

Growing program

Global Gardens expands to Rosa Parks Elementary

By BRIGID KIMERY VANCE
World Staff Writer

After more than a year at Eugene Field Elementary, the Global Gardens program is expanding to Rosa Parks Elementary in the Union district.

Global Gardens is a nonprofit organization that helps empower children by creating a school garden. Through the garden, students learn about science, nutrition and teamwork.

Even more, they learn how to create change.

"The big picture of what we do is showing these kids that they can make a difference, that they can dream, that they can make a difference in their school," director Heather Oakley said.

Both Eugene Field, 2249 S. Phoenix Ave., and Rosa Parks, 13702 S. 46th Place, are community schools and report high rates of poverty.

Oakley, teachers and students began to install Eugene Field's garden in spring 2007. Principal Cindi Hemm said. The program started two weeks ago at Rosa Parks.

Right now, third- and fourth-graders at Rosa Parks journal about different topics, create a list of things they want in the garden, decide on themes and come up with fundraising and implementation ideas.

"They're really a part of all the steps," Oakley said.

In April, students will begin to install their garden by preparing the plot and planting vegetables, fruit and flowers, Oakley said.

Students will learn how to care for their gardens once the planting is complete.

Eugene Field third-grader Julian Corrie explained that unwanted grass can harm



BRIGID KIMERY VANCE / Tulsa World

Global Gardens founder Heather Oakley (right) encourages Nena Compton, a fourth-grader at Rosa Parks Elementary, as she writes in her journal. Participants in Rosa Parks' garden project are still in the planning stages.

other flora.

"You can't just pull it," he said. "You have to pull it lightly so the roots will come out."

At both schools, Global Gardens is an after-school program.

"So many of our kids go home to empty houses," Molly Springer, community school coordinator for Union, said of the need for after-school activities.

Hemm agreed. "Our kids come from really high poverty, and this is something they've never had before," she said.

Oakley provides the schools with curriculum that integrates classroom work with the outdoors.

"The children have decided

that everything can be taught through the garden," Hemm said.

At Eugene Field, each classroom has its own plot, and individual students and their relatives also can sign up for planting space.

"Families can come in and be a part of it," Oakley said.

Hemm reported a positive response from students' families.

"And what we're finding is the grandparents know how to do all that," she said, noting that many have farming backgrounds.

"We've skipped a generation in knowledge."

Soon, Oakley hopes to pair up the new and experienced gardeners as garden buddies.

"We want the Eugene Field students to be the mentors to the Rosa Parks kids," she said.

Students enjoy spending time working in the garden.

"We love to actually help our community," third-grader Jordan Riney said.

Oakley said Global Gardens will expand slowly.

"What I'm really hoping to do is get international partners," she said, explaining that the students would write letters and e-mail about what school gardens look like around the world.

Eugene Field students are proud to be the pilot location for Global Gardens.

"It's kind of like a world record," Jordan said.

BRIEFS

Performing arts forum, showcase set for Friday

The Tulsa 66ers and the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa will host a Salute to the Performing Arts Forum and Showcase.

The forum, "Exploring and Embracing the Performing Arts in Tulsa," will take place from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Friday at the Expo Square Pavilion, west Yale Avenue between 15th and 21st streets.

A 66ers basketball game will follow the forum. Panelists and participants at the free, public forum will discuss what is being done to improve the creative assets of the greater Tulsa region, according to a media release.

Schools wishing to highlight their performing arts groups may sign up by contacting the Tulsa 66ers. People may sign up by calling 749-5701.

Arkansas choir to give performances in Tulsa

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Vesper Choir will present four performances in Tulsa during March, and organizers are collecting donations to help pay for the group's expenses.

Six graduates of Tulsa's Booker T. Washington High School sing in the choir, according to a media release.

The performances will be at the following times and places: 1:30 p.m. March 28 at Washington High School, 1514 E. Zion St.; 7 p.m. March 29 at Metropolitan Baptist Church, 4025 N. Hartford Ave.; 11 a.m. March 30 at St. Andrew Baptist Church, 3115 N. Garrison Ave.; and 5 p.m. March 30 at All Souls Unitarian Church, 2952 S. Peoria Ave.

People may obtain information and make donations by calling 425-5402 or by mail at Metropolitan Baptist Church, 4025 N. Hartford Ave., Tulsa OK 74106.

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Living Arts offers festival

Living Arts of Tulsa will present nontraditional art at its annual New Genre Festival.

The festival runs Thursday through Sunday, according to a media release.

New Genre XV Festival passes cost \$55 each for nonmembers, \$50 for members and \$40 for students. The pass allows entry to all events. Admission at each venue is also available without a festival pass.

People may obtain information and purchase passes by sending a check to Living Arts of Tulsa, 308 S. Kenosha Ave., Tulsa, OK 74120, or by going online at www.tulsaworld.com/livingarts.

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