

Healthy Schools Year-End Story Template

Date: June 7, 2013

School Name: Ecole Beairsto Elementary

School District: SD 22, Vernon

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Tell us about your Healthy Schools Team (i.e. who was on it? How many students? Other teachers? Partners?):

Our school team consisted of students, parents and staff. During the year, the numbers of members of each partner group changed.

We started out with a group of 15 students in grade 5 lead by parent, Carolyn Fletcher and facilitated by principal, Wendy Briggs.

During the planning stages the group remained stable but during the action phase the group morphed and multiplied. There were two grade three classes lead by teacher, Chloe Mongerson, who participated in the preparation and planting stage. There were many different grade 5, 6 and 7 students who joined in to help with the physical labour in preparing and planting the garden.

Eventually, most students in the school of 600 planted seeds or transplanted plants. We also had parents and teachers donate materials to create the garden.

Share Your School Story! Tell us about what happened and how it went!

Please see the video for the visual of the project this year.

1. We started last year by doing a Four Pillars of Comprehensive School Health activity to get input from all partner groups-parents, students and staff. From the feedback, we saw that healthy eating and providing more green space around the school were common themes. Together with student enthusiasm and parental expertise, we decided on a permaculture garden project.
2. We invited any students interested in joining the team to meet on Mondays at lunch to plan the project. The group ended up with all grade 5 students. We met through the winter and worked on our inquiry project about "Could we teach other students to grow their own food and know where food comes from?" We introduced the idea of the garden where every student would have the opportunity to plant a seed by going to each class with Okanagan organic fruits, showing them a map and inviting them to participate. We had an overwhelmingly positive response.
3. In the spring, we had a plan. The students visited all classes again to share the seeds that they could plant and describe how they could start the plants inside after spring break.
4. After the break, in the month of April, the serious physical transformation of our garden space began. Students began digging, turning turf and using cardboard, compost, soil and straw to layer the permaculture garden.
5. The planting began in May. When the school district saw the transformation and the planting begin, they came with a contract for us to sign to ensure that we were responsible for the creation and if necessary restoration of this garden should we choose to stop gardening. During the garden construction, we tried to not disturb the existing irrigation system in case we needed it in the future.
6. In June, the work continued and all planting was completed.
7. At the June 13 Family BBQ, there will be tours available for the garden by students who have learned about all aspects of the permaculture garden. We will try to interest other parents to help with the garden for watering and

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- harvesting during the summer months.
8. As we have received another large grant, we will be able to purchase more composting materials and greatly improve our existing compost. We will also be able to harvest water with rain barrels and purchase necessary tools and materials to keep the garden healthy and growing into the future.
 9. The work is not complete but there has been a great deal of progress in creating the jardin enchanté in the middle of a busy city. There are plans to use this space as an outdoor classroom for teaching a variety of science concepts including the water cycle, soil, composting, weather station, etc.
 10. We would not have been able to accomplish this grand garden without the hard work and expertise of our parent, Carolyn Fletcher.

Reflections (what worked well, what would you do differently next year?)

What worked well was including so many different students in the garden project. There was so much learning happening and students taking ownership of their own and collective work to create a beautiful green space to grow fruit and vegetables and learn about creating sustainable and environmentally friendly gardens. Each day of work, there was a lot of learning and enjoyment for all involved.

What we would do differently is to take more time to accomplish the large scale project. This first year required a great deal of physical work, materials and planting. In the future, we need to divide the work by grades with the support of some teachers to ensure that long term maintenance of the garden is enjoyable and sustainable. We have a plan and need to share it with staff and students for the future. It was difficult for many to jump into the project until they could visualize what it would be and how they could be a part of the green joy. In the future, when it is really a maintenance project, it will be easier for others to see how they can contribute and involve students in chunks of garden work. Due to the large size of the school and trying to have our student group communicate with the classes, we did not do as good of a job of sharing how and when the planting could take place.



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