The following document is being considered for inclusion in the Smithsonian's *Community of Gardens* website used to promote gardening in America through narrative celebrations of people's connections with gardens.

Campbell Elementary School's Outdoor Classroom

At Campbell Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia, our students are fortunate to have wonderful outdoor spaces which serve as places to to extend their lessons and provide a natural environment in which they can learn. We also have an Outdoor Learning Coordinator, Ms. Christy, who has spearheaded many lessons with students and given teachers the courage to take their lessons outside.

The school is also an EL Education school. This means that twice a year, students engage in in-depth interdisciplinary units which focus on helping to solve local problems. This year, the 5th graders' organism expedition took them into the outdoor classroom and allowed them to address the question, "How can I leave my mark on a place that has left its mark on me?" One of the ways they are leaving a mark is by having created placards for some of the most prominent organisms in our outdoor spaces, and the other way is by writing their fondest memories of Campbell's outdoor classroom including our courtyard, gardens, pond, and compost pile. The following essays were written by Campbell 5th graders.

Eating Campbell Tomatoes

By Drew

On a bright sunny day in October, in the Campbell School courtyard, Ms. Perry's class and I picked out tomatoes so we could eat them. The garden had other vegetables growing in it. The tomato patch was on the right side in the courtyard a few feet away from where I was standing.

We were picking out tomatoes because the tomatoes were ripened. When we were walking to the tomato patch, there were not many tomatoes. There was not much space for Ms. Perry's class to pick out the tomatoes. The other vegetables were kumato tomatoes and cherry tomatoes. There were some green tomatoes that I thought were kumato tomatoes, but they were normal tomatoes. We couldn't pick those out. We picked some kumato tomatoes. The cherry tomatoes were small. I thought those weren't ready, but Ms. Christy said, "We have to pick them out." There weren't many cherry tomatoes. I think I picked out one of the cherry tomatoes. After we picked out the tomatoes, kumato tomatoes, and cherry tomatoes, the BEST part was yet to come.

Ms. Perry's class was going to eat the tomatoes. Right away, I was so excited. We first washed the tomatoes, and then Ms. Christy cut them. I ate the tomatoes and maybe one cherry tomato. While I was eating a tomato, Ms. Christy brought out salt, and then said, "Salt will be your friend." What she meant by this is that salt will always taste good with food. Afterward, I was delighted with our Campbell Courtyard adventure!

Through the Lens of Microscopes
By Bruno

Roses are red, violets are blue, I saw compost samples so go look, too. It was a bright and colorful Friday with the marshmallow fluffy clouds shielding the burning sun. In the middle of the day, Mrs. Perry announced “We're going to scan the compost pile for samples and look at them through a microscope.” About three-fourths of the students’ mouths opened, and then the blizzard of questions began.

If we would be looking through a microscope, then there must be something living in it. And how would it survive? What does it eat? What does it look like? Turns out there were a blizzard of questions in my own head. “So it must have a body as small as the tip of a sewing needle,” I thought.

As we walked down the hall past the pictures and windows, we turned right and headed outside. As we approached the emerald green and dirt brown leaves, we saw something extraordinary curled up. A greenish-gray and orange-outlined box turtle! He or she was close by the leaves and stems of dark green shoved in the corner part of the compost. As the words, “Wow look a turtle!” were passed around, Mrs. Perry collected a sample much like all the rest.

Soon after, we went to Mrs. Olson’s classroom to look at our discovery with the other classes. As the coal black microscope’s HD camera transferred the image to the Smartboard, everyone was either talking to their friends or wondering what is smaller than a thread and is alive and surviving. When it finally turned on, we saw these little black blobs zooming like a train

late to it’s station. Some big, other blobs are small ,and it turns out these little blobs ate this sort of gel. While they eat it, it looks like their digging through it. Some quick rumors spread like “Look, it’s a fly!” or “No, it’s a lizard!”. But really there's no way that it was a lizard or a fly because it was WAY too small. The teacher explained to the students you can't see it with the naked eye. I got a shock of excitement and wonder while experiencing this once in a lifetime chance of a learning expedition. I realized there can always be something so small you can't even see it, as if there are little, tiny, magical creatures.

