



Kid Cafe Harvest Day – 11/18/2025

James Gettys Elementary School

Building Connections Between Farmers and Schools

Farm to school connects children to local agriculture through local procurement by using locally grown foods in meals, snacks and Child Nutrition Programs, helping educators and students grow their own food in school gardens and hands-on learning about food and agriculture by providing experiential education through farm field trips, cooking in the classroom and more. When farmers and growers connect directly with schools there are many opportunities to advance and enrich farm to school activities. The GASD Food Service Department is an active member of the PA Farm to School Network. Today we are celebrating Harvest Day in the Kid Café with our local farmer partner and sampling healthy farm fresh recipes using ingredients locally grown in Adams County, Pa.

Please join us in the café for delicious food samples, and the opportunity to speak to our guest farming expert to learn about local farming in your community.



Today's Guest Farmer: Mr. Ben Mearns

Bio:

Ben Mearns is the owner and managing farmer at **Mudcollege Farm**, a small, certified-organic vegetable, fruit, and egg farm located between Gettysburg and Littlestown.

Ben leads with a strong commitment to environmental stewardship: he follows USDA Organic practices in vegetable and fruit production, never using synthetic inputs, and going beyond national standards under Real Organic Project Certification. His team has planted over 1,000 trees with assistance from the USDA. They also integrate pasture-raised hens (non-GMO fed) and goats into this system. Altogether they are rebuilding the fertility of the land and health of ecosystems while growing lots of good food.

Ben is a Gettysburg native and a graduate of James Gettys and Gettysburg High School. **Mudcollege Farm** is on land once part of his parent's dairy operation, and where he spent much valuable time with his grandparents. Having previously worked in research and data systems, Ben returned to the farm in 2015. He is deeply invested in growing a resilient, community-based food system, working with educational programs like Gettysburg College's Painted Turtle Farm to mentor the next generation of farmers.