

Seeds Of Leadership (SOL)

Youth Garden Program Newsletter

In the Terra Nova Garden @ Morse High School

Winter, 2008

It's Winter in Terra Nova Garden at Morse High School in Southeast San Diego, and all of our many winter greens are very happy! The tomatoes and basil of summer are now all but distant memories, and in their place grow a wide variety of cool-weather vegetables such as collard greens, lacianato (or dino) kale, red russian kale, mizuna greens, swiss chard, mustard greens and many kinds of lettuce.

The SOL Interns who worked in the fall session were 10th graders Kelly Hanesana, Jonathan Hernandez, and Aleesha Regino; 11th grader Sarita Tolbert; and Seniors Randall Magno, Jackie Cabrera, and Antonio Noza Jr. This group had the pleasure of enjoying the summer produce planted by the first group of SOL interns as well experience the change in seasonal crops that they planted themselves such as carrots, spinach, radishes, broccoli, beets, onions, and salad greens.

This group became experts at trapping gophers, too—a pest problem that became more severe in the fall—and as difficult as it was to trap this critters, it provided a good opportunity to teach about the cycles of life and death in the garden and in food chains in general.

Some of the highlights of this session were attending the Harvest Festival at La Milpa Organica Farm in Escondido, taking a tour of Jimbos Natural Foods Store and working one Sunday morning assisting Farmer Barry Logan at the Hillcrest Farmer's Market. We were also lucky to have Tia Anzellotti visit the garden again and talk about hunger issues in San Diego County, as well as involve the interns in writing letters to their representatives about the Farm Bill. We are also establishing a partnership with Fulton Elementary School as they are wanting to start a garden and composting system as well. They came down to visit the garden and heard what the SOL interns had to say about creating a more sustainable food system in Southeast San Diego.

Through a grant partnership with University of California Cooperative Extension and the Solana Recycling Center, compost youth training workshops will be taught to SOL interns and other Morse High School students so that they can in turn, teach the Fulton students how to compost their food scraps and make soil out of waste!

The Fall Session of SOL interns were a fantastic crew who put many days of hard work into making the Terra Nova Garden grow—thank you to all of them, and congratulations on your completion of the SOL Youth Garden Internship!

The Winter SOL session has begun and seven new interns have been learning how to care for the earth and grow healthy food locally. They are: 10th graders Amiin Dahir and Roy Quin, and 11th graders Reginald Paragas, Zaina Nunez, Tyree Roberts, Arsaejah Talon and Paul Achee.

The interns have been busy cultivating the soil and growing a beautiful winter garden. They have dug and laid out four new vegetable beds as we try to maximize space in our 4,000 square-foot garden. They have planted cabbages and broccoli, and planted an apple tree grafted with three varieties of apples that will be “espalliered,” or

trained onto a trellis so that the fruit will be easy to access. They have also been busy taking advantage of the Winter rains and planting some flowering perennials that will attract beneficial insects into the garden. A big welcome to the new SOL crew as they learn how to grow food locally and teach others how to as well!

We've had a couple of people come out to the garden to visit and/or to share some skills with the interns. One person was Matt Finkelstein from the Willow Glen Farm working group and UCSD ROOTS contingent. He wanted to see the work the SOL interns have been doing because he is helping students at UCSD start up a garden on their campus.

Another visitor we've had the pleasure of meeting is Jeff Zlotnik from the Matrix Mandala Garden in Downtown San Diego. He teaches people how to meditate to improve concentration and help relieve stress—all important skills for leaders to have! He led the SOL crew in a meditation and will come back every other week to share more of his knowledge about focusing on breath and being in the present moment. Thank you Jeff!

We've also had Chad Reese from the Willow Glen Farm Committee come out to visit the garden and lend his film-making skills as he helps us put together a short video about the program. He's guiding the students in writing, storyboarding, filming and editing a short video about the SOL program and its connection solving to larger issues.

Mel Lions, ROOTS co-founder and gardener extraordinaire has been out to the garden to help with irrigation and the underground plumbing that has to happen in order for the water to grace the garden with its necessary libations—thank you Mel for all of your help in making the Terra Nova Garden shine!

Another exciting first for the SOL program is that we have started selling the produce on campus from our “Food for the SOL” produce stand. We started Thursday, January 16th and will continue selling on campus every Thursday from 2:15 to 3:15. Our first week we sold mustard greens, mizuna greens, red russian kale, dino kale, rosemary, oregano, marjoram, mint, thyme, and lavender. We're selling everything at an affordable price so that the healthy, pesticide-free food is accessible to all.

I'd like to end this Winter Newsletter with prose by Sarita Tolbert, an intern from the Fall Session wrote and presented to the group before Winter vacation: “As we move along from our adventures, we become more wise and ready to explore the things that life has to bring. When we learn to grow a plant we learn to create better things through love and kindness for people. We can grow an apple for a hungry child or help build a home for a homeless family. Thank you Seeds of Leadership for all that you have taught me.”

May we all do our best to create beauty and strengthen communities where fresh, healthy food is grown everywhere,

All of us are the SOLution!

Warmly,

Julia Dashe

Garden Coordinator/Educator, SOL Program

**Inspiring
leadership
among teenagers
as they use their
hearts, minds,
and bodies to
cultivate healthy
food and a
hopeful future.**