



"A GROWING PATCH" SIDNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL students tend to their garden.

A Growing Patch of School Gardeners Raised at Sidney Elementary

SIDNEY - As temperatures finally warmed this spring, Sidney Elementary School student Cody Wheeler stood outside, gazing first at the darkening sky, then at the newly planted raised beds in the school gardens. "Looks like rain tonight," he said, with the expression of a farmer whose fields need a good drink.

This spring, members of the Green Thumb Growers Guild, an after-school group focusing on horticulture, healthy eating, and gardening experiences at Sidney Elementary School, were busy tilling the soil and planting vegetables, herbs, and flowers in the elementary gardens.

The gardens at the school consist of six large raised beds, wheelchair accessible planters designed for movement-challenged students, and a worm composting system that is filled weekly with food waste from the cafeteria.

"Since starting Green Thumb Growers, we've seen incredible interest among students for gardening and getting hands-on experience with plants and planting," reports Josh Gray, a teacher at Sidney Elementary and one of the organizers of the Green Thumb Growers Guild. "Our students love being outside getting their hands dirty. It's fantastic to see how motivated students are to learn about growing and using plants. Their curiosity drives the learning."

Madison Burnett, a fourth grader and Green Thumb group leader, explains, "This year has been like a 'Story of Plants.' Everything we're doing in the gardens now is connected to the last thing we did, which is tied to what we began last year."

Last October, one after-school class was focused on hulling dried rattlesnake beans to save seeds for this year's garden. Bean and wildflower seeds were then packed in paper envelopes and stored for the winter in a dark, dry place. On another afternoon, Green Thumb members shoveled a truckload of alpaca manure onto the raised garden beds in the back of the elementary school.

December saw students bundled in winter jackets, digging through the frozen crust of soil to plant garlic bulbs. In January, Green Thumb members collected empty milk containers from the cafeteria to use as starting pots. The following month, students planted a variety of seeds in over

Once the seedlings appeared, GTGG members traveled to the high school greenhouse each week to tend to their plants, making sure they had enough water and were growing well. Student James Orezzoli, a fourth grader, joined the Green Thumb Growers in September, and has been student leader and mentor for younger students. "It was fun watching the seedlings getting bigger and bigger each week," Orezzoli recalls. "Actually, I couldn't believe it when we saw something green coming out of the soil."

This spring, with a donation of plants from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, and a variety of seeds donated by Page Seed Company of Greene, students planted tomatoes, green peppers, basil, parsley, onions, sweet potatoes, nasturtium, string beans, strawberries, herbs, and perennial flowers.

"I can't wait to eat the strawberries," exclaims Asma Butt, who participated in the group since it's beginning last year.

The student group Girls on the Run has also contributed to creating and maintaining vibrant gardens on the Sidney Elementary campus. In May, Girls on the Run members worked to clean up the front flower gardens and plant new flowers in areas that were overrun with grass and weeds. The front gardens were further expanded in June with a donation of perennial flowers from the Hill and Valley Garden Club of Sidney.

The food-to-school movement, which seeks to bring more locally grown, fresh food into schools, is gaining popularity with students nationwide. Not only does it address a need for healthier food and eating habits, but it can

also connect those needs with an exposure to science education at its most fundamental level.

With a growing interest in growing their own food and working with plants, Green Thumb members are already looking toward next year. Mackenzie Dutton, a third grader and avid gardener, wants to expand the gardening opportunities at the elementary. "I'd like to do more field trips, more nature walks, and grow more food," Dutton remarks.

Mr. Gray adds, "Our future plans include expanding the gardens, putting in some dwarf fruit trees, berry bushes, creating a Native American food garden, a medicinal garden, and a butterfly garden. We'd also like to increase our cafeteria composting program, work with classroom teachers to integrate nutrition and horticultural education into the school-day, and eventually start providing students with fresh, very local, student-grown food, and then maybe get some chickens."

