

# Nurturing a New Haven School Garden

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## Project Motivation & Goals

Benefits of spending time outdoors in nature have been widely documented, but some densely populated areas present few opportunities for children and young people to do so freely and safely. Fair Haven School is a public PreK-8 school in a densely populated neighborhood in New Haven, Connecticut with a sizeable outdoor space for students with garden beds, a playground, and a pollinator habitat. The gardens were started by teachers to get their students outside and learning through growing food. Over time and due to limited capacity and resources, some of the infrastructure has fallen into disrepair.

**Project Goals:** We want to help revitalize the garden at Fair Haven School. This project will fund new garden tools, seeds, soil and other equipment to bring our beds back to life. These gardens are in the main school yard where all students at the elementary school will have access to them. In addition, we want to...

- Build relationships with Fair Haven School teachers and school community
- Engage students and families in the garden
- Raise funds to acquire garden supplies
- Create an oasis for observing life cycles of insects, plants, and hopefully birds as the garden matures.
- Create a benefit to the urban landscape that lasts into the future.



Students at the garden with a strawberry plant

## Methods

**Location** Fair Haven School - New Haven, CT  
**Fall 2022 - Spring 2023**

### 1. Planning and fundraising

- Visited the school garden to take measurements and figure out supplies
- Created a materials list with prices to set a funding goal
- Set up SeedMoney campaign and shared via social media

### 2. After-school seed-starting lesson

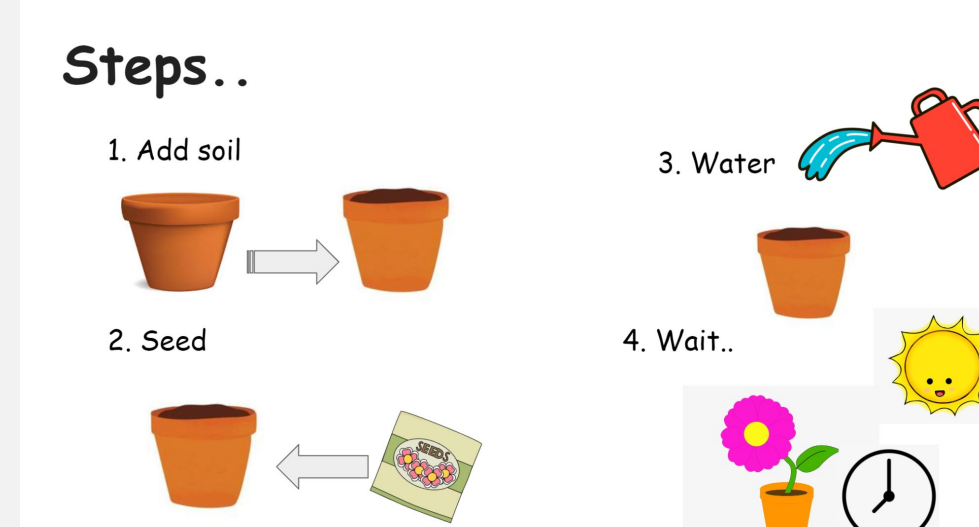
- Visited students to get to know them and figured out plants they would like to grow in their garden
- Created a short picture slideshow with instructions for how to plant seeds
- Guided students in a hands on activity planting seeds and caring for them

