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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Nice work, Joslyn! I gently made a few changes in the service of making the strength and power of the facts and quotes speak for themselves. I'm always happy to arm wrestle about any editorial changes. Thanks again for sending this in. —Jeff



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Farm and Field Day celebrates local agriculture at
2 Guilford Central School

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3 A fall festival of food and farming strengthens kids' ties to
4 their community and their food — and deepens everyone's
5 understanding of agriculture

####END SUBHED####

6 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

7 Every tradition starts somewhere, and for Guilford
8 Central School (GCS), 2025 marked the first year of what the

9 school community hopes will be an annual celebration of local
10 agriculture.

11 On Oct. 9, in the heart of harvest season, all 130
12 students took a morning off from their usual studies to congregate
13 in the “circle garden” in front of the school, where squash,
14 carrots, and tomatoes are still growing. From there, they broke
15 into small multi-age groups to visit six stations led by local
16 farmers, parent volunteers, community educators, and staff
17 members.

18 GCS Farm to School Coordinator Sarah Rosow explained
19 the origins of the celebration, inspired by a similar tradition at
20 NewBrook Elementary School in Newfane.

21 “A lot of people these days are very disconnected from
22 nature, the land, and their food sources,” she said. “I think it’s
23 really important to educate kids about where our food comes
24 from, to teach basic cooking and gardening skills, and to
25 strengthen relationships with the farmers in our community.”

26 Rosow collected ideas, gathered resources, took
27 donations, and (with lots of community support) orchestrated the
28 Farm and Field Day on an iconic fall day — sunny but chilly, with
29 a wide-open blue sky.

30 “What a picture-perfect Vermont autumn morning for this
31 fabulous all-school celebration of our agricultural heritage,”
32 remarked GCS Principal John Gagnon.

33 **Local food, from milk to pie**

34 At one station, Lisa Nichols, the education, events, and
35 demo coordinator of the Brattleboro Food Co-op, guided students
36 through making their own mini no-bake apple pies — a huge hit
37 with the kids, who diligently chopped up apples and waited for a
38 grown-up to pour a bit of melted butter into each tiny cup.

39 At another station, students printed with leaves and their
40 hands to make colorful art under the direction of GCS art teacher
41 Nina Nabizadeh.

42 At the dairy station, students met Thuja the calf and
43 learned about dairy farming from John and Taylor Franklin of
44 Guilford's Franklin Farm. They also tasted cheese donated by
45 Cabot Creamery.

46 Students sorted items into buckets in a guessing game,
47 "From a Cow/Not From a Cow," most clearly knowing where milk
48 comes from, but some a bit fuzzy about the origins of leather and
49 beef jerky.

50 Elsewhere, parent volunteers Peter Welch and Michael
51 Becker, along with music teacher Steve Damon, taught children
52 how to run an apple crusher and cider press, making cider with
53 apples from Green Mountain Orchard in Putney.

54 Local farmer and sheep shearer Andy Rice told his tales
55 of sheep farming and demonstrated his knowledge of the history
56 of sheep in Vermont. Students got to meet a sheep and try their
57 hand at spinning wool. Cathi Wilken of Guilford supplied raw
58 wool from her flock of Romneys and helped students as they
59 attempted to spin it into yarn.

60 And, just behind GCS, with the school's Three Sisters
61 Garden (intercropped corn, beans, and squash) as a backdrop,
62 Melody Mackin, an enrolled citizen on the Elnu Abenaki Tribe,
63 shared traditional stories about the Three Sisters and taught
64 students about the beliefs and ways of life of the Abenaki people.

65 Meanwhile, Steve Hed, food systems coordinator with
66 WSESU's newly formed nutrition program, cooked up a three
67 sisters stew with local squash and beans for students to enjoy
68 while they listened to Mackin's stories.

69 One fourth grader, Oonagh Dougherty, said: "It was
70 super fun! I learned how to make an apple pie and about the
71 Three Sisters. And I got to pet a sheep!"

72 Strengthening community

73 connections

74 At the end of the morning, all of the children met again
75 in the circle garden, where “we ended the event with singing
76 together as a community,” staff member and paraeducator Caitlin
77 Calcagnini said.

78 “This was a fun and celebratory event, but at heart it was
79 about strengthening the children’s connections to their farming
80 community and food sources — and deepening everyone’s
81 understanding of agriculture,” said Rosow.

82 Visitors observed a lot of joy, a lot of learning, and a lot
83 of kids overheard exclaiming: “This is the best day ever!”

84 . “This will be an annual event — as far as I know from
85 the very positive response,” Calcagnini said. “I think it was so
86 enriching and nourishing for everyone.”

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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