

Press Clippings 08/17/2019 to 8/19/2019

---Kane County Connects---08/19/2019

School District U-46 Has a Garden Program and Needs Your Support!

By: Kane County Development and Community Services Department Matt Tansley.



Exciting things are happening at the School District U-46 Food and Nutrition Service headquarters in Elgin!



This summer the district broke ground on a sizeable vegetable garden plot on the open space next to their food service distribution center. The “Going Green with U-46” initiative is focused on building a new pipeline of fresh vegetables for U-46 students.

The produce grown this season will supplement the fruits and vegetables served at the garden bars (salad bars) in operation at five district schools.

The district is planning to add 10 new garden bars within the coming year. As it grows, it is hoped that the Going Green program will be an added source of fresh produce for the district’s summer feeding program.

Food Service Director Elena Hildreth and Food Service Manager Amelia Rothstein partnered with local farmer and community member Mike Kenyon to envision a way to serve kids locally grown fresh produce.



“Feeding the students our produce from tomatoes to herbs is going to be very exciting this fall,” Rothstein said. “We hope to reach the students to develop their understanding of sustainable gardening while providing nutrient rich food.”

The garden team has managed to plant a large portion of the garden area with seedling sunflowers, cauliflower, tomatoes, carrots, basil, cilantro, and cucumbers. However, there is still room available for additional plantings that will be harvested this fall.

The district has also partnered with the Association for Individual Development, a service organization for adults and children with developmental / traumatic disabilities, to create garden learning and volunteer opportunities for their clients.



The district is making an appeal to area residents and community organizations to donate needed supplies or cash. Some short-term needs include a storage shed, hoses, and assorted garden tools.

The program administrators will also be seeking grant-writing assistance to grow and sustain the program for seasons to come.

The district is also open to corporate sponsorship opportunities for businesses looking to make a positive impact in the community. Interested supporters / donors should contact Elena Hildreth, director of Food and Nutrition Services, at 847-888-5000 x5036 or elenahildreth@u-46.org.

The U-46 Food and Nutrition Service facility serves 57 district schools, including 41 elementary schools, five high schools, and two schools with summer breakfast programs.

For updates and photos, visit the Going Green program [webpage](#).

Press Clippings 08/18/2019

There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Daily Herald---08/17/2019

U-46's welcome center helps new, immigrant families acclimate

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Norma Burns, left, an English Language Learner parent educator with Elgin Area School District U-46's Family Welcome Center, works with Marissa Soto to get her daughter Mia enrolled in the district's dual language program this school year, which started Wednesday. Mia is an incoming kindergartner.



Brenda Escobedo is the coordinator of Elgin Area School District U-46's Family Welcome Center, whose primary function is ensuring new students with a non-English background are placed in the appropriate instructional program.

When Marissa Soto entered the American schooling system, there was a huge disconnect between the language she spoke at home with her Mexican immigrant parents and how she learned and communicated in school.

"I would go to school and it was all English and go home and it was all Spanish. That was so hard on me," said Soto, who now is trying to enroll her 5-year-old daughter Mia into Elgin Area School District U-46's dual language program, in which students learn proficiency in English and Spanish.

"I would definitely want her to speak both languages," said Soto, adding Mia then can communicate with her grandparents and her father, who primarily speaks Spanish.

U-46's Family Welcome Center, which helps newcomers and primarily immigrant families navigate the school system, tested Mia's English language listening and speaking skills to determine whether she qualifies for the dual language program. The process involved an interactive gamelike test with stories and pictures.

Over the past 14 years, the center has helped guide countless families like the Sotos through the enrollment process and get acclimated to U-46's schools and programs. It was established in 2005 to address the changing demographics of the state's second-largest school district that is reflective of the diversity within the 11 communities U-46 serves.

Families using the center's services come from a variety of ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds representing more than 100 languages spoken in U-46 classrooms, said Brenda Escobedo, center coordinator.

"This is like the first stop for our new families," Escobedo said.

The center's services are designed to meet the linguistic and academic needs of all students, but the center's primary function is ensuring new students with a non-English background are placed in the appropriate instructional program. More than 1,000 incoming kindergartners are screened there during the school year and the number keeps growing yearly, said Annette Acevedo, U-46 director of English Language Learners.

Screening students' English language proficiency helps determine their eligibility to receive English language learner services as mandated by federal and state laws.

The center also provides information to new families about the instructional programs the district offers from kindergarten through high school, the registration process, eligibility for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program, available community resources and assists with housing and transportation needs.

Center officials also follow up with students and their families providing additional social-emotional supports through home-school liaisons.

U-46 is a majority-minority district with Hispanics making up 54 percent of its more than 38,000 students. A majority of its schools serve significant Spanish-speaking student populations, while groups of students who speak a language other than Spanish -- Gujarati, Lao, Polish and Urdu -- are served at Liberty Elementary School in Bartlett.

The district's dual language program is offered starting in kindergarten and running through 10th grade, with the goal of rolling it up through 12th grade. Its goal is educating students at a high level to be bilingual and biliterate.

Acevedo said bilingual education has changed dramatically within the past decade with dual language programs replacing the previous traditional model that was focused on transitioning students to general education classrooms as quickly as possible.

"We know that being multilingual, multicultural is what students need to be successful in this global society," Acevedo said. "As a district, most definitely we see coming from a home that has another language as an asset not a deficit. We build on students' strengths and needs."