

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE
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Norwich school children make a meal out of growing!

A year of Food Discovery ends with a massive harvest feast for children at Mile Cross Primary School

180 children from Mile Cross Primary School, Braiser Road, Norwich will be celebrating the end of a year of Food Discovery with a massive harvest feast at their school **on Monday 18th July 2016**. With the help of national education charity The Country Trust, over the last year, the children, all aged between 7 and 10 have learnt to grow their own vegetables and herbs, taste and explore new foods, cook simple nutritious meals, explore local farms and run a playground market. The feast will be the biggest The Country Trust has ever organised and is the highlight of the school year. Farmers and Estate managers from Norfolk who have hosted school visits have been invited to the event and will be their guests of honour. Parents and carers will be invited to view photos of the pupils' activities and join the celebrations too.

This is the 6th year of The Country Trust's ground breaking Food Discovery project which has now run in over 40 urban schools across England, and the fourth year that Mile Cross has taken part. The Country Trust's aim is to bring food, farming and the countryside alive for those children least able to access it in a whole year of hands on discovery. Every child takes part in every activity, learning new skills, gaining confidence and experiencing exciting ways of learning outside of the classroom. Local farmers welcome children onto their farms, and local "Food Heroes" visit the schools to share their passion for food and farming.

Stuart Allen, head teacher at Mile Cross Primary School said *'The children are very excited about the harvest feast and can't wait to pick all the fresh herbs and vegetables they have grown. Working with The Country Trust has really helped the school enhance a key part of the curriculum as well as getting the children excited and interested in important life skills such as cooking and preparing tasty meals, and having a greater understanding of the working countryside.'*

Sally Hetherington Aherne, Food Discovery Co-ordinator said *'It's been fantastic to see how the children's understanding about food has developed over the past year. All the children have learnt something new about the things they have seen and grown and they have been able to share this with their families. Many have gone on to cook recipes at home using ingredients they would not normally use which is brilliant and are learning first hand where food comes from both through hands on growing and unforgettable farm visits.'*

In preparation for the feast, children will be harvesting what they have grown over the year and preparing dishes to eat together. They will all receive a certificate to celebrate their success over the year and will sow a seed to take home.

If you would like to know more about the work of The Country Trust or become a supporter, please go to www.countrytrust.org.uk

-Ends-

Editors' notes

The harvest feast will take place:

Date: Monday 18 July 2016 **Time:** 2pm

Mile Cross Primary School, Braiser Road, Norwich NR3 2QU

For more information, please contact Sally Hetherington-Aherne on shetheringtonaherne@countrytrust.org.uk or call 07929 342804

About The Country Trust

- Founded in 1978, The Country Trust is the leading national educational charity that brings the working countryside alive for those children least able to access it, whether through disadvantage or disability. Every year we support hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms.
- The Country Trust has 3 main strands of activities:
 1. Farm Discovery - day visits to real working farms
 2. Countryside Discovery - residential visits to the countryside
 3. Food Discovery - yearlong programmes exploring every aspect of growing, cooking and even selling food
- The Country Trust focuses on working with the following:
 - Primary age children from schools with an above average percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals
 - Schools catering for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Looked After Children and Pupil Referral Units
- In 2015 The Country Trust enabled
 - 17,961 children to go on a farm or estate visit
 - 6,600 children took part in farm led assemblies and food and farming workshops
 - 860 children took part in Food Discovery Programmes
 - 883 children went on 29 Residential visits
 - 415 children with Special Educational Needs took part in Countryside Adventure days in Hampshire.
- The Country Trust currently works with schools in and around London, East Anglia, Hampshire, Birmingham and the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, the North West, North Wales and Northumberland.

What we do

- We make it easy and safe for children to visit farms and for farmers to share their knowledge and passion.
- We bring urban and rural communities together, increasing communication, respect and understanding of the countryside as a place of possibilities but also a place on which livelihoods depend.
- We facilitate children's cultural understanding about the life and work of the British countryside through visits and talking with those who live and work there.
- We enable children to experience the wonder of the countryside:- open space, breathing space, the people who live and work there, habitats, farm animals and wildlife.
- We enable children to understand the possibilities of food, what a variety there is, why and how it grows, who grows it and where, what it tastes like, why all this matters.
- We introduce adult role models who nurture and take responsibility for crops and animals. People who often work in strong family units.
- We bring two interdependent but disconnected communities together for a stronger future. Our school community includes many urban children and a significant number of children from ethnic minorities.
- We can help schools to meet the new Ofsted common inspection framework which now includes a judgement on 'personal development, behaviour and welfare'. Ofsted states that the first-hand experiences of learning outside the classroom can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding. It can also contribute significantly to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

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