



August 15, 2016

Academe of the Oaks Garden

2016/2017



Welcome Back!

We've had a busy and productive summer in the garden. Well over 200 hours of volunteer time went into maintaining the garden and caring for the animals. Thank you to all students and parents who worked so hard on Volunteer Thursdays. It has been such a pleasure to work with you all and we could not have maintained such a productive garden without you. I will continue to hold Volunteer Thursdays this fall from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. I hope to see you soon.

What's Growing!

This was the first year we planted corn. The gardening class planted the seeds this past spring and we harvested it over the summer. We also harvested figs, peaches, cucumbers, peppers, beans, basil, okra and plenty of tomatoes. One of the harvested tomatoes weighed in at just over two pounds! Next up should be the sweet potatoes. The vines are taking over. I hope that is an indication of a big harvest in the next month or so.



Gardening Elective

This semester I am teaching homesteading and traditional skills. Modern homesteading is about increased self-sufficiency and living sustainably whether you live in the country, suburbs or city. In this class we will plan and plant the autumn/winter garden, learn about animal husbandry; make herbal medicines and beeswax candles, learn how to preserve food from the garden and other skills and crafts. We'll package and market some of the products we make in order to help support the garden program. One thing we will definitely do is process the dent corn we harvested over the summer, make it into tortillas, cook them and eat them in class. Yum!



Wish List

Every year we try to improve the gardening program at Academe of the Oaks and we are

never short of ideas of things that will benefit outdoor learning at the school and move our environmental stewardship forward. Funds come from the school's budget, grants and individual donations. We can't do everything so we prioritize but there are a number of low budget projects that we can make happen if we work as a community. I have two projects in mind.

- **Project One**

It would be very helpful to have a washing station in the garden. Students could wash their hands; we can clean vegetables, eggs and equipment. Here is a picture of what I was thinking. Is there anyone out there who has replaced a sink lately or have other materials we could use? A person handy with power tools would be a big help. Please let me know if you would be interested in making this happen. Student volunteers are always welcome.



- **Project Two**

As part of our Green School initiative of becoming a zero waste school we would like to create a year-round, school-wide worm composting system for food waste. The system will have to be easy for the students to maintain and sized to handle our school population. I have drawn up some plans that can be modified to use salvaged materials. Please let me know if you would be interested in being part of this project.

Green Club

Last year Academe received The Green Flag, the highest award of the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA program. This was a massive achievement. Student-led teams conducted audits in our three chosen pathways, energy, consumption and waste and schoolyard habitats. This year the Green Club will have the responsibility of monitoring the program for compliance and conduct audits as necessary. Team members will continue to act as environmental leaders to keep green school initiatives top of mind. Look for updates on Green Club activities in coming updates.



Thank you for all your support.

Best,

Edna Lora