

The HEAL Project History and Highlights



VALUES: We believe that everyone should have access to quality food systems education. We see food and how it's grown as central to the health of the individual and the planet.



VISION: A world where everyone understands the connection between our food, our health and our environment.

MISSION: The HEAL Project teaches kids where their food comes from and why it matters.

2001-2005

Original
Hatch School
Garden
developed
(before and
after),
precursor to
The HEAL
Project



First Year Highlights

2005-2006

- Kaiser Permanente grants initial funding for \$45,000.
- The HEAL Project is piloted in six Hatch School 2nd and 3rd grade classes.



HEALTH

Students hatch a new wellness program

Local elementary students participate in a pilot garden and physical fitness program provided by a \$45,000 grant to school

By STEFANIE HOFFMAN
Half Moon Bay Review

Sunlight had finally torn through the curtain of morning mist when about 10 Hatch Elementary School second-graders marched in a line to the garden.

Sloshing through puddles amidst the raised vegetable beds, the students broke into groups to examine their own designated section of the garden. Led by two instructors and a parent volunteer, the students peered curiously at the plants in their own vegetable beds in the new garden outside the school.

Though it had only been a week since they were here last, the garden had changed already. Plants had grown. Leaves changed color. The wind had changed direction.

The students shuffled through the soil with their fingers, closely examining the leaves and stems while trying to capture minute difference.

"I'm learning a lot of plants need soil and a lot of plants need air and a lot of plants need space," said Maya King, 7, adding that the lettuce was her favorite.

"It has a lot of colors and it tastes good," she said.

For King and about 120 other students, experiences like these are new, and exceedingly pre-

The program's overarching goal is to improve health and physical fitness of students through good nutrition and physical activity.

The bulk of the grant funds three positions that include a program coordinator, a garden coordinator and an outreach worker that work with three second- and three third-grade classes that were selected for the program.

"We wanted to pick second- and third-graders," said Maureen Perron, program manager for Coastside Health Committee, a non-profit that serves and provides community health needs. "We're hoping the earlier we start, the more likely they are to continue."

So far, coordinators say, they have a good start.

The health and fitness program focuses on garden education for one hour a week and organized playground games and activities twice a week for a total of 40 minutes.

For the garden component learning groups are kept intentionally small — classes are divided in half so that only about 10 students are given instruction at a time.

Amid the vegetable beds, students are exposed to a variety of subjects ranging from parts of a plant, to photosynthesis, to nutrition, to the importance of organic



Leigh Ann Maze / Review

Hatch Elementary third-graders learn about life through a new gardening and healthy living program at the school.

"It brings together the idea that health is inclusive and also you can learn about health from something as simple as growing things."

— Julie Hosfeldt, parent volunteer

about soil composition. Another Permanent School Project pro-

aged to participate in organized activities that include kickball, relays and soccer as well as jump rope and group activities with the parachute.

Although some sports are more competitive than others, program coordinators said that they tried to incorporate numerous activities that would cater to a wide range of abilities.

"You don't have to be on a sports team to be fit and you don't have to look a certain way to be fit," said Perron.

The program also promotes a connection between local farming community and the students, by hosting guest speakers from local farms about organic farming and buying local produce.

"I think the best part about it is the enthusiasm of the children," said Perron. "That's been very rewarding."

Now, it's a matter of keeping the program alive as grant funds are set to expire at the end of the school year.

But coordinators say they are working on finding ways to make it sustainable.

This will mean heavy recruitment of parents and other members of the community to volunteer to be garden and classroom instructors.

Coordinators will also need to create workbooks and elaborate on the already existing curriculum.

"The goal is to build a sustainable program through parent and community involvement that can run after this without Kaiser Foundation," said Danova.

before returning to class.

"The goal overall is better health habits," said Hellerich. "I think gardening is one of the most effective ways of eating and tasting new fruits and vegetables."

