

Seeds for Education Grant Media Release Template

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

News from:

Date:

Phone:

E-mail:

For grant information, visit <http://www.wildones.org>

PROJECT CONTACT:

Person #1 Phone: _____ email: _____

Person #2 Phone: _____ email: _____

(Examples)

LOCAL CHILDREN GROW SEEDS FOR EDUCATION

or

[NAME OF FACILITY] INVITES BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES WITH NEW CROP OF NATIVE PLANTS

or

STUDENTS RESTORE PRAIRIE TO SCHOOL GROUNDS

Town/State – Student, staff, and community volunteers at _____ are excited to plant a _____ at their site this spring with funds from the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program administered by Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes. Everyone, but especially the children, will learn about native plants that have grown in this area for thousands of years, while getting a close-up view of butterflies, songbirds and other creatures that use the plants for food or shelter. Site preparation included _____. Members of the community are invited to participate in this project.

Seeds for Education grants include technical advice from local experts. The grants honor Lorrie Otto, who inspired school garden projects in the 1970s in the Milwaukee area.

_____, a local native plant nursery, will partner with the grant recipients through Wild Ones to supply seeds and plants at a discount. If applicable, include a quote from a representative of your local Wild Ones Chapter or a quote from a volunteer or project supporter. The quotes below are samples.]

NAME, Executive Director of Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes said, "We are pleased to support the children of _____ as they learn about pollination (or the water cycle), and bring back nature to their school grounds with this project."

Teacher _____ said, "This will be an exciting hands-on learning experience for our students. They have been planning this project for several months and learning about how growing native plants from our local ecosystem supports wildlife. The grant will help us purchase most of the seeds and plants we need. The children can hardly wait to get started."

Wild Ones is a non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging the use of native landscaping for the benefit of the environment. See their website at www.wildones.org.

For photos or information about the project, please contact _____.

SFE Sample Article for Newsletter

Seeds for Education: Toledo Public School's Proud Pollinator Garden

This time of year, the Hawkins Elementary schoolyard is peaceful, with an occasional cottontail grazing on white clover, and the sweet calls of goldfinches calling in flight. But in a few weeks, this scene will be teeming with excited children greeting the new school year.

Next to their playground, they will find a brand-new attraction: a colorful wildflower garden. Planted just two days before school let out for the summer, Hawkins 4th graders and their high school garden buddies from the Toledo Natural Science Technology Center (NSTC) teamed up to plant a new outdoor learning area: the *TPS Proud Pollinator Garden*. Both schools share a ten acre green space with mesic woodlands, pocket prairie, rec field and small stream.

This new 800 square foot garden was made possible through a 2017 Wild Ones Seeds for Education Grant and in-kind resources from the high school program. Two enthusiastic Toledo Public School high school teachers, Natalie Cook and Laura Schetter wrote the grant proposal and planned the garden with help from our Wild Ones chapter, supported by Hawkins faculty, all NSTC teachers, administrators, and of course, their students.

In May, using SFE funding, local genotype native plants were purchased from Wild Ones Nursery partners: Toledo Botanical Garden (Oak Openings Natives) and Friends of Wood County Parks. The plants selected typically attract pollinators and other wildlife throughout the season. Species included: lupine, penstemon, wild columbine, nodding onion, black-eyed Susan, mountain mint, bergamot, cardinal flower, blue lobelia, dense blazing star, buttonbush, swamp milkweed, butterfly weed, hoary vervain and New England aster. This summer, bees, hummingbirds, goldfinches and butterflies have begun to discover the new garden habitat.

Previously a lawn, the HS landscape class prepared the site in April by covering with black landscape cloth in order to kill the grass. Then, the animal care class used some math skills to determine the number of pavers and strong backs to surround the garden border. Early in May, TBG, teachers and students tended the 4" pots of native plants in greenhouses until planting day. Teachers prepared the students with ecology lessons before the big group planting on the morning of May 23rd. Tools were gathered, and the planting plan was made tangible by painting it onto the landscape cloth. Close to 70 people joined together to plant: 48 garden buddy students, 7 teachers, 5 administrators, 6 parents and 3 Wild Ones members shared in this special morning. The TPS garden buddies celebrated this fun and worthwhile learning project with a group photo and refreshments. This was the first time most students had ever planted a garden.

To maintain the pollinator garden, wood chip mulch was added mid-season to help keep the weeds in check and moisture in. Watering duties are shared by teachers, students with Wild Ones as back up. Soon a Wild Ones native garden sign will be installed. Garden buddies plan to meet to care for the garden through the school year. It is hoped that all grade levels will visit the garden during recess or lunchtime. Teachers are preparing lesson plans such as monarch butterfly tagging and release to feature the new garden, migration, geography and Citizen Science.

This fall, the high school students will begin planting another native landscape through a second Wild Ones SFE grant. This garden, for their own school, is a wildlife habitat rain garden. It will be planted next to the urban agriculture area, just below the NSTC school parking lot so it will slow down and clean storm water run-off before it flows into the Ottawa River watershed. Native plants will include rain garden species and shrubs that will provide food and shelter to support many types of wildlife.

If you would like to visit the Seeds for Education *TPS Proud Pollinator* educational garden, it is located on the southwest side of the schoolyard.