

503 bryan avenue
fort worth, texas 76104



PHONE : 817.348.8102
FAX : 817.348.8680

realschoolgardens.org

Media Contact:
Matt Hackler, 817.348.8102
mhackler@realschoolgardens.org

REAL SCHOOL GARDENS TRAINED EDUCATORS TO TEACH CHILDREN OUTSIDE AT JANUARY 16 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

DALLAS, Texas — [February 2, 2010] REAL School Gardens, a leader in the growing movement to connect children with nature, hosted a day of professional development for educators at the Dallas ISD Environmental Education Center in Seagoville on Saturday, January 16, 2010. The event was free and open to educators of all kinds and all subjects.

REAL School Gardens' Professional Development Coordinator Matt Hackler commented, "It is exciting to see such dedication and commitment from our area's talented educators. They give so much of themselves for the betterment of our children. I continue to be impressed by their passion to introduce children to the wonders of nature in their own schoolyard. It's the enthusiasm from the teachers and students that will carry forward this outdoor education movement."

January 16's professional development day welcomed 62 educators from 9 districts across the Metroplex and beyond. The series of innovative workshops were designed to spark creativity and provide new skills and resources for the elementary classroom. Sessions featured experiential, hands-on activities aimed at using the outdoors to teach across the curriculum to meet and exceed state educational standards.

"Thank you for coordinating such a wonderful professional development day on January 16th. It was a fantastic day from beginning to end and I left energized," reported a participant, Lara Guerra, from the Hockaday School.

The use of school gardens as outdoor classrooms enhances learning, develops the academic, social and emotional well-being of children, and invites community participation in urban elementary schools. As part of its commitment to share best practices in outdoor education with communities across North Texas, REAL School Gardens will host additional professional development opportunities throughout the year. Please visit www.realschoolgardens.org for upcoming events.

About REAL School Gardens

REAL School Gardens cultivates relationships with elementary school communities to create learning gardens that raise hope, spark imaginations, and connect children to nature. In addition to garden

installations, REAL School Gardens provides year-round support for the gardens, professional development opportunities for educators, and community-wide networking events.

Currently, REAL School Gardens works with 66 elementary schools in five urban school districts, ensuring that more than 40,000 children and more than 2,300 educators have daily access to nature through school gardens in North Texas. With a six-year history in Fort Worth and recent expansion into Grand Prairie, REAL School Gardens is launching a partnership in Dallas. With plans to reach more students and school communities across the country, the organization is itself growing. For more information, visit www.realschoolgardens.org.

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