



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MCPS Breaks Ground on Innovative New Community Hub and Urban Farm at Loiederman Middle School in Wheaton, MD

In partnership with the Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will bring together nearly 1,000 local community members, students, leaders, and lawmakers to break ground on a new community Resilience Hub and Farm at A. Mario Loiederman Middle School this Earth Day.

Wheaton, MD - April, 22 2024 - Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will host nearly 1,000 volunteers, lawmakers, and county leaders for a groundbreaking ceremony and volunteer day for the County's first Resilience Hub and School Farm. The Resilience Hub and School Farm are collectively being referred to as the REACH (Resilience, Education, Action, Climate, Habitat) Hub A. Mario Loiederman Middle School in Wheaton, MD. The ceremony will take place at 9 AM, followed by a volunteer day until 2 PM (EST).

The REACH Hub at Loiederman Middle School is being developed by MCPS in partnership with the Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming, a nonprofit land trust dedicated to creating and supporting neighborhood farms that provide educational opportunities, improve food security, build community connections and promote land conservation. The REACH hub aims to support food production and climate resiliency, as well as serve as an accessible resource for over 17,000 students from 20 school locations within two miles, including the Weller Road Elementary School (an MCPS Community School), Thomas Edison High School of Technology, and Wheaton High School.

The groundbreaking ceremony and volunteer event on April 22nd will bring together hundreds of middle and high school students, MCPS staff, and project partners to break ground on the new REACH Hub.

At the event, participants will build portions of the farm, restore a courtyard garden, and plant bioretention areas at the middle school and nearby Weller Road Elementary. The event will be attended by stakeholders and local businesses including: Montgomery County Green Bank University of Maryland Extension, Nature Forward, PEPCO and Covanta. Speaking on the impact of the event and the historic groundbreaking of the REACH Hub, Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming Founder & Executive Director Kate Medina says, *"This event marks a historic milestone in the joint efforts of MCPS, CKC and the County to build a productive community space that fosters environmental education, climate awareness and learning, and provides critical fresh produce and food to local*

communities. The mission of the REACH Hub closely aligns with CKC's values and we are a proud partner in this project and excited to see this groundbreaking take place."

For more information on the *Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming*, please visit our webpage [here](#), and sign-up for our [newsletter](#) or follow-us on social media (@ckcfarming) for more regular updates. You can support this project by making a donation [here](#).

Volunteer and groundbreaking for the first REACH Hub urban farm to help serve thousands of students and families

- 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, April 22, 2024
- A. Mario Loiederman Middle School at 12701 Goodhill Road: Silver Spring, MD 20906 and Weller Road Elementary at 3301 Weller Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20906

What: Volunteer and groundbreaking for the first REACH Hub urban farm to help serve thousands of students and families.

When: 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, April 22, 2024

Who:

MCPS Division of Sustainability and Compliance

MCPS Board of Education

Montgomery County Executive, Marc Elrich

Montgomery County Councilmembers, Natalie Fani-Gonzalez and Gabe Albornoz

Montgomery County Government Agencies

Department of Environmental Protection

Office of Food Systems Resilience

Montgomery County Parks

Montgomery County Green Bank

Habitat for Humanity

Nature Forward

Where: A. Mario Loiederman Middle School (12701 Goodhill Road Silver Spring, MD 20906) and Weller Road Elementary (3301 Weller Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20906)