

The Southern Boone Learning Garden:

A Model for School Garden Sustainability in a
Public School District

In
Ashland, Missouri



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Year 1: 2007-08 School Year After-School Garden Club



- *Gardening & nutrition lessons
- *Positive relationship w/school
- *Enthusiastic student & parent response



Year 2: 2008-09 School Year

School construction



Garden destruction



Steering committee
formation



April, 2009
New garden
location



April, 2009 Community Work Day – Learning Garden Built in 1 Day



2009 through 2012: Tremendous Growth

- **After-school Club** (40 students/semester!)
 - Basic gardening skills
 - Cooking & nutrition
 - Eco-art
- **School-day activities & lessons**
 - Facilitating teacher use of garden as extension of classrooms
 - Getting a couple of good teachers interested was key...then others started getting interested
 - Working with 100% of preK – 5th grade teachers (~35) & students (~750)
 - at least 1 Learning Garden lesson for each class each semester



Social Studies, Literature & History

3 Sisters
Native American Garden
(corn, beans, squash)



Laura Ingalls Wilder
"Pioneer" Garden
(staple crops: potatoes, wheat)



Japanese Garden
(Hakurei turnips, tatsoi, komatsuna)

Math, Science & Nutrition



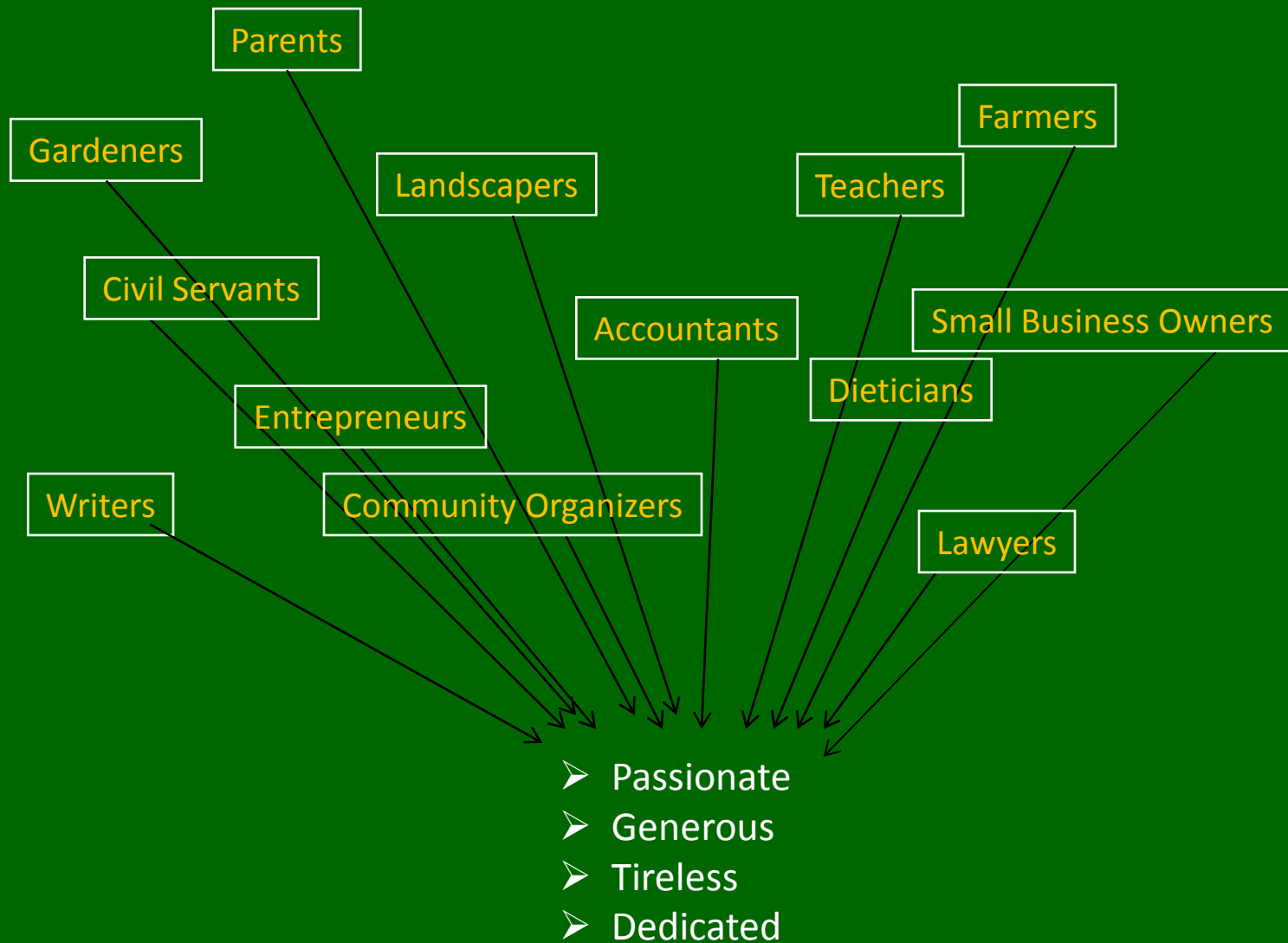
After School Club



- ✓ Basic Gardening Skills
- ✓ Cooking & Nutrition Lessons
- ✓ Physical Activity
- ✓ Eco-Art Projects



Who Are the Learning Garden Volunteers?



Learning Garden Supporters:

- Southern Boone Cy. School District
- City of Ashland
- Southern Boone PTA
- S. Boone Chamber of Commerce
- Columbia/Boone Cy. Dpt. of Health & Human Services
- MU Extension – Healthy Lifestyles Initiative
- PedNet Coalition
- Columbia Community Garden Coalition
- Boone County Journal
- Daniel Boone Regional Library system
