

HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWS

Steps toward a Healthier Future | One step at a time | by Melissa Jacobs & Gramma D

Kidston's 'Healthy School's Journey... the road so far

Compiled by Dawn Guenette (aka Gramma D)



The following is a timeline representing some noteworthy community efforts along Kidston's 'Healthy School' journey.

Kidston has been registered as a 'Healthy school' since 2010. See link for information regarding the supports and services offered to us through this agency. Noteworthy is the B.C. fruits and veg + milk program which we benefit from; receiving fresh fruits and vegetables and milk for students each week.

<https://m.healthyschoolsbc.ca/default.aspx>

Since my grandson's Kindergarten year (2012), Laura Kelder and I began sharing our thoughts about a need for a garden. Over the years there was correspondence involving garden committees, corporations- (grants), district management(s), principal(s), teachers, media, and the community at large.

The cumulative efforts came to life in **2016**, with the implementation of 10 raised garden beds. By **2017**, the request for more garden space had grown along with a vision to develop an area that would meet the combined wishes of Kidston students and teachers consisting of biodiverse and veggie gardens, an outdoor classroom and adventure forest...an outdoor learning legacy. Note: *The name was created by students*



We believe that children learn in a variety of ways and environments. By offering an outdoor space students can explore with their senses and cultivate confidence through growing and discovery; a longtime dream at Kidston.

Garden Club 2016- 2017

Weekly garden club meetings at noon.

Note this was highly popular where upwards of thirty students would show up. We did a range of activities including dehydrating apples, painting stepping stones for the front butterfly garden and seed starting. This program essentially outgrew the available adults to run it.

Watering 2016-2017

Summer watering schedule while the garden was in the original lower level location is noteworthy as several hoses were needed to reach the boxes. This was a big commitment on the part of families who coordinated with this all-important summer maintenance schedule.

Note: With the present garden set-up we now have drip lines in the garden boxes.

Landed Learning Program/ Garden Friends

Out of the very successful and engaging 'Landed Learning Program' run through the Okanagan Science Centre the first year, spurred a growing interest from students and teachers. 'Garden Friends' are integral to the success of the program; with a ratio of 1 adult/4 students to help facilitate the hands-on learning.

Note: *Garden Friends teamwork is needed year round.*

Garden Blitz April 28 2018

The planning and development of the (three phase) garden expansion with Jen Tumber and Rebekah Pedersen as the team leads was a significant undertaking as it involved coordination with a hired school garden planner, district grounds manager(s), all the while keeping a team effort with the Kidston Community.

The 'Garden 'Blitz' was an incredible day of collaborative teamwork, where the original garden beds were moved up the hill and six new beds were built- all in a day! Note: The three troughs located at the Kindergarten entrance were placed there due to a miscalculation of the space requirements at the prepared garden location.

Note: there is no irrigation in place for the troughs at the Kindergarten entrance. They are ideal for fast growing spring plants that can be grown by students and harvested by the end of June.

Class involvement

With garden champion, grade five teacher Charlene O'Brien's lead, teachers who choose, may sign up for a garden bed or two. Charlene and I have worked together to ensure teachers are supported with all they need for a successful gardening experience.

'Garden Friends'- (parents, grandparents and members of the community), are welcome to be a part of this valuable support to teachers and students.

Waste reduction/compost: established 2019

We can thank Charlene O'Brien and her students for leading the way in waste reduction at Kidston. We can be proud to say that our 'garbage' has been reduced to a fraction of what it used to be with the use of a compost service along with the commitment it takes to create a functioning system. We strive at Kidston to reduce our single use plastic waste, creating a healthier environment for all.

Summer gardening sessions: 2019

Gramma D initiated these weekly (at times biweekly) meetings at the garden. We would do a little maintenance, enjoy some fresh picked produce and picnic together. It was a very enjoyable time of networking as well. Besides the planned garden visits, families from the community would come through to enjoy our beautiful playground (and check on the garden development) and they too would enjoy the surplus from the garden.

Note: teamwork needed for future summer gardening session.

Butterfly Garden: 2015

This front garden was reclaimed while in the process of planning the vegetable garden. Students and Gramma D began the task of digging up this overgrown space. How engaged those grade 6/7 boys were... they actually showed up over spring break to help finish the project! While Gramma D maintains this space, students are involved in the tasks of weeding, watering and thinning out the volunteer sunflowers. The sunflowers have volunteered each year since being planted that first year and at times have almost reached the roof of the school. It is an inviting place at the entrance of our school and a major attraction for pollinators. It is a cool spot to be when the weather is hot. Try going into the middle and look up and observe the buzz of bees.

Note: This garden is open to teamwork. Who would like to take on this project?

Weekly smoothies started 2013

Local fruit is sourced as much as possible, at times, This year a couple families participated with Gramma D in this fruit picking process. A big effort is involved with gathering fruit for the season but oh so worth it.

Nicole Fitzpatrick is in charge of this popular smoothie service. Talk to her to see how you can be a part of this exciting team effort.

Contact Nicole at fitzpatrickny@gmail.com if you are available for helping on Tuesdays.

Note: This initiative raises funds for the PAC.

Filling the freezer

This is a team effort- any help with fruit gathering is appreciated. Note: cherries are in the freezer ready for Fun Day treats.



Fry Friday: began 2016 starting from the first fall harvest. Baked fries have made their way through the school each year since. This is an invaluable project as students wholeheartedly love the process of cooking and then proudly serving their classmates. Depending on the class dynamics I either set up in the class which allows each student to participate or I take three students into the PAC Kitchen where the potatoes are cut with a simple fry cutter. I take care of the baking and deliver to class where they are served at lunch. Connections to our food sources are made with this simple activity; there are many teachable moments and much sharing involved.

Note: This program could also be expanded and a committee formed.

Produce Fundraisers: 2016- present

Carrots, beets and potatoes and since last year also apples are sourced in bulk from local farmers. Students are involved with the process from weighing, bagging and delivery. This is a win win win project as the profit margins are 60% plus, the students are engaged and they are happily rewarded with a carrot.

Note: This initiative raises funds for the PAC

Note: Team members needed

PAC Hot lunch program

Changes to the PAC Hot Lunch menu began in **2014** with the addition of soup and salad bars. Now a variety of healthy fresh made lunches are served from the PAC kitchen each Wednesday. Besides a variety of wholesome soups and salads, choices include breakfast wraps, chili, rice bowls with sweet potato fries all made possible by a team of committed Kidston parents. Prior to this, PAC student lunches were sourced from food services in the community.

Note: Team members needed

This initiative raises funds for the PAC

For more information on the development of 'Kidston Discovery Gardens' and the plans for moving forward with the next phases of creating an outdoor classroom environment and adventure playground, go to:

www.Kidstongarden.com

To create an outdoor learning legacy, inspiring healthy gardeners, mindful explorers and environmental stewards..."

'Garden to Plate' or more aptly, 'Seed to Plate' is a title given to Gramma D and her role at Kidston as she supports all things... from seed to plate... and now compost; working together to be a 'Healthy School' role model.

