

# Year-End Report

The 2009 Subaru Adopt a School Garden Program recognized nine schools serving low- to middle-income students in southern New Jersey. Educators at winning schools use the garden to reinforce academics, develop environmental stewardship, teach life skills, and encourage students to make positive choices for themselves and the planet. Each winning school received \$1,000 in materials and funding.

Tom Doll, president of Subaru of America Foundation, Inc., says, “The Subaru Adopt a School Garden Program is a natural fit for Subaru, given its dedication and commitment to environmental initiatives. Providing our youth with opportunities to explore and learn about the importance of being environmental stewards is a key priority in our philanthropic activities.”

The 2009 winning schools are: Sarah Ward Nursery, Newark; Westfield Friends School, Cinnaminson; B. Bernice Young School,



Burlington; Ventnor Elementary School, Ventnor; Forest Hill Elementary School, Camden; Mt. Olivet Seventh Day Adventist School, Camden; Clyde S. Jennings School, Haddon Township; ECO Charter School, Camden;

and Logan Township Elementary School, Logan Township.

National Gardening Association requires recipient schools in the Adopt a School Garden® program to submit a formal evaluation to capture quantitative and qualitative data on the donation’s impact. The following is a summary of responses from the nine winning schools for the 2009 Subaru Adopt a School Garden Program.



*“Younger students learned about food and where it comes from, took ownership of the crops they planted, and enjoyed watching them grow. Older students developed a strong sense of responsibility for the garden. They weeded and watered it, demonstrated leadership skills, and willingly sampled fresh, raw vegetables. They also donated some of the harvest to a soup kitchen, extending our community service and volunteerism efforts.”*

— Jacquelyn Williams  
YMCA of Burlington and  
B. Bernice Young School

## Adopt a School Garden Program



Adopt a School Garden (ASG) is a program of the National Gardening Association, 1100 Dorset St., South Burlington, VT 05403, (800) 538-7476. To learn more about ASG and the nonprofit National Gardening Association, please visit:

[www.garden.org/asg](http://www.garden.org/asg)

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*The children created beautiful butterfly and rain gardens. They learned about plants, planning, cooperation, volunteerism, fundraising, grant writing, composting, mulching, and weeding. This was a community-wide effort and the impact on the students, parents, staff, and administration was entirely positive. Thank you for this opportunity!*

— Steven Evinski

Ventnor Educational Community Complex  
and Ventnor Elementary School

**Number and age/grade of participating children:**

Ages 2-5 (preK-K) .....	359
Ages 6-8 (gr. 1-3) .....	324
Ages 9-11 (gr. 4-6) .....	203
Ages 12-13 (gr. 7-8) .....	25
Ages 14-18 (gr. 9-12) .....	12
Adults (18 yrs+) .....	50
Total children involved .....	973

**Demographic information:**

African American .....	36%
Anglo American .....	29.5%
Latino .....	22.5%
Other .....	10%
Asian .....	2%
Female .....	54%
Male .....	46%
Eligible for free or reduced lunch program .....	47%

**Program continuation:**

Respondents plan to continue their program next year....	100%
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**Location of winners responding:**

Suburban .....	56%
Urban .....	44%

**Months of the year respondents conducted gardening programs:**

Average .....	5.5 months/year
Range .....	3 to 10 months/year

**Hours per week a child/youth was involved in gardening activities:**

Average .....	3 hours/week
Range .....	1 to 8 hours/week

**Type of audiences participating in these programs:**

In-school .....	67%
After-school .....	44%
Summer program/camp .....	33%
Special Needs .....	11%
Community gardeners .....	11%
Preschool/Head Start .....	11%
Church/Youth Group .....	11%

**Program leaders noted student improvements in these characteristics:**

Environmental attitude .....	100%
Social skills .....	100%
Self-confidence .....	100%
Attitude towards school .....	100%
Community spirit .....	89%

Volunteerism .....	89%
Leadership skills .....	78%
Nutritional attitude .....	78%
Motor skills .....	78%
Scholastic achievement .....	44%

**Reported evidence documenting the effectiveness of these programs:**

Positive feedback from participants .....	67%
Positive feedback from family members .....	67%
Positive community feedback .....	56%
Positive feedback from administrators .....	33%
Funding and donations .....	33%
Positive survey results .....	33%
Decreased disciplinary actions .....	11%
Improved test scores .....	11%

**Subjects taught through these programs:**

Science .....	89%
Community service .....	56%

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Math .....	56%
Health and nutrition .....	44%
Intra/interpersonal relationships .....	44%
English .....	44%
Cultural studies/issues .....	44%
Arts .....	33%
Social studies.....	33%
Physical education.....	33%
History.....	22%
Interdisciplinary .....	22%

**Compliance with State and National Education Standards:**

Programs connected to State and National Education Standards.....	67%
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**Importance of linking program to the standards:**

Mandatory .....	11.1%
Very important.....	33.3%
Important.....	22.2%
Somewhat important.....	0%
Not important.....	33.3%
N/A .....	0%