- Ashland Optimists
- Ashland Garden Club
- Boone County Commission
- Local Girl & Boy Scout groups
- Local churches & clergy members
- Local families, businesses & farmers



Funding and Support, 2007-2012

- Our pockets, our families, & our friends
- In-kind contributions by school (land, utilities, shed)
- Local donations of seeds, plants, compost, tools, lumber, labor, equipment, etc
- Youth Garden Grant (Nat. Gardening Assoc.; 2x winner)
- National PTA Healthy Lifestyle Initiative Award
- MU Extension Grow Healthy Initiative funds
- All garden teaching & labor was 100% volunteer (>1,500 volunteer hours per year in 2011 & 2012)
- Interest in what we were doing was growing rapidly. Everybody wanted more – students, teachers, parents, the community... **We wanted to find a way to continue to improve, expand, & make the Learning Garden sustainable over time...**

Missouri Foundation for Health Grant

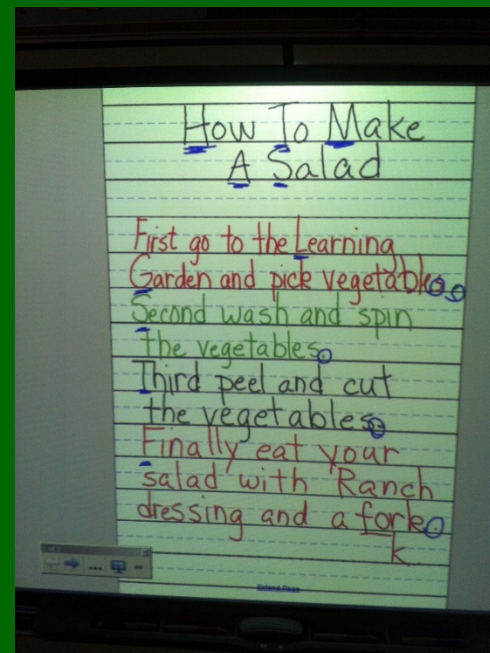
- December 2012 – awarded 5 year grant for **\$471,000** to:
 - 1) form Healthy Community Partnership to promote healthy & active living in Southern Boone County, MO
 - 2) Improve and expand the Learning Garden to serve all 1500 students (incl. middle & high school), teachers, and families
- \$90,000-\$95,000 per year
- ***3rd time we've applied** (each application = 100s of hours of work)*

- Most of the grant funds go to **pay people to do the work**
 - Executive Director (me)
 - Garden Site Manager (Kelly Redford)
 - Accounting Manager (Amy Collette)
 - 2 Americorps VISTA and/or hourly workers
 - After School Club leader stipend

The remainder of the grant provides for:

- Continuing Ed/Professional Development
- Social Marketing, Printing, Community Workshops
- Walking School Bus & Livable/Complete Streets workshops & consultation (PedNet Coalition)

Because of the
MFH Grant and
our ability to
pay people...



