

Longfellow Elementary School

1615 Marion RD SE
Rochester, MN 55904



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

■ Longfellow is a Year-Round (45-15) school ■ Garden area is 4000 square feet ■ Students created fence around garden ■ Use garden as an outdoor learning center ■ Students involved in planning and maintaining garden ■ Created 'imagination' stations for students ■ Use produce in school lunchroom

Photos



An outdoor learning space is next to the garden.

Each student painted their own picket, topped by a representation of their face. This will be repeated each year.



Neat rows of produce are now surrounded by a most colorful fence. A large amount of fertile soil was donated. Pickets were recycled.



Details

General Information:

Longfellow is a Year-Round School. With students in school most of the summer months. They wanted to create a spectacular garden and outdoor classroom for students and staff. One goal was to get the students outside, digging in the dirt, and learning through "hands on" activities. A major focus was to create an environment where kids can learn, dream and feel free. Multiple cross curricular "imagination stations" were created for a variety of educational activities.

Garden Site:

Their garden is located on the backside of the school and encompasses approximately 4,000 square feet. There are also additional areas near the garden for future expansion. There is water and electricity near the garden area. A unique aspect of the project was the fence surrounding the garden. Each student painted a fence board with a picture of themselves. At an all school gathering outdoors, they finished painting each board and carried it to the garden area to be installed.

Garden Product:

An abundance of Minnesota grow-able vegetables, fruits, and herbs were planted. Fruits are used for morning and afternoon snacks. A plant stand at the local farmers market was set up to sell the vegetables and fruits. They also donated some of the produce to the local food shelf. Plans going forward are to serve fresh vegetables and fruits in the salad bar in the school lunchroom and to have a Farmers Market at the school.

Education:

Staff in all curricular areas used the garden. The staff knows and understands all the benefits of building and creating curriculum that incorporates hands on learning in an outdoor classroom and garden. The "imagination stations" in the garden/outdoor classroom provide activities for math, social studies, art, music, reading, writing, and beyond. School staff was given the opportunity to have its very own raised garden bed. They were also involved, along with their students, in the maintenance of the garden.

Student Involvement:

Students were involved in the planning process including the selection of vegetables and fruits, suggesting “imagination station” ideas, naming the garden, and more. They help maintain the garden, pick and wash the vegetables, sell them, and get them ready for the lunchroom. There is also a garden club for students after school in the fall and the spring. Since this is a year- round school (45-15) students are in school part of the summer months, which gives them a great advantage for all their students to watch the garden grow during the major growing season.

Supervision and Maintenance:

There is an outdoor classroom/garden team, which consists of the principal, and three teachers who supervise the area and make schedules for volunteers who help out with watering and maintenance. The PTA, along with families, help with watering and maintenance throughout the school year. The building custodian also keeps an eye on the garden in the evenings and assisted in making this project a success.

Sources of Funds and Assistance:

The Jeffers Grant was used to purchase garden tools and supplies. There was also a SHIP (State Health Improvement Program) grant and grants from local businesses. The PTA provided funds to install water and electrical hookups.

Sustainability:

The Longfellow staff thinks of their school as a big family. They have support from students and their families, teachers, principal, custodians, district grounds and maintenance team, PTA, kitchen staff, para-professionals and others. The plan is to make the garden an on-going project.

For more information contact:

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