

Learning and Gardening in School

By Shawnta S. Barnes – May 10, 2017



The Kitchen Community (TKC) is a nonprofit organization that believes, “Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, play, and grow in a healthy community.” To achieve this mission, they build learning gardens at schools. TKC first began building learning gardens in Colorado and over the years expanded to other cities including Indianapolis. “TKC’s goal is to build at least 100 gardens in each city it enters,” shared Theresa Vernon TKC Regional Director. “The first two learning gardens launched in Indianapolis were at William McKinley School #39 and Global Prep Academy in November 2016. We have done six additional kick-off days in March and April 2017

at James Whitcomb Riley School #43, Cold Spring School Environmental Studies Magnet, IPS Newcomer Program, Wendell Phillips School #63, Butler Lab School #60, and Edison School of the Arts #47. By June 30, 2017, we will have built 20 learning gardens in Indianapolis.”

Wendell Phillips School #63, a recent recipient of a learning garden, submitted an application to TKC December 2016. On Wednesday, February 8th, Wendell Phillips was notified they had been selected to receive a learning garden. Next, TKC Indy met with the school’s garden team to discuss the learning garden plan. Shaun Antrim, TKC Indy Project Manager, designed the garden’s layout and during spring break Gardens of Growth began construction.

On Tuesday, April 11th, an all day learning garden kick-off was scheduled at Wendell Phillips. Many guests attended the event including Carrie Petty, TV personality, master gardener, and author. TKC’s Garden Educators, Tim Villard from TKC Colorado and Joris Van Zeghbroeck from TKC Indy, facilitated lessons with various classes throughout the day. In addition to the lessons, the first half of the day was spent with older students filling the garden beds with dirt and during the second half of the day, younger students planted the spring garden. Students planted: peas, cilantro, spinach, lettuce, and radishes.



After the school day ended, staff gathered in the learning garden to learn more about TKC and the learning garden plan. TKC wants to remove barriers that could prevent garden

success. They provide videos, standard based lesson plans, workshops, and a garden educator to help schools have a successful garden.

The learning garden is not just for growing food, but it is also an outdoor classroom. The following day after the kick-off, second grade teacher Ms. Tippmann took her class to the learning garden to teach her writing block.



Students at Wendell Phillips are enjoying their new space. They will be able to consume food grown in the learning garden before school ends on June 8th.