Math In Our Learning Garden

Geometry Edition



THE WORMS

Ashtin Stondifer, Jakob McKee, Kaylee Petty, Madelyn Painter, Kaden Schupp, Lleyton Shoot, Emily Blake



THE SUPER 7

Brady Willhite, Alyssa Crum, Grace Gask, Alex Switzer, Avery Pickett, Logan Stone, Hailey Fleming



SBC 5 REPORTERS

Drew Eppy, Chris Ketterman, Margo Haynes, Katie Lee, Mia Crow, Alana Norris, Andrew Hopper

Mrs. Levery and her three teams of 5th graders headed out to the Learning Garden again this week to see what else that they could find out about how math is used in everyday life. The groups discovered a lot about geometry this week, exploring problems in area, perimeter, and volume.



Hi everyone! We are SBC 5 reporting on area in the Learning Garden. Our problem was to find the area of the new planting field so we would know how much space it took up. We measured the length and width to find our answer.

We found the length was 108 feet and the width was 25 feet. When we multiplied them together we got an area of 2,700 square feet!

Fall 2013 –

- 140 garden classes (preK-5th)!!!
- Several High School classes & workshops
- Middle School garden started
- Curriculum Integration
- Garden produce into school cafeteria & farmer's markets



Because of the MFH Grant and our ability to pay people...

Significantly
increased &
improved
production,
aesthetics



The Learning Garden has become so
much more than just an outdoor
classroom, so much more than just a
garden...



Sustainable Business Plan...???

- Revenue generation from program fees: after-school clubs, summer camps, community workshops
- Revenue generation from farmer's market sales of produce, plants, etc.
- Revenue generation from consulting fees for other organizations and school districts who want to have school/youth gardens
- Business sponsorships and donations (\$\$ and materials, equipment)
- Local donations (\$\$ and supplies)
- Free/cheap labor: AmeriCorps VISTA workers, University interns, service-learning students, senior capstone project students, retired community members, etc.
- Grants



Key factors to Learning Garden success so far:

- Quality programming
- Excellent relationship with school district (at all levels)
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Parents
 - Staff
 - Administration
 - Board
- Long-term sustainability always a focus
- Steering committee, Board of Directors
- Strong, active community partnerships
- Constant networking & communication (staff, Board, volunteers, students, parents, teachers, school staff & administration, community organizations & groups.....)

Lessons Learned for Sustainability

- Good **volunteer recruitment and retention/appreciation**
- Good **relationships with all levels of school district** (students; parents; teachers; grounds, maintenance, & kitchen staff; administrators; school board)
- Broad, multi-sector **community involvement**
- **Funding to pay people** (teaching, garden maintenance, coordination/administration)

Helpful Web Sites and Social Media Pages:

- Life Lab – Santa Cruz, CA: www.lifelab.org
- The Edible Schoolyard Project – Berkeley, CA: www.edibleschoolyard.org
- Granny's Garden School – Loveland, OH: www.grannysgardenschool.org
- National Farm to School Network: www.farmtoschool.org
- Nationalschoolgardennetwork.org
- REALschoolgardens.org
- Many, many more.....



What Can a School Garden Do?

Enrich public education with hands-on learning...



Show kids (& adults) that growing & eating fresh fruits & veggies is FUN...



Unite a community in support of living healthier, more active lives



The Southern Boone Learning Garden:

Sowing seeds for Healthy Kids
and a Healthy Community

The time is right for
Southern Boone County...



Chances are, it's right for
your community too!

Contact Information:

Email: sobocogarden@gmail.com

<http://sblearninggarden.org>

Facebook: 'Southern Boone Learning Garden'

Jenny Grabner, Director

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