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## The Secret Garden



by Charissa Ling & Sonny Wong, Garden Coordinators

Tucked away behind bungalows A and B, Francis Scott Key has a small vegetable and herb garden that has been flourishing under the loving care of students, parents, and teachers. The garden was created three years ago by the F. S. Key community in a desire to develop a more comprehensive learning environment for students. In conjunction with our school's rigorous academics, nutrition, and physical education programs, the garden is helping the school move forward with our vision for Building Healthy Bodies and Healthy Minds.

In the course of gardening, we have been able to incorporate many of the different core curriculum subjects. The students have been given opportunities to see firsthand how plants develop from seeds and seedlings to mature plants and how environmental factors can affect the growth of plants. Students have also been able to apply mathematical concepts, develop their verbal and writing skills and expand their art experiences through hands-on work in the garden. Nutrition is also another curricular connection that students have been able to access through the garden. A few of the classrooms will soon be harvesting some of the vegetables and herbs from the garden to be used in nutrition lessons with our Nutrition Coordinator, Jessica Frazier.

Through the dedication, generosity, hard work, and expertise of the F. S. Key community, we have been

able to build a garden that we can all be proud of. It started with the building of two large planters and thoughtful placement of wine barrel planters and bench planters around the school. Last year, student designed signs were created to help beautify and draw attention to our garden area. Earlier this year, the two large planters were planted with an array of carrots, peas, lettuce, broccoli, chard, onions, strawberries, mint and kale. The planter benches near the play structure were planted with a hardy lemon tree and blue berry bush. The PTA also purchased a garden shed to protect and store tools needed to help upkeep our garden area.

The garden's future looks very promising. We currently have plans to build an arbor for the garden's entrance. It is being designed by our 5th grade teacher Ms. Bradley, and construction will be led by Ray Ng, a parent at our school. The garden committee is also in the process of planning murals to beautify and create a more welcoming garden for everyone in the F. S. Key community. There is also a good possibility that in a few years, we will be able to access funds to expand our current garden. Please keep your eyes and ears open for more garden information. You are always welcome to come join in the fun, by coming to our next meeting, just check in with our Google Group, [fsk-garden@google-groups.com](mailto:fsk-garden@google-groups.com).

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