Falling In Mud
By Angela

Falling in mud is like falling in goopy quicksand. You sink, and it's hard to get out. Mrs. Christy had asked us to collect mud so we could make clay. She assigned us partners, and I got Brittany. Mrs. Christy gave us a pail and a shovel. Brittany took the shovel, lost grip of it, and it fell in the mud.

“No!” Brittany cried. Cass heard her and ran over.

“What?” Cass asked.

“Give me your shovel!” Brittany demanded.

“Um, no,” Cass told her.

“Angela! What are you waiting for? An invitation? Get the shovel from the mud already!” Brittany yelled at me.

“Can't you just ask Mrs. Christy for a new one?” I asked Brittany.

“Get it now!” she yelled.

“Fine!” I yelled at her. I leaned over to pick it up.

“Angela, watch out,” Cass told me.

I leaned over more and more till splat! I fell in.

“Grab onto my shovel,” Cass told me. I grabbed it, but it snapped in half. The head of the shovel fell in the mud causing the mud to fly all over the place.

A piece splattered on Brittany’s boot.

“Angela! My boots are muddy because of you!” Brittany yelled at me. Cass rolled her eyes.

“Ugh!” Brittany yelled stomping her foot, throwing the pail at me and storming off.

“I'll go get Caroline,” Cass told me running in her direction. She quickly came back with Caroline. I tried to move my feet but it was like my shoes were bricks! I managed to wiggle one foot out; don't ask me how.

“I know what to do!” Caroline cheered running into the building with the pail.

She quickly came out of the building running towards me with the pail. I looked closely into the pail and it was water! She dumped the water into the mud and my leg became free to move around! It was easy for my friends to pull me out.

“Thank you!” I cheered wrapping my arms around them. That day in the garden, I learned how important it is to ask for help.

Observing with Ipads

By Jack

The 4th grade class was as loud as a tornado throwing stuff around! Then they calmed down as they listened to trees swaying in the wind. Ms. Olson brought the class to attention and explained that we were going outside to take pictures of animals and we would come back inside for the next step of the process. As I walked out the door, conversations turn into whispers, and the whispers turned into fingers intensely dancing around the shiny Ipad screens.

The first person shoved the door open and bright colorful T-shirts fill the green grass in the courtyard. The tie-dyed T-shirts reflected off the peaceful, clear water. People’s shoes scrambled around the grass racing to get to the pond. Then the teacher said, “Five minute warning!” Then, the sound of “*Kachows”* coming from the Ipads started to increase as people were getting their final pictures in. Ms. Olson gathered the kids by saying, “Line up, Everyone.” Finally, it was time to go inside and let the cool A/C flow across our faces.

I’ll always remember people kneeling down on the wooden, bridge trying to get the picture of our courtyard turtle floating on the surface of the water, peeking his head out to show his smile. I’ll never forget the tiny waves echoing throughout the pond and lightly smacking against the stone slabs or seeing the bright yellow sun shimmering off the clear pond water and the tadpoles squirm around making ripples in the water. I will always have those memories of Campbell in my mind.

Taking Samples
By Joe

We walked outside into the courtyard, clueless of what was ahead of us. Ms. Davitt took a cup out of her pocket, then she informed us what we were doing. As she carefully took a sample from the pond, she said, “The sample we are taking is for looking at under a microscope.” When we finished taking our sample, we made our way into Ms. Olson’s room. When we put the cup down on the table, we noticed there was a tiny fish in the cup. We named him Geraldini.

When Ms. Perry’s class entered the classroom with their sample, we put a little bit of our sample on a slide and looked at it under the microscope. When the microscope finally focused, we saw a bunch of little organisms squirming around in the water. “ What is that thing wiggling around?” children asked. Ms. Clark moved the slide around so we could see different organisms. When we were done looking at our sample, Ms. Clark took our slide out and put Ms. Olson's slide on from the Campbell wetlands.

