



SPROUTS

The newsletter for Collective Roots Garden Project...helping our students grow

Under the Rainbow

By *Tori Derr, Executive Director*

On a recent hiking trip through the mountains of New Mexico, soggy and cold, I witnessed a beautiful rainbow pass through the dripping needles of a pine. It reminded me that without rain, there can be no rainbows.

Collective Roots Garden Project is currently housed at East Palo Alto Charter School, adjacent to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. With a history of environmental distress, we knew that this area was at-risk of contamination from industrial waste that makes its way into the Bay each year. This summer, when a tanker released volatile organic compounds across the Bay and near the garden, we were particularly reminded of how fragile our environment is. As a precaution, we removed all edible plants from the garden until we knew exactly what had been released from the tanker. This fall, after two fantastic workdays and lots of help from the Middle School Garden Elective,

the garden is moving forward and renewing itself.

For me, the rainbow that followed this event is the stark reminder of the important role Collective Roots Garden Project plays in promoting student understanding of the link between human and environmental health. Research suggests that when people eat nutritious, organic

foods, they are better able to fight off cancer and other environment-related illnesses. Collective Roots has brought these issues into focus with the Middle School Garden Elective this fall. As we work through the process of rebuilding the garden, we have asked students to imagine new plans for the garden and to reflect on the garden – past, present, and future.

Meanwhile, our programs move forward with a renewed commitment to providing opportunities for students to learn in a resource-rich, experiential environment; to grow and eat healthy, organic vegetables and fruits; and to learn from the experiences that life puts forward.

“ I feel bad for the garden because they had to pull out every single plant that’s edible. I also feel happy for the garden because we get to plant new plants and because they didn’t close it down. If it wasn’t for Collective Roots, we wouldn’t be here right now.

– Jesus, 8th grade



Garden Club members Jennifer, Dupree and Steven enjoyed harvesting artichokes together.

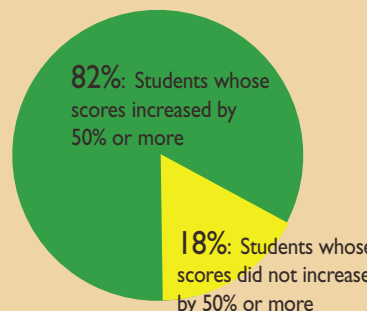
NOTES From the Garden

- CRGP welcomes **Jennifer Wei** to our Board of Directors. Jennifer brings a breadth of experience to CRGP, including experience in strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, management, public relations, and marketing.
- CRGP is also pleased to introduce two new staff: **Tori Derr** is Collective Root’s new Executive Director, and **Robin Galas** is our Middle School Garden Elective instructor. Tori and Robin both bring a passion for garden-based learning and are pleased to be getting their hands dirty and feet wet!
- Our next **Community Garden Workday** will be **Saturday, November 11, 2006**. Check our website for details: www.collectiveroots.org.
- This fall we are hosting **Open Garden Thursdays from 3:30-4:30**. Stop by to help our garden grow.

Garden-based lessons help increase 2005-2006 assessment scores!

Our goal in garden-based lessons is to increase the students’ scores by 50% or more from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment.

This pie chart reflects our scores in Kindergarten through sixth grade in the 2005-2006 school year.



GREEN Week launched at EPACS

By Holly Taylor, Nutrition Program Coordinator

This past May, Collective Roots hosted our first GREEN (Gardening, Recycling, Environmental Education, and Nutrition) Week at EPACS. With the help of several partners and more than 125 parent and community volunteers, we were able to showcase our regular work and pilot new ideas. We reached 100% of EPACS 400 students and involved school staff and families as well.

Students were able to try new fruits and vegetables during the week as part of our Organic Treat Table. Oranges, strawberries, cherries, and sugar snap peas from local farms were served during morning recess. Garden Club students hosted two "Marketplaces" where they sold bilingual cookbooks highlighting the foods they'd made throughout the year as well as a variety of healthy snacks and garden crafts. Additionally, our Middle School Elective students continued the class tradition of serving salads in the school cafeteria. As always, this was a hit. Each year, more students eat their entire salads.

GREEN Fiesta, our culminating event, was held on Saturday. Attendees enjoyed live music, Bayland nature walks, GREEN games and educational activities as well as great food and student performances. Thanks to everyone who supported GREEN Week by donating materials or volunteering their time. We couldn't have done it without you!



Sixth-grader Daisy said, "I loved GREEN week because we got to eat healthy foods instead of all the gross food we usually get."

Collective Roots thanks...

Geoff Holton and David Waldorf

of Geoffrey Holton and Associates in Oakland for their tremendous dedication to the design and vision for our outdoor kitchen.

The Pacifica 4-H Bee Garden Project and **Cliff Rocha** for the donation of 40 pollinator plants and 15 redwood trees.

Our students are buzzing with excitement at the new additions to the garden!

Elizabeth Gamble Garden for their donation of seedlings and pots for our Middle School Elective Salad Bar garden. Hands On Bay Area for their hard work and enthusiasm in the garden on September 9th.

All of the committed **teachers, students, parents, and community members** who help maintain the garden, support lessons and Garden Club, and donate generously to our work.

PROGRAM UPDATE: Garden-based lessons

By Serina Eichelberger, Garden Learning Coordinator

We are excited to begin another academic year with garden-based lessons at EPACS. Each year our programming grows and improves. We now have a comprehensive curriculum with 16 units per grade. In the 2006-2007 school year, we are offering 12 garden-based lessons to each of the K-6 classrooms. We are also pleased to be able to offer an additional 4 lessons teachers can use independently to enhance the garden instruction we provide.

Last year we piloted the kindergarten and first grade lessons with nine classes. Betsy the Bee, a pollinator puppet, was a very popular addition and a great management tool. Betsy helped the kids learn to use their five senses to discover the parts of plants and to categorize animals by their structures. In spring 2007, we will offer even more lessons to the Kinder and first grade classes.

This year our garden-based lessons started with the 4th grade. Students are learning different organic gardening techniques such as pollinator planting, companion planting, and composting. We are also delving into ecosystem dynamics with a specific focus on human impacts, both positive and negative. The fourth grade is also revving up for a field trip to Vida Verde in November. Look for a report in the following newsletter!

In October, we will begin garden-based lessons with the 3rd and 5th grades. Our third graders will begin by studying different habitats and the specific adaptations of birds and insects that enable them to survive in a given habitat. The fifth graders will study the human digestive system and the role of fiber in human health; the water cycle; and photosynthesis.

If you are interested in helping with garden-based lessons, please contact Serina@CollectiveRoots.org.

Many thanks to Kathy Switky for the design of our newsletter. SPROUTS is printed on recycled paper.



Collective
Roots
Garden
Project

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tori Derr

Recent months have brought a wave of exciting change and possibility our way. We are pleased to introduce our new Executive Director, Tori Derr. Tori brings a diversity of leadership experience in environmental education and community development to CRGP, and we're delighted to have her on board. We are also thankful for all the consistency and dedication Serina Eichelberger has brought through

our season of growth and change, and for Holly Taylor's hard work to make GREEN Week so successful. With the latest addition of Robin Galas on our staff, we are well-equipped to move Collective Roots forward. Stay tuned for new developments in our programming and partners in the coming months.



— Beth Steinberg
PRESIDENT

Collective Roots Garden Project's mission is to develop young urban leaders who understand where their food comes from and how their actions impact human and environmental health.

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