**Percentage of time spent on instructional techniques (note: this is the average of all the responses for each technique):**

Adult-led investigation/hands-on activities.....	36%
Student-led investigation/hands-on activities.....	24.5%
Collaborative project work .....	23%
Lecture .....	10.5%
Independent Learning.....	6%

**Source of curriculum used by gardening programs:**

Combined materials from numerous sources .....	56%
Created original curriculum .....	44%
Nonprofit organization (such as NGA or Life Lab) .....	22%
State education department.....	22%

**Approximate amount of money spent on these programs:**

\$500 to \$1,000 .....	22.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,500 .....	22.2%
\$1,500 to \$2,000 .....	33.3%
\$2,000 to \$2,500 .....	0%
More than \$2,500.....	22.2%

**Approximate value of in-kind donations to gardening programs:**

Less than \$250.....	11.1%
\$250 to \$500 .....	22.2%
\$500 to \$1,000 .....	22.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,500 .....	22.2%
\$1,500 to \$2,000 .....	0%
\$2,000 to \$2,500 .....	0%
More than \$2,500.....	22.2%

**Percentage of funding programs received from other sources (note: this is the average of all the responses for each source):**

Grants .....	50.5%
Fundraising .....	13%
Other .....	11%
Donations .....	10.5%
School or School District Funds .....	8%



Parent or Volunteer Organizations .....	4%
Instructor's pocket.....	3%

**Publicity received by programs:**

Newsletter articles .....	6
Newspaper articles .....	3
Web site features .....	2

**Type of organizations responding:**

Public school.....	44.4%
Nonprofit agency .....	22.2%
Private school.....	11.1%
Community garden .....	11.1%
Charter school .....	11.1%

**Community interaction and additional impacts noted by respondents:**

“This grant allowed our school to establish vegetable and butterfly gardens. Five grades participated in the planning, building, planting, tending, and harvesting. Some children listed ‘building the garden’ as their favorite activity this year! One boy wrote, ‘I have a garden at home, but here I liked all of the responsibility I had. I was good at shoveling and I could help my classmates know

*“The children were surprised that a garden could be more than just flowers. They hadn’t realized you could plant seeds, grow vegetables, and eat the resulting produce. Initially they thought only farmers in the ‘country’ grew vegetables.”*

— Lynn Turt, Forest Hill Elementary

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which plants were weeds and which ones we needed to keep.’

The kids loved sowing seeds indoors and watching them grow, and seeing butterflies emerge and releasing them in our garden. Getting their hands dirty and pulling fresh vegetables from the soil made every student a gardener at heart. Many children asked their parents for a small plot at home. Children learned about the benefits of eating sunflower seeds over potato chips, and many became converts.

This program has been a success for participating children and adults in every way. The cafeteria staff’s support and encouragement was a bonus, elevating the project beyond its initial scope. The lunch program will use the fall harvest in soups, stews, sauces, and salads. One staff member said, ‘I have to smile when I see what the kids have done.’”

— Patricia Lyons, Westfield Friends School



“One student had behavioral issues and wasn’t doing well in school. But once his class started applying their classroom learning to the real-world garden situation, there was an

immediate change and he ended up passing all his subjects with flying colors. Now he’s become a leader, and is teaching other children how to use garden tools and perform various garden duties. The change in this child has been amazing to watch, and it’s thanks to our school garden.

We also have a budding relationship with a neighboring Quaker Friends Meeting House. For 4 years they watched us transform a weed-ridden plot into a thriving garden habitat. This year they offered us some of their land for a second children’s garden. It is great to witness cross-generational and cultural bonds forming between our school and the Quaker Meeting House. They want to host a celebratory harvest dinner at the end of summer for the students and their families. It is wonderful how a garden can bring a community together.”

— Jessica Subramanya, ECO Charter School



“Since starting our garden last fall, the community’s involvement and enthusiasm has continued to grow. A parent/teacher team developed initial ideas and plans and coordinated classroom efforts linked to each grade’s curriculum. Students and staff rallied to provide more ideas and manpower to implement them. Strong administrative support ensured a successful, long-term garden project.

We chose to create a freely accessible community garden and worked hard to instill a sense of garden ownership in our students and their families. We also involved school neighbors in planting days and harvest festivals to build community support. There’s been zero vandalism and neighbors even fix things on weekends when the garden is unintended. To manage summer care we held a ‘garden’ adoption party, and had tremendous response from families that haven’t traditionally volunteered for school functions.”

— Lisa Kasilowski, Clyde S. Jennings School

*“The children got so much out of this opportunity to create and care for their own garden. They got their hands dirty and learned about plant life cycles and the care involved in tending a garden. I heard discussion among children about what makes the earth ‘unhealthy.’ Although young, many of these children have gained an in-depth understanding of what it takes to sustain a garden, as well as the ways in which gardens sustain us.”*

— Theresa Collins, Sarah Ward Nursery