

fresh from the farm

A school-based healthy eating program of seven generations ahead



Longfellow students from Ms. Lamshead's and Ms. Martin's 2nd and 3rd grade classes along with Principal Angela Dolezal and PTO parents show their excitement after the recent harvesting at Longfellow's school garden, which yielded organic peppers, purple carrots, and huge white radishes.

Longfellow Elementary School Students Become Seasoned Organic Gardeners



On a journey to Egypt, a Longfellow 2nd grader enjoys a fiber and vitamin-packed couscous stew from North Africa.

This fall Seven Generations Ahead's (SGA) gardening partnership with the Longfellow PTO Greening Committee and Growing Power

showed bountiful results as 2nd and 3rd grade students worked in amazement to pull purple carrots and giant heirloom radishes out of their vibrant school garden. One radish measured 15½ inches long and four inches wide, opening students' eyes to a whole new world of enormous vegetables.

After digging outdoors in the sun and wind, students learned about the origins of purple carrots and daikon radishes, the nutritional benefits they offer our bodies, and different ways these vegetables are utilized around the world. Of

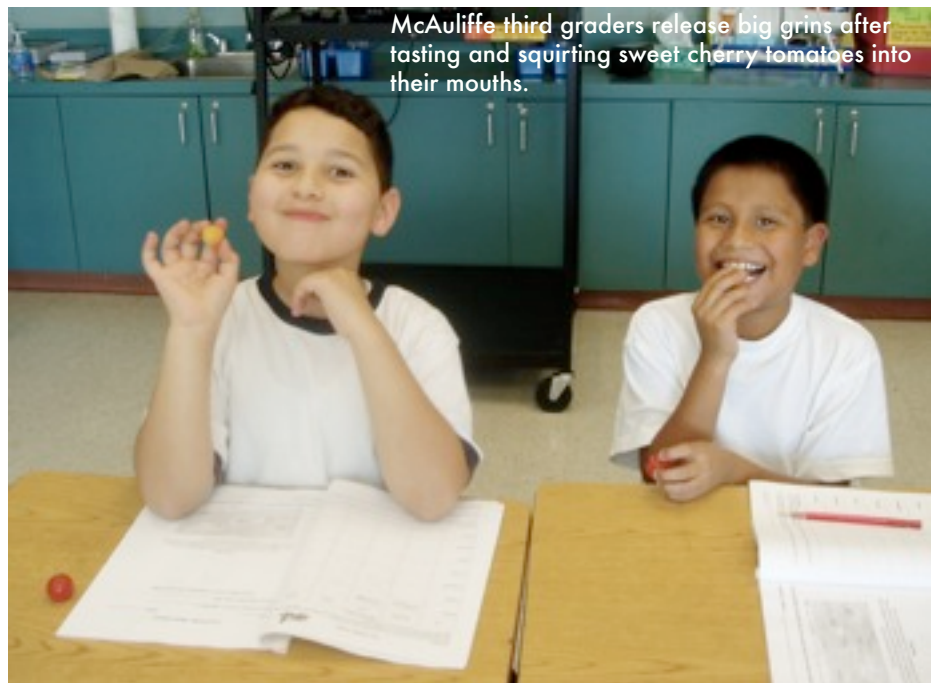
course, students were thrilled to finally taste the vegetables they had tended during the previous summer months.

The school garden is part of SGA's 8-week Fresh from the Farm program in Oak Park D97 schools. Each week, 2nd grade students travel on an imaginary journey across the globe, learning about culture and healthy cuisine on every continent. The program provides the opportunity for students to taste unique foods, all while expanding their knowledge of nutrition and earth-friendly-farming.

Farmer Feature: Vicki Westerhoff, Genesis Growers, St. Anne, IL

Vicki Westerhoff considers her farm a physical and spiritual haven. At Genesis Growers, her small but dedicated team grows more than 60 varieties of vegetables, not to mention an array of herbs including basil, cilantro, horseradish, parsley, and rosemary. When possible, Vicki plants heirloom varieties of tomatoes, peppers, and lettuces. On their land, the Westerhoffs also raise over 200 chickens for meat and eggs. Vicki is a great partner for SGA because she loves hosting students at her farm. Over the past few years, she has made numerous visits to classrooms in Oak Park and Chicago to share her enthusiasm about seed starting and organic farming.





McAuliffe third graders release big grins after tasting and squirting sweet cherry tomatoes into their mouths.

Savoring New Foods in Chicago Elementary Schools

Third and fourth graders at Lozano and McAuliffe are covering new territory this fall as they focus on specific fruits and vegetables. For eight lessons, students are delving into the origins of tomatoes, spinach, carrots, squash, eggplant, pears, apples and blueberries, their growing process, cultural uses and nutritional content. At the end of each lesson, students taste the food and describe its flavor and texture.

SGA's *Local Foods, Global Stories* program allows students to gain an appreciation of produce by understanding how it is grown and utilized worldwide. "My son came home and said that he loves blueberries. I am thrilled that he is learning to enjoy healthy food in school," a McAuliffe mother exclaimed.

Each week, students and parents work together on family homework addressing different aspects of health such as recording exercise habits and creating nutritious recipes. And students are making big strides towards their health. Fourth-grade McAuliffe teacher Mrs. Taylor noted, "many students are now choosing cherry tomatoes from the salad bar!"

Teachers Gain Knowledge of Childhood Obesity and Embrace Fun Nutrition Lessons

This fall, SGA is motivating teachers across Chicago to think seriously about nutrition education. Workshops integrated with existing professional development trainings were held at McAuliffe, Whittier, and Lozano Elementary. In total, over 100 teachers participated in the trainings. Guest speakers Dr. Philippa Norman, a health and wellness pediatrician, and Sandy Noelle, a 2006 Golden Apple Teacher, spoke about the significant relationship between children's diet and classroom performance. During the workshops, teachers gained new ideas and resources for fundraisers and classroom lessons involving healthy food tasting.



Growing Young Farmers

Sixty students from McAuliffe got their hands dirty at the Green Earth Institute in Naperville, IL. After digging up carrots and beets, students scrubbed them clean and delighted in their tastiness!



Family Harvest Festival

SGA Americorps volunteer, Christina Luongo, taught McAuliffe families about the importance of eating a variety of fresh foods while distributing organic apples donated from Seedling Fruit.



Healthy Halloween

During a teacher workshop at Lozano, teachers created a vegetable skeleton, a healthy alternative for Halloween.