January 7, 2016

Dear Friends of Burleigh VEG,

Last Spring, we began a project with the simple idea- let’s plant a school garden. The enthusiasm of the Burleigh community and the support of all of you has helped us to begin Burleigh VEG with big ideas! We had a wonderful Fall in the garden, and we want to update our supporters and donors who cannot often see it in person.

Todd Ruedt from GMS landscaping, along with his father, graciously installed two large raised garden beds so we could begin planting. Funding from families, our PTO and Education Foundation allowed us to purchase plants, rain barrel table supplies, and materials for our hoop house. A first and third grade group of buddies build our hoop house over the new garden beds. It stays surprisingly warm inside! All of these additions in combination with a very warm Fall have allowed us to keep kale, rainbow chard, spinach, onions and peas growing- even now! Classes from every grade level have visited VEG. Some have moved stone, some have drawn maps. Some classes do scavenger hunts, others measure trees and other structures. Many classrooms are composting their snack waste, which has also encouraged healthy snack choices. Each visit to VEG is a little project based learning with a healthy twist!

Throughout the beginning of the school year, Lisa Rouskey and Lynn Carlson, who were instrumental in helping to design VEG, worked each weekend to help more ideas become realities. Magically each Monday, our school classes would discover new developments that allowed us to extend learning opportunities. Musical pipes, additional material for our fairy garden, a structured pallet surround for our school compost, and even a raised pizza garden made from lannon stone- Lisa and Lynn have given so much to our outdoor learning space! Jim Borecki, the father of one of our Burleigh teachers, spent many hours hand crafting 2 beautiful wooden benches for our garden. It is the care and talent of these people and many others that make VEG so very special.

Getting our hands dirty with this kind of experiential learning means more mess all around. Our maintenance staff, led by Rick Domach, has taken on this mess. We are constantly amazed by the high standards they keep in helping our indoor and outdoor spaces look their best. We are so thankful for their kind support!

So many of you have donated time, plants and money as we begin this venture. The teachers have had the great fortune of seeing the impact this outdoor space can have on our children. Please use the link below to find a link to a short video of VEG in action. We are so thankful for all of your support and enthusiasm. Spring is just around the corner, and we anticipate many more new developments and learning adventures.

Thanks for helping us GROW!

Amy Ziegler and Lisa Gajafsky
(and 100s of Burleigh Gardeners) VEG Thanks Video