



### Sea Gate Elementary

650 Sea Gate Dr.  
Naples, FL 34103

#### School Profile:

- Collier County Public Schools
- K-5<sup>th</sup> grades
- 733 students

#### Garden Profile:

- 9 years in operation
- K-5<sup>th</sup> graders participate in garden in addition to Exceptional Education Classes K-5 (MC3)
- No staff paid to assist garden
- A parent volunteer, with the help of 8-10 other parents, prepared the beds for the school year and assisted throughout the school year

#### General Garden Information:

The garden is approximately 2,200 square feet in size. Everything we planted was edible! Plants included cabbage, eggplant, tomato, radish, green beans, carrots, peppers, kale, strawberries, onions, and a variety of herbs. We have 16 wooden raised beds just off the ground and filled with organic soil.

Other features of the garden include: a sign with the garden's name, signage about garden rules/safety, outdoor teaching space with tables with umbrellas and shade trees, native habitats, and fruit trees or berries. Parents volunteer with their children to water and weed during the holidays.



**Student Involvement & Education:**

All students have access to enjoy the garden. Walking, observing, reading, and sometimes class work is done by the garden. The afterschool program also has access. How often the garden is used depends on weather and teacher/student availability.

We use the Florida Standards for Math and Science when planning lessons for our garden. It depends on the grade level as to what the standard may be. Lessons are done on soil exploration, living vs. non-living, herbs, five senses, and growing seeds. The different parts of plants are drawn for students to label. Math lessons have to do with area, perimeter, measurement for layout of planting, and graphing. Vocabulary lessons are incorporated with science lessons. The vocabulary words are added to science journals.

**Garden Product:**

The students harvest the produce and enjoy it in the classroom and take it home. We are also working with our cafeteria manager to use some of the harvest in our lunches.

**Parent Engagement:**

A parent, Melissa Rocchio, was instrumental in getting the beds ready for classes this fall. She had a group of 8-10 parents that assisted her. At the beginning of school, the parents cleaned out the beds, prepared them for planting, and assisted in planting. Throughout the school year, the parents assist with weeding, watering, and harvesting. The parent volunteers elicited businesses in the community to help with our garden. For the second harvest of the year, the parents clear out the beds and help students plant a second crop.

Parents are informed about the garden through newsletters, parent link, and PTO meetings. We encourage parents to visit the garden when on campus. Parents may take their children to the garden for lunch when visiting campus at lunchtime. Volunteering in the garden is a way we engage the parents, also.

**Goals:**

Sea Gate would like to develop a butterfly garden and rebuild our worm garden. We would also like to start exploring the options for a watering system. We are also looking into how our cafeteria will be able to incorporate what is harvested. There is a process so we are going to communicate with the appropriate people to see if we can get the process started.

**Additional Notes:**

We used last year's Recognition award towards: organic soil, fertilizer, mulch, herbs, seeds, and plugs. All these materials were purchased at a great discount from local businesses.

Sea Gate Elementary was named a Blue Zones School in the spring of 2016. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in our garden with representatives from all areas of the community. The garden was also featured as part of the application to be a Blue Zones School. When we have other visitors in our school, such as non-profit organizations or other schools that shadow us, they visit the garden.

The garden is a very special place for all our children. Melissa Rocchio has expressed her most precious moments are when the students come out to check on the garden. Their faces and pride speak more than words.

**Contact:**

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