

Foreword

Like so many educators, I have always strived to find the perfect project where everything comes together: units of study, students, parents and the community. The garden is that project, addressing multiple disciplines and modes of learning. It gives students hands-on experience in the creative arts, science and math, and the practice of responsibility and respect. In the school's Harvest Garden, I finally found that project.

Our garden project began five years ago with a humble, but large plot of land overgrown by brush and weeds. It was the perfect spot.

Creating this garden is a cooperative effort. Landscaping firms and farmers have donated their time and equipment to cultivate our land, and local businesses provide potting soil, seeds, hoses and sprinklers. In the classroom, our teachers guide students in the planting and nurturing of seeds, while school staffers manage supplies and garden equipment. Parents volunteer to help transplant our 400 second-grade students' tiny seedlings. Community experts help us educate our students about the earth and the growing process. Students and their families carefully tend the garden all summer long by weeding, watering and harvesting the bountiful produce.

In fact last year alone, we donated more than 900 pounds of vegetables to our local food pantry. Many people in need benefitted from the fresh produce, and that lesson was not lost on our students.

Whether you are an educator, parent, community volunteer or caregiver, I encourage you to garden with children. Yes, it is hard work requiring "sweat equity," but the learning opportunities – for both children and adults – are worth the effort, if only to experience a child's wide-eyed interest and enthusiasm.

Our school garden has become a beloved tradition. I hope that you too, will take steps to create a living, learning environment that teaches our children not only academics, but the sense of achievement gained through cooperation and the joy of helping those in need. May your "Generous Garden" prosper!

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Gardening is fun. We use tools, and the hose, and our hands.

The vegetables you buy at the store grow on a farm.



By the end of summer, we have many vegetables to harvest: tomatoes, squash, green peppers, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and cucumbers.



The mini-pumpkins are my favorite.

Ben gives them all a drink of water.



*Gardens must have one
to two inches of water
each week.*



In the garden we learn what plants need to grow.
We learn respect for the earth, and for each other.
And we learn the joy of giving.

