



Highland 8th Grader, Brent Haskins, spreads mulch in his school garden.



News from the Delta Garden Study

Addressing Childhood Obesity in the Central and Delta Regions of Arkansas
Headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas

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Delta Garden Study Lessons Have Begun At All Garden Schools!

Lessons have started in the garden for the intervention schools participating in the Delta Garden Study. Students at Harrisburg, Highland,

Marshall, and Monticello were introduced to their gardens September 12th during "Meet Your Garden" when they toured



Mabelvale Garden to Host Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference Field Trip

We are pleased to announce that Mabelvale will also host a field trip for attendees of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Groups' annual conference to be held in Little Rock January 19-21st, 2012. For more information about the conference, please visit their website at www.ssawg.org.

Over the last two weeks, Chris and crew have been working feverishly at Mabelvale to get it ready for a late fall planting. Summer crops have been removed, beds have

the raised beds, greenhouses, chicken coops, composting operation, worm boxes, and rainwater harvesting system. They harvested basil and made pesto for the first time! Now they are learning the scientific method, including structured observation and hypothesis testing, through their activities in the garden. Monticello Garden Program Specialist Liana Harden has helped the students create a circular "Class Room Garden" which allows for better interaction between the teachers and students. "The students are really excited to be in the garden and especially excited about playing with the chickens," said Katy Brantley, Monticello FoodCorps service member; "next week each of the 6th grade classes are voting on names for their chickens." We're all looking forward to a year of growth for students in the Delta Garden Study. Visit [our website](#) for weekly updates from each school. - *Many thanks to Kent Thompson, Delta Garden Study fall intern, for this contributing article*



FoodCorps Service Members Began August 22nd

The 2011-2012 school year marks the inauguration of FoodCorps, a national service program that aims to deliver hands-on nutrition, build and tend school gardens, and connect local food with school cafeterias. Fifty-two service members have been placed in ten states throughout the nation. Arkansas

was chosen as one of those ten with the Delta Garden at ACHRI serving as the state's Host Site. Four members have been placed at the four Delta Garden Study garden schools. Each member is serving alongside a DGS Garden Program Specialist, assisting with lessons and maintenance and expansion of the gardens. Jackie Billhymer, Katy Brantley, Rachel Spencer, and Jill Zartman came to Arkansas filled with enthusiasm for the year ahead of them. Please visit our [FoodCorps page](#) on the DGS website to learn more about our Service Members. Are you interested in having a FoodCorps Service Member next year? Visit our website often for more information. Details will be released as soon as they are available!

been turned over, and seeds have been started.

We are excited share that Mabelvale will have a 1700-hour AmeriCorps service member at the school beginning in mid-October. This person will assist the school staff, teachers and students as they determine how best to incorporate the garden into their classes and school environment. We are grateful to both Mabelvale Magnet Middle School and the Arkansas Division of Community Support and Nonprofit Support. Additional community members and organizations are welcome to volunteer time at Mabelvale throughout the year. For weekly updates and pictures on the activities and progress of Mabelvale's garden, please visit [Mabelvale's page](#) on our website.

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October Dig Day

Dates Finalized On

October 14th and 21st, Delta Garden Study schools will be holding their Dig Days, which marks the official expansion of their gardens. Harrisburg Middle School will hold its Dig Day on October 14th and Monticello Middle, Highland

Middle, and Marshall High will hold their Dig Days on October 21st. Dig Day will begin at 9:00 in the morning and last through the day. All teachers and students in the schools are invited to participate, as well as community members.

Participants will work together to prepare new garden beds and taste recipes created with seasonal produce. From here, the students will continue to build and maintain this additional garden space as a means of inciting ownership and involvement from the ground up. All are welcome to attend a Dig Day (9am - 3 pm) at a DGS school near you!



Bismarck School District Serves Up Local

Produce Vicki Hill, the Child Nutrition Director of Bismarck School District plans nutritious meals and incorporates fresh fruits and vegetables into the menus in an effort to improve the diets of her students. Mrs. Hill's work allows students to have access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables. One local producer she purchases from is Arkansas Natural

Produce, a farm owned by Jay Fulbright just eight miles from the school. Fresh produce is delivered to the school once per week. On the days the produce from a local farm is served, signs are put up in the cafeteria to inform the students where the product came from. Her staff stepped up to the extra prep work of washing, cutting, and preparing whole produce. For Bismarck food service staff, the payoff comes in seeing their students' excitement about the fresh new menu items. Vicki has a top priority of providing fresh produce to her students and builds the budget around buying locally. For other child nutrition directors interested in farm to school, she recommends having a discussion with local producers as the

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first step. This can be set up through your county extension agent, or by contacting Andrew Carberry (501-364-6555, ancarberry@uams.edu).

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