of community, business, and foundation partners. For more information about the program, including how FFL is supported, contact:

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Organic School Garden

Established at the inception of the Food for Life program, the Garden for Life has steadily expanded and matured into a vibrant outdoor classroom, community greenspace, and demonstration site. Students in Food for Life classes explore where food comes from and experience the flavor of freshly grown fruits, vegetables and herbs. The Garden Club plants

and tends the space and enjoys a bounty of fresh produce. Parents and the community are invited to enjoy the green oasis, participate in gardening workshops, and volunteer during workdays. The garden is managed using organic methods and showcases urban- and environmentally-friendly gardening practices, including container gardening, composting, rain-barrels, and drip irrigation.



Community Dinners

Four times per year, families and the community are invited to enjoy a meal at HHA prepared by Culinary Arts Club students. Families and students share in the fellowship of the table

while enjoying a nutritious, delicious, scratch-cooked meal made by students. Entertainment is provided by HHA choir, orchestra, and band.

Healthy School Environment

HHA aims to provide consistent messages and support students in making the healthy choices promoted through FFL by providing healthy foods during school events. Food at major evening events is wholesome and minimally processed, and

snacks at teacher meetings reflect the key messages of FFL. HHA engages with other schools and City Schools leadership to increase the access to healthy foods for all students in Baltimore City Public Schools.



Garden Club

The after school Garden Club meets weekly during the growing season to plant and tend the garden. The club also creates artwork to enhance the beauty of the garden, visits other urban agricultural sites

throughout the city, and participates in local farmers markets. Garden Club parents volunteer during club meetings or workdays, and help maintain the garden over the summer.

Culinary Arts Club

The after school Culinary Arts Club meets weekly to learn advanced cooking skills and coordinate Community Dinners. Guest chefs visit the club to teach new skills and

the club explores food systems and careers in the culinary arts through field trips to local farms, grocery stores, and restaurants.



Parent and Community Engagement

Parents and community members are invited to learn and share in the Food for Life program. Parent and community workshops provide information, demonstrations, and hands-on experience in various topics surrounding healthy eating and gardening.