

# Farm Service Learning

Students visit a working farm one day each week for three months. Mrs. Hidalgo and the farm educator jointly created the curriculum for students to learn about the five critical components of a successful farm enterprise which include fertility, composting, planting, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) support, and sales and marketing. This unit focuses on *Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayyim*, preventing animal cruelty using various texts.

**INSERT:** Fair Trade Lesson Plans Feb29-March4

**INSERT:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Jewish Studies Update 10.8.2014

**Activity:** Students go to Whole Foods Market on a scavenger hunt to learn about Fair Trade products.

**INSERT:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Whole Foods Scavenger Hunt and Notes

**Activity:** Understanding Fair Trade Lunch and Learn

Students meet over lunch to watch and discuss *The Harvest (La Cosecha)*, a documentary. This documentary is based on the story of the children who work 12-14 hour days in the fields without the protection of child labor laws. Students make connections to Cesar Chavez and his work with migrant workers in Texas and California. These connections are key in helping the students understand Fair Trade.

**INSERT:** YouTube *The Harvest (La Cosecha)*, a documentary

[https://youtu.be/TX7RD3it\\_W4](https://youtu.be/TX7RD3it_W4)

**Activity:** Students wrote persuasive letters to local companies encouraging them to carry Fair Trade products.

**INSERT:** Photo Fair Trade Letter Assignment

**INSERT:** FAIR TRADE FLOWERS

**Activity:** Design a lightweight mobile chicken coop

Every Friday for three months the fifth grade class uses Green Gates Farms as a real world classroom. We partner with Erin Flynn (co-owner of Green Gates Farms) to develop curriculum blending science, math, health, sustainability, art and Judaic principles. AJA is proud to be the first school to participate in the New Farm Institute's School-to-Farm program. Each week the students focus on a different topic spending an entire day working and learning on the farm.

As part of the Farming Unit, the fifth grade class was challenged by the farm's owners to design and construct a lightweight mobile chicken coop with capacity for up to 50 pastured birds using repurposed materials. Students created their own set of guidelines addressing functionality, engineering, sustainability, aesthetics and messaging incorporating Judaic elements. The students

then worked as partners to create their own unique designs. After constructing models of their designs, the students presented their creations to the farm's owners, Erin and Skip Flynn. The farm owners then selected one of the models for the students to design and the farmers to build (because of time constraints).

The students created guidelines for their coops.

**INSERT: CHICKEN COOP GUIDELINES**

**INSERT: PHOTOS OF STUDENTS WITH THEIR CHICKEN COOP DESIGNS**

Chicken Coop Design 1& Chicken Coop Design 2

**Activity:** Students document their designs daily using the following questions:

1. What did you work on/complete yesterday?
2. What are you working on-new ideas that you have?
3. What is your vision for the aesthetic components you are working on/are adding?
4. Challenges? New directions?

Students have an amazing opportunity for service learning experiences at Green Gates Farm. At the farm each Friday, students learn about a wide array of areas from seed saving, to permaculture, to biodiversity and much more. Their learning has included working in composting centers, feeding and caring for animals, gathering manure, planting seeds in the greenhouse and in the fields, and getting CSA (community supported agriculture) baskets ready for the members that come to the farm.

**INSERT:** Photo of students working at Green Gates Farm

**Activity:** Students are required to write a one page essay on their service learning at Green Gates Farm.

Topics of Discussion:

1. What are your biggest "takeaways" from this service learning experience? What are your strongest memories?
2. What farm station did you enjoy working in the most? Explain the main jobs you did here and paint me a picture/visualization of your favorite day working there.
3. Do you think service learning work at Green Gates Farm complimented your learning on the topics of sustainability this year at school? How and why?
4. What new ideas, if any do you and your families incorporate now in your life, because of the learning that took place at Green Gates Farm and in the classroom?
5. From your now personal experience, why is this work 'outside the classroom' beneficial for future 5<sup>th</sup> graders at the AJA?
6. What recommendations do you have for future service learning opportunities?

**Example of student final paper attached**

**INSERT:** Lue Coplin final paper

**INSERT:** Jewish Outlook Funky Chicken write up The Jewish Outlook April, 2014 Funky Chicken.pdf and Funky Chicken part 2.pdf

**INSERT:** Parent Feedback of former 5th graders

**INSERT:** Green Gates Farm Letter

Note from Ms. Hidalgo

“I learned that the best gift you can give a student is an opportunity to make their learning (presentations, reading, and writing) come alive, by providing out of the classroom, real world applications of the knowledge acquired. I also learned that pre and post reading on concepts of our work, were a great addition to the service-learning plan of the day, and served to both compliment and more deeply delve into the issues of our work and discussions while working on the farm.”

“This service learning experience, wherein the students used voice recorders as one method of capturing the student learning, went beyond my greatest expectations! Although, as all educators do, we did tweak our final project, choosing to create and build chicken coops instead of create Ted Talks. The depth of which my students connected to their learning on the farm and in the classroom was a true testament to the power of this experience. The students presented their chicken coops to a panel of adults, which spotlighted their learning of this 10-week service learning work. In addition to this, the students gave tours of the farm to 50+ students from the Magellan International School, where any onlooker would have seen the extent and depth of the knowledge gained while working at Green Gates Farm. They each took a final written exam as well, covering the scholastic objectives of the work, where the class as a whole received outstanding marks. I am including several pictures of their chicken coops, the rubric and a final write-up from one of my students.”