



*nourishing the cycle ~ from earth to table*

**Davis Farm to School Connection Awards  
Six Davis School Garden Coordinators with a  
Matching Stipend Grant**

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**For more information contact: Talia Hack-Davie, Davis Farm to School Program Coordinator, (530) 219-5859, [info@davisfarmtoschool.org](mailto:info@davisfarmtoschool.org)**

At its semi annual Garden and Recycling Coordinator Meeting held at Pioneer Elementary on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Davis Farm to School Connection announced a matching grant of \$500 awarded to six Davis schools to support their school garden programs. These funds are part of the ongoing support the organization offers to every school in the district to make the State education standards come alive. In order to receive the grant, a school's PTA/O must agree to match the grant, bringing the total awarded stipend to \$1000.

Though this stipend does not pay for all the work a garden coordinator does, Davis Farm to School Connection hopes that it will encourage every school to have a sustainable garden based learning program with stipend-supported garden coordinators. The six schools for 2008-09 are: Birch Lane Elementary, Emerson Junior High, Fred T. Korematsu Elementary, Marguerite Montgomery Elementary, North Davis Elementary, and Pioneer Elementary. Schools may use this stipend to pay their existing garden coordinator, or reward a particularly active garden volunteer. Grant notification letters and applications for the 2009-10 school year will be sent out to PTA presidents at every school in Davis in March to enable the PTA to calculate their match into their budget for the following year. These grants are funded through tax-deductible community donations to the Davis Farm to School Connection raised through The Village Feast, their signature fundraiser, held this year in Central Park, Saturday August 22nd.

School garden coordinators work on average 10-20 hours a week. Describing Debbie Ariola, Birch Lane Elementary Garden Coordinator, grant recipient Sue Rutherford says, "She practically lives at the school!" Sue Rutherford volunteers as the Birch Lane Garden Club Leader. Balancing pruning shears, wheelbarrows, sheets of gardening curriculum, and most likely a trail of excited children, garden coordinators are

masters of the outdoor classrooms. They are charged with keeping an often overgrown garden plot under control, coordinating plantings throughout the year and encouraging teachers to use the garden with their students. A large majority of the over 300 adults working in the schools on garden based learning are volunteers. What brings them back year after year? “This is the job that gives me the most satisfaction when I go home each day. It is so important to give kids the opportunity to get off the cement and into the dirt”, says Jenn Forrester, Montgomery Elementary Garden Coordinator.

For the past eight years, the Davis Joint Unified School District has worked in conjunction with Davis Farm to School Connection and given full support of the concept of garden based learning. In giving this support, the district joins over 3,000 districts statewide with school gardens, a program supported early on by the California State Department of Education.

The mission of Davis Farm to School Connection is to create an educational and cultural environment in schools that connects food choices with our personal health, community, farms and land. Davis Farm to School Connection has supported programs within the district to create whole-school learning environments that include learning gardens, outdoor classrooms, arboretums, lunch waste compost and recycling systems, fresh produce served in the lunch program, cooking lessons and field trips to local farms. Savings generated from the composting and recycling systems fund stipends for recycling coordinators at every school.

If you would like to make a donation, or are interested in joining the Davis Farm to School Connection, please visit [www.davisfarmtoschool.org](http://www.davisfarmtoschool.org), or email [info@davisfarmtoschool.org](mailto:info@davisfarmtoschool.org).