

The United States Department of Agriculture has come through for Porter Consolidated School in a big way. The school is utilizing a \$33,905 Farm to School Planning Grant this year to cultivate a school garden. Gloria James, the school district's director of child nutrition, serves as director of the grant. She said only 18 planning grants were awarded nationwide, and Porter is one of only five Oklahoma schools to receive one. The process is quite competitive. She noted the grant will enable the district to expand on the school's small garden and table top gardens that the after school and summer program kids worked on earlier in the year. Porter educators Susan Rush, Jackie Bobbitt, Jill White and Janet Wybrant spent three days in September attending a Life Lab "Growing a Classroom" workshop in California where they learned the program curriculum, built compost bins and worked in outdoor gardens. They brought that information back to Porter for implementation. "This is a huge opportunity for our children to have a field that they may be able to go into later in life, other than college or tech school," James explained. "They will learn the importance of where their food comes from, how to grow their own food and take ownership in that. They will also learn how good food tastes when it's natural and they grow it themselves." On October 4, Oklahoma's Farm to School and Ag in the Classroom Representative Cheri Long provided teachers with curriculum that included hands-on training for things such as building a desktop greenhouse. Rush, Bobbitt, and Wybrant were joined by teachers Stephanie Kilgore and Jenna Dupree for the session. On Friday, Oct. 25, Chef William Harris with Cooking with Kids from Oklahoma State University was at the school to conduct a fall stir fry taste test using mushrooms from J-M Farms. He conducted a hand washing training/game with kindergarten students and held a preservative training with cafeteria staff using apples from Livesay Orchards. Harris will be back on Wednesday, Oct. 30 to work with the cafeteria staff on preserving with apples and making applesauce. He will also train the staff on how to make a healthy dip to go

with fresh apples. The fruit will be served to students on Oct. 31. Pre-kindergarten students will undergo the hand washing training/game as well. According to James, additional Farm to School activities may be planned from November through February. Be the first to know Get local news delivered to your inbox! Sign up! * I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.