



Camden youth holding a sign thanking GPI, of Lebanon, for sponsoring the transportation from their homes to America's Grow-a-Row in Pittstown for the day.

Camden children enjoy a day on Hunterdon farms

Greenman Pederson INC (GPI), America's Grow-a-Row (AGAR) and Peaceful Valley Orchards (PVO) shared something with the children of Camden that those of us who live in Hunterdon County often take for granted...an opportunity to spend a day on the farm. GPI recently sponsored a group of "Camden kids on the farm day" that included transporting a group of 54 young children ranging from 5-17-years-old up from the city of Camden to spend the day harvesting free produce to bring back home to their families and communities as well as learning about agriculture, farm animals and playing good old fashioned outdoor summer games. The Camden kids were not the only youth enjoying the experience as several high school and middle school students participated in coordinating the events as well as helping their Camden guests pick bags of corn, string beans as well as nectarines that they were able to bring back to their families.

Hosting inner city youth to the AGAR headquarters, located at the PVO farm is not something new to AGAR as they have done so in the past with other groups from Paterson. What's unique about this event is that it all started when the AGAR team learned about the "Food Deserts" that exist in the city of

Camden. This new term means that the residents and children of these defined geographical areas do not have access to healthy, fresh produce that is critical in order to lead a healthy lifestyle and to minimize the risk of diabetes, hypertension, cancer, etc. When AGAR heard of this dilemma, they reached out to the Camden Collation on Healthcare who helped them set up "Free Farm Markets" in a central location in the city of Camden. Every other week, cases and cases of free produce has been distributed to these residents which cultivated the relationships with these community members that then spurred the idea of having the youth from Camden also come visit on the farm here in Pittstown and experience the joy of picking fresh produce for themselves.

This event was only made possible due to the generosity of GPI, who sponsored the trip, the Deupree Family Foundation, Peaceful Valley Orchards as well as America's Grow-a-Row. If you are interested in volunteering or making a financial donation to America's Grow-a-Row to support their mission, contact Chip Paillex at 908-331-2962 or email him at chip@americagrowarow.org. To learn more information, log onto their website at americagrowarow.org.