

PRESS RELEASE
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Tower Hamlets children discover pumpkins in Brentwood!

Essex based charity the Country Trust teams up with Calcott Hall Farm, Brentwood to bring the countryside alive for inner city children.

Whoops of joy could be heard from Calcott Hall Farm's pumpkin fields last week as 30 excited year 3 children from Woolmore Primary School, Tower Hamlets got hands on with vegetable growing for the first time. The visit was organised by The Country Trust, a national education charity which works with farmers and food producers to make it possible for children from disadvantaged areas to discover food, farming and the countryside. The McTurks, award winning growers in Brentwood, are the latest family to join The Country Trust's growing network of farmers who welcome inner city and urban children to their farms for day visits.

Country Trust Coordinator, Sharon Roberts said 'I don't think I have ever seen a more excited group. We set them the challenge of finding the biggest and smallest pumpkins in the field and they were determined to measure every one!'

Farmer Peter McTurk said 'We open our pumpkin fields for pick your own pumpkins on Tuesday 26th October so it was perfect timing for a visit from Woolmore School. Seeing their excitement at being in the countryside and discovering how things grow reminded me that there are lots of children who never get to experience life beyond the city limits. It was great to give them new experiences.'

Teacher Laura Amissah was delighted with the opportunities the visit afforded her year 3 class. "Many of the children said this was the best trip they had ever been on. Not only can the experiences like this meet our curriculum requirements but they can also, and probably most importantly, contribute to children's social and emotional learning. I believe that first-hand learning is 'learning that sticks'".

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

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Editors' notes

Year 3 from Woolmore Primary School, Tower Hamlets visited Calcott Hall Farm, Brentwood on Wednesday October 19th.

For more information, please contact Jill Attenborough on jattenborough@countrytrust.org.uk or call 01245 608363

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, Essex, 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.

Chief Executive: Jill Attenborough

Head Office: Moulsham Mill, Parkway, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 7PX

E-Mail: info@countrytrust.org.uk

Web: www.countrytrust.org.uk