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January 2017

A Success Story To Start The Year!

***Health, Wellness and
Environmental Studies
Elementary School (HWES)
Jonesboro, Arkansas***

Every year, Renee's Garden donates seeds to a wide variety of organizations and educational programs worldwide that strive to improve social, economic and health conditions, and promote sustainable organic gardening.



We'd like to share the ongoing success of one of our favorite programs: the The HWES School, in Northeast Arkansas, has about 70% of the students coming from rural, low income families. Starting with three Bermuda grass infested courtyards and an abandoned former cafeteria, Melinda Smith and her colleagues have successfully created the kind of program that is vitally important in the world we are all facing today.

In their hands-on "garden classroom," kids learn lessons that incorporate basic science, math, nutrition and the environment. They produce the vegetables and greens used in the "teaching kitchen" where they prepare and cook their produce, learning to make and enjoy healthy meals.

Melinda's challenge is to keep the garden going, move ahead and expand the program.

Renee's Garden adopted this program and invites our customers to join us in helping HWES students and staff achieve their goals.



Here's an update from Program Director

Melinda Smith:

2016 ends as an outstanding year for our elementary school's Garden To Kitchen program. Eight years ago marked the beginning of our



gardening journey. Today with over 600 students, we have 3 garden courtyard spaces with a total of 3 small greenhouses, 19 raised beds, an outdoor cooking space, chicken coop, outdoor rabbit habitat, science lab and a full size indoor student kitchen. Our unique physical spaces in an elementary school setting have helped us develop great community partners.

The Craighead County Master Gardeners joined us a partner and have become instrumental in summer upkeep and overall sustainability because they help the children plant seeds starting in January in our greenhouses. This early start allows us to have three annual plant sales, with the proceeds going directly to our program, adding to our sustainability.



Arkansas State, our local university, has a dietetic program that places graduate level students with our students to provide an internship as part of their program. The ASU students work with our children in the area of nutrition and wellness activities.

We won State School Garden of the Year in the area of nutrition and our local country Master Garden Project of the Year. We were very honored to receive this recognition, but the REAL proof of progress is in the daily educational experiences of our

students in our gardens and student kitchen! Thank you to all of our garden friends for your support!



LET'S WORK TOGETHER

We want to help Melinda's program continue to grow and succeed, and are inviting our customers to join with us to make that happen. I asked Melinda to make a Wish List of things she really needs but can't afford for her program. [Read more about the program and view Melinda's Wish List.](#)



Come Visit Often

reeneegarden.com has more articles, great seeds, recipes and ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Wishes,
Renee Shepherd



Recipe Of The Month

Renee's Family Recipe for
Homemade Chicken Soup

Comforting chicken soup, guaranteed to make you feel warm and happy. The addition of a few cloves and fresh ginger add richness and complexity.



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