

**For Immediate Release**

February 18, 2021

**Contact:**

Erica Taylor, 843-937-6303

# Media Release

## **CCSD partners with local hydroponic farm, Vertical Roots**

Division of Strategy and  
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor  
Chief of Staff

**Charleston, SC** – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is excited to announce a partnership with Vertical Roots, a leading indoor hydroponic container farming company in the country. [Vertical Roots](#) produces nutrient-rich lettuce with globally recognized food safety standards inside its eco-friendly, upcycled container farms.

The district's Office of Nutrition Services will incorporate lettuce from Vertical Roots in the salads offered in school cafeterias starting on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. Today, as part of the rollout, students at Chicora Elementary School participated in a taste-testing event with representatives from Nutrition Services and Vertical Roots.

"CCSD knows that students, communities, and farmers win when schools implement farm to school practices," said Kerrie Hollifield, the district's registered dietitian. "This partnership with Vertical Roots is going to allow students to eat local salads every day of the week. We plan as a district to be the gold standard of supporting local agricultural programs and building vibrant communities."

Vertical Roots farms use 98 percent less water than conventional farming methods to sustainably grow non-GMO lettuce that is full of flavor and pesticide-free. Their farms also generate eight-times more produce per acre of land compared to traditional farms. For example, Vertical Roots four acre-farm in Columbia, SC is equivalent to 350 acres of traditional farmland.

Vertical Roots grows lettuce every day of the year at their farms in the Charleston and Columbia areas. Their produce is harvested at the peak of freshness and delivered to grocery stores within one to three days.

"The partnership with Charleston County School District is very important to Vertical Roots and our mission," added Andrew Hare, Co-Founder and General Manager of Vertical Roots. "Our youth is our future. This will create a hyperlocal farm experience for students, and educate them on nutritional benefits of local produce as they better understand where their food comes from."

Vertical Roots' produce is available in 1,200 grocery stores across the Southeast at Publix, Harris Teeter, Whole Foods, and Lowes Foods.

For more information, contact the Division of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303 or the Office of Nutrition Services at (843) 566-8180.

###

#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.