Kitchen Happenings...

Let’s take a tour around the kitchen for Term 3 and see what the wonderful students in 4CH have been cooking...

Well, it was all about being warm this term, with a wet and cold winter keeping our kitchen steaming with goodies - the perfect time to cook some tummy warming dishes that can be shared at home.

The students were introduced to the kitchen and knife safety rules in Term 1, so they had many opportunities to further expand their repertoire and develop their knowledge and skills during Term 2 and 3.

Since the students were already cutting, chopping, slicing and dicing like professionals, we wasted no time in making some lovely, tasty dishes such as Silverbeet and Feta Muffins, Cauliflower Mash and of course Indian Flatbread and Turkish Bread. This was followed by an all-time favourite - making Pasta from scratch, topped with our tasty Tomato Sauce. Next there was our Broccoli, Cauliflower and Parsnip Soup. All of these dishes were accompanied by a delicious Leafy Green Salad or Tabouli, using fresh produce from our garden. With the garden hibernating over winter, there were still plenty of pickings, such as lettuce, silverbeet and herbs to complement and garnish our food.

While the very busy chefs were cooking up a storm, the hospitality group was keeping the kitchen running smoothly. They helped collect the ingredients, clean work benches, wash and dry dishes, set the tables as well as present our dishes in an appealing fashion with beautiful garnishes. As if that wasn’t enough to keep them busy, they were also responsible for taking photos of the wonderful dishes in progress - always useful for documenting our experiences and reflecting back in the classroom.

The chickens loved our cooking days, as they got to enjoy all our kitchen scraps and they repaid us generously with lovely, fresh eggs for the muffins and pasta.

At the end of each cooking time, the students sat down together to share the wholesome dishes and talk about the different flavours, textures and taste sensations. This is a very important time for sharing and reflecting on the core principles of the Stephanie Alexander Program, which emphasises the benefits of growing, harvesting and cooking fresh, seasonal produce - for health, sustainability and fun!

To support the program, simply call 6021 3849

Thank you in advance and kind regards

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program Team
In the Garden...

It has been a cold, wet Winter, but that hasn’t deterred our green-thumbs from getting their hands dirty during Term 3!

Our students have been doing a fantastic job maintaining our compost system throughout the school. They ensure that class buckets are cleaned out and the compost bins at each building have the right balance of fruit and veggie scraps, as well as dry materials, like straw. We have also begun to utilise some of the compost from these bins to fertilise our soil in preparation for our Spring/Summer crop. It is so amazing to think that we are turning our scraps into food for our plants as well as minimising our landfill!

Did you know that by reducing organic waste to landfill we can reduce the potential for landfills to create liquid ‘leachate’ which can pollute our streams, oceans and underground water, and reduce the production of methane gas which is a powerful greenhouse gas?

Another way we can do this is though the humble worm…

“A worm farm produces vermicast, a soil-like material, and a ‘juice’ which are both nutrient rich and make ideal natural fertilisers to improve the health of the plants in your garden. Establishing and maintaining a worm farm is great fun and an excellent way to educate children about our natural world while touching on a myriad of topics including maths, spelling (hermaphrodite), art, biology and soil chemistry. In addition, managing a worm farm encourages a sense of responsibility both for our own actions and the world we live in” (eco house and garden)

When students first smell the worm castings (aka worm poo), they usually do so with their faces screwed up whilst exclaiming, “EEEEeeeww!” However, they are always pleasantly surprised to discover that, providing their environment is balanced, worm castings are free from odour and smell just like fresh earth.

Leanne Schifferle and Lynda Joyce

A fundamental principle of the Stephanie Alexander Program is to teach our students benefits of growing and cooking our own food, to equip our students with the basic skills necessary to achieve this and most importantly learn just how easy it is to grow and cook your own food with minimal resources.

This is one reason why teaching students how to make wicking boxes is a favourite lesson. Students learn how to make a ready-made veggie patch using recycled materials (broccoli box), some soil and a few seedlings. In the process they also learn about the wicking process, whereby plants draw moisture up from the earth and so need minimal watering. Wicking boxes are ideal for people who have limited space for garden beds.

During garden lessons, students are also taught the fundamental principles of composting and worm farming and easy, cost effective ways to set up basic systems at home. We basically follow the “lasagne” principle, which is quite simply layering green waste (nitrogen) and dry (carbon) materials. Students are also taught to observe their environment and make changes where necessary. For instance, if the worm farm is looking overly damp, is overloaded with food or has a strong odour, students learn to remedy this by adding dry materials and perhaps removing some food.

It’s all about balance!

We are looking forward to some warmer weather in Term 4 and an abundant veggie patch!

Until then, happy gardening and see you all soon!

Special thanks to Katherine Bonham for looking after our patch while Ms Joyce was busy in kindergarten. Also, Carmel Waite and Zoey Rowe for looking after our chooks so well! They are looking so happy and well...fat!