Back in the special HEAL classroom, students check on their growing pea plants lined in neat green rows in small plastic

Second Year Highlights

2006-2007

- First logo!
- Expansion to all Hatch 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms
- Garden Club extends programming to interested 4th and 5th graders.



Third Year Highlights

2007-2008

- Expansion to Farallone View and El Granada Schools.
- The HEAL Project partners with Pilarcitos Alternative High School.
- Russel J Kent Award



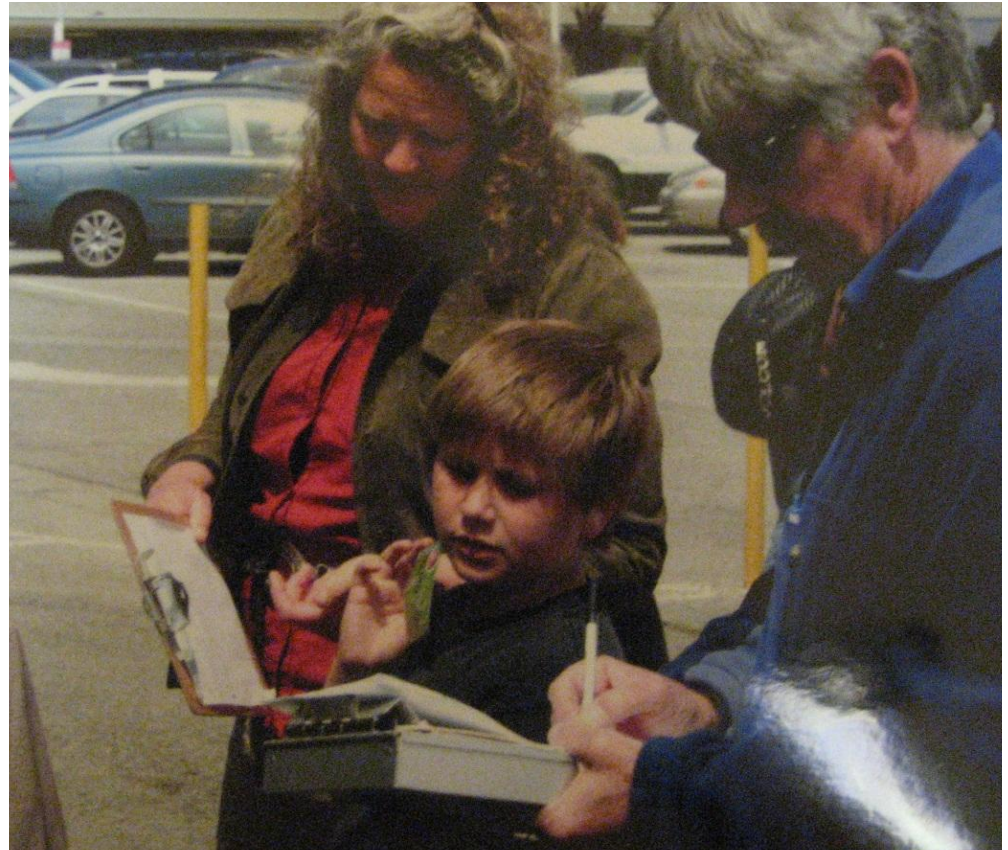
Fourth Year Highlights

2008-2009

- The HEAL Project partners with the Coastside Farmers' Market owner and manager Erin Tormey.
- Introduction of signature Farmers' Marketeer Program.



Hatch School
students become
California
certified growers,
with assistance
from
Erin Tormey, and
William Shek,
Agriculture
Inspector.



First Certified Student Growers in California!



LEIGH ANN MAZE / REV

CERTIFIED FARMERS

William Shek, a biologist and standards specialist for San Mateo county, listens as Hatch Elementary School students Marlene Virgen-Vega, left, and Cali Jimenez, right, tell him what is growing in their HEAL garden at the school. With Shek's approval, the young gardeners earned certification to begin selling produce at the Coastside Certified Farmers' Market.



