



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 12, 2017 CONTACT: William Diepenbrock PHONE: 909-206-5304

Baldwin Park Students Cultivate Vegetables and Nutritional Knowledge

BALDWIN PARK – Rows of manicured plots filled with sprouting greens, carrots and zucchini cover the quarter-acre land that makes up Baldwin Park’s Community Garden, where for the last eight months Baldwin Park Unified’s fourth-graders have carefully harvested crops through Kaiser Permanente’s Garden Gourmet program.

More than 130 students from Charles Bursch and De Anza elementary schools spent from 8:45 a.m. to noon one Friday a month tending to fruit and vegetables to learn about horticulture and the importance of healthy eating.

Garden Gourmet is a food preparation and nutrition education program that provides students the opportunity to plant seeds, harvest homegrown produce and then transform the ingredients in easy fruit- or vegetable-based recipes.

Students celebrated the end of the year-long program with a culminating event on May 5 at the community garden featuring a tour of the garden, samples of the summer melon cucumber salad recipe and a presentation recognizing program supporters.

“I’ve learned how everything works together – like how worms are important in different ways – and how we can use what we grow to make healthy snacks,” Bursch fourth-grader Anqi Guan said. “My favorite thing we’ve made so far is couscous with garden greens.”

Gardening instructor George Funk, who maintains the garden year-round, taught the students how to identify when crops are ready to be picked and the ideal growing conditions for different fruits and vegetables.

After students collected the fresh ingredients, food and nutrition instructor Phyllis Hamler provided cooking demonstrations to promote positive eating habits. Hamler taught students about healthy portion sizes, produce native to California and how to prepare nutritious snacks and meals.

The duo rotated the two groups of students, with half the students gardening and the other half cooking.

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At the culminating event, it was announced that Hamler would retire, after working four years with the program. Kristen Steele was introduced as the new nutrition educator.

“This program gives our students the opportunity to create something special,” Charles Bursch Principal Linda Heredia said. “They get to see a recipe made, and then they can share what they’ve learned at home with their families.”

Baldwin Park’s Community Garden is owned by Kaiser Permanente, which has facilitated the program for more than 14 years. The City of Baldwin Park also collaborates on the project.

“Garden Gourmet provides students the indispensable knowledge of nutritious eating and the importance of lifelong health and wellness,” Superintendent Froilan N. Mendoza said. “We are so thankful to Kaiser Permanente for allowing our students the chance to learn outside the classroom with lessons that they can use for the rest of their lives.”

PHOTOS

BPUSD_Garden_1: Fourth-graders from Charles Bursch and De Anza elementary schools sample the summer melon cucumber salad during the Garden Gourmet culminating event on May 5 at the Baldwin Park Community Garden. The year-long program teaches students about food preparation and healthy nutrition.

BPUSD_Garden_2 Baldwin Park Unified fourth-graders in the Garden Gourmet program display produce harvested at the Baldwin Park Community Garden on May 5. Gardening instructor George Funk teaches the students from De Anza and Charles Bursch elementary schools how to plant and care for fruits and vegetables, and how to properly pick the ripe crops.

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