

## The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

# BUSY BEES NATURAL LEARNING CENTER

Centre County, PA



In late summer 2022, **Tonya Fisher**, Director of Busy Bees Natural Learning Center in Centre County, brought in several dozen ears of corn for her students to shuck. “To my surprise, the children were engrossed in the sensory of every ear,” Tonya says. The following day, she purchased a few dozen more from another local Amish stand. The children shucked that corn, too, and they prepared the corn to freeze. “As we peeled back every layer from the corn, we discussed how we can preserve different foods from one season to another.”

Throughout winter and into spring, the daycare reached out to their community for donations of raised garden beds, soil, mulch, and garden plants. The community delivered all this and more. Local greenhouses donated plants, fruit trees, berry bushes and fertilizers. Monetary donations came in from organizations such as their local Kiwanis.

They built two raised beds by hand and purchased six premade beds, including a salsa tomato bed made from tires donated by the local mechanic.

In an effort to plan ahead, they planted several pumpkin plants. “Apparently, we are great pumpkin growers,” Tonya says, “as these plants have taken over the hillside.” Sunflowers are lining the fencerow to provide the perfect backdrop for pictures and seeds for roasting.

“We have been working hard weeding and watering our gardens and preparing for a season of preserving.”

– **Tonya Fisher, director**





“Twelve watering cans, one hose, 24 bare feet and a lot of smiles fill our summer days. However, the joy for me will come in January, when we will gather around the table to eat spaghetti, knowing that the tomatoes in the sauce were grown with our very own little hands.”



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