

Local Farming and Gardening Benefits Great Valley School District's Children

Great Valley School District's Food Service Supervisor Barb Nissel reports that her school district's gardening efforts continue to thrive. There are a myriad of benefits to having a school garden. The most obvious benefit is an increase in the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables for the school meal program. Fruits and vegetables are being utilized not only in the school lunch program at Great Valley but also for breakfast. In addition, Great Valley makes their own soup, salsa, and spaghetti sauce, which allows them to control the sodium content of these items. Bumper crops of cucumbers are pickled. All this has led to a 34% increase in fruit and vegetable consumption!



About the photos:
Scenes from the Great Valley SD's garden and locally grown produce.

Barb is working with local farmers as well, procuring items such as corn and apples, which the school is unable to grow. Not all schools have the resources for such a garden, but a garden of any size, or a relationship with local farmers benefits students in other, less obvious ways. Students learn where and how their food is grown and begin to think about what they consume. Adults are featured as role models and mentors for students. Finally, by being a part of the process, students are more likely to try new foods with an open mind.