

Blue Earth Farms Helps Students at CC Raise Food, Learn Nutrition

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By Robin Montgomery Centralia College | [0 comments](#)

The Centralia College TEEN (Teens Entering Education Now) program has paired up with a local farm to teach nutrition and build a sustainable meal program.

TEEN Program Manager Kristi Jewell collaborated with Kari Windsor, of Blue Earth Farms in Chehalis, to help students raise food to supplement the program's limited food budget. (The TEEN program provides one healthy meal a day for students who may otherwise have little to nothing to eat.)

Digging right in, Blue Earth Farms worked with teens to start a small garden plot on campus from which they could learn about sustainability, nutrition and economics. TransAlta Community Transformers has also supported the project, assisting with materials needed for the gardens and kitchen classroom. After five years, the fruit of this community partnership continues to flourish.

Today, in addition to tending on-campus plots, students also grow produce at Blue Earth Farms. Last year they raised 1,000 pounds of squash alone. A portion of the fresh food harvested goes directly to supplement their nutrition-based meal program. They also earn wages selling the excess produce.

Thanks to the Twin Cities Rotary and the Puget Sound Community Foundation, a farmers market booth was built on campus, where students can learn basic business skills as they sell the extra produce, plants and seeds grown in their garden plots both on and off-campus.

Since many of the teens receive assistance through TANF and WIC, these work opportunities not only teach responsibility, but they also help students learn the value of earning wages in the marketplace.

Integrated in these hands-on experiences are numerous opportunities for students to practice life skills in math, science, culture, English and teamwork.

Planting seeds of success, Blue Earth Farm's partnership enhances the potential for students to continue their education after they graduate from the TEEN program.

"I feel extremely privileged to be involved with the TEEN Program and look forward to our future adventures and growth," said Winsor.

The TEEN Facebook page is CC Grow.

For more information about the TEEN program, call (360) 736-9391, ext. 341.