

St. Paul City School

643 Virginia Street
St. Paul, MN 55103



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

■ Has a 3C's (Connecting Community & Children) Garden Program ■ Thirty families involved in garden program
■ Students involved in 24-week garden project ■ Families learned how to prepare, cook, can and preserve produce
■ Used garden as an instructional tool ■ Have strong support from outside sources ■ Provided instruction to both students and families

Photos



St. Paul City charter school serves a diverse pre-school and K-8 population. It's housed in a vintage 1901 building in the Frogtown neighborhood. The garden is quite large by most school garden standards.



Many parents bring advanced gardening skills to the project. Parents and students often work together.



Details

General Information:

St. Paul City School's Community Garden Project; "3C's" (Connecting Community & Children) is designed to: (a) provide a living laboratory for students; (b) provide families with access to fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables; (c) help families develop the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to establish and maintain nutritious eating and active lifestyle practices; (d) educate families on such topics as environmental stewardship, where food comes from and how agriculture impacts our daily lives; (e) engage families in an outdoor learning experience; (f) provide inter-generational exposure to cultural traditions; and (g) provide families from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to work side-by-side on a common endeavor.

Garden Site:

The garden is located in the interior courtyard of the school and the school is located in the heart of the community near the state capitol making it easy for students and families to access and enjoy the garden on a daily basis. The garden site is free of shade trees, providing the plants with the direct

sunlight. Each of 30 Families was assigned their own 1' x 3' garden plot to care for and maintain. The 3C's Community Garden Project uses a plan to measure product output by weighing and recording the number of pounds of herbs, fruits and vegetables harvested.

Garden Product:

Students and their families plant and harvest fruits, vegetables and herbs that are nutritious and represent the cultures of the community for example: assorted vegetables, fruits and herbs, as well as Hmong cucumbers and Mexican Husk tomatoes. Students and families living in the community reap the benefits of the harvested produce. Through a series of classes (minimum of 6) students and their families learned how to prepare and preserve nutritious and delicious herbs, fruits and vegetables.

Education:

The 3C's Community Garden Project is designed to be a "beginning to end" educational learning

opportunity for students and their families. The garden-based learning project encompasses “hands on learning by doing” activities and workshops that promote integrated learning in and across disciplines. The garden is used as an instructional tool that contributes to all aspects of basic education. Areas include: enhanced academic performance in the fields of science and language arts; increased nutrition and physical activity awareness; increased environmental awareness; increased personal, social and life skills development, self-sufficiency; and building strong communities through gardening.

Student Involvement:

Students participating in the 24-week community garden project were involved in planning, designing, clearing, preparing, planting and maintaining the garden. They also attended workshops (12 gardening sessions, 12 nutrition and healthy well-being sessions, and 6 food preparation & cooking sessions). Other activities included harvesting the produce, keeping weekly journals, evaluating the project, and celebrating community gardening successes. St. Paul City School Special Education teachers are available to help meet the needs of students with disabilities or special learning needs.

Supervision and Maintenance:

The Project Director and Project Assistant supervise the garden year round. During both the school year and the summer months, the garden is maintained by students and their families with help from SPCS staff, two Master Gardeners from the Frogtown Garden, Hmong volunteers, and gardening experts from the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. The community garden site is located in an area that discourages vandalism and minimizes damage from playground havoc, dogs and foot traffic. The school area has a fence and motion-activated security lights to protect the grounds.

Sources of Funds and Assistance:

St. Paul City School used their Jeffers Grant to purchase gardening equipment and supplies needed for cooking, canning and preserving the harvested herbs, fruits and vegetables. Funding sources secured for the 3C's Community Garden Project included a \$10,000 grant from the Cargill Foundation and four garden boxes from the MN Horticulture Society. The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum provided garden plants and food (snacks) for project participants

Sustainability:

St. Paul City School is committed to making the

3C's Community Garden Project a long-term sustainable project. Meetings held with representatives from the Cargill Foundation and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum included discussions on plans for expanding and sustaining this project. Strengthening the partnerships with the Cargill Foundation, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and others who have a strong interest in supporting school garden projects, will aid the school in its commitment to foster strong and healthy families through community gardening.

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