

# The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

## PLANT IT FURTHER

Allegheny County, PA



In her work with farmers, growers, and education providers, she has connected community members, teachers, Parent-Teacher Association members, homeschoolers, farmers, and other advocates to opportunities available to them via the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network.

“When we create [as many opportunities as possible to connect students to their local food systems], in our classrooms, cafeterias, and communities for students to see where their food comes from, we cultivate a real-life understanding of the food growing process,” says **Tamara O’Brien**, Director of the nonprofit Plant It Further.

Plant It Further aims to advocate for and raise native pollinator awareness through education and to help facilitate native pollinator-specific garden growing. The organization helps facilitate the setup, maintenance plans, and educational programming of pollinator gardens in schools and communities.

“When we create [as many opportunities as possible to connect students to their local food systems], in our classrooms, cafeterias, and communities for students to see where their food comes from, we cultivate a real-life understanding of the food growing process.”

– **Tamara O’Brien, director**





Plant It Further currently has a garden site at the Lawrence County Partners for Preservation building with a pollinator garden and some raised beds. The organization works with volunteers and a local homeschool group to maintain the garden. They also have worked with Hoover Elementary in Mt. Lebanon in the past to help install an outdoor garden. Tamara and her team picked beds and soil, grew plants, and helped set up a maintenance and fundraising plan for the coming years.



Tamara wants to see farm to school continue to grow and flourish. She recently moved to Lawrence County and has spent the summer identifying the schools and early learning centers near her that already have gardens. She would like to help revitalize them and generate more community support and funding. Tamara looks at her work as building a sustainable future for PA farmers and students. Making sure that students and children have hands-on learning will allow the students to cherish those experiences forever.

“Ideally all schools would have a garden. Either food and pollinator habitat or even just a native plant habitat if the support for food gardens is not available,” Tamara says. “All children need access to growing plants and learning to steward the land they live on. School gardens provide a safe and neutral place for all kids to grow and learn to create the regenerative systems we need.”

**Find more farm to school success stories:**

[pafarmtoschool.org/news/success-stories](https://pafarmtoschool.org/news/success-stories)



**PENNSYLVANIA  
FARM TO SCHOOL  
NETWORK**