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Co-op Seedling Grant 2023 Quarry Hill School Stone Soup Garden Final Report- December 2024

When we were awarded this grant we began planning our stone soup garden. Starting late last winter, we explored seeds with the preschoolers at Quarry Hill School in many ways- anticipating and thinking ahead! We planted them in small containers and tended and watched as they sprouted in the south facing windows of our classroom.



As mud season took hold and spring was around the corner, we poured over picture books and talked about gardens and growing vegetables. As the weather warmed, teachers and parents began gathering the supplies we needed to prepare our garden beds for planting. New tools, soil and compost all

supported the work outdoors as the season changed to spring. Birds and blossoms welcomed us outdoors as we dug and turned and played in the dirt!



Students drew pictures of plants and gardens, we planted early season plants, and later transplanted our seedlings from indoors and added many more. We made garden maps and row markers, adding literacy and math activities to the expanding stone soup curriculum.



We watered and mulched together, more new learning about the many things important in caring for the growing plants. Using new hoses and watering cans became sought after daily chores and we celebrated both sunshine and rain, as we had learned and now knew, they both are important to the success of our garden.



New songs and more stories were incorporated into our circle times and the learning and delight we shared were part of the wonderful welcoming of spring and early summer! We were thrilled to watch the tiny plants growing and new plants emerging from the soil as the seeds we planted sprouted and began to mature. Children pretended to grow roots down into the earth and stretched their arms and facing up to the sky.

Children and adults alike were excited to observe daily and weekly changes to the growing plants. The onions, potatoes, garlic, squash, carrots, tomatoes, kale and herbs each so unique as they began to take on personalities in their places in the garden. We added art materials and journals to document and express our observations through paintings, drawings and words.

During the summer we celebrated and ate our first cherry tomatoes and kale leaves. By the time school started again in September the promise of a bountiful harvest was real! Snacks of carrots, salsa, kale chips and sweet peppers were welcomed by our students. For many, new flavors were discovered through "taste tests" - fun activities that supported us expanding our normal food choices. We loved baking with garden produce as well. Muffins became a regular item on the snack menu!



As the season wound down and we harvested the last of the veggies, we made plans for a Stone Soup Feast that included our larger school community of families and friends.



We dug and washed the potatoes and carrots, we hopped the onions and squash. We used new tools like food mills and graters. And we read many versions of the Stone Soup folktale and each brought in one more ingredient to add to the pot. We drew and painted, we made decorations and invitations, as well as baked and stirred and cooked with the 2 most important ingredients in each recipe of sharing and love abundantly added.

The day of our feast arrived. We had prepared two big pots of soup- carrot/squash/ginger and savory mixed veggie. We had also served roasted root vegetables, along with homemade bread, butter, applesauce, and pumpkin tarts to round out the meal. The menu was extensive and so was our sense of accomplishment and pride.



Over 65 people joined us for lunch after an outdoor circle time of singing thematic songs of community and food. We were surprised and amazed by the appearance of a dramatic rainbow as the last notes rang out.



The Stone Soup Garden Project was a huge success over many months. Our community of learners and families grew as a community of caring and thoughtful gardeners, and providers of delicious food for our families and friends. The learning was meaningful and lifelong- caring for the earth, growing our own food, and sharing the bounty with others are just a few of the important lessons.

Thank you for the support of the Seedlings Grant funding of \$500 that helped make this happen. A yearly tradition is well established and one that will continue to provide learning and sustenance and a time to work and gather together for years to come.