When the microscope focused on their slide, we saw almost an exact replica of our slide. I think they looked alike because the wetlands get the same rain water as the pond. When Ms. Clark focused on an exact place, we saw a blob with little organisms going in and out of it. In the

middle of one blob, there was a long green stick- like organism. It looked similar to a little bamboo stick.

Since Ms. Perry's class took a sample from the compost, Ms. Clark had to put a little bit of water on their slide. When Ms. Clark put the slide in, all we could see was darkness. When Ms. Clark moved the slide around, there was some spots where there wasn't any soil, so it was clear. When we were done looking at the slides, we talked about what we saw under the microscope during the lesson. Jokingly, one kid claimed, "I saw a blue whale." After everybody calmed down, Ms.Olson reminded us that we were looking at this under a microscope that was zoomed in 400 times. When everybody was done talking, we went back to our classrooms. I'll never forget seeing the little organisms from our outdoor classroom at Campbell hop around on the screen.

The Best Turtle Time Ever!

By Laura

One day after science, kids were running and shoving all over the place trying to get to Turtle Time, which is a half hour block each day when we focus on various special activities. I went back to Ms. Davitt's classroom for Turtle Time. When everyone got there, Ms. Davitt said, "4th grade! ''

Then all the kids said, " Yes, Ms. Davitt! " which is our typical response.
Ms. Davitt told us that we should get a book to read because we were going to go read outside. Everyone looked happy and relieved that we were going to go read outside because that meant we didn't have to do any work. I said inside my head, " Yay. "

Once we stepped foot in the courtyard almost everyone dashed away running just to get a chair to sit on. I just walked to get a chair. At least there were still some chairs left. Once I got settled, I started reading my book. Then a few minutes later, I started getting distracted by the turtles swimming peacefully in the pond, relaxing on the warm sunny day. So I went to sit next to Susan. We wanted to feed the turtles some leaves but we couldn't, so we just started to talk a little.

A few minutes later, I decided to start reading in the grass, and when I did, I could feel the nature on me, birds chirping, the wind blowing my hair, the sound of the waterfall going into the pond, and trees dancing in the wind. That day, I learned that reading in nature makes you feel heavenly. It was really the best Turtle Time ever.

Community Courtyard Crew

By Cass

It was just an ordinary Monday. We had P.E. and Spanish, which aren't too interesting, and math, language arts and science. Nothing special about that, or so I thought, until it was Community Meeting Crew. During Community Meeting Crew a team of 4th and 5th grade

students usually prepare the googleslides of student work and school activities we present to the entire school on Friday mornings when we gather in the multipurpose room.

“Today we will be doing something differently,” started Ms. Olson “We will work in the courtyard! ” she announced.

“Noooo!” yowled the students that love to create Google Slides and backstage people who look forward to working behind the scenes.

“No moans, no groans, and no complaints,” said Ms. Olson.

Then we had to line up and we went outside to the courtyard.““ Cass, can you get my jacket for me?” asked Ms.Olson.

“Why?” asked Pele.

“Because It’s too cold!” Ms. Olson responded. So I raced over to get her jacket and returned just in time.

“Thank you, Cass.” said Ms. Olson.

“You’re welcome!” I replied.

“ Okay I will be choosing jobs,” began Ms. Olson. “ Will, Cass, Pele and Jamilla, clean out the cilantro pots, Opal…”

I got started on my job. The cilantro pots were growing mold and surprisingly some moss.

“Okay, I got three pots cleared!” Will announced. We were supposed to each get tan compostable pots and pull out the dead cilantro plant and throw it into a bucket, and then dump the soil left inside of the eco- friendly container getting every last particle into a giant pot. Afterwards, we placed the mini pots into the stack. Of course, Will had to make it a competition, and of course, he won. I got 20 done, Pele got 18, and Will got 23, so he won but got completed last. Pele got done first so she also won since she got done with her fair share first. I completed it with the cleanest hands afterwards, which is a skill.

