

Farm to School Program

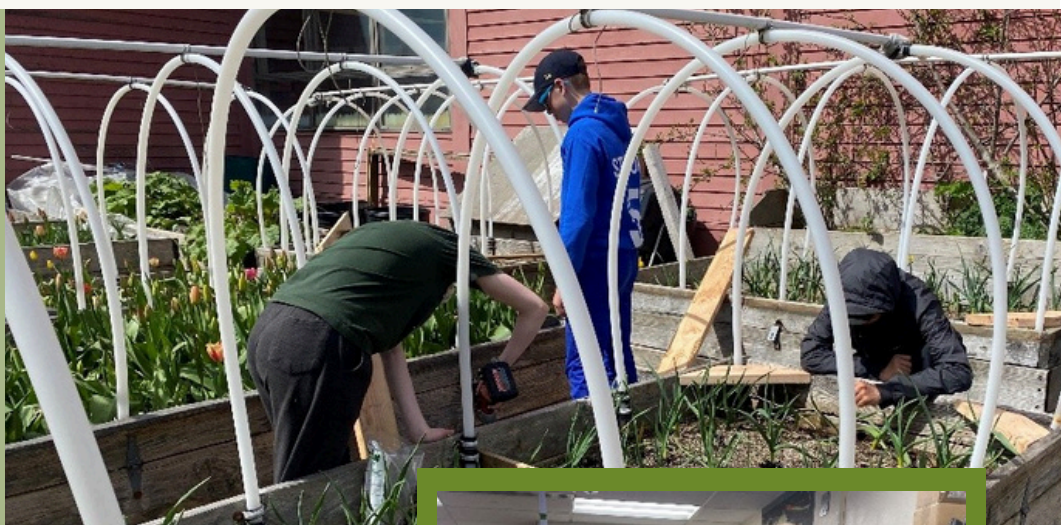
KODIAK AREA NATIVE ASSOCIATION

July 2025

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IMPLEMENTATION GRANT UPDATE

Kodiak Area Native Association's Farm to School Implementation Grant has ended. It was a busy spring, working on school gardens and ensuring that many of the active projects of this program were completed. Our second-year grant objectives included supporting town and rural school agriculture learning opportunities, building relationships with regional farms, and working to increase agriculture internship opportunities. Intending to enhance the stability and sustainability of agricultural education in the

Kodiak region through the F2S program, our final report is a mixed bag, with both setbacks and successes in our school agriculture landscape. As this grant concludes, most of our schools are positioned to continue to integrate agriculture education into the future. Revitalized school garden sites and expanded hydroponic growing infrastructure set the stage for future learning and growing opportunities. To realize their potential, Kodiak's schools need partners in agriculture. If you love to garden, I encourage you to support our local elementary school's growing efforts, because a helping hand is what our teachers need most.



SUPPORTING HYDROPONICS AT RURAL SCHOOL SITE

One of the big successes of KANA's Farm to School efforts was to support rural schools' hydroponic growing efforts. Collaboration with KALI, village farms, and teachers has set the stage for expanded agriculture activities at our village schools in the coming years. Agriculture-based learning at our rural schools is great because it allows students to gain experience and skills that can be applied at tribal farms. With significant agriculture initiatives occurring in Port Lions, Old Harbor, and Ouzinkie, students will be better prepared to be involved as interns and employees. It also connects them with food security initiatives in their communities and the state. KANA's F2S coordinator was grateful to be a technical advisor who was able to set up a new grow cabinet at the Ouzinkie school in May. With this Farm Flex grow cabinet up and running in the secondary classroom next year, the school will be enjoying fresh salads regularly. Farm to School staff and rural schools would like to extend a BIG thanks to SPAN for donating the shipping for the new grow cabinet and a large order of nutrients that is being shared among all of the rural school sites to support their hydroponic growing into the future.



KIBSD AWARDED A NEW FARM TO SCHOOL MINI-GRANT

With an eye on the future, it is great to report that Main Elementary was awarded a F2S Mini-Grant through Alaska's DEED. This funding will help continue their school garden projects for years to come.



