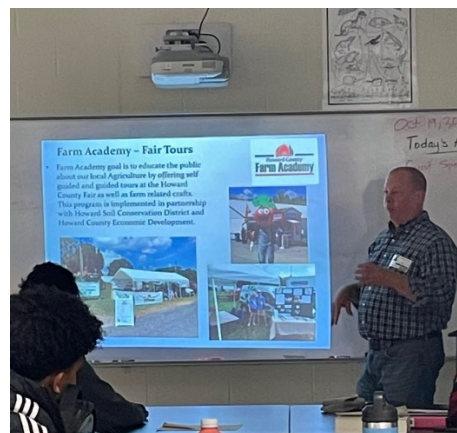


Press Release #3: October 19, 2022

Telling the Story of Community Sustainability = County Agricultural and Food Access Programs

The new Agricultural Seminar Series continues in the classroom of the Howard County Public School System Ag Science Academy, in collaboration with the Howard County Farm Bureau (HCFB). **President Leslie Bauer** stated, “The seminars give students an awareness of career opportunities when they hear from expert speakers from all walks of Agriculture.” **Kathleen Wojick**, Educator, Ag Science Academy, said, “For most of our students, these seminars are their first awareness of the amazing experiences possible through a career in Agriculture.”

This month, students learned about food security, with emphasis on connecting farmers to consumers. **The Howard County agricultural and food access programs are overseen by Mr. James Zoller, Agricultural Coordinator, Office of Community Sustainability, Howard County Government.** The successful **Roving Radish**, is a meal-kit program that promotes healthy eating, supports our local farms, and connects our community by providing healthy farm-to-table meal kits at affordable prices to everyone in our community. In 2021, 9,336 meal kits were distributed with 43% of those being subsidized. Farmers sell produce to Roving Radish and receive competitive prices, and the meal kits are constructed and available for purchase online to anyone in the community. The program also provides meal kits at a reduced cost for those in need. The **Roving Radish Marketplace** is a store open to all farmers and consumers. Farmers set the retail price of their products and are paid 20% less than their retail price. The Marketplace through grants also offers farm products at a 50% discount for those in need making local fresh produce and meats affordable for everyone. The Roving Radish marketplace will expand to include a mobile farmers market with a projected start in the summer of 2023. The Roving Radish is also part of the Healthy Food Access Program in partnership with the Howard County Department of Community Resources delivering food provided by the Howard County Food Bank to families with access issues.



James also manages other agricultural programs to include **We Are HoCoFresh** a marketing program to encourage business and the community to buy from our Howard County farms and the HOCOFARMS.com website. Students heard about volunteer opportunities with the **Howard**

County Farm Academy, education and tours offered during the county fair, as well as **Howard County Harvest for the Hungry**, which connects farmers and hunters to community by providing venison to local food pantries. Mr. Zoller also is Executive Secretary of [Agricultural Preservation Board](#), so the students learned about the value of ag land preservation and the “Farmland Forever” program.

Students were curious asking about food sustainability, the mind set of today’s consumers about their food, best degree to get in college to work on food systems, as well as questions about what he likes about his job, and what is a low point on the job? Once theme is consistent and these Ag Science students hear it across all of the Ag Seminar Series speakers. **As Mr. Zoller advised, “The best career for you is to find your passion and if you love it, do it!”**

