

2014 Best School Garden Award Winners

Best Sustained School Garden Category

Winner: School Within School

Written by: Tillie Freed

Our garden is the best sustainable garden in DC because our garden has been growing and moving with our school. Whenever we move to a new school building the 1st thing we think about is our school garden. We haven't only moved once, we have moved three times. At SWS we don't just grow a garden we harvest and cook the garden. One of my favorite recipes is Bruschetta. Our school doesn't use nasty pesticide against the cabbage worms because that would be cheating. The war has to be fair and square.



So instead we take the worms off and place them safely outside the school gates. There is something else we need to do to help the garden. We have a compost bin to make good soil but you have to go through a lot of stinky times. In the garden at the end of each year we have The Fairy Festival. All the kids in PK4 make fairy houses and hid them under plants like swiss chard. It looks

magical. Parents come to see them after school. The food was made by PK4. They made lemonade with mint. It tasted sweet and minty. They also made a salad with all sorts of greens. You can go through the front gate or the garden to get in and out of school. If you chose the garden you can see sprout to begin your day and full cucumbers to finish. That's why I always choose the garden path.



Winner: Barnard Elementary School

Written by: Mishca Walters

Our garden at Barnard is good for the environment, we plant fruit and vegetables, and people know you care about the world and you want more people to be healthy. We learn a lot about Vegetables and the Earth in Veggie Time with Kid Power. We learned that it is much better for the Earth to plant vegetables and fruits and they taste better too. My favorite was planting cherry tomatoes and cucumbers because we got to use them in our salads. Before, my salads were just lettuce and cheese and a sauce. And after Veggie Time we put a ton more vegetables in our salads like corn and cucumbers and plenty other things. In Veggie Time, we made our own salad, our own sandwich, we made our own pasta, and we made lots of different things.



In Veggie Time we have different jobs to take care of the garden. My favorite job is to pick fruits and vegetables from the garden. I even got to harvest cherries from our cherry tree we planted!. We washed them off and ate them – they were delicious! My favorite vegetable we've grown in the garden is tomatoes. I didn't like tomatoes at first, but then I tried them and they were pretty good. My dad came to family cooking night and told me tomatoes are good for my bones, so I tried them and they tasted a little sour but I liked them in the end. VeggieTime is fun for me. The coolest thing I learned with Kid Power: I did not know corn could grow in a garden, I thought you had to grow corn on a farm. I can say later on in life that I had a fun time in Kid Power and we did a lot of cool things in the garden. One day I will miss what we did and I will have parties and teach others about what we did when I was in Kid Power. When I am in middle school, I will do Kid Power then too.

Winner: Stoddert Elementary School

Written by: Daniel Sipes

Stoddert's school garden was opened in 2012, and since then has been something of a "Mecca" to school garden designers, who routinely visit our garden to gather inspiration. However, our school's true claim to fame is the degree in which students participate. For example, most, if not all, plants in our garden have been planted by students, by hand. We make our own compost bin, greenhouse, and bug garden. Our school garden would not get by without the help of Stoddert students.

Our school garden uses students to keep it sustainable. Every feature of the garden is sustainable. Our garden is a testimony to hard work, a monument to school gardens everywhere. For example, our school garden uses no chemicals, no electricity, and no tools except spades and shovels.

Students worked to make it almost like a garden 100 years ago, and 100 years later, it might still be run this way.



Our school garden is also educational, with hands-on learning being a big part of the process. Students are told what to do, and then are allowed to participate in the actual process. We are invited to help with difficult tasks such as building shelters and planting trees. Most students look forward to the interesting classes that they plan for us each day. That is why many Stoddert students believe our school garden to be the best school garden.



Best New School Garden Category

Winner: Sousa Middle School

Written by: Latrell Terrell and Maurice Williams

We, the students, are very involved our garden. We help to plant and we also keep the garden well maintained in appearance and health. We water every other time we visit the garden to make sure the plants get the nutrients they need. We pick unhealthy bugs off the plants, too. Last year, we doubled the size of our school garden during a garden-build.

In the coming years, the students at Sousa will continue to take care of the garden—even when I have graduated! The garden will maintain its ability to grow and produce food with help from students. When we plant, we keep in mind what plants grow well together and



which should be kept in separate areas. The beds are built so water can be in the soil and keep the plants healthy and happy. The produce we grow helps our community by providing healthy and organic eating choices at little-to-no-cost.

A garden in our urban community is especially important because our school is located in a food desert. That means there are not a lot of healthy choices available for purchase at the local stores. Even where there is a Safeway, healthy options are often too expensive for people to buy. We took the small area in front of our school—formerly just grass and dirt—and managed to use it as a place to build our garden.

The garden at Sousa will always be dear to our heart and healthy for our bodies.

