

Students Growing into Leaders: Fostering a healthy school and a healthy community

Completed 

Reporting Periods

SNAP-Ed 2022 (October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022)

Site

Arthur Hapgood Elementary

Unit

Santa Barbara (County)

COVID-19 Impact

Modified due to COVID-19

Program Activity

Not Specified

Keywords

Positive Youth Development

Youth Gardening

Comments

Media coverage: [https://lompocrecord.com/news/local/education/hapgood-elementary-students-lead-campus-garden-tour-on-friday/article_fcdb1e87-1b2b-5dc3-9d88-f36eb5fad105.html?](https://lompocrecord.com/news/local/education/hapgood-elementary-students-lead-campus-garden-tour-on-friday/article_fcdb1e87-1b2b-5dc3-9d88-f36eb5fad105.html?utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0nuxolkmp_WPoOsuM2QezZ9IWOSBsyUsRt5bp6QOLtRzPozYaAKG7peW0)

[utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0nuxolkmp_WPoOsuM2QezZ9IWOSBsyUsRt5bp6QOLtRzPozYaAKG7peW0](https://lompocrecord.com/news/local/education/hapgood-elementary-students-lead-campus-garden-tour-on-friday/article_fcdb1e87-1b2b-5dc3-9d88-f36eb5fad105.html?utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0nuxolkmp_WPoOsuM2QezZ9IWOSBsyUsRt5bp6QOLtRzPozYaAKG7peW0)

Lompoc City Council Meeting - School Garden Resolution May 17: <https://youtu.be/2ngOtFsn8zY>

Stories about the apricot tree that was gifted from the city to the Hapgood garden: <https://keyt.com/news/local-news/top-stories/2022/05/27/city-of-lompoc-gifts-apricot-tree-to-hapgood-garden/> and <https://newspress.com/roots-of-a-good-education/>

Photos: Students at the Lompoc City Council Meeting, Lompoc City School Garden Proclamation

Uploads

[image \(2\).png](#)


[Proclamation.jpg](#)

[Image_20220923_132300_519.jpeg](#)


Has Photo Releases

Yes

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Story

Background

The issue

Studies show that school gardens support student health through increased physical activity, increased consumption of healthy foods, and decreased body mass index[1]. School gardens are also associated with positive emotions and social interactions[2] and may support student mental health.

CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE in Santa Barbara County (UCCE) partners with schools to gather stakeholders, create plans, fundraise, build, maintain and teach in school gardens. One partnering school, Hapgood Elementary, has a flourishing garden that has been expanded and maintained over several years. The garden encompasses 18 garden beds, a fruit tree orchard, a composting system, and 10 hydroponic garden towers. Each of these spaces takes skilled care and maintenance to keep them growing and producing.

[1] Rochira A, Tedesco D, Ubiali A, Pia Fantini M, and Gori D. (2020) School Gardening Activities Aimed at Obesity Prevention Improve Body Mass Index and Waist Circumference Parameters in School-Aged Children: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Childhood Obesity*. <http://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2019.0253>

[2] Pollin, S., & Retzlaff-Fürst, C. (2021). The School Garden: A Social and Emotional Place. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 567720. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.567720>

Story Narrative

How UC Delivers

As COVID-19 restrictions at schools began to ease in February 2022, UCCE garden educator Abbi Marrs reached out to the student leadership class to see if there was interest in developing leadership skills related to nutrition and food production in their school garden. Over 26 student leaders expressed interest in learning more about the garden.

With the support of classroom teachers, P.E. teachers and the school Principal, UCCE staff met with the students over the course of a month to support the student leaders and provide training related to growing food, composting, maintaining, and teaching in the garden. Throughout these trainings, UCCE staff worked with the youth to make decisions related to how and what they wanted to do with their new skills and knowledge to support the garden. One group decided to focus on building more support for and awareness of their garden through providing school garden tours. Another group decided to focus on supporting school and family health by providing garden enhanced nutrition education lessons in the garden.

UCCE staff supported youth by facilitating school garden training, helping them write their scripts for the garden tours, training them in teaching from the TWIGS curriculum, and practicing their presentations and roles. In addition, their teachers supported their development by providing time for them to practice and giving them feedback and suggestions. Students were also encouraged to work together independent of their teachers to practice working as a team and making the tours and presentations their own.

