

An Evaluation of the Farms for City Kids Program, 2005-2006

A Brief Summary

In fall of 2005 and spring of 2006, PEER Associates, Inc. collected and analyzed new and existing data from the following sources:

- Teacher surveys from 2006 (n=35)
- Student surveys from 2006 (n=162)
- Interviews with 8 staff members, 17 students, and 2 teachers at the farm conducted in 2005
- Pre- and post-surveys of one group of students in 2005 (n=17)
- Student and teacher video interviews collected in 2005 as part of a fundraising campaign
- Teacher surveys collected at the farm from 2002-2005 (n=125)
- Student surveys collected at the farm from 2003-2004 (n=669)

Analysis of the data listed above demonstrated that the program is succeeding at achieving the following outcomes for students who attended the week long residential Farms for City Kids program:

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem, including greater willingness to try new things;
- Improved cooperation, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills;
- Deeper appreciation and respect for farm animals;
- Greater respect for each other and their teachers;
- New understanding and appreciation of agriculture and the natural environment; and
- Greater appreciation and awareness of a healthy lifestyle.

The evaluation offered recommendations for program improvement, including:

- Provide more opportunity for students to reflect individually and as a group on their daily experiences so that students may be able to more explicitly understand the values and skills they are learning at the farm;
- Staff could facilitate more personal and social skill building exercises in order to reinforce the lessons students are learning to the strongest degree possible; and
- Expand the reach of the program with follow up activities such as development of farm-themed curricula and teacher professional development.

Further evaluation recommendations included refining the program strategies, activities, and goals based on evaluation findings, continued collection of surveys from students and teachers at the farm, and employment of a formative evaluation process to ensure successful new program development.

The Executive Summary of the report provides a more detailed synopsis of the Farms for City Kids evaluation process and outcomes. The full analysis and discussion of both quantitative and qualitative data including narrative, graphs, charts, and quotes is available in the complete report.