



Throughout this school year Lanai's Garden has provided so much to our community. Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade Garden Club started the year by learning about and prepping the soil for the first set of crops which included broccoli, beets, spinach and carrots in our garden beds. Simultaneously, they cared for and planted our 2 hydroponic stands with a variety of herbs and lettuces. After the plants firmly took root, the team planted two additional beds with native pollinator plants with the goal of attracting beneficial pollinators to our previously barren space in Encino.

As the plants matured, we experienced a few setbacks as we dealt with the many critters who wanted to share in our bountiful garden. But these challenges offered an opportunity to problem solve and further the discussion of what it takes to grow food, as well as understanding the larger food chain around us. In the spring we shifted our focus to growing just one crop – potatoes. We just completed our potato harvest and are happy to report that 150 potatoes were successfully grown in our beds. The children were so eager to partake in the harvest and will be reporting back the meals they created with them.

Spring time also started our garden rotation with our kindergarten classes, as well as our Transitional Kinder (TK) class. The kindergartners are spending time in the garden tending to their "pizza garden" where they are growing basil, oregano, tomatoes, bell peppers and garlic. They are learning to read the plants to see if they need more water, or are exhibiting any stress from bugs or lack of sun. Our TK class currently has 8 enormous corn stalks (all taller than them) squash and bean plants growing in our smaller beds. They are learning the basics of gardening and soil composition, understanding the relationships between beneficial plantings.

There are many goals we hope to accomplish during our time in the garden. While the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and kindergartners have spent the most hands on time their, we have used it for many other grades throughout the year. Whether we just needed a special place to catch our breaths, or to further a specific grades understanding of geology, the garden is becoming an outdoor classroom available to all. Our hope is to further the connection of responsibility to the land, to our food and to our community on campus and off through harvesting our own food, and creating spaces to encourage the restoration to our native plants and animals. We have learned so much in a short period of time, and can't wait to continue our ever evolving gardening education.





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