



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**Thurgood Marshall Academy**

**Written by: Briana Sturdivant and Gabrielle Sam Dab**

Our garden is the best school garden because we cherish and maintain and grow healthy herbs and foods. When we go to the garden we all work together and have fun. We can pick flowers, and we can harvest food to cook in our Green Club. We can also take some of the vegetables and flowers home.

As long as we have been at TMA Green Club and the garden have been safe places to get to know each other, get advice and learn more about plants and flowers. But most importantly it has united many student relationships by bringing people together."

## **Barnard Elementary School**

**Written by: Brittany Happy and her best friend Madelene Flores**

The Barnard garden is the best school garden in DC because we care for it. We care for it first by weeding. Weeding is important because weeds block the sunlight and don't give enough space for other plants to grow. Weeds also take the nutrients from the vegetables like sunlight, water, air, and soil. The garden is also great because we protect the pollinators. We never kill bees, and we don't destroy their homes. People think killing bees is good because they can sting you. But that's really bad because if we didn't have any bees, we wouldn't have food because they pollinate the plants. And they make honey! We also shouldn't kill earthworms because they help the earth too! Worms help keep the soil moist, clean, and nice and healthy.

The Barnard garden is also special because it is a place to come get food. Our market on Friday sells really nice yummy vegetables and fruits. My mom came and bought onions and I got a sticker! We would also come and take some food from the garden during recess. The strawberries look so juicy! We like to get the darkest red ones because they're sweet. The little ones are too sour. One time my mom came in and took some okra.

Barnard has peach, apple, plum, cherry, and persimmon trees. Trees are important because they give oxygen to us and plants. People are cutting trees down to make space, paper, and pencils. Trees are also getting destroyed in wildfires. We protect and care for our trees by watering them and giving them more soil when they need it.

We also cook really good food. In after school we cook delicious food to share with our school. Sometimes when we cook we use vegetables from the garden. We've made pizza, corn salsa, apple and pear sauce, and more.

When I cook I feel like a chef, like Gordon Ramsey. It makes me feel so happy. When we garden, we feel helpful, and when we finish in the garden, we feel proud of ourselves. Remember that the garden is what helps you get food and that you should always take care of it.

## **School Without Walls at Francis Stevens**

**Written by: The Tuesday and Thursday Student Sustainability Corps members**

At SWW@FS we continue to persevere towards an eco-friendly school garden. We have evidence. Cardboard is under mulch to weed-proof paths. Raised beds contain composted plant waste and vermicompost. We plant cover crops to build up the soil for spring planting. We reject the use of pesticides. This is a HEALTHY place for delicious plants, even weeds. Adi pulled one with roots taller than Masha. Breony'E pulled four volleyball-sized weeds. We pull up all roots so weeds can't grow back. We also have bugs. Our zinnias attract pollinators, bees and butterflies. Ladybugs demolish aphids that try to scarf vigorous food plants. Praying Mantises eat other bad bugs. Birds come to nest in our space.

We plant novel varieties of vegetables: red noodle beans, orange and purple tomatoes, tomatillos, ground cherries, ark of taste pumpkins. Food tastes better with new-to-our-garden herbs like rosemary, oregano, two kinds of parsley and sage, four kinds of basil. Also, black sesame seeds and hard-necked garlic.

We grow our garden for food. We cook in FoodPrints classes and compost leftovers. We ask to take vegetables home to cook with these recipes. Tuesdays we have FoodPrints lunches in our cafeteria for everyone to eat.

We have continued to expand with two new agricultural areas. Kids 3-14, families, teachers, college students and community volunteers do all the work. We built a shed and shelving.

Are we unique? With a DOT partnership we have log stools, tree trunk benches, and wood chip paths. Also, we testified at the DGS Oversight Committee Meeting, giving evidence on why composting trucks should start running again. We made a difference! The trucks are running again for 35 DCPS schools.

Why are we the best? We did not rest. We keep building beds, sheds, and shelves in the garden, understanding in our heads, and love in our hearts. Hard work feels like we have accomplished something big.

## **KIPP DC Webb Campus**

**Written by: Summer Williams and Samantha Simmons**

Our school garden is the best because it helps people stay healthy. We work hard to grow fruits and vegetables. We have a school garden market where we sell cheap fresh produce and encourage people to try samples of food that they might not have tried before. Our school garden club is full of nice students from different ages, grades and races. We work together to learn about planting, weeding and harvesting. We have tried new recipes using herbs from the garden. We eat Asian pears off of the tree. We eat tomatoes off of the plant. We have tried peppers, watermelon and sorrel, too. Being a part of the garden market has challenged us to work together and be more open to meeting new people and not being shy. We use our social skills to ask parents and students to try new things from the garden. We rate what they try and we take their orders when they buy produce. We ring up their orders, bag them and collect their money. Everyone has a job and we work together to make our school community know that our garden is there for them to eat from. We are committed to helping people who can't afford expensive produce by telling them about our garden. We want to learn how to grow our own food at home. We want even more fruits and vegetables available in our garden. We would recommend that every school have a garden to feed their community, but our school garden is the best