



Changing of the Gard(eners)

Message from Charlotte Mandrier, the outgoing Garden Coordinator:

First of all, thank you to everyone who came to help with our campus clean-up day. The campus is looking gorgeous and our garden is weed free and ready for spring planting! I am so grateful to be a part of such an incredible community.

This month, we have been busy working behind the scenes to transition the role of garden coordinator over to Emily. I am stepping away to spend more time on my business, and an upcoming family move!

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of the volunteers, parents, caregivers, family members, teachers, and especially the students who I've worked with over the past couple of years. From the epic post covid garden clean out (the weeds were taller than the kids!) to the now infamous Dirt Day, an amazing time was had by all.

There was something so magical about showing our incoming students where to find a strawberry in the garden. Watching grandparents help kids plant their first seedlings in the ground. Seeing our teachers challenge the kids to find their own answers in the garden. Most of all, seeing our students challenge us adults to embrace a little bit of chaos. It was from their lessons that our collective mantra emerged, "Mistakes are okay in the garden!" This was both a reassurance, and an intentional reminder to choose joy over fear when learning new skills.

I know Emily will carry on this tradition, and bring new experiences and teachings of her own. I can't wait to see what you grow together!

Message from Emily Heaton, the incoming Garden Coordinator

My daughter is in 5th grade at SRFACS and my son is in 3rd. Many of you know me as the uniform swap coordinator, but I have also spent many hours in the school garden. My background is in ecology and natural history, and I am an avid gardener as well. I'm excited to be taking on the role of garden coordinator and am thrilled to have the opportunity to teach kids about gardening and the natural world.

As always, the garden will continue to provide opportunities for students to get their hands dirty, sample fresh produce, and connect with nature. I also envision the garden as a STEAM lab of sorts - a space for kids to explore various science and math concepts; as well as a place that inspires art and creativity.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with project ideas or tips on how to improve the garden. While I've had many summer vegetable gardens and a handful of winter gardens over the past 24 years, there is always so much more to learn! ***For anything garden-related, you can reach me at potager@srfac.org.***

