

The Education Fund, Ford deliver fresh food to students, families

TO MIAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

To ensure students in Miami-Dade County receive fresh produce and school supplies during distance learning, The Education Fund is teaming-up with Ford Autonomous Vehicles LLC, its self-driving technology partner Argo AI, and Ford Motor Company Fund to make contactless deliveries in Ford's Fusion Hybrid self-driving test vehicles.

Ford currently is building a self-driving service in Miami-Dade for ride-hailing and goods delivery and offered to help make deliveries to students' homes through this innovative pilot program.

Before COVID-19, The Education Fund seamlessly distributed produce from its first-in-the-nation Food Forest program at 26 schools in Miami-Dade and gave away millions of free classroom materials from its 11,000 square foot school supply warehouse. Students would take bags filled with fresh produce and supplies home weekly. With the pandemic leaving many students learning from home, The Education Fund was looking for a variety of ways to provide supplies to students and their families safely.

"Ford saw an opportunity to broaden a critical supply pipeline to students," said Linda Lecht, president of The Education Fund. "The deliveries ensure low-income students have nutritious food and the learning materials they need even at home. Ford's truly unique support fuels our pursuit of innovation to help students succeed."

Over an eight-week period, the Ford and Argo AI team is making weekly contactless deliveries of supplies to the families of approximately 50 students attending Fienberg-Fisher K-8 in Miami Beach and Riverside Elementary School in Little Havana. The Education Fund packs harvest bags with organic greens grown in Food Forests at these schools,

along with books, pens, masks and other materials. After the Ford and Argo AI team collects the bags at each school, the deliveries are made in Ford's self-driving test vehicles with two highly trained Test Specialists.

In addition to supporting The Education Fund and the community, the Ford and Argo AI team are developing key learnings through this pilot as it builds its self-driving service for Miamians.

"As we pave the path for our self-driving services in Miami-Dade, we are committed to being active members of this vibrant community and supporting local institutions like The Education Fund that have been doing so much good for such a long time," said Alex Buznego, Miami market manager, Ford Autonomous Vehicles LLC. "Our goal is to be a part of Miami-Dade's success by offering self-driving services that provide our neighbors with flexibility, reliability and value, allowing our community to achieve its fullest potential. This business pilot is foundational for developing our goods delivery business and doing so in collaboration with our fellow Miamians is the perfect way to continue to earn trust here."

Parents, like Leonarys Jardine, welcome the deliveries of produce from the food forest at Fienberg-Fisher K-8, where her children are in fifth and seventh grades. Jardine sautés spinach, seasons dishes using fresh herbs, and makes lemongrass tea.

"I grew up eating fresh produce," said Jardine, who grew up in Venezuela. "I love that my children are learning to appreciate what comes from nature. It's something that will stay with them for life, as it has with me."

The philanthropic arm of Ford, The Ford Motor Company Fund, has long played an essential role in helping The Education Fund innovate to support



The deliveries are made in Ford's self-driving test vehicles with two highly trained test specialists.



Students participate in a Food Forest program at one of 26 schools in Miami-Dade.

student success. In 2020 alone, Ford Fund donated and raised \$72,000 for the nonprofit's COVID-19 relief work, supporting its work as a critical distributor of school supplies and household goods to students and families.

"Ford Fund is proud to once again partner with the Education Fund. The opportunity to leverage Ford AV technology to assist families during COVID-19 is critical as we look to provide mobility and social solutions in our communities," said Joe Avila,

manager U.S. and Latin America, Ford Motor Company Fund. "Since 2009, Ford Fund, in partnership with our Ford dealers, has invested more than \$8 million in Miami with efforts focused on education, disaster relief and social entrepreneurship."

With the help of donors like Ford, The Education Fund has provided nearly \$3 million in materials and produce benefitting more than 90,415 families, 60 schools and 1,500 teachers just since the pandemic hit in March 2020.

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