On April 15th, 2022, youth delivered a garden tour to 26 youth and 16 teachers, family, and community members. The mayor and city council were invited to attend and youth had the opportunity to share their garden and how it impacts their learning an health. In addition, 10 lessons were taught to 211 students in grades TK-6th.

Lastly, eight student leaders shared their garden experience while presenting at the 2022 California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in September. Student leaders worked with UCCE staff to develop a one-hour presentation focused on the responsibilities of being a student leader in the garden. The topics included: how the garden youth leader program started, student garden jobs, composting, working with hydroponic towers, working with food service staff, safe harvesting practices, and how to teach garden-based and nutrition education lessons to K – 4TH grade students. During the presentation, student leaders also shared their favorite parts of working in the garden. Some answers included teaching younger students about the garden, learning healthy recipes, and learning more about gardening in general. Following the presentation, student leaders delivered a condensed version of “Pest or Pal” lesson from the TWIGS garden-based curriculum to over fifty workshop attendees. The presentation concluded with a question-and-answer session and student leaders took turns answering questions such as the biggest challenge they faced working in the garden, their favorite foods to grow, and how working in the garden has helped developed them as student leaders.

The Impact

Youth leaders completed the Youth Leader Retrospective survey at the end of the school year (n=26). This survey asks participants to reflect on changes they see in themselves due to their participation in programming. Questions ask about behavior changes related to safely preparing and cooking healthy foods, leadership skills gained, and support received from adult facilitators.

For healthy behaviors, students agreed or strongly agreed, due to their participation in the UCCE Student Leaders Garden Committee: *I wash my hands frequently (100%), my family has purchased healthier foods (92%), my family has prepared healthier foods (88%).*

For leadership skills, youth retrospectively rated their ability before and after the program using a 4-point scale from *No Ability to Excellent Ability*. Improvement was observed in all leadership skills assessed including ability to work as a team member, speak before a group, teach others, and plan programs. The biggest change was observed in their ability to teach others. Prior to the program, only 1 (4%) youth reported an Excellent Ability and 11 (42%) reported Good Ability. After the program, 11 (42%) rated themselves as having Excellent Ability and 13 (50%) rated themselves Good Ability. In addition, 0 youth rated themselves No Ability after participating in the program, compared to 5 (19%) before the program.

For program support, youth agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements: There were dedicated adults who supported me as a youth leader (100%), I received ongoing training and support throughout the program (88%), The program made sure I had everything I needed to be successful as a youth leader (100%).

Lastly, as a result of the garden tours, the Lompoc City Council adopted a school garden resolution that states the importance of school gardens to student health and the commitment of the city to support school gardens. Youth attended the council meeting to meet the mayor and council and talk about the garden. Due to their leadership, their school was gifted an apricot tree in their honor and the Principal hosted a tree planting ceremony with students and family members.

Favorite Quote

From Lompoc City Mayor, Jenelle Osborne: “I am so impressed with the students and the garden at Hapgood! Their passion for growing food was evident as the young scholars taught us about composting and what each part of plant contributes to in its growth. I want to thank the UC Cal Fresh Education Program, all the parents and volunteers as well as the staff at Hapgood for supporting such an awesome learning experience in how our food grows.”

“I chose this [garden leader project] because I loved the idea of being able to teach kids - because some kids are really funny - while also being able to teach them about delicious, healthy recipes” – Youth leader, Bailey, 7th grade

SNAP-Ed Custom Data

Related Framework Indicators

- Healthy Eating (ST1)
- Food Resource Management (ST2)
- Healthy Eating Behaviors (MT1)
- Food Resource Management Behaviors (MT2)
- Physical Activity & Reduced Sedentary Behavior (MT3)
- Nutrition Supports (MT5)

Program Recognition (LT7)
Media Coverage (LT8)
Planned Sustainability (LT10)
Multi-Sector Partnerships and Planning (ST8)
Fruits and Vegetables (R2)

Socio-Ecological Framework Individual/Family
Environmental Setting

Approaches Individual or group-based nutrition educators (e.g. direct education)
Comprehensive multi-level interventions (a combination of direct education, PSE's, and social marketing)
