

The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

SANKOFA VILLAGE COMMUNITY FARMS

Allegheny County, PA



Ayanna Jones started Sankofa Village Community Farms in 2015. “There were no grocery stores nearby, so we started a farm,” Ayanna Jones, the Director and Operator of Sankofa Village Farms, says. The farm’s mission is to eradicate food apartheid in the Black community through education and the distribution of culturally relevant food. Some of the foods they grow are collard greens, okra and green tomatoes. In 2022, they donated 2,000 pounds of produce every other week to the community.

Ayanna teaches students of all ages how to grow food on the primarily educational farm. Students come to the farm from the Pittsburgh Learn and Earn Summer Youth Employment Program as well from the community. The children love being at the farm. “As soon as I open the gate, the kids come up to help,” says Ayanna.

Growing the food is what the children enjoy most. Each student gets their own garden bed to choose what to grow and care for throughout the season. They are thrust into situations that challenge their decision-making process and Ayanna creates a space for them to think for themselves. “Don’t ask me what

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Each season, students grow radishes from seed. Because it takes only 28 days from seed to harvest, it is a great way for students to watch the whole process. While they may not have eaten or enjoyed radishes before, they eat them now because they grew them themselves. “They’re like the Energizer Bunny when they pull the radishes out of the ground,” says Ayanna. “They’re so excited about the radishes, especially to share them with their families at home.”

In addition to growing produce, each student paints or mosaics a paver for the floor of the farm’s pagoda. “I want them to leave their mark on the property so they feel invested in the farm.”



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