From the Principal
By Mrs Dorothee Lean

Welcome to the first edition of The Green Gazette, a quarterly newsletter designed to inform the school community of environmental happenings at Faulconbridge Public School. 2013 is an exciting time as we make great steps towards meeting our target as set in our 3 year Strategic Management Plan (2012 – 2014). As part of this process we are implementing a number of practical sustainable activities into programs and the school.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program

Last year, I was very pleased to sign a memorandum of understanding between the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF) and the school.

The introduction of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program at FPS is happening at the same time as the release of the new NSW syllabuses’ implementing the new national curriculum.

The program, with its practical hands on and meaningful experiences, is an ideal way for the school to help students develop:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Ethical understanding
- Information and communication technology capability
- Intercultural understanding
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Personal and social capability.

The program will also address the curriculum priority areas:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

Other environmental initiatives

- Activities enabling the school kitchen garden to be used by all classes K-6
- An Environmental walk being designed by 3/4/5/6E
- The Green Team
- The Green Thumbs Gardening Club
What is the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program?

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation aims to educate children in gardening, cooking and sustainability to improve both educational and health outcomes for children.

This program allows children to develop confidence and skills and provides opportunities for community and family involvement that is meaningful and FUN!

In the school based kitchen garden program:

- Students learn to build and maintain a garden.
- Students prepare a range of delicious dishes from the seasonal produce they have grown.
- Students develop positive lifelong eating habits.
- Experiences in the kitchen and garden classes support and extend learning across subjects such as English, maths, science, history and languages.
- Students learn to calculate, measure, analyse and articulate their experiences in a real life context as they engage with new cultures through food, leading to intercultural understanding.

Green Team

By Alexia (2T)

What is the “Green Team”? Green Team is about helping the school grow in caring for the environment.

Who is in the “Green Team”? Two people in your class get chosen to be special representatives.

What do we do? We take the compost out to the purple bins, we work in the garden and we take turns in watering the garden, we tell the teachers to turn the lights out to save electricity and encourage the students to be a good part of the environment.

Why did I choose to be a part of “Green Team”? I chose to be in “Green Team” because it is a great and special part of our school in lots of ways. My Dad works at Penrith Lakes doing Bush Regeneration and I think this is important because he does lots and lots of planting which is good for the environment in one hundred and fifty thousand different ways!

What I like about “Green Team”? I like “Green Team” because you get to be with a special friend and do special jobs in the garden and in the playground. My partner from 2T is Josh W.

What don’t I like about “Green Team”? I don’t like emptying the compost into the purple bins because they are smelly and they have fruit flies in them!
In December 2012, FPS was accepted into the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. This was the result of hard work from teachers, parents, friends of the school, and the principal Mrs Lean, who worked together to apply to be one of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF) schools.

In November 2012, Mrs Howard submitted an application for P & C assistance with funding which was given in principle support. One of the requirements for participating in this program is a kitchen with sufficient work spaces to conduct an effective kitchen garden class.

To meet this requirement we are planning to locate the kitchen in the old school library. The kitchen will include six kitchen bays allowing students to work in groups of five or six to produce food for sharing in the dining area.

Another key component of the SAKG program is a harvest table where children can look at, smell, touch and use the produce gathered from the garden.

Sharing the food they have made allows children to be rewarded for their efforts, discuss what they have made and how it was done. This essential component of the lesson also gives students ownership of the entire process.

Since the beginning of the year we have had plumbers, builders, electricians, council members and staff all working together on the project.

We thank Mr Patterson wholeheartedly for his work to assist us with overcoming obstacles mostly concerning the plumbing and waste water of the kitchen (due to the need to pump water UP rather than DOWN). Without parents like this school would not be what it is, so THANK YOU.
Grant Applications: The Quest for Funding
By Jacqui Hyslop and Beck Whiteside

After observing Mrs Poulson and Mrs Atwood’s enthusiasm and commitment to the SAKG Program we wondered what we could do to help get this project up and running. The answer—search for grant funds. The result—our first application for funding under the Environmental Trust’s Food Gardens in Schools Program.

The Program awards 20 grants of $3,500 for 24 month projects. Armed with the funding guidelines, and after meeting with staff from the School, we set off on the adventure of writing a grant application!

Our aim was to not only get funds to purchase supplies and equipment for the Kitchen Garden, but to develop a project that would allow parent involvement and teach students about sustainability and foods from different cultures. This project is called Munch ‘n’ Mulch: Growing together at Faulconbridge

It was with a sense of achievement and sheer relief that we submitted the School’s grant application to the Trust on Thursday 16 May.

Unfortunately, we now have to wait until October when the Minister for the Environment will announce successful grant applicants. If successful, the project will commence on 1 February 2014.

The process took many more hours than we expected but we’re really proud of our finished product.

Munch ‘n’ Mulch: Growing together at Faulconbridge

We will create specific food gardens that align with key areas of the school curriculum.

Bush Tucker and Asian food gardens will augment traditional vegetable and small fruit gardens.

The school’s Green Team collect leftover food scraps from lunchboxes. Purchasing worm farms and compost bins will allow our Green Thumbs workers to convert these scraps into compost for our existing kitchen garden, increasing self-sufficiency and reducing waste going to landfill.

