



This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

**Tell Us What's New...**

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail [martha\\_marino@yahoo.com](mailto:martha_marino@yahoo.com).

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

**Subscription Information**

*Energize* can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge.

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For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.



**ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!**  
**EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE**

Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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**This Month's Focus: *School Gardens***

School gardens have been gaining recent traction across the country and here in Washington State. As nutrition educators, it is worthwhile for us to consider gardening as part of our efforts to help youth eat more fruits and vegetables. This month's issue of *Energize for Nutrition Educators* focuses on school gardens, local examples, sources of funding, curricula, and other resources. A special thank-you goes to Karen Barale of Washington State University Extension Pierce County for her assistance with this issue.

**Four-State People's Garden Grant** – Washington State University Extension was awarded \$1 million from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to create new school gardens and education programs in high-poverty schools. "Healthy Gardens, Healthy Youth" is a pilot program that is taking place in Washington and three other states: New York, Iowa, and Arkansas. All will conduct garden programs to improve students' access to nutritious food, nutrition knowledge, and opportunities to contribute to the nutritional well-being of their communities. Of the 60 schools participating, some will have a garden installed next spring, and some will serve as control schools, with their gardens installed at the end of the study. The first gardens will be planted February 2012, and the nutrition education component will run from then until the end of the school year. A particularly valuable aspect of the study is the evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs and developing a model that can be applied nationwide. Karen Barale is leading a team to identify appropriate curricula for the program. An experienced gardener, Barale has been involved in the Square Foot Nutrition Project (next article) and at home with ten raised beds and a 10- by 20-foot in-ground garden. (Contact: Karen Barale, WSU Extension Pierce County, 253-798-3262, [kbarale@wsu.edu](mailto:kbarale@wsu.edu).)



Garden at Edison Elementary, completed with a grant from Lowe's. Photo courtesy of Pierce County Extension.

**Square Foot Nutrition Project: Garden-enhanced Nutrition Education** – Even before the school gardening trend caught on, schools in Pierce County have been using gardens as part of nutrition education. The Square Foot Nutrition Project: Garden-enhanced Nutrition Education program has been under way for more than ten years. It is provided in more than 120 classrooms in Tacoma and Clover Park School Districts through the SNAP-Ed Program. In its 12-week curriculum, students plant fall crops, and in the spring they may plant radishes, leafy greens, bok choy and more. To cap it off, schools hold a harvest celebration in the spring, inviting parents and other adults to share in the bounty. (Contact: Karen Barale, see above article.)

**Culinary Students Cook from School's Garden** – At Shorewood High School, culinary arts students work alongside King County Master Gardeners in the school's garden. Located right outside the kitchen classroom, raised beds contain herbs, vegetables, and fruits that are used every day in classes by Culinary Arts / Chef Instructor Diana Dillard. She says that most students don't know where food comes from. An example: One student looked down at a raised bed saying, "That looks like broccoli." She replied, "Well, it is broccoli." To which the student replied, "You're kidding me!" Master Gardeners come to the school on Fridays. Two Fridays each month they teach the students about gardening, then they work together in the garden. On alternate Fridays the volunteers maintain the garden. The garden is also used by the high school's science classes and the on-campus daycare. Dillard says that one of the benefits of the collaboration with Master Gardeners is the enjoyment of the two generations working side-by-side.



Master Gardeners and Culinary Arts students at Shorewood High School. Photo courtesy of Diana Dillard.

(Contact: Diana Dillard, Culinary Arts / Chef Instructor, Shorewood High School, [Diana.Dillard@shorelineschools.org](mailto:Diana.Dillard@shorelineschools.org).)

**Effects of School Gardens on Students' Diets** – With the increasing popularity of school gardens it's fair to ask whether this enjoyable activity makes a difference in kids' nutritional status.

- A review of research published 1990 to 2007 found that garden-based nutrition interventions may increase fruit and vegetable intake among youth. Although the number of studies is scant, it appears that garden programs (during school, after school, and in the community) result in an increased willingness to taste fruits and vegetables, particularly among kindergarteners and first-graders. Studies were mixed about whether kids increased their intake of fruits and vegetables: some found that they ate more, other studies found no change. Students who didn't care for fruits and vegetables liked them better after gardening experiences. (Source: Robinson-O'Brien, R et al, "Impact of garden-based youth nutrition intervention programs: A review." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109(2):273-280, February 2009.)
- In a study of sixth-graders, students at two schools participated in a 12-week nutrition education program, and those at another school received the same program with the addition of garden-based activities. Researchers found that the kids who gardened consumed more fruits and vegetables, and had higher intakes of vitamin A, vitamin C, and fiber, than the students in the nutrition education program without gardening. (Source: McAleese, JD et al, "Garden-based nutrition education affects fruit and vegetable consumption in sixth-grade adolescents." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 107(4):662-665, April 2007.)
- Because school gardens are an engaging, hands-on activity, they appear to have a positive impact on students' opinions and choices of fruits and vegetables. Research is needed to measure the impact and whether it makes a difference in lifetime food choices. (Source: Oxenham, E et al, "School gardens as a strategy for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption." *School Nutrition*, 34(1), Spring 2010.)
- The Berkeley (CA) School District evaluated the long-term effect of its School Lunch Initiative, which included a gardening component in most schools. One of the many findings was that elementary students had a higher preference for vegetables. By the seventh grade, those participating in the program sustained their preference for leafy greens, but preferences for other vegetables was no different than those of students who did not participate in school gardens. (Source: [www.school lunch initiative.org/downloads/sli\\_eval\\_full\\_report\\_2010.pdf](http://www.school lunch initiative.org/downloads/sli_eval_full_report_2010.pdf).)

