

HARRISBURG, Pa., April 18 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Students from the West Philadelphia Achievement Charter Elementary School grew green thumbs and learned about agriculture's role in preserving the environment at an Earth Day celebration today in Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture partnered with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Penn State Cooperative Extension and The Growing Connection in the celebration, which was highlighted by the unveiling of 10 EarthBoxes that will be used by students to grow vegetables for the community.

"By celebrating Earth Day, we are recognizing agriculture's commitment to preserving and protecting the environment," said Wolff. "Today's event allows us to increase agricultural awareness among the urban community, while giving students a first-hand look at how their food is produced."

Representatives from Penn State Cooperative Extension and members from Philadelphia's W.B. Saul High School FFA Chapter helped in Wolff's lesson about soil.

The EarthBox project, funded by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, is teaching students agricultural principles through vegetable production. Students will also be part of The Growing Connection, an affiliate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Growing Connection provides school gardening programs the opportunity to grow food, conduct horticultural experiments and share lessons and experiences with participants from other countries including Ghana, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Penn State Cooperative Extension will form an after-school 4-H program to help maintain the EarthBoxes through the summer.

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