



News release
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Grant helps enhance outdoor learning space at Mill Creek Elementary

Students, staff and volunteers come together to triple footprint of Gratitude Garden



Everett, WA—Mill Creek Elementary was one of 24 schools in the nation to win a \$20k grant from Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation, the only one in the state, to refresh and build onto the school's Gratitude Garden. On Saturday, September 23, volunteers from the local Sprouts store, staff, parents and students participated in the 24 gardens in 24 cities in 24 hours initiative. Nearly 3,000 nominations were submitted.

In applying for the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation grant, the Mill Creek Elementary PTA partnered with all stakeholders at the school to include the established Garden Club co-chairs, the STEAM teachers, the cafeteria manager and the administration to create a robust proposal for a school garden to serve all the students and staff at the school while increasing sustainability efforts.

Thanks to the grant, the PTA was able to more than triple the garden space, install ADA -compliant raised beds and two greenhouses and provide gardening tools for an entire class to actively participate in the garden at one time. Along with refreshing the existing garden, the grant also supports nutrition education lessons in the garden and ongoing professional development and 1:1 support to sustain the learning garden program.

"Long-term we plan to grow food on campus that is then used by our own cafeteria for student lunches, and even provide opportunities for families to harvest and take home food directly from the school garden," said Elizabeth Pendzick, PTA president. "We are fortunate to have dedicated teachers and staff at Mill Creek who recognize the great benefit of outdoor learning and the opportunities available in using school gardens to help students learn and grow themselves."



The first Garden Club meeting was held just days after the installation and 20 students and 10 adults attended. The club meets twice a month.

"Many schools use the outdoors for learning and we are grateful for community partnerships for their contributions to enhance those spaces," said Dr. Ian Saltzman, superintendent.

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For more information:

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