

Final Report - Harlem Grown

Project: Maintenance / Enhancement of PS 318 school garden

Project Reporting Dates: September 2018-June 2019

Project Leader: Emma Egan, FoodCorps Fellow

Project Summary & Progress

With support from the Forix Foundation, Harlem Grown continued and expanded our nutrition-based education programming at PS 318, reaching K-3 classes at Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School during the 2018-2019 school year (from September 2018 to June 2019).

With supervision from Sage Aidekman, our Program Director, Harlem Grown placed FoodCorps Fellow Emma Egan and Harlem Grown Sustainability Mentor Chris Reynoso in TMA this past school year. Bridging hands-on urban agriculture and sustainability education in the garden with indoor nutrition and cooking lessons, Emma Egan taught STEM-focused lessons to grades K-3 throughout the year. Her farming lessons included topics like soil preservation, recycling/waste mitigation, and ecosystems while Food lessons focused on nutrition, cooking, culture and mathematics. Crops cultivated in the TMA garden lessons were also harvested and used for Food lessons. Sticking to Harlem Grown's approach, Emma intentionally connected the information gap between our student's food experience (fast foods and processed, packaged foods) to our existing food systems. Overall, she hoped to introduce fresh, healthy produce into students' diets while emphasizing the importance of healthy eating and encouraging long-term behavioral change.

Staffing: Emma Egan, FoodCorps Fellow // Chris Reynoso, Mentor

Original Budget: See [attached](#)

Note: We budgeted \$1,000 in the grant for cooking and farming materials, but have included more than three times this amount in the receipt breakdown because we order supplies for all of our schools and sites at the same time. Then, a calculated portion (based off numbers of weekly lessons) of those purchases go toward TMA. Similarly, we have two FoodCorps Fellows; however, only one leads programming at TMA.

In particular, we had to use more soil and purchase more lumber than anticipated to deal with the cat issues. For example, we had to rebuild beds and add coverings to the beds to reduce the cats.

Current Milestones:

Under Emma Egan's leadership, Harlem Grown achieved the following during the 2018-2019 academic year:

- Served 243 students through our Food & Farming curriculum
- Combated cats over-running the garden space by installing a mesh wire solution
- Delivered 26 garden lessons and 88 in-class lessons
- Grew and distributed 25lbs of food

We didn't grow what we had anticipated due to cats over-running the garden space. While our farm crew installed a mesh wire solution which resolved the cat issue, the situation gave us a slow start to our planting and delayed garden lessons since the cats were using the beds as litter.

Opinion:

When Harlem Grown launched the 2018-2019 academic year programming at TMA, teachers were thrilled to have Harlem Grown supporting the school's curriculum. The year started with the kids prepping the empty garden beds in the midst of applesauce lessons.

Students were especially excited about the fall corn-themed lesson and were in awe as they watched the corn "seeds," which they had just learned about when learning the parts of the corn plant, turn into a warm toasted popcorn treat.

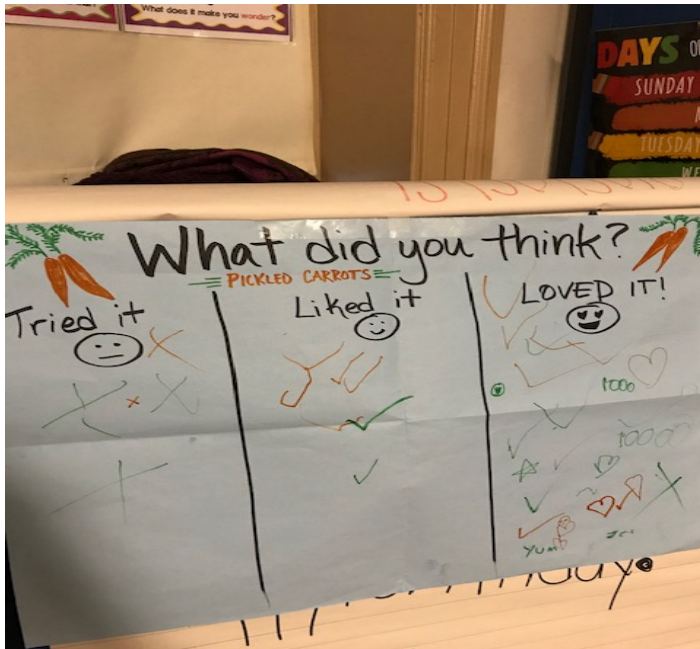
Striving to incorporate culturally relevant topics into our programming, we also developed and facilitated a lesson where students tasted Arroz con Grandules, a Puerto Rican dish with peas and rice. Students enjoyed making the connection that the peas we eat are, in fact, the seeds of the plant -- the same as the ones we plan to grow our pea shoots (which were in the window sills of the classrooms).

When we launched our first after-school lesson, we wove bindings for after-school journals and made strawberry smoothies. In the spring, the students really enjoyed when ICM Partners came to TMA and led a workshop about things they had learned in the Harlem Grown classroom. They also tasted pumpkin seeds, made minty beet salad, made herbal iced tea and lemonade, and planted kale, collards, herbs, tomatoes, eggplant, radishes, lettuce, cabbage, and flowers.

While we had a very successful and exciting year at TMA, we faced an issue with cats in the garden space. This problem hindered us from delivering garden lessons, but it provided a great opportunity for the Harlem Grown farming crew and education team to work together in solving the issue. We redesigned and re-enforced the garden beds using lumber, mesh wire and plastic siding to decrease the likelihood of cats in our beds.



Medicinal Herbs Lesson



Taste testing results



Classroom Lesson



In the Garden!

[Receipts](#)

Attachments:

[Completed Recipe Cookbook](#)