

Common Ground Program Updates September 2020

Common Ground High School

- School Year started September 4th
- 39% all virtual; 61% hybrid
- Zero quarantine or transmission concerns so far
- [Independent Article about CGHS](#)

Community Programs

- Children's programs are serving 280 children between NatureYear and Kids Unplugged.
- Nature Notes is a weekly email that goes out to a list of about 6,000 people and is intended to support teachers and families in integrating nature into their home and school based learning. Our Schoolyards Crew is also going out to NHPS on weekends to clean up school gardens.
- All is going well! Right now one of the hardest things is what we are NOT doing: no weekend programs, bdays, parent and child classes, field trips, etc, but we get phone calls and emails every day from folks who want to join us for those things. There is a lot of need for outdoor, learning and social opportunities for kids and families, and we are offering very limited opportunity right now, by necessity.

Farm

- Instead of our seasonal Farm and Garden Conference, the Farm and Schoolyards Program has been hosting monthly free virtual workshops since June focused on topics ranging from "Gardening with Kids" to our for youth lead by youth workshop; "Nasi Gohreign: Indonesian Fried Rice". We are continuing this Fall with an exciting lineup highlighting exciting community partners and CG youth: "Seedkeeping" this Friday, "Natural Dying", Preserving Food Preserving Culture", "Land, Food and Climate Talk " (for youth, by youth), and a "DIY Herbal Medicine Kit".
- As many of you know we've had a roller coaster journey with our Family Food Box program, which we have been running since March. Since then, our amazing team (made up of staff and volunteers) have delivered almost 4000 boxes to CG families, and Senior and Community Residences around New Haven. Unfortunately, the farmer we've been working with, Cecarelli Farm, did not receive the most recent round of contracts through the USDA Farm to Families Boxes, so in 2 weeks, the program we are running for our families will most likely pause. We are conducting an audit of our 65 CG Food Box Families to assess the current needs of our families and, after 1/3 of our families have responded, have already seen that the food insecurity they experience is not going away. Without Common Ground's food box deliveries, 77% of responding families said

that they would not be able to consume vegetables on a daily basis. One respondent said that they "only get \$50 a month in SNAP and frequently don't eat so that (their) child has regular meals."

"Speaking from and for my family particularly...The farmers box helps families to learn and to teach them the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. Money was real low in our house and we appreciated those boxes. The fresh bread is amazing also (thanks Chabaso!). The farmer boxes also introduced my family to a whole different variety of fruits we had never heard of. I guess what I'm saying is this program exposed us to all different kind of healthy fruits and vegetables. Not only does our family need this program, but the community needs this program, and especially our kids thank you for everything. I almost forgot to add that the fact that they bring it to our homes that is a blessing from God!!!!" -YB, Student Parent