

# COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



## CASE STUDY

### Seedfolk City Farm Cultivates School Composting Program

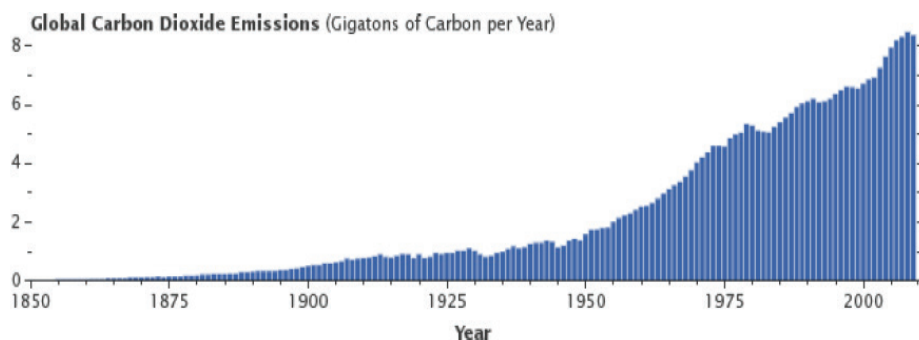
Seedfolk City Farm is a multi-site urban farm based in Rochester, NY that focuses on engaging youth in project-based learning and creating healthy localized community food systems through building resilient urban communities. As a New York State charitable corporation operating as a nonprofit, Seedfolk City Farm's focus is on providing locally and sustainably grown produce to residents within the city of Rochester while creating educational employment opportunities for young people. Since the summer of 2013, Seedfolk City Farm has provided over 40 teenagers with the opportunity to serve as leaders in their neighborhoods through apprenticeship programs that focus on the food system at all levels: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste reduction. Seedfolk City Farm partners with RochesterWorks, the Center For Youth Services, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, and Prosper Rochester Inc. to provide teens with a diverse array of engaging activities that include working with many other collaborative community partners. Seedfolk City Farm currently operates urban farms at three (3) sites in Rochester and uses these sites as dynamic living classrooms for our teens and community members while also producing healthy food for local residents.



Photo Credit: Seedfolk City Farm

#### Challenge

The public, particularly youth, needs to be educated on environmental issues and how to address them. Food waste is at a all-time high in the United States; EPA estimates that more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in our everyday trash, constituting 21.6 percent of discarded municipal solid waste. When food scraps are sent to landfills they pollute the air by producing leachate and methane. Separating out organic waste materials and composting them onsite is one of the most direct and powerful methods for improving the environment and reducing pollution in every day life. By diverting food scraps away from landfills and responsibly composting them, Seedfolk Farm can simultaneously convert a liability and a waste stream into a soil-builder, reducing landfill pressure, and reducing carbon emissions.



NASA: Graph by Robert Simmon, data from [Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center](#) and [Global Carbon Project](#).)

#### CHALLENGE

- Environmental issues and how to properly address food waste is not currently incorporated into common core K-12 curriculum standards in NYS

#### SOLUTION

- Seedfolk City Farm conducted a 17-week hands-on educational program and worked with 14 classrooms in two (2) city schools
- 14 teachers were trained in a newly developed Classroom Composting curriculum developed through this project for Grades 4 to 6

#### RESULTS

- Seedfolk City Farm held 78 workshops to educate 311 students and 14 teachers on the value and technique of composting
- Several classrooms visited the Seedfolk City Farm on East Main Street where they saw the role composting systems play in a sustainable food system



## Solution

Seedfolk City Farm conducted a 17-week hands-on educational program where students explored the benefits of composting as a pollution reduction and soil-improvement technique and learned how to create and maintain simple composting systems. The Seedfolk team worked with 14 classrooms in two (2) city schools; 14 teachers were trained in a newly developed Classroom Composting curriculum developed through this project for Grades 4 to 6. The Seedfolk City farm instructors and youth volunteers conducted workshops and hands-on sessions that were integrated and used the newly developed bilingual Spanish/English curriculum in classrooms to help all students develop an empowered understanding of the role they can play in reducing climate change and pollution.



Photo Credit: Seedfolk City Farm



## Results

Seedfolk City Farm held 78 workshops to educate 311 students and 14 teachers on the value and technique of composting. Several classrooms visited the Seedfolk City Farm on East Main Street where they saw the role composting systems play in a sustainable food system. Students were invited to attend by their teachers if they were members of the School Green Team, which managed the school's daily composting chores. Several classrooms have continued with composting and using the worm towers. The Rochester City School district is considering a pilot school-wide composting program, which would include a commercial composting pick-up service.



Photo Credit: Seedfolk City Farm



Photo Credit: Seedfolk City Farm

## Online Media:

Seedfolk City Farm Website

- <http://www.seedfolkcityfarm.org/>

Seedfolk City Farm Facebook

- <http://www.facebook.com/seedfolkcityfarm/>

Seedfolk City Farm Instagram

- <http://www.instagram.com/seedfolkcityfarm/>

Online Article

- <http://catholiccourier.com/in-depth/back-to-school/students-heed-popes-environmental-call/>

<sup>1</sup>Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/sustainable-management-food-basics#what>

## TESTIMONIAL

"NYSP2I made it possible to pilot a hands-on educational program and develop a model curriculum for students that explored composting as a method for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As a result of the program, more than 300 students learned how and why to compost, and we were able to create and freely share a 6-session, tested, and easy to use curriculum. NYSP2I funding was crucial in making this project a success."

– Amber Powers, Program Coordinator,  
Classroom Composting Pilot

## NYSP2I PARTNERS

R.I.T

Rensselaer

UB

University at Buffalo  
The State University of New York

Clarkson  
UNIVERSITY

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Funding provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

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