

Growers News for the Week of September 4, 2017

The OFE Growers are happy to welcome you all back for the new school year. Many of us have been working on the school grounds and in the school gardens during the summer and sometimes it was lonely here without all of you. A big thank you, to all the volunteers and former students who helped this summer in the gardens! They are in good shape and ready for another class of 5th graders to learn all about science and math with “hands on” gardening experiences. During the Harvey event, the gardens were spared any serious damage. Volunteers are working today (September 7th) to get the orchard cleaned up and ready for use this fall.

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. If you ever 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 met many of you at Falcon Fest. Yes, we were the folks out in front of the school with jellies, jams, and preserved items from the summer gardens at OFE. Thank you to those of you who have contributed to the gardening program either through donation of time, money, or purchase of these delicious products from the gardens. During the school year all produce is sent home with the 5th grade students. Last school year that amounted to over 3400 pounds. The preserves from the summer garden, processed by the volunteers, provide about half of the funding necessary to operate the gardens and other nature areas at the school. Since this is a special program only offered at OFE, most of the funding must be raised by our organization.

Due to the storms associated with Hurricane Harvey, we were not able to sell as much of the preserves as in past years. This funding is critical to the future of the gardening program! We will be offering the products again in the weeks ahead and urge you to consider a donation of \$5 for a half pint jar or \$6 for a pint. If you picked up an order blank at Falcon Fest, you can fill it out and send it and the payment in an envelope for your student to give to their teacher. Also put Mrs. Krenek's name on the envelope and your child's name and classroom teacher.

The sooner we can get this fundraising over, the sooner all of the Growers volunteers can concentrate on the thing we all love much more---gardening with your students. This is the only fundraiser we have during the school year. If you are a fifth grade parent, just consider it a prepayment for the bags of fruit and vegetables your student will bring home later this year.

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 nearby grandparents join us. We will be at the PTA's Grandparent lunch on September 19th.

We all look forward to working with your students!