

Making a difference

NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Jamestown Afterschool Gardening Program

The Situation

The 21st Century Community Learning Center MOST Summer Program at Washington School continues to be attended by area youth that meet the 50% free and reduced criteria. The coordinators of the afterschool program were looking for programming that would teach kids where their food comes from and also about nutritious eating.

Extension Response

NDSU Extension teamed up with the 21st Century MOST summer program to offer the third annual gardening program. A Jr. Master Gardener grant was used to fund supplies such as gardening tools, seeds, transplants and soil for this project.

This year's garden theme was a pizza garden. The garden consisted of the produce that is needed to make a pizza. We even planted wheat in the garden to show the kids what a common crop in North Dakota looks like. Through the summer we conducted weekly lessons for a total of nine sessions and reached 96 kids. Each session consisted of gardening and nutrition lessons. Some of the topics we covered throughout the summer included how to read seed packets, how to compost, what makes up soil, transplanting tomato plants to bring home, learning the difference between beneficial insects and harmful insects, parts of the plant and which ones we eat, and much more. At the end of the summer the kids made homemade pizzas from ingredients picked from the garden that they served to their parents during the family night event.

Impacts

The kids answered survey questions before and after the gardening program to capture knowledge gained and attitude changes from participating in the program. Here are the results from that survey:

- 12% more kids indicated they would be willing to try new fruits and vegetables they haven't tried before
- 52% of the kids increased their knowledge about composting
- The number of kids that could correctly indicate which vegetable is the first one to

be harvested from the garden increased by 55%

Parents were also asked survey questions at the program. Here are the results:

- Of parents that do not currently have a garden, 88% indicated they are now interested in gardening with their kids
- 83% of the parents observed their children eating more fruits and vegetables
- 77% indicated they have eaten or plan to eat the tomatoes produced from transplant project that was sent home

Feedback

Comments we received back from the kids:

- "That pizza and tacos don't grow on trees."
- "Carrots helps your eyesight because they contain vitamin A"
- "To try new foods."
- "How wheat grows. It looks like grass at first."
- "How composting works."

Comments we received back from the parents:

- "They became aware that not everything comes from a store. You can grow it!"
- She watched and watered her tomato plant. She is growing her own strawberries."
- "Tried new foods. Wanted to help in the garden."
- "They had a lot of questions where each food comes from."
- "Very interested in gardening now. Took very good care of her garden tomato."



Contact

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