

**TROY KIDS' GARDEN AT COMMUNITY GROUNDWORKS**  
**KIWANIS CLUB OF DOWNTOWN MADISON**  
**2018 GRANT REPORT**

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At the Troy Kids' Garden, the spring 2018 season was filled with fresh food and fun. From April through June, students from kindergarten through fifth grade worked together to cultivate, plant, and harvest a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in the garden. They also cared for our resident chickens, hiked through the tall-grass prairie, built forts in the woods, and prepared delicious garden-fresh snacks.

We were able to offer gardening education for 312 student visits during the 2018 spring season. Thanks to support from the Kiwanis Club of Downtown Madison, we provided 134 Mendota Elementary student visits, 51 East Madison Community Center student visits, 72 Vera Court Neighborhood Center student visits, 26 Lindbergh Elementary student visits, and 29 student visits through one-time field trip experiences.

Our spring data set revealed that we made some important steps toward increasing the health and wellbeing of Madison area youth. Our data collection methods included daily written observations, video and photo documentation, journaling, and informal interviews with program interns and participants. We were pleased to meet all of our project outcomes! The children who visited the Troy Kids' Garden this spring learned new techniques for growing and preparing garden-fresh fruits and vegetables and continued to deepen their relationship with the environment.

Through hands-on sensory, art and cooking activities, children gained confidence growing and preparing fresh food. They learned important foundational culinary techniques such as chopping, stirring, braising, and blending. After preparing garlic mustard pesto on our bike blender, a program participant remarked to a friend, "***this smells like I should eat it!***" New recipes of 2018 included Rhubarb Poptarts, Broccoli/Kale Slaw, Veggie Spring Rolls, and Salad with Rhubarb Vinaigrette.

We found that children were more willing to try a wide variety of new fruits and vegetables while spending time in the garden. When provided an opportunity to nurture a plant from seed to harvest they were enthusiastic about tasting the fruits of their labor. We observed children eagerly snacking on fruits and vegetables that they were not familiar with such as kohlrabi, garlic scapes and chives. With dressing dripping off his chin, one young boy excitedly explained, "***this is my fourth one!***"

We were impressed by how many children increased likability of fruits in vegetables in the garden. Not only did kids develop an appreciation for new foods, but they developed a fondness for fruits and vegetables they had previously disliked.

Program participants made strong connections with the natural areas at Troy Gardens this spring. For example, upon returning to the garden from hike to the prairie, one young boy remarked, "***Being out there just gives you a sense of adventure.***" A young girl observed, "***Shhh—listen! If we are quiet, we can hear the crickets!***" Sensory explorations of the plants and wildlife of the Troy Kids' Garden, tallgrass prairie, maple woodland and edible landscape offered participants opportunities to engage their senses to feel the ground beneath them, to smell the fragrance of the outdoors, and to taste the subtle flavors of the garden.

During a tour of the garden this spring, Kiwanis Club members may have observed the community involvement and enthusiasm surrounding Troy Gardens. The garden is a place where food and fitness are celebrated. We continue to grow as a learning community comprised of enthusiastic children, interns, program staff, volunteers, after-school program supervisors, school teachers, community gardeners, parents, and community center staff - all focused on health and nutrition in the garden.

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the Kiwanis Club of Downtown Madison for the opportunity to develop and implement this important program. Your generous donation enabled us to offer Madison area youth opportunities improve their health and wellbeing by learning to grow and prepare garden-fresh fruits and vegetables, and developing a deeper connection with the natural environment.

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*Cooking lessons in the Culinary Arts Outdoor Classroom*



*Building forts!*



*Harvesting greens*



*Mulberry paradise!*

