

The Harvest of the Month program continues to deliver local, seasonal produce to students by bringing the initiative to students' homes. In lieu of in-person taste tests, Cultivate Charlottesville and Charlottesville City Schools are collaborating with PB&J Fund and 4P Foods to incorporate the Harvest of the Month crop and the student-illustrated backpack flier into their weekly produce and Fresh Farmacy bags.

We celebrated collards the first week of October during Farm to School week. Cultivate Charlottesville purchased 500 bunches of collard greens from local growers to go out with CCS school lunches along with a backpack flier including a recipe from Rosa Key, a seasoned cook and food justice advocate in the Charlottesville community. We also filmed Dr. Leni Sorensen, a culinary historian, giving a cooking tutorial for her favorite collard greens recipe. This video can be found on Cultivate Charlottesville's YouTube page.

For November's Harvest of the Month, we partnered with PB&J Fund to distribute locally grown potatoes and the Harvest of the Month backpack fliers to 350 families through the distribution of their fresh produce bags. We ended the month in the gardens where Jordan Johnson, the City Schoolyard Garden Program Director, visited with 5 afterschool programs to serve up hash browns to over 50 students.

In December, Cultivate Charlottesville participated in CCS's Response to Essential Needs (REN) event. In this drive through event, we prepared and distributed 300 bags of produce highlighting leeks as the December Harvest of the Month. The bags included a recipe for leek and potato soup along with leeks and potatoes for families to make it at home.

We brought in the new year with turnips as January's Harvest of the Month. The backpack flier includes a tasty recipe for baked turnip fries and a ranch Greek yogurt dip. These fliers went out with 345 of PB&J's fresh produce bags and 350 of 4P's Fresh Farmacy bags. We are finishing up the month with turnip taste tests in our garden programs at City of Promise and Hearthwood.

We have been excited to be able to implement these innovative ways of continuing to move towards our goal of fresh, from scratch foods for Charlottesville public school youth, despite having a virtual school year. We look forward to celebrating the rest of this year's crops with students, whether it is bags that they take home, or taste tests and activities in the garden.