It's not every day that 10 year olds have their school garden visited by a San Mateo County Agriculture Inspector. In fact, it's so rare that Hatch Elementary School is now the first public school in California to have a Certified Producers Certificate with the ability to sell produce at any Certified Farmers Market.

The HEAL Garden Club at Hatch Elementary School came together for the first time in September of 2007 with a mini grant from the Half Moon Bay Beautification Committee. For thirty lucky fourth graders, Garden Club is an extension of the HEAL Project - a comprehensive health education program for 2nd and 3rd graders that connects them with their food, the environment and their community. Garden Club members are HEAL graduates and already have two years of experience in the garden. Since the start of the school year the Garden Club has tended parts of the school garden primarily for after school sales to parents and teachers. Garden Club students have even prepared and delivered salads for Coastside Senior Center luncheons.

Recently, HEAL community partners and

With Erin's help, HEAL Instructor and Garden Club leader Kim Borick were able to prepare both the garden and the students for an inspection by Bill Shek, a Biologist and Standards Specialist with San Mateo County.

Certification is no small feat. Students had to learn the names of all the plants they intended to sell and they had to be specific: red oak leaf lettuce is not the same as flashy trout back lettuce! To manage these tasks, Miss Kim selected eleven students as team leaders to be responsible for a particular part of the garden and to talk to the Ag Inspector about that area. Students studied plant names and predicted the yield for each crop in their garden.

For the Garden Club students, this experience has been far more than planting a seed and watching it grow. It has been a tangible process - a real life lesson in agriculture, marketing and in responsibility. The students have blossomed with the many chores and requirements of the certification process and are both proud and knowledgeable as a result.

To sample some of their diverse

Fifth Year Highlights

2009-2010

- Incorporation as non-profit organization.
- Collaboration with San Mateo County Health System to begin Student Farm development.



San Mateo County School Farm

With funding from
Dr. Scott Morrow,
San Mateo County
Health Officer, and a
loan of 2 acres of
farmland from David
Lea,
The HEAL Project
launches the School
Farm in El Granada.



Sixth Year Highlights

2010-2011

- Community outreach
- Collaboration with agriculture students at HMBHS
- Expansion of School Farm visits



We've been busy lately...

2011-present

- Expanded student involvement from San Mateo County Schools
- Enhancing volunteer opportunities
- Introduction of seasonal camps on the School Farm
- School garden rebuilding and renovation



Seasonal Camps

6 weeks of summer
camps for ages 6-11
at The San Mateo
County School Farm

Themes range from
artists in nature to
Farm to Fork!

Harvest Camp
during Thanksgiving
Week



Field Trips at The San Mateo County School Farm

Grades K-12th

NGSS Curriculum

Over 3,000 student
visitors annually

Field Trips focus on
Eco-Literacy, Health
and seasonal
learning



Volunteering

Community Farm Days! Every Second Saturday of the Month 9am-12pm. RSVP online

Internships: High School Interns for camps, Dietetic Interns from SFSU

Group Volunteering- Boy Scout troops, corporations, nutrition department, etc.

School Garden rebuilding and renovation



Farallone View and Hatch School students enjoy their new and improved school gardens.

Graduates help at Farmers Market

“I have observed healthy snack choices becoming popular. One student said to me, ‘*Vegetables are my thing now.*’ I’ve heard many kids talk about how they need to exercise or eat healthy to have energy. They have all grown in the right direction!”

- 3rd grade Hatch teacher commenting on The HEAL Project



How to support The HEAL Project



Volunteer! Join our
Community Farm Days

Come to Spring Ahead!
Our annual strolling
supper and fundraiser

Shop at our Farmers
Market Booth

Organize field trips for
students

Join our newsletter

Donate

Additional Resources for environmental education in Half Moon Bay

Pie Ranch

Elkus Ranch

4H

Sweet Farm

Pacifica Community Gardens

..and much more!



We grow healthy kids
from the ground up.

Thank you!