

SCHOOL GRANT TESTIMONIAL

My 7th grade Biology classes at Hannah Beardsley Middle School in Crystal Lake have been WPPC garden grant recipients for the past 7 years. Year after year it has been a great learning experience for all, in addition to “watching our garden grow

Student experiences have included: plant research which focused on the needs of the plant, garden design (which has been judged by WPPC members), garden preparation (large shovel work) and of course preparing plants for planting and planting the plants (small shovel work). We have also traveled to an elementary school and helped younger students plant their plants. Since 7th graders did not want to show up empty handed, they made native plant bookmarks to share with their new young friends.

In addition to student experiences, I have found the support of the WPPC group priceless. They helped me get our first few years of planting off the ground by spending the day with my classes. As mentioned above, they judge our garden designs. They met me at school on the weekend and helped me burn our garden. Their words of advice, helpful suggestions and new friendship are greatly appreciated.

Our garden at Hannah Beardsley is unique as it is large and encompasses a dry (mesic) area and a wetland. Sun and shade also. Many of the neighbors have stopped by when we are out there working to comment on the beauty of the garden when it is blooming and that there was a noticeable difference in the amount of standing water after a rain. The media center director at school, whose large windows face the garden, comments on number of birds and butterflies she observes and how many students stand and stare at the landscape

Our garden area is used by the art classes for drawing, language arts classes for poetry writing and even our special services classes where they take their students outside to just “sit and absorb nature.”

This is such an incredible opportunity for all. I have students who are now in high school who stop by and find their plant! An experience remembered forever.

Sincerely written by,
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7th Grade Biology Teacher

