

Kids eat veggies they raise themselves

BY MARK TOWER • Staff writer • July 27, 2010

FREMONT -- Getting children to eat their vegetables is a notoriously difficult task.

Not when they grow it themselves, said Mae Leake, the afterschool and summer program coordinator for WSOS Community Action.

Family and friends flooded to Croghan Elementary School in Fremont on Monday for an open house followed by a lunch, complete with a vegetable soup and fresh vegetables that the students have been tending all summer.

"They received it well, and I think they ate more of the vegetables because they are part of the process," Leake said. "They've been watching them grow and learning about them."

The program, a collaborative effort between Fremont City Schools and WSOS, has a compact, hydroponics garden at Croghan Elementary and a larger, raised-plot garden behind Fremont Ross High School.

Inside a cube of fencing designed to protect the garden from tampering, plants are stacked on top of each other on PVC poles, with hoses feeding each plant water and nutrients, all controlled by an automatic timer.

Cascading out of the pots were crops ranging from kale to watermelon. When there was a large enough harvest to offer the students a taste-testing, Leake said, they gobbled up two large trays of the fresh vegetables.

Many also said they enjoyed the vegetable soup during Monday's lunch, and Leake said she attributes it all to the fact that the youth were so involved in the process of growing the food.

"There was stuff in that soup that some of them have never tried before," said Michaeleen Rogers, Fremont Schools' Child Nutrition Department supervisor.

During Monday's lunch, Sara Weiker, 6, said she helped plant the seeds in the garden and worked on

the soup everyone was enjoying, though she did not like the onions.

Joshua Johnson Jr., 6, also helped grow the vegetables and said he loved the soup.

"My favorite part was growing the plants," Joshua said. He shared the lunch with his sister, Jenna, and mother, Karrie.

Logan Knight, 9, said he already liked vegetables, especially the tomatoes his mother, Billie Knight, grows at home.

"My favorite part was playing with the plants," Logan said.

The hydroponics garden system is slated to move to Ross High School's courtyard when the program ends and will be housed in a local farmer's greenhouse over the winter.

High school staff can care for the garden until the end of the summer, Rogers said, and the Consumer Science class will look after the plants as part of their curriculum once school starts.

WSOS is continually writing grants for programs like this one, Leake said, and they are seeking funds now to start a solid waste management program to teach composting and create benches out of recycled material. Rogers said they plan to increase community awareness of the program by putting the bench and a sign along U.S. 6, at the site of the Ross High School garden.

Advertisement



Mom Dilemma #36:
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

momslike me .com
where Local moms meet

Print Powered By 

Although it seemed obvious that all the students enjoyed their time gardening, some students, like William Bailey, 7, said that no matter what, they still weren't interested in eating any vegetables.



Purchase this Photo

Bruce Knight and his son, Logan, 9, eat lunch at Croghan Elementary School during the summer school program put on WSOS Community Action and Fremont City Schools. The lunch featured a soup made with vegetables grown by the summer school students. (Mark Tower | News-Messenger)



Purchase this Photo

The hydroponic garden at Croghan Elementary School in Fremont was created and tended by students in a summer school gardening class run by a collaboration between Fremont City Schools and WSOS Community Action. (Mark Tower | News-Messenger)

Related Articles

- Students spend summer in the garden
- 63 learn to garden in summer school
- WSOS centers receive ratings from the state



Advertisement

Mom Dilemma #36:
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

momslike.me.com
where Local moms meet

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™