



STUDENT EVENTS

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Spring 2007

inside



A Garden for All Seasons

Ian Lai's outdoor classroom at Terra Nova Rural Park continues to inspire Richmond students.

A Class of grade 3/4 students from Quilchena Elementary walks 40 minutes to the field, gardens for an hour and a half, and then walks back to school. Three classes from Spul'u'kwuks Elementary also spend time in the garden, as do students from Gilmore Elementary's out-of-school care program. For older students, there is a program for young women from a grade 11/12 "Fit for Life" class at Richmond Secondary, and plans are underway to develop a program with the City of Richmond for youth at risk.

In the winter, Ian goes into classrooms to teach about composting, bread making, cultivation, and other gardening-related skills. Students can also cook their harvested food in the newly acquired community kitchen. They receive expert instruction, thanks to Ian's "day job" as instructor at the Northwest Culinary Academy.

The garden ties into a number of curriculum areas. Students learn mathematic skills such as graphing, percentages, and measuring. They study earth and physical sciences. They learn about heritage food, culture and other social studies-related topics. One teacher brings her students to the garden to sketch. Ian is also working with teachers to develop curricula that will emphasize nutrition.

Ian's intent is to use the garden to bring together the whole community, and to serve the community's well being. Most of the garden's summer bounty goes to the food bank, which is the destination for a field trip Ian does with students. He is also working with VanDusen Botanical Gardens to connect with master gardeners, each of whom would work with 6-8 students per year.

In the Spring of 2007, Ian will be co-hosting "Chefs to the Field" with the City of Richmond. Chefs will pick fresh produce from the garden and then compete to create the best dish.