### 3. Planning a family garden day

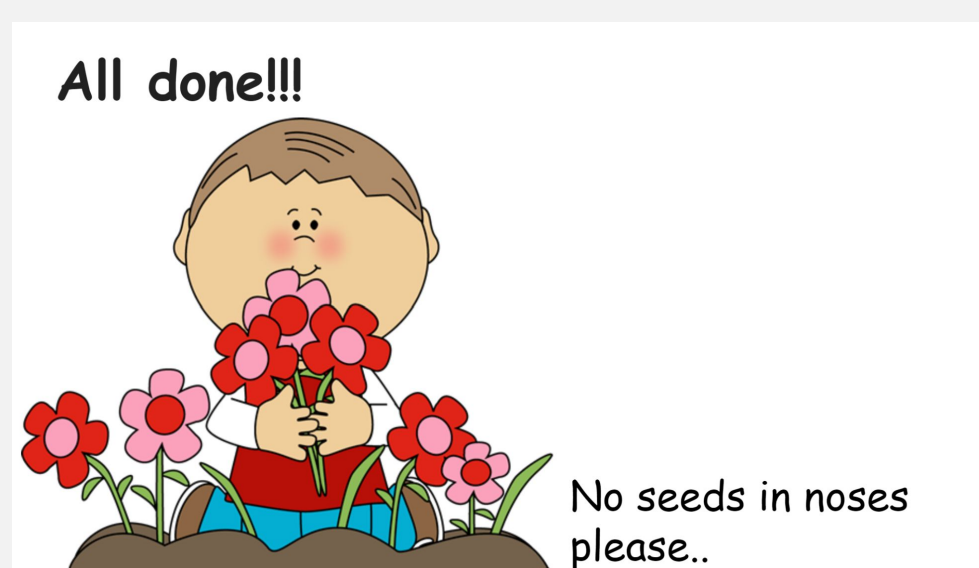
- Scheduling a time and date that works for school community
- Gather materials and send invitations

## How do seeds grow?

Slides used during the seed starting lesson



Developmentally appropriate instructions for how to plant seeds



Making sure to cover safety

## Project Outcomes

### Fundraising

- Raised \$480 for garden via SeedMoney & NRCA mini-grant!
- Purchased seeds, seed tray, soil, watering cans, shovels for the family garden day, materials to repair the garden beds

