



## Whole School Model *Yellville, AR*

### ARKANSAS VALUES IN ACTION

Along with fellow members of the Yellville-Summit school wellness committee, school health coordinator Valerie Davenport believed that bringing healthy food to students' plates is essential to their learning and developing as citizens. This conviction led Davenport to apply for the Delta Garden Study through the Arkansas Children's Research Institute. District administration, staff, and faculty were also eager to start the school garden program as it would help develop students' skills as farmers and support agricultural studies, both important to the local community. In a district where nearly 75% of students are on free and reduced lunch, a school garden's reflection of the local agricultural economy could become a source of pride.

In July of 2012, Katherine Quinn came to start a school garden, working with an



▲ *This trio, along with others, is responsible for a lot! From left, Arkansas GardenCorps member Amy Fitzpatrick, ag educator Katherine Quinn, and school health coordinator Valerie Davenport.*

AmeriCorps NCCC team to build a high tunnel and 24 raised garden beds. During her first year, Quinn maintained the gardens, integrated them into science classes, and started a garden club. When the

**“Growing your own food is empowering—the hard work you put into it pays off.”**

*-Katherine Quinn*

research year ended, the school was determined to continue the program: Quinn was offered a full-time position teaching agriscience. During this time, Davenport and Quinn were persistent about growing the campus garden infrastructure. Through grants, the school built a greenhouse to ensure students would receive credit in their plant-based science class. As their program continued to expand, Yellville-Summit partnered with Arkansas GardenCorps to provide Quinn with garden maintenance assistance and delivery of garden-based nutrition education for students of all grades.

The teamwork of the local and school community has been invaluable. District superintendent Wes Henderson and principal Calvin Mallett wholeheartedly support the program, and teachers have found it easy to incorporate garden lessons because Quinn and Davenport build their programs into existing policy. Teachers and community members purchase produce from the school, and many members of the local community volunteer at the gardens. The local Rotary Club plans to start a school orchard. >>



# CLASSROOM TO CAFETERIA

>> What started as a hands-on education opportunity has grown to include supplying produce for school meals. The cafeteria must serve food that meets United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. As Quinn and her students were already growing healthy produce on campus, Child Nutrition Director Cindy Weaver was able to use school produce to meet USDA nutrition requirements.

In addition, Davenport and Quinn have partnered to bring “Friday Try Day” to students. On select Fridays, wellness committee volunteers present students with produce from the school gardens. Students are invited to try the food and are asked to rate it. Veggie quesadillas and braised Brussel sprouts have been great hits!

Teaching requires a “whole child approach”.

Davenport and Quinn believe that teaching requires a “whole child approach”.

Through their farm to school practices, they believe children are learning skills that could sustain them in future generations: they are learning how to lead healthy lives, directly impacting ability to focus and succeed in school. Yelville-Summit schools have dedicated five years to developing their whole school integration model, paving the way for others to do the same. ∞



▲ High tunnels are a relatively inexpensive way to extend the growing season. Leafy greens, simple to grow and full of nutritional value, can be grown in winter.



[www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc)

▲ The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model courtesy of the CDC in collaboration with ASCD.  
 ◀ Often a learning experience for teachers as well, classes sign up to adopt small hoop house plots.

Many thanks go to the following at Yelville-Summit: **Valerie Davenport**, school health coordinator; **Amy Fitzpatrick**, Arkansas GardenCorps member; **Wes Henderson**, district superintendent; **Calvin Mallett**, elementary school principal; **Katherine Quinn**, plant science ag educator; and **Cindy Weaver**, Child Nutrition Director.



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