

# Deane-Porter's STEM Makerspace Wins Local Farms, Local Foods Contest



Deane-Porter's STEM Makerspace program, run by teachers Liz Waters and Mark Panas, entered and won 1st place in a contest run by the Monmouth Conservation Foundation. "The contest's purpose was to raise awareness of Monmouth County's local farms and the foods that grow on them," stated Liz Waters.

Panas and Waters developed a STEM unit specifically for this contest. The lessons were designed to encourage their students to use the engineering design process to learn about local farms. Deane-Porter's kindergarten students studied seeds, farms and their crops. "We wanted our students to have the experience of researching, discussing and reflecting about locally grown foods through a hands on approach," stated Panas. Students examined specific Monmouth County farms through literature, reference materials and videos. Once they had the basic background knowledge, the kindergarteners designed and constructed model

farms using recycled materials. Students imagined, planned and created miniature farm prototypes. They worked together using makerspace materials to build different farm features such as plants, vegetables, irrigations systems, animals, barns, tractors and more. Each model contained an actual soil garden for which the students plowed, seeded and tended. The kindergarten farmers watered and watched their seeds grow into plants.



All five kindergarten class farms were entered as one submission to the contest run by the Monmouth Conservation Foundation. The 1st place projects were displayed during the MCF Family Day on June 3rd at Bucks Mill Recreation Area in Colts Neck.