Since we all finished in less than a quarter hour because of our “intense” competition, Ms. Olson gave us another job. This one was not messy, which ruined the fun. That job was to rake the leaves with the fifth graders. When I was raking the leaves, I saw a little mini turtle when I came by raking the leaves, so I had to put him down gently and slowly before continuing to rake the leaves.

Suddenly, “Okay guys, time to go inside,” I heard Ms. Olson yell in order for all of us to hear. Then we lined up and went back inside the cool science-decorated classroom. I got my purple tie-dye backpack, and my owl lunch bag, and I headed out the classroom to the door to wait for my mom.

“It’s getting colder and you’re not even wearing a jacket!” Ms. Olson told Will and Pele. They were wearing just long-sleeved shirts. And it wasn’t that cold because the sun was shining. Suddenly, I saw my mom out the door standing in the warm outside. I raced over to her and hugged her.

“How was it today?” my mom asked.

“Great, err, actually good “ I replied.

“Why? Did you not get the job you wanted?” she asked again.

“Because it wasn’t messy enough.” I told her.

“What job did you get then. Weatherbug, M.C., Backstage?” she asked again.

“Nothing”. I answered.

“Why?!” asked my mom surprised.

“Because today we cleaned up the courtyard since we won’t be having Community Meeting this Friday,” I answered.

“So it was like a Community Courtyard Crew!” she exclaimed.

“Yeah, basically’” I told her

“What did you learn?” She asked.

“That Ms. Olson hates the cold!” I replied smugly. Then we kept driving to our house.

Notes
By Dave

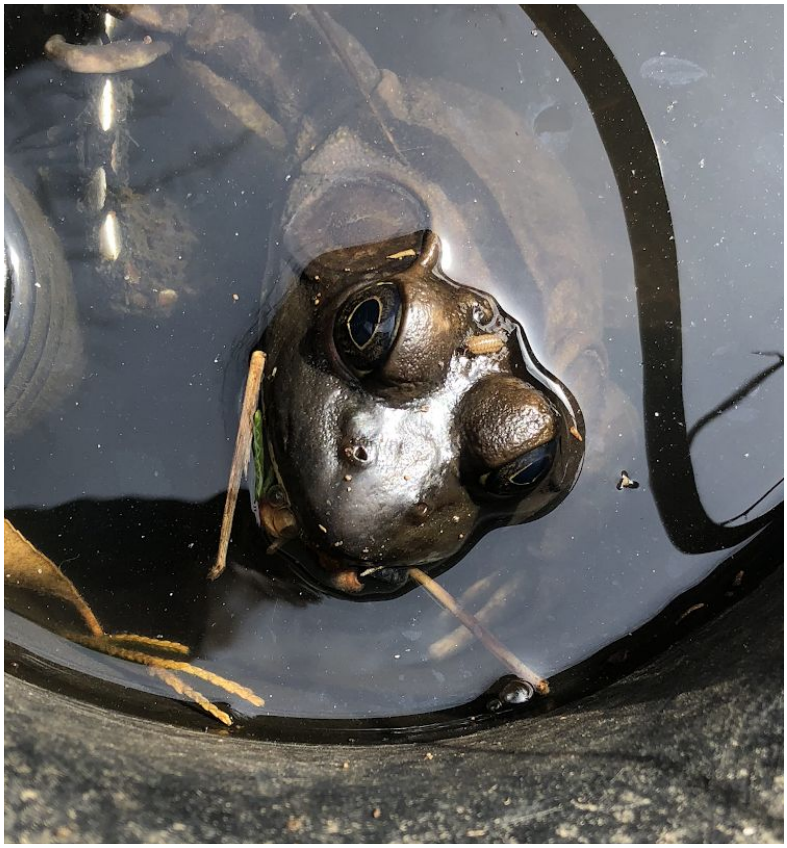
As I scampered though the leaves and the thin stalks of bamboo, my eyes were set on the oval-shaped pond. Our fifth grade class was working on our organism notes in the courtyard. Bees were buzzing and ants were crawling around the bamboo. Wildlife was all around me, suffocating me. When I halted to a stop, something caught my eye. All of the mosquito fish and tadpoles were firing in all directions creating an illusion.