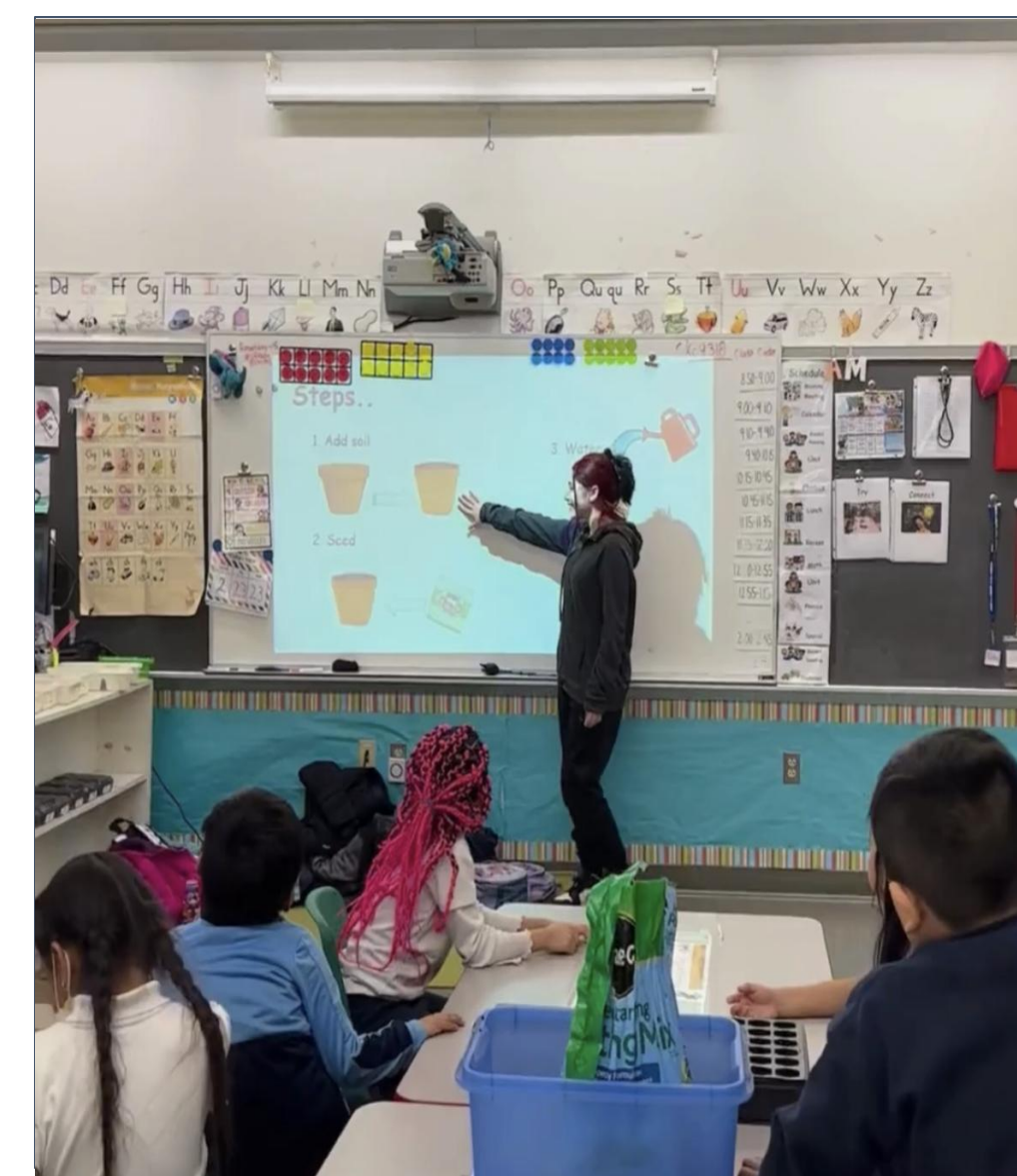
### After-School Seed-Starting Lesson

- 4 teachers, 9 students engaged in the lesson and planting
- Planted yellow and red tomatoes, broccoli, cucumbers, and kale
- Taught students new skills and vocabulary



### Family Garden Day

- Planned for Earth Day 4/22/23
- Students, teachers, and family involvement
- Creating a place for students to feel welcome and included by adding:
  - A new bench
  - Repairing the garden beds
  - Getting started in the greenhouse



From Left to Right: Here I am teaching the students and giving them instructions on how to plant seeds. We added the seeds to the tray and you can see some sprouting. Then we added the dirt and went over what types of seeds we had.

## Community Partnership

**When I was younger, I spent a lot of my time in** a garden in my neighborhood known as the **Davenport Children's Garden**. I would visit with my family and it became **one of my favorite places** to be. I wanted to **share this experience with other young kids**. I began by reaching out to Gather - a local non-profit that helps to maintain the Davenport Children's Garden, and asking my NRCA mentor and community partner for ideas of gardens to collaborate with. I learned from my NRCA mentor, Chris, that the Fair Haven School Garden (which was started in partnership with Gather - previously New Haven Land Trust) could benefit from additional support. **When I heard back from folks from Gather, one of the gardeners even remembered me from when I was younger!**

I knew I was interested in making my project about gardening, and Chris helped me get in touch with Mrs. Van Tassell from Common Ground High School and Ms. Alderman at Fair Haven School. We set up a meeting to tour the school and garden with Mrs. Van Tassell and talk with a few teachers from Fair Haven School. Together, we made a list of materials, took measurements, and made plans to lead a garden lesson for some students.



Students add seeds into the soil during the seed-starting lesson

## Conclusion and Next Steps

- Fair-Haven School **Family Garden Day** planned for Earth Day 4/22/23
- A bed for each grade level can serve as a rich learning environment for students, and the opportunity for our upper elementary students to serve as role models to our younger students.
- Follow up with Gather to get involved in future projects



## Acknowledgements

Thank you so much to Chris for helping me get in touch with Mrs. Van Tassel and Ms. Alderman. This project wouldn't have been able to happen without them. Especially, the UConn NRCA CAP, thank you for this amazing experience; it was great! I made many friends along the way and I'm thankful for everyone involved. I learned a lot and I'm glad I had the opportunity to teach during my project.