**School Garden Grant Opportunity** – Les Dames d'Escoffier, Seattle Chapter (LDES), is in its second year of offering grants up to \$3,000 which may be used for school gardens. Grants are available to qualified non-profit organizations serving people in Washington State that impact and improve knowledge about food, its sources, and preparation. Last year's four grant recipients used funding for school gardens, which gave students hands-on opportunities to grow, harvest, and enjoy their own fruits and vegetables. One innovative school used new feed troughs to create raised vegetable planters. The deadline for a Letter of Inquiry is November 1; selected organizations then will be invited to submit grant proposals by December 15. To read more, go to [www.lesdamesseattle.com](http://www.lesdamesseattle.com) and click on "Seattle Green Tables." LDES is a non-profit invitational society of professional women of high achievement in the fields of food, beverages, and hospitality. (Contact: [seattlegreentables@lesdamesseattle.com](mailto:seattlegreentables@lesdamesseattle.com).)



Photo courtesy of McGilvra Elementary School and Les Dames d'Escoffier Seattle.

**OUR MISSION:** *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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## Additional Funding Sources for School Gardens

- Lowe's offers support to schools for school gardens and other projects through its "Toolbox for Education" grants, [www.toolboxforeducation.com/hta.html](http://www.toolboxforeducation.com/hta.html)
- The National Gardening Association, in partnership with The Home Depot, awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs, [www.kidsgardening.org/grants/2012-youth-garden-grants-1](http://www.kidsgardening.org/grants/2012-youth-garden-grants-1)

**Resources for Gardening with Youth** – These resources can help nutrition educators and others interested in school gardens:

- Wisconsin Department of Health, "Got veggies, [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity)
- University of Maryland, <http://md.nutrition-ed.org>
- Iowa State University, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/growinginthegarden/index.html>
- National Gardening Association's website is devoted to gardening with kids, at school and at home, <http://www.kidsgardening.org>

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**Is Produce from School Gardens Safe?** – Absolutely, if certain guidelines are followed. Fruits and vegetables from school gardens may be served in the classroom and in school meals, but it's best for the school garden coordinator to check first with the local health department and school nutrition director. The USDA and the National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi offers a four-page handout of tips for safe school gardens from selecting the site through harvest. Some of the advice includes: identifying the soil's history to ensure it hasn't been contaminated in the past, using food grade containers to transport water, and confirming that volunteers are covered by the school district's insurance policy in case they get hurt. Source: "Food Safety Tips for School Gardens," <http://nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20110822025700.pdf>.

**Tried and True Tips for Starting School Gardens** – To learn about "rallying the troops" to build support among administrators, teachers, parent and community volunteers, and garden coordinators, the California Department of Education and other offer advice from experiences with the \$15 million funding for school gardens through the California Instructional School Garden Program. See Hazzard, EL et al "Best Practices Models for implementing, sustaining, and using instructional school gardens in California." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 43(5):409-413, 2011.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the permafrost mountains in northern Norway, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault stores seeds from around the globe, primarily from developing countries. The seeds are preserved for future generations in order reduce the risk of hunger and famine, [www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/campaign/svalbard-global-seed-vault.html](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/campaign/svalbard-global-seed-vault.html).

### EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

*Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.*

**Seattle-area Chefs in the Great American Family Dinner Challenge** – Two award-winning women chefs in the Seattle area, Maria Hines and Holly Smith, will pair off in Washington DC to prepare a nutritious dinner that fits in the budget of SNAP recipients. Using 30 minutes and \$4.50 worth of ingredients, they will create the meal in front of an audience at the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) in Washington, DC, on November 29. Other chefs will be competing, too, and meals will be judged by two families who won a sweepstakes sponsored by *Parents and Se Padres* magazine. For information about the Great American Family Dinner Challenge, see <http://www.evadopr.com/newsandevents/2011/09/20/great-american-family-dinner-challenge-features-chef-maria-hines> For the PHA agenda, see <http://www.cvent.com/events/building-a-healthier-future-bringing-together-industry-and-civic-leaders-to-end-childhood-obesity/event-summary-8399766c9463480c937678316e7c1b44.aspx>



**Photo Essay of Family Dinners** – In a New York Times article, "Why does it matter that families eat together?" a variety of American families were interviewed and photographed at their tables. See [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/10/02/magazine/02-families.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/10/02/magazine/02-families.html)

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