

# Lake Harriet Community School

4030 Chowen Ave. S  
Minneapolis, MN 55410



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## Summary

■ Nine concrete planters in front of building ■ Emphasis on teaching the importance of pollinators ■ Year-round program called, “Minneapolis Kids” ■ Planted a variety of veggies and herbs ■ Added milkweed in existing rain garden ■ Partnership with parents

## Photos



Imagine rows of empty concrete planters. Empty for years. Now imagine how, with a group of dedicated staff and parents, and help from Jeffers Foundation.... The planters become a teaching space.



Beside the many familiar garden plants there are some fascinating educational plants like the popcorn plant which smells like, well, you know... popcorn!



## Details

### General Information:

Renovation in the 2012-2013 school year provided Lake Harriet Elementary with nine large concrete planters in the front of the school. The planters are 43 inches long 13.5 inches wide and 22 inches deep. Due to budget restraints, the planters were left empty until 2015 when a plan was developed to raise funds and use the planters for a school garden. The principal, teachers, parents and students all cooperated in the program.

### Garden Site:

The garden site is unique as it is located in the concrete planters directly in front of the school where it is readily visible to everyone attending or visiting the school. The planters serve to keep out rabbits and other animals and are aesthetically pleasing as well as functional.

### Garden Product:

“Minneapolis Kids” planted vegetables to make pizza, salad, snacks and salsa. The garden produces a variety of veggies used in the summer program for

snacks and for the cooking component of the program.

### Education:

Two major education components of the program are: (1) to grow and harvest food and (2) to support pollinators. “Minneapolis Kids” involved in Lake Harriet's summer and before and after school programs were responsible for planting the vegetables. The Summer program enrolls over 100 K-6 Lake Harriet students who are engaged in the garden program gaining experience in math, nutrition, cooking and science. Students also helped to bring back the monarchs by planting milkweed beds in the existing rain garden, a plan designed to help them better understand the role that pollinators play in our food cycle.

### Student Involvement:

Students were involved in the designing, planning, planting, tending, harvesting preparation and best part of all, eating the produce. Youth from “Minneapolis Kids” program measured the planters,

estimated costs and developed a garden plan. Seven of the nine planters are wheelchair accessible. This ensures that all students have access to the garden.

**Supervision and Maintenance:**

Supervision is seamless as “Minneapolis Kids” are involved year-round. During the school year, the second grade team cared for the pollinator plants. Parent volunteers helped supervise and tend the gardens during the summer months. The only vandalism concerns came from those four-legged critters, but the raised beds acted as a great deterrent.

**Sources of Funds and Assistance:**

The Jeffers grant was used to purchase supplies and materials. The school also received a substantial discount from Sunnyside Gardens (a local garden store) when purchasing seeds and plants.

**Sustainability:**

The project has the support of the administration, “Minneapolis Kids” and the second grade team. Every spring the second grade team holds a garage sale fundraiser for the school. Some of these funds go to support the pollinator project. There is a very supportive PTA at Lake Harriet that offers support for school programs. Plans for next year include asking parents to donate plants to help ensure that the garden program continues to “grow.”

**For more information contact:**

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