More pictures and information about the Green Thumb Growers Guild are available at <http://www.sidneycsd.org/GreenThumb.aspx>.

Anne Pysnik Receives Intern Placement at CDC

SIDNEY - Anne Pysnik, Sidney High School class of 2011 and Nazareth College, is serving an intern placement in environmental health programs at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR) at CDC in Atlanta, Ga.

Over the course of the summer, Anne and fellow interns will be exposed to a broad

overview of environmental public health issues at the federal level. The 10-week summer environmental health internship is for undergraduate students who are passionate about the environment, interested in human health, and curious about how they are linked. The link between

the environment and health is aptly referred to as "environmental health." Environmental health as a discipline focuses on the interrelationships between people and their environment, promotes human health and well-being, and fosters safe and healthy living.

Computing Center Open Hours For Teens at Library

SIDNEY - Tweens and Teens (anyone who will be entering grades 4 - 12 in the fall) are welcome to stop into the Public Computing Center at the Sidney Library on Fridays in July from 2 to 5 p.m. for activities on our laptops, iPads, and Wii game console.

POLICE BLOTTER

New York State Police

July 2 - Troopers at SP Sidney arrested Jason A. Lester, 32, from Bainbridge, for driving while intoxicated. The arrest was the result of an intoxicated subject who drove away from the Hess Mart in the Town of Unadilla. Troopers located the operator who was placed under arrest. Lester was processed at the Sidney station and was released to a sober third party to appear in Town of Unadilla Court at a later date.

July 5 - Troopers at SP Oneonta arrested Brittany M. Homza, 21, of Unadilla, for petit larceny. The arrest resulted from a complaint at the Mirabito gas station on County Route 48 in Otego. Homza was issued an Appearance Ticket returnable in the Town of Otego Court at a later date.

ANNUAL GILBERTSVILLE COMMUNITY SALE DAY Sat., July 19 - All Day

Rain or Shine
Tables and Spaces also available inside
Butternut Valley Grange Hall, Bloom Street
Space \$10
Info. & Res. 783-2495
Maps Available Sat. at Value Way Grocery Store

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GATES OPEN AT 7 PM
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WED. & THURS., JULY 9 & 10

1ST MOVIE: TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION (PG-13)
2ND MOVIE: 22 JUMP STREET (R)

FRI., SAT., & SUN., JULY 11, 12 & 13

1ST MOVIE: DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (PG-13)
2ND MOVIE: TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION (PG-13)

CLIP & SAVE

The Sidney Community Band
is pleased to present the
12th Annual Don Clayton Memorial TRAILSIDE Music Series
Every Wednesday Evening during
July and August
6:30-8:00 pm at the Pavilion Area
of the Walking Trails
River Street, Sidney
Held Rain or Shine, As Shelter Is Available

<p>July 9 SIDNEY COMMUNITY BAND The area's concert band consisting of 25-30 volunteer musicians. Music ranges from classical to pop & rock</p> <p>July 16 WALTON COMMUNITY BAND First time playing in Sidney!</p> <p>July 23 PARTY OF TWO Keyboard stylings of Joann Chmielowski and Vocals of DJ Potter</p> <p>July 30 BAINBRIDGE OLD TIME BAND "Old Time" band standards</p> <p>Aug. 6 DJ WOODEN Everything from Sinatra and Elvis to Motown and Country</p> <p>Aug. 13 THE FABULOUS MOONLIGHTERS Classic Big Band sound</p> <p>Aug. 20 SIDNEY COMMUNITY BAND</p>	<p>ALL CONCERTS ARE FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC Plenty of parking available and handicapped accessible. Please bring a chair or blanket to sit on, your friends, and enjoy the music. The Trailside Concert Series is brought to you by the Sidney Community Band.</p>
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ROUND & SQUARE DANCE

WITH **Wes St. Onge & Bob Utter**
Sat., July 12 • 7-11 PM
\$6 COVER CHARGE
Next Dance Aug. 9 w/Phoenix
Refreshments Available

Refreshments Available

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