



Growing Hope Together

Mission: To connect children, families, schools and communities from different cultures to exchange ideas and innovation while reconnecting with the local foodscape through an integrated school gardening program.

SPRING 2010

MARCH 1, 2010

Update:

Newfield— plowed new ground

The past year has been extremely productive for Growing Hope Together. In early March, we had a garden planning meeting with thirty-five third graders in the Newfield Elementary School. Students drew pictures of their ideal garden. Pictures included everything from carrots to apple trees. Following the meeting, Sue Shults, Jon Armstrong and Laura Smith sat down with the pictures to try to incorporate as many features as possible into the garden.



Although the garden was originally envisioned as a vegetable garden, the students made it clear that they wanted flowers as well. The design for the garden was developed so that 2-3 students would have own-

ership over a 2X3 foot plot. The border for the whole garden was reserved for a variety of flowers.

In late April, students started seedlings for a variety of herbs, flowers and vegetables. With the help of Erin Smith and Tina Winstead, students placed their seeds in tiny peat pots. The seedlings were set in the large windows in the third grade classroom. Teachers Shults and Armstrong reported students checking

on the plants each morning excited to see new growth. In early May, ground was broken next to the historical Kellogg's Schoolhouse, thanks to Scott Smith and his
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Newfield 3rd graders display their garden spoils.



Simenya— sowed the seeds

Simenya also had an excellent year. In November 2008, Laura Smith set up a computer lab in the Primary School. The purpose of the computer lab was to encourage communication between the Simenya teachers and students and the Newfield teachers and students. Linda Popleton set up a private social net-



Simenyan 1st graders show off a plant they've pulled while weeding the garden.

working site for the project. In Kenya, we are starting with square one with

computer skills though. It was the first time that the Headmaster of the school had used a computer!

We have a long way to go with computer training so that using the social network is possible, but we are well on our way! During the year, students and teachers have started learning typing skills as well as using the educational games for learning. Hopefully, the social networking site will be in full swing during 2010.

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Newfield continued...

beautifully restored 1957 Farmall tractor; also thanks to Bill Miller of Spencer for lending his tiller. Shortly thereafter, the fence was erected and a group of college students gathered to lay out the brickwork, dividers and mulch pathways. Later in the month, the third graders proudly planted their new seedlings in the garden plots. Thanks to the dedication of Erin Smith, Linda Poppleton and volunteers, the garden began to flourish despite several early setbacks. The abundance of rain during the summer months helped to produce hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables which were donated to the Newfield Food Bank. The border of flowers added by the students were invaluable to a successful garden. The flowers aided in plant pollination and prevented the majority of destruction by insects and other pests.

During the summer months, Erin and Linda maintained the garden, harvested vegetables for the Newfield Food Bank and brought student groups into the garden, which was dedicated to Herb & Florence Emery and renamed the "Emery Memorial Kids Garden". We'd like to thank those few

anonymous, good hearted community members who stopped by occasionally to weed. At Newfield Old Home Days, in September, many Newfielders toured the garden for the first time and we received glowing compliments. In addition, we offered baskets for sale.

In early October, the new group of third graders were introduced to the project through a vegetable scavenger hunt. Prior to the activity, few children could identify the vegetables in the garden. Although they knew what a carrot looked like in the store, they couldn't find this underground

them with their class-mates. Following the activity, students were offered a small portion of "Kale Fritata". All 39 children in the class were willing to sample the vegetable and egg dish, while 35 students ate the entire serving! Pretty amazing for a dark green leafy vegetable!

As we plan for the upcoming year, we hope to start seedlings earlier in donated greenhouse space, which has been offered by several individuals. In addition, we hope to bring in more summer groups to learn about gardening and food, and get some help with harvesting for the

Newfield Food Bank.

We would like to thank the United Way Youth Philanthropy Grant program for the startup funding and William Hurley, Newfield's school superintendent, for encouraging us and supporting the project throughout this first year.



The produce donated to the Newfield Food Bank during one harvest.

vegetable in the garden. Students were able to take trophy vegetables from the garden and share

ing the project throughout this first year.



Cornell senior Diane Wang helps to build the plots.

This coming spring...

In March, Laura and Linda will travel to Simenya, Kenya to visit the pro-

ject site, develop plans for the year, and provide computer training opportunities.



Laura gives Ephraim Randiga, the school master, a computer tutorial during her visit last year.

This year, we hope to have the gardens in both locations up and running in addition to established communication between the two sites. As we look to this next year, we will need resources to help the project grow. In 2009, Growing Hope

Together received donations of time, land and money from private citizens, a grant from United Way and numerous donations from local businesses including Agway, Early Bird.... Thank you for your support!

Volunteers help make this project work. There are numerous volunteer opportunities within Growing Hope Together. Whether you would like to help plant with children, aid in fundraising drives or contribute gardening expertise, we would like to hear from you!

Simenya Continued...



Students work on plowing the soil for the garden.

The garden in Simenya also had a great year. For the first planting season, students and teachers planted maize, tomatoes, onions and many traditional green vegetables on a small plot at the school. Poor soil resulted in a poor maize harvest, many of the local vegetables did quite well. In May, 2009 Laura Smith visited Simenya and helped develop plans for the next growing season. With support from Growing Hope Together, the garden was expanded an additional acre on

land donated from Samm Rabbette an elder in the village. During the summer months, the land was cleared and fence was constructed to protect the garden from small and large animals. In December, the maize was harvested. Due to soil improvements and

decent rain, the maize harvest was excellent.

While Laura was in East Africa during the summer, she was able to visit the project several times. During one of the visits, she toured each classroom and met with students. When asked what they wanted Laura to tell President Obama, children shouted "We

want shoes and books!"

Food produced on the school garden plot will be invaluable to improving the nutrition of the children, but it is only a first step for many of these children. We hope that the Growing Hope Together project can continue to expand to increase agricultural education, cultural interaction and improved nutrition and livelihoods in the communities in which we work.



Simenyan primary school children take a break during class.

Resources Needed This Year:

- 10x10 EZ-up tent for basket sales and shade for summer educational programming- the basket sales provide a large portion of the operational support in Kenya
- Planting materials for Newfield garden
- Fence for Newfield garden
- Fence for Kenyan garden
- Compost for soil improvement in Kenyan garden
- Planting materials for Kenyan garden
- Older laptop computers for Kenyan computer lab
- Children & young adult books for Kenyan youth
- VOLUNTEERS

If you have any good, usable items that you would like to donate, please let us know! We also welcome donations (501c3 tax deductible) which help us to purchase supplies and keep our program going.





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Growing Hope Together

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Growing Hope Together, Inc. is a cross-cultural school gardening initiative. We are currently working with a school in Newfield, New York, and another school in Simenya, Kenya.

Mission: To connect children, families, schools and communities from different cultures to exchange ideas and innovation while reconnecting with the local foodscape through an integrated school gardening program.

For more information about our organization and what we do, feel free to contact our Director, Laura Smith (laura@growinghopetogether.org).

Want to help?

Buy a basket to help support our garden in Kenya.

Donate money to help support both gardens.

Like to garden? **Volunteer** your time to help us on planting day.

Have a related skill? **Teach** a lesson to our little workers!

Really intrigued? **Become a member!** We are always looking for new and creative people to help us make our project even better!

