

School Garden Coordinator Meeting Notes

December 9th, 2009

People in Attendance: John Marchino, Lisa Wilk, Ann Litow, Carla Mulkey, Krista Garand, Julie Beekman, Darcy Craig, Jim Dyer, Jan Larson, Linda Herz, Jennifer, Craig, Darrin Parmenter, Chris Paulson, Chris Isgar, Marna Haley, Susie Francis, Karen Carver, Sharon Orr, Shari Fitzgerald

Schools Represented: Animas Valley, Fort Lewis Mesa, Riverview, Bayfield and Needham Elementary, Escalante, Durango High School, and DeNeir

- CSU Extension and Master Gardeners: The extension office and Master Gardeners has resources and volunteer support to assist school gardens. Ideally, MG volunteers could be placed with one school or community garden (could be especially helpful for maintaining school gardens in the summer). First year Master Gardeners have 50 hours of community service to complete and Second Year's have 20 hours to complete.
- Food System Development focuses on gardens as a central role; check out Denver Public Schools for more information on food production in schools.
- School Food and School Gardens: The school salad bar continues to be an easier fit for incorporating school garden produce into the school lunch program. Schools interested in incorporating food via a meal, salad bar, or other, can contact Krista Garand with Durango 9R Food Services, for ideas and suggestions on how to do so. Schools are encouraged to plan this winter for meal planning.
- DeNeir was a great model for using the County Fair as a place for kids to show of their work and prizes from the garden. The prize money was put back into the garden funds at DeNeir.
- Escalante: received a grant from BP and LPEA to revamp their greenhouse and use solar. DFEE grant was used for electrical, plumbing, fencing, and water. Boys and Girls Club will be in the garden over the summer (great connection!) The biggest issue at Escalante is integrating the garden into the school curriculum. TGP is working on a Resource Guide filled with curriculum in accordance with Colorado State Standards, as of now the guide focuses on K-5, but further development will include the curriculum for middle and high school gardens.
- Animas Valley: built compost bins and planted tulip bulbs. They have 20-25 stumps for kids to sit on in the garden and have a lesson or eat lunch. The faculty at Animas Valley is finding the garden to be an excellent place to students with special needs and a nice place to work with kids one on one. The pre-school planted pumpkins last year and each student was able to take one home as kindergarteners this fall. Their raised beds made out of black plastic are starting to fall apart and may need to design new recycled raised beds. A summer schedule with maintenance lists will be key for 2010.

- Riverview Elementary: is interested in having a garden and is considering a space at the school as well as suggestions to use the parcel off of 32nd street that Bob Lieb wants to turn into a community garden.

- Susie Francis: culinary teacher at DHS is very interested in having a garden space and incorporating the food into her classes. Currently, they grow sprouts and herbs. Focus has been on animal husbandry, but Susie would like to look at the vegetable and food production aspect, and possibly incorporate the animal manure into the garden.

- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary: is in their 3rd year of their Learning Garden. The garden, @ 10,000 sq. feet, contains five distinct growing zones, 9 raised beds, at least one per grade level, a classroom work space, peace pole, and several compost bins. This year, lessons have focused on incorporating science curriculum. FLM also has a Student Garden Club, Dirt Club after school program and a greenhouse, which has been operational for 30+ years. This garden, which lacks adequate water for food production, uses the garden primarily for classroom integration projects. Tours welcome.

- Needham Elementary: has an indoor growing space, outdoor learning preserve and now a vegetable garden with 8 raised beds, handmade seating, and a compost bin. This fall Needham students were responsible for creating soil lasagna gardens and seed saving activities. Next year students will focus on growing salad greens, root crops and other foods to incorporate into school salad bar.

- Bayfield Elementary is working with Jenny Craig through a grant to compost all their food waste for an accelerated 5th grade class. Carolyn Striker at Bayfield Elementary wants to start a garden and there are several Master Gardeners in the Bayfield community. TGP could help with planning a garden at the Elementary School.

- “How do you get a garden started?” Recruiting support from the school administration, teachers, students and parents is often the first step in starting a school garden. Touring local school garden that currently have up and running greenhouses and gardens in place can be used as models. Small working groups or committees can help plan, design, fundraise and write grants for the new garden. See TGP website for a list of tips and guidelines to starting a school garden

http://www.thegardenprojectswcolorado.org/site/School_Gardens_.html

Look at the School Health Improvement Plan for additional information and funding resources for starting a garden. The need to create curriculum supporting the Health Standards in the schools was identified.

- Durango Nature Studies, is brainstorming ways to incorporate their program into school gardens or outdoor learning spaces.

- School Garden Training: The Garden Project will host a school garden training in the spring of 2009. The training will cover tips to starting a school garden, curriculum integration, local resources, and networking among schools. Feedback cards were circulated to identify topics and requests for the training.

- Tool Mobile and Curriculum: Resources, garden materials, and curriculum are available for loan via the Garden Project's tool library, contact us to donate or borrow materials.
- School Garden Profiles: The Garden Project posted a list and profile of La Plata County School Gardens and Greenhouses. Visit http://www.thegardenprojectswcolorado.org/site/School_Gardens_.html - click on school profiles. Please send updated information on schools, along with photos and upcoming events to Shari @ thegardenprojectsw@yahoo.com
- Ag Presenters in the Classroom: Healthy Lifestyle La Plata will have funds to support ag. Producers in the classroom in 2010 to request funds or find resources contact jadyer@frontier.net All funds were used in 2009.
- Farmers in the Garden: the Garden Project has funds to bring farmers to the school gardens, contact Shari @ thegardenprojectsw@yahoo.com for information and funds requests.
- Each person in attendance received a packet of information, lesson plans and brochures on school gardens to access this information contact TGP.

*Thanks to Turtle Lake Refuge for providing prickly pear juice, and locally made desserts.
Thanks to Healthy Lifestyle La Plata and Growing Partners of SWCO for providing funding support for The Garden Project's school garden efforts.*