The local community will be invited to "Mulch Fests", where the gardens are mulched and demonstrations held, to learn ways that we can reduce our carbon footprint and produce healthy food.
**Mulch Fests**

“Mulch Fests” will be an opportunity for parents to help mulch the garden and the students involved in the SAKG program will be cooking up Bush Tucker and Asian inspired dishes using produce that they have grown in the garden. It will be a great opportunity for parents to see what their children have been learning in the garden as well as the kitchen.

**Did you know..?**

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program not only increases children’s knowledge, confidence and skills in cooking and gardening. It is also aids learning across other subject areas and improves social skills.

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**Who knew pumpkins were so interesting?**

By Mrs. A

Before I went to the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden training, I thought pumpkins were just weird rotund vegetables that took up too much room in the vegetable patch. Did you know that you can actually train pumpkins to grow on a fence? Although their stems are slender they are capable of supporting up to ten kilograms. That’s like an ant giving a sparrow a piggy-back!

The humble pumpkin can also be stored for the Winter months. Want to know how?

1. Pick a pumpkin (Not from Mr. McGregor’s garden).
2. Place it in a sunny spot.
3. Turn it every few days. When the skin has hardened and the stem is as dry as your Pop’s elbows, it is ready for storage.
4. Place on a tea towel or mat (to stop bottom rot).
5. Store in a cool dark place (not your sock drawer).

Now you know how to store your pumpkins, you can enjoy some delicious pumpkin scones, pumpkin soup or roasted pumpkin, but not all in the same week.
Mr Thomson’s Fruity Dream
By Mr Paul Thomson

I keep having the same dream. In this dream I run through a sea of green parsley, jump over cucumber logs, swing on beans and somersault into a bed of lettuces. In this dream I feel so light and healthy. In this dream I arrive at Faulconbridge School and push open the gate that is heavy with tomatoes.

Mrs Lean opens her window and waves hello, then picks an apple from a tree and throws it to me. I catch it and yell “thanks” with a pearly white smile.

When I enter the class a beautiful perfume ignites my nostrils (it is about now that I realise I must be dreaming). I open the window and a frog jumps in and a beautiful butterfly lands on my laptop. In this dream I am happy. I think the seed of this dream is the fertile environment of our ever-greening school.

I like to dream when I’m awake too. For example, whenever I’m in the school garden I seem to be overtaken by a warm, sleepy feeling. I see the butterflies and the marigolds and my mind begins to soften and sway in the breeze. I’m partially aware of energetic children buzzing around weeding and planting new crops. I feel so good in the garden that I unfortunately never quite become as productive as my young green soldiers. It seems that I’m a very good supervisor. But for my dream to grow roots and bear fruit I must also lift a spade, I suppose. So next week these guitar-picking finger nails are going to get dirty. I promise.

Drawing by Emma (2Z)
Pathways, Plants & iPads  
News from Class 3/4/5/6E

Class 3/4/5/6E are creating an environmental walk through the remnant bushland near the Meeks Crescent entrance to the School. Education Officer from the Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens, Mount Tomah, Rusty Worsman, visited our School to identify the plants in the area and, in particular, those native to Faulconbridge.

It was amazing to discover such a large number of different plants in such a small area, including some bush tucker and carnivorous plants! In coming months, Class 3/4/5/6E will design an environmental walk. Students explore the path, pick a plant and use an iPad to find information about that plant. Rusty will advise us on how we can utilise the School’s new iPads to do this.

Students in the class will work on:
- developing a project plan and mapping the area
- identifying & researching plant types
- measuring and designing a path
- learning how to use an iPad for the project.

We aim to have the walk finished later this year so that we can showcase how well 3/4/5/6E have been able to work together.

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**GARDENING CLUB**

Gardening club meets every Friday from 11am-11:30am. Parents, carers and family members are welcome to join in. Please BYO gloves. The gardening club has over 100 members and is growing all the time. Students are involved in composting, harvesting, weeding, mulching.
Parsley
By Mikala Holdsworth

Parsley is one of the most popular herbs in our gardens. The two main types of parsley are curly leaf and broad leaf (sometimes called Italian).

It grows well in full sun or part shade; up to 30cm high. Seeds are best sown in spring and autumn.

Other plants believed to grow well with parsley are tomatoes, chives, asparagus, roses and carrots.

It is rich in vitamins A, B and C, iron, potassium and magnesium. The leaves can be used as garnishes, in fish dishes, chicken dishes, in salads, soups and tea.

Parsley also cleans the palate between courses. Why not try this quick parsley recipe?

Quick Parsley and Pasta
(serves 4)

1. Cook 250g dried pasta spirals according to packet instructions.
2. In a food processor add a bunch of parsley, 2 cloves garlic, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 2 tablespoons olive oil. Process until smooth. (Don't forget to taste test to see if you need to add more lemon juice or olive oil)
3. Drain pasta when cooked. Mix in parsley while pasta is hot.
4. Serve with halved cherry tomatoes.
(Optional serve with diced cooked chicken)

Thank you
To the parent volunteers, in particular Mikala Holdsworth and Shawn Hull, who not only help with the Gardening Club but also help maintain the garden and run the Harvest Market each Friday afternoon.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program really works!

Findings of an Australian Government-funded independent evaluation have the potential to change the way educators view the benefits of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program in Australian primary schools. To find out more visit the link below.

http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/about-the-program/proving-it-works