

Growers News for the Week of September 18, 2017

This week after a slight delay due to Harvey, the gardening year for 5th graders is beginning. All 5th graders will meet with the OFE Growers garden volunteers on Thursday. During a half hour in-classroom session, they will be introduced to what their role will be in operating the Science and Math gardens at Oak Forest. Safety is always job number one as they will be using tools and supplies that could cause harm if not used properly. In 14 years of gardening at Oak Forest, no serious injury has ever occurred. Most students leave Oak Forest thinking that their gardening classes were one of their most fond memories; however, what they are learning is so much more with this “hands on” teaching method. Stay tuned though out the year as they experiment and learn.

After the classroom session, the students in Mrs. Krenek’s classes will be taken in small groups on a tour of the gardens on the south side of the school and also to the orchard area that is behind the staff parking lot and the water tower. On this tour they will learn basic information about the Little Red Shed, the compost area, the water harvesting systems, the various fruit trees, and finally the vegetable beds where they will spend most of their time during their classes. Each student will participate in one one-hour class every other week. Ms. Warnack’s students will take the same tour on September 28th. Work in the gardens will begin in October and continue throughout the school year. The fifth grade students will be taking home the “fruits of their labor” during the school year. Normally that is over 3000 pounds of produce.

The Growers volunteers spend lots of time year-round keeping the gardens maintained and on schedule. Because of the late start to gardening this year, volunteers have already planted some of the crops that students would normally plant in September. During the summer they harvested produce, preserved much of it for use as a garden fundraiser, maintained the garden (weeded) and also made some infrastructure improvements to the gardens.

The OFE Growers are an all volunteer non-profit organization created specifically to fund and administer the gardens and nature programs at the school. Mrs. Krenek is the president of the organization. The idea of this “hands-on” approach to learning science and math was her idea over 15 years ago. If you have questions or comments on the programs of the Growers, do talk with her or send her an e-mail at:

deborah.krenek@humbleisd.net. Many of you probably know she is a long time 5th grade teacher at OFE. You can also learn about the OFE Growers by going to their web site at: www.ofegrowers.org.

We need help in the gardens to make the students’ time there meaningful. The more volunteers we have, the more “one on one” time that can be spent with each student. No experience is necessary. If you are available to help us on Thursdays, please contact hoppergo@aol.com. Since many of us are grandparents, we would love to have grandparents join us. We will be at the PTA’s Grandparent lunch on September 19th and would love to take any interested parties on a tour that day.

We all look forward to working with your students this year!