



MARK E. BROWNING '13

Going Green

A Sopris Elementary School student checks out the crop.

Students at a Colorado school grow their own vegetables.

Do you know where the food in your cafeteria comes from? The students at Sopris Elementary School, in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, do. They grow it themselves!

A story in TIME FOR KIDS two years ago about fresh food in schools planted the idea for the school garden. The article suggested that readers invite a local lawmaker to lunch. Fifth graders Niamone Myer and Meghan Cobb invited Bruce Christensen, who was the mayor. “We wanted to see if we could make school lunches a little healthier,” Niamone told TFK.

Power Words

compost *verb*: to use organic material to fertilize soil

greenhouse *noun*: a glass building where plants are grown

Christensen joined the kids in the cafeteria. “We talked about the importance of fresh food, and that’s how it all got started,” he says.

Christensen also happens to be the executive director of Mountain Valley Developmental Services



Soon, these greens will be ready to be harvested.

(MVDS). The organization supports people with developmental disabilities and is located next door to Sopris Elementary. After lunch, Christensen invited the students to use part of MVDS’s **greenhouse**.

Fifth-grade teacher Mark Browning helped students create a plan for the use of the greenhouse and for how to pay for the project. “I saw all the possibilities for teaching science and growing vegetables,” he says.

The program received grants from local banks and businesses. The Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development provided a loan and \$5,000 for the plan.

Digging In

Today, the project is blooming. The school added a solar-heating system to the greenhouse to keep plant beds warm in the winter. Every class in grades K through 5 works



All in a day's work: **Sierra McKinney** tends the school garden.

in the greenhouse two or three times a week. More than 400 students take care of the plants.

Students in a science class are using worms to **compost** the soil. First, vegetable scraps from the cafeteria are separated from other waste and taken to the greenhouse. Then the worms break down the food scraps to create fresh soil.

Last month, students began to harvest their first crop of vegetables, including carrots, radishes and spinach. Hannah Jull, 11, says the crops are doing well. "We have so much fun," she says. "Everyone is going to like the food we're growing."

Niamone believes the school garden has inspired kids to plant gardens at home. "The project taught us that with a little hard work, you can make a healthier choice," she says. "You just have to take that one first step."

—By Stephanie Kraus

Think

What lessons can students learn by taking care of a garden?

Recycled Music

Jack Berry, 16, and his friends are making music from garbage. The Garbage-Men play instruments made from recycled materials, like cereal boxes and bottles. The Florida teens

perform to promote recycling. "We want to show people that there is more to recycling than throwing things away in the bin," Jack (second from left) told TFK.



ROBIN ROSEN

★ TIME FOR KIDS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER ★



MAJESTIC Lorenzo Rohani, 12, of Edmonds, Washington, took this winning photograph of a snowy owl at Boundary Bay, in Canada. He says he "had to wait a long time" to get the shot that answered the question "Why is Earth Day important to our planet?" See more photos at timeforkids.com/pixwinners12.



To read more about kid heroes for the planet, visit timeforkids.com/earthday12.