As I approached the bridge, I noticed something: a dark green bullfrog! As I surveyed the situation I whisper-screamed,“ There is a bullfrog!” When people started to crowd around the frog, I exited the pond suddenly and silently.

Next, I was warned by Ms.Davitt that baby turtles were on the prowl, so I chose carefully where to place my feet. I trotted carefully alongside the pond. Then, I came to a stop. I jumped on my favorite violet chair, setting my eyes on my bright white notes and concluding them. Then, Ms. Davitt rounded us up like sheep, and we class marched toward the hallway.

I will always remember the bullfrog with its warts on its back propped up on his stick like an emperor, like he was some kind of Frog Prince. “Crook,crook,crook,” the frog was in action as the leaves danced around the sky and into the Campbell courtyard. The pond was ready for

the frog’s arrival.



Orientation to The Outdoor Classroom
By Gilbert

We were walking to the outdoor classroom with Ms. Christy. Ms. Davitt was shhhing us. Thump, thump, thump, we were walking down the hallway. Then we were in the outdoor classroom. I was looking at some turtles but then I heard people yelling and pointing. I came over to see what the noise was about. People were yelling. “Frog, Frog, it's a Frog,’’ in every direction. Then I saw it! It was big and green maybe dark green. I looked at it for a little while longer, and then I walked to Ms.Christy. She said, You can try one of these small little cherry things. They were covered up in the this white fluffy packaging, but they were tasty.
Meanwhile…

We were walking through the Wetlands. People were looking at the moss on the tree and I saw this large Mosquito Spider. After that, all of the students walked to the orchard and then BOOM! ‘’G,‘’I yelled.back.

Everyone was asking what had happened. I said, “I heard a big boom!’’

Jack said, ‘’James just stepped on a bee.’’

We spent a few more minutes at the orchard. Ms. Christy was telling us about how there used to be three apple trees, but they disappeared. Then the tour was over. I will always remember the frog in the courtyard and the bee in the orchard that passed away.

The Finding of Willow

By Pele

Oh no, what happened now? I thought. It was a sunny, bright and cheerful recess at Campbell Elementary, and I was just about to ask what to play, when Ms. Christy headed over. Her face was grim and full of sadness, and all my anger about not already being playing washed away.

“Hi?” I questioned, my voice quivering. I was beginning to worry. With that look, it must've not been a good day.

“I’ve got a job for the Green Team,” she responded.

About a year before in third grade…. It was very chilly compared to the previous spring but I still wandered around the Campbell Wetlands. It was cloudy and windy, just what I did not like.

“Hey, you know what?” I said to my friends. “We should start an environmental club!” I exclaimed.

“ Yeah!” one of my friends named Brianna said; her dark braids swayed as she said it.

“But what would we name it?” Anna asked. She always loved nature ideas.

“Green Team.” I said with a grin. “ Green Team. Yeah,” I agreed with myself.

Now, about one year later, the Green Team was still in action. Ms. Christy pulled me over and I took a few friends with me.

“So where are we going?” Will, another Green Team member, asked.

“Over by the weeping willows and near the main office,” she replied.

The weeping willow’s branches rustled softly as we walked. Their thin green leaves almost sparkling in the sun. Cool, we get to go with Ms.Christy, but why such a sad face when it’s such a nice day? I thought. When she stopped I looked around, all I saw was the main office and willows. What was wrong? Then I looked down.

At first, there was silence. That’s all that you would hear. Nothing. There was a baby bird. Pale and featherless, it was really not a pretty sight. It was just a little taller than half a somewhat sharpened pencil and was laying on its right side, dead.

