Accomplishments

School Garden Designs

As any great idea that catches fire does, the concept of a simple butterfly garden, spurred on by the receipt of grant funding from the Georgia Wildlife Federation, flourished into a full scale re-imagining of the school-yard landscape at the Metter PreK-8th School.

Archway Partnership graduate assistants from the College of Environment & Design, Kiley Aguar and Emily Hunt worked with teachers, Candler County Extension faculty, local garden clubs, and parents to create a multiphased garden design that hopes to address run-off from the building and mechanical systems, add shade and visual interest to the site, and, most importantly, provide opportunities for increased STEM education and experiential learning for students at all levels within the system.

The impressive design features bog garden areas, xeriscapes, pollinator gardens, cisterns, a weather station, and outdoor classroom areas. There is even an elevated garden bed to allow hands-on access for all students. Interactive signs featuring QR codes will be placed throughout the garden. While the sign itself will display only basic plant and animal information (species, habitat, etc.), the QR code will allow students to use handheld electronic devices to dig deeper.

To make the project come to life, Candler County Extension will provide $2,500 via a memorial fund to supplement the $1,500 provided by the GWF. Additionally, the core group plans to tap into Metter High School’s CTAE Agriculture and Young Farmer classes, to extend the learning opportunities to a more advanced group of students.

First grade science teacher, Amy Koth, who initiated the project says, “This garden has the possibility to set Candler County apart from other schools in the state of Georgia. It connects venues in high school (agriculture, construction, life science, etc.) to all grade levels. The academic arena does not touch upon the social or community relationships and or impacts of volunteers coming into the school. This garden, in essence, is an educational tool with the capacity to teach lifelong learning skills for generations to come. Can you imagine communicating with NASA or other countries on their findings in advanced growing techniques? Or, how to become a sustainable community with little dependence on outside forces? A community garden for all to tend and reap the rewards.”