



District Department of Transportation Public Meeting Notice

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is hosting a public meeting to invite comment on the 2011-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). DDOT is asking for public participation in the identification of projects that could be beneficial to enhancing transportation for the District. Comments are sought for transportation projects including, but not limited to, pedestrian/bicycle programs, transit programs such as MetroExtra, Circulator and streetcar, and repairing and improving bridges, roadways, sidewalks and alleys.

The public meeting is scheduled for
December 10, 2009
6pm-8pm

Franklin D. Reeves Center
2000 14th Street, NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20009

(Metro accessible Green Line U Street/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardoza (walk two blocks to 14th and U streets, NW) or Metro Bus 52, 53, or 54 Lines or Circulator)

If you are unable to attend the meeting you may send your comments to:
District Department of Transportation,
2000 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009,
Attention: Resource Allocation/5th Floor.

All comments must be received no later than December 20, 2009.
Copies of the 2010-2015 TIP can be found on-line at
www.mwcog.org/clrp/projects/tip/fy0914.asp

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Students at Watkins Elementary harvesting pea shoots.

Healthy Eating!

How One School Volunteer Makes a Difference

BY PATTIE CINELLI

On the east side of Watkins Elementary School, at the corner of 12th and E streets SE, is a plot of land 20 by 80 feet that has 10 raised beds and five planter boxes filled with edible crops. This garden produces vegetables three seasons a year, planted and harvested by first and third graders. The garden has become a valuable tool for students to learn about healthy eating.

“Other Capitol Hill schools have gardens, but ours is the only one devoted to vegetables and curriculum nutrition,” said Barbara Percival, a master gardener who has helped in the creation of the “Edible Schoolyard” at Watkins.

The Edible Schoolyard started at Watkins last year. It is named after a

program in California developed by Alice Waters who established a three-acre Edible Schoolyard. It is one of four gardens at Watkins – Wetlands Garden, Garden of Seasons and Native Plant Wildlife Garden -- that line three sides of the school building. Although the garden began 15 years ago as a small butterfly garden, it expanded with the help of a grant from the Department of Agriculture. Barbara began volunteering in the mid 1990s when her son and daughter attended Watkins. By the time they moved on in 2000, she was too deeply involved in the project to let it go. She laughed, “They graduated and I didn’t.”

Integrating the Garden Curriculum

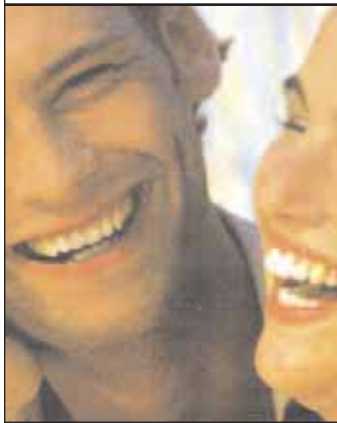
For the first few years of volunteering Barbara worked with the garden

founder, parent Molly Dannenmaier. Barbara focused primarily on helping teachers integrate the garden work into lesson plans. “I loved gardening and was fascinated with the curriculum connection.” When Molly left in the late 90s, Barbara took over the entire garden operation.

Before her volunteer stint at Watkins, Barbara dabbled in gardening. But since taking over the program, she has completed her studies as master gardener. Her volunteer hours often consume more time than a part-time job. Depending on the time of the year and number of assistants, Barbara spends 20-25 hours a week at Watkins from September through November; she plants almost every day in March and is there five to 10 hours a week during the summer, watering and harvesting.

This past spring Barbara and the

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the district **BEAT**

by Mark Segraves

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"In September the first grade classes planted spinach, kale and mustard greens in their planter boxes."

kids planted lettuce, spinach, radishes, peas, strawberries and cabbage. "We were able to have salad for 200 kids." They also made fresh salad dressing. She said the children loved it so much they cleaned their plate and asked for more.

In June they replanted with September crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, winter squash, sweet potatoes, beans and Swiss chard. This fall they harvested the beds and replanted with greens – kale, spinach and mustard greens. "In the dead of winter, we'll have kale to eat."

This past year Barbara said they challenged students to create a 'garbage garden.' "We told them to bring in parts of plants or seeds that would be garbage that they thought might grow." Children brought carrot tops, potatoes, avocado seeds, mango seeds, beet tops and popcorn (not the microwave kind) and onions. "They planted it all and we spent six weeks waiting and watching things grow. It was a lot of fun."

"Barbara is the miracle worker

in our garden. What she does is just like magic," said Bernie Prince, co-director of FreshFarm markets. "She has made all the difference in the program. She makes it work so well."

FreshFarm Markets created a partnership last year with Watkins through its FoodPrints program. It provided resources and expertise (a classroom teacher), which allowed the Watkins Edible Schoolyard to expand and make it a part of the curriculum at the school. This fall first graders are learning about how food grows. Third graders are learning about how food affects our bodies. "What makes the Watkins program exciting and unique is how Brandon Eatman, principal of the Capitol Hill Cluster Schools, is making part of teachers' evaluations how well they integrate the principles into their curriculum. We're working with teachers directly to show how to integrate the material," explained Bernie.

The Edible Schoolyard is not the only garden to be a part of students'



Barbara Percival with students in the new "Edible Schoolyard" at Watkins Elementary

studies. "Two-thirds of the gardens are non-edible plants and are used for classroom learning in different ways," said Barbara. The gardens can be used to teach: math (measuring, estimating, mapping); language arts (reading, writing, oral story telling); science (botany, weather, seasons); social studies (native plants, using plants in different cultures); art (drawing from nature, creating art for the gardens); physical education (motor activity, nutrition); and life skills (planting, harvesting, cooking).

The education about healthy and local eating does not stop with the students. Parents are enthusiastic. "We have more volunteers for this garden than for any of the others." Barbara also sends recipes home with the kids, which often trigger phone calls from parents asking, "What is this ingredient?" or "Where can I find this vegetable?"

Barbara dreams of expanding the program to include the rest of the 530 children at Watkins. The 200 children in the first and third grades were initially chosen because the material fit well into their curriculum. For many of the Watkins children, the Edible Schoolyard is the first time they've experienced a garden. A Hill resident since 1984, Barbara is in her second decade of volunteering at Watkins and said she stays because "I'm having so much fun. I enjoy the work. I love the teachers and the kids. My work is so rewarding."

To learn more about the gardens or to find out how you can help at Watkins log onto: www.watkinslivingschoolyard.com. To learn more about the FoodPrints program log onto: www.freshfarmmarkets.org.

Pattie Cinelli is a fitness professional who trains, teaches classes and lectures on stress management, fitness and overall well-being. Email her with fitness questions or story ideas to: fitness@pattiecinelli.com. ★

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Dr. Sheila Samaddar is a local Hill resident and has been practicing dentistry for 9 years.



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