As Main Elementary was not awarded funds in the previous F2S mini-grant, which was used to revitalize local elementary school gardens, this funding comes at a good time. The school utilizes its garden to grow veggies over the summer and hosts a harvest celebration with students and families in the fall. With dedicated staff and a strong volunteer network, Main's school garden has thrived over the past years. However, aging garden beds needed some repair this spring, and we would like to extend a big thank you to the KMS industrial arts students who put in a helping hand.



KMS AGRICULTURE UPDATES

Quarter four was another successful session of the KMS agriculture class. A great group of students expanded their knowledge base by

engaging in soil and hydroponic growing. Agriculture students also exhibited great teamwork and problem-solving skills while helping to re-cover a large hoop house at KMS on a nice afternoon. They also successfully hatched ducks and chickens, which were sold at the KMS plant sale fundraiser. It was wonderful to see such strong community interest and excitement for the hatchlings. The successful fundraiser allowed many from the community a chance to tour the classroom and see the product of students' efforts.

Unfortunately, this update also includes a heartfelt goodbye to the KMS Agriculture teacher, Amanda Johnson, who has built the program over the last 10 years. Her commitment and excitement for agriculture education sustained the KMS program through incredible effort and grant writing. Beloved by her students, she cultivated a unique and dynamic learning environment that allowed students to get their hands dirty with applied learning.

At the time of this last report, the KMS agriculture program is unlikely to continue. Besides losing the program's lead teacher, there have also been major setbacks to the program's facilities. A rat colony was discovered in one of the two greenhouses used by the class, and KIBSD Facilities condemned the space and removed all of the garden beds and soil. It is now used for storage. Also, the indoor space where hydroponic and soil growing have historically occurred over the winter has been deemed unusable in the future due to insurance reasons, and all equipment will need to be relocated. These challenges leave Kodiak's secondary education without a clear path for agriculture education in the future.



View a short video highlighting Amanda's passion and efforts.



SCHOOL GARDENS UPDATES

As the F2S Implementation Grant comes to an end, one of the lasting footprints of the project will be the revitalization of our town's elementary school gardens. Even with our wet and cold spring, gardens at Peterson, East, and Main were active this spring. Second-grade students at Peterson and East directly sowed snap peas and carrots in the last week of school. Fourth-



grade students at Peterson also helped establish two new beds at their school garden and planted apple trees on their campus. Special thanks to the secondary teacher and students at The Rock Educational Group for their efforts to relocate garden beds from North Star to support the Peterson apple tree project. Main's garden has transitioned from a sea of flowers to veggies, and will have snap peas, carrots, kale, garlic, and potatoes for their annual fall harvest festival.

CELEBRATING OUR PARTNERS IN AGRICULTURE

Throughout the Winter and Spring, collaboration with community partners has supported learning and growing opportunities. Special thanks to Max Lyons and Joe Kewan (Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute) for helping to support agriculture at our rural schools. Thanks also to Brandy Nelson and Karen Baker for partnering with The Rock Educational Group to facilitate growing in the high tunnel hoop house at St. Mary's. Much thanks to the Kouremetis family for the use of equipment critical to the success of our garden revitalization efforts.

F2S staff is also grateful for the support and guidance provided by Kodiak Harvest Food Co-op, Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District staff, Island Trails Network, KANA's Employment and Training Specialist, Alutiiq Grown Farm managers, the KALI team, Rooted, and our partners at KIBSD. These community partners are helping shape the future of Kodiak's agriculture sector.

Thanks also to SPAN Alaska for generously donating shipping for school agricultural supplies, and Sutliff's Ace Hardware for support as we maximized the impact of our F2S supplies funding.

Students at The Rock Educational Group partnered with parish gardeners to help revitalize and plant the large greenhouse at St. Mary's. Secondary students put in a strong effort to help establish new garden beds at the site, moving loads of soil on three different occasions. Elementary students planted snap peas, carrots, beets, and bush beans. Planting gardens with students has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my position as F2S coordinator. I am grateful to all of the teachers who made time for our gardening activities.

CONNECT WITH US

If you have interest in supporting future Farm to School activities reach out to:



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