

Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

GREENER PARTNERS AND ST. ROSE OF LIMA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Philadelphia County, PA



Greener Partners, a Philadelphia area non-profit addressing barriers to healthy eating in schools through gardening and cooking/nutrition education, has partnered with **St. Rose of Lima Catholic School** for several years, providing food and garden education indoors in the classroom and with their **Farm Explorer**—their signature mobile farm truck. In 2024, Greener Partners engaged with students and staff to build St. Rose of Lima's first school garden. In collaboration with teachers, staff and students, the team designed and installed a raised bed garden that realized St. Rose of Lima's vision of creating a productive and visually engaging space for education and food access.

The garden was created with the 1st and 6th grade classes. During the winter months of early 2024, Greener Partners led garden visioning, site walks and mapping activities with the students. On the garden build day, the 6th graders learned how to safely use drills, and under the guidance of Greener Partners staff, they put the raised wooden garden beds together. On a separate day, 1st and 6th graders shoveled soil and compost into the beds.

For many students, this experience was their first time using a power tool. For one student, they were struggling to get a handle with the drill and were getting frustrated, but then they said, "I'm not going to give up." They later got the hang of it and helped to drill garden beds together.





Following the garden build, Greener Partners had one lesson a month with the students in the gardens. Lesson topics included spring garden preparation, seeding, planting, harvesting and cooking with the harvested food.

Each 1st grade student was paired with a 6th grade student so that the younger students had a mentor and partner throughout the lessons and experience. The school garden is now an engaging garden project that involves students and staff in the cultivation of outdoor food-growing from seed, to soil, to plate. For the upcoming 2024-2025 school year, the same groups of students, now in 2nd grade and 7th grade, will continue to cultivate the garden. The garden will also be used for after school activities.



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