We talked about where it might have come from because Ms. Christy didn’t know. Finally, we decided that we would name her Willow after the majestic Willows we found her under.

From that day on, each time I passed under the willows I thought of Willow. Not sadly though, I felt proud. As time went on, I always remembered Willow and that brought me to think. One act of kindness can have a big impact on the people around it, like it had on me.

Pond Cleaning

By Will

Splash! My hand plunged into the water. Splat! The muck I fished out hit the hard stone.

It was a beautiful morning in the Campbell courtyard. The bird's songs filled the air, the leaves were a cheerful green, and the sound of the waterfall drifted around the pond. "Hey Anna, Will want to clean the pond?" asked Ms.Christy.

"Sure," we responded.

Ms.Christy, our outdoor classroom teacher, gave us special gloves, and we were on our way. We lifted off the lid of the filter and got to work.

"This water is muddy," I said.

"Yeah," agreed Anna.

Grabbing muck through the gloves felt weird because I could feel the mud oozing around, but I wasn't getting messy. Once we fished all the muck out of the filter, we took out the filter to clean it. Then I saw something move in the muck.

"What was that?" I asked Anna.

"What was what?" Anna responded.

"Something moved in the muck."

Then a fishing spider crawled out of the muck.

"Oh, it's a fishing spider," I said.

"Can they hurt us?" Asked Anna.

"They do have venom, but," I responded.

"So they can hurt us?"

"No."

"But they have venom."

"Never mind."

"Can they hurt us, or not?"

"No, and I think we should clean the net now."

"Hey, where did it go?"

"You mean you lost it!"

"Yeah."

"Well,I'll turn on the hose."

While Anna turned on the hose I looked for the fishing spider but had no luck.

"Stand back," Anna said.

Shhhhhhhhhhhhh. Anna sprayed down the net then we put it back in the filter and put the lid back on.

"Let's do the top filter now," Anna said.

"There's a top filter? I asked.

"Yup," Answered Anna.

We walked up to the waterfall, and Anna started to move a big rock.

"Can I have some help please?" asked Anna.

"Sure," I responded.

Once we got the rock off we pulled out the filter and got to work.

“What are those?” said Anna.

“I have no idea,” I responded.

There were small squirmy creatures all over the inside of the filter.

“I’ll get the hose,” Anna said.

“Ok,” I answered.

We washed all the squirmy things away, put the filter back and went inside to wash our hands.

“Whoa! Are your gloves filled water too? I asked Anna.

“Yup,” she answered.

“They need to get longer gloves.”

“Yeah.”

“My hands are cold.”

“same.”

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

“I’d use warm water if I you,” I said as I washed my hands.

“Ok.” Anna responded.

After we washed our hands, we went back outside to ask Ms.Christy for something else to do.

Pond Filter Madness!

by Anna

Why did I agree to do this? I asked myself as I pulled another handful of wet leaves and algae out of the pond filter. It was a Saturday morning garden workday and the courtyard at Campbell Elementary was filled with parents, students, and teachers all either weeding, cutting, hammering, watering, or planting something.

Will, who was my classmate, and I had the task of cleaning the pond filter because the gunk from the pond builds up in there. I clearly didn't know what I was agreeing to when earlier that day my mom asked us if I would do it. We had put on gloves to “protect” our hands.
To clean it we had to take off the top of the first filter and pull out all the gunk in there. This gunk included leaves, algae, and mud. It was disgusting, and by now chilly water was seeping into our gloves.

After a little while, beside me Will said, “Oh, there’s a fishing spider!”

I looked down and there it was, a spider with a dime sized body with eight long skinny legs. “Oh my goodness; it’s ginormous!” I exclaimed. Then I looked away for two seconds and when I looked back it was gone! “Where is it?! Where is it?!” I asked terrified. Of course, what Will didn’t tell me was that the spider’s venom couldn’t harm humans. “You lost it!” I exclaimed. A chill went up my spine. Who knows. It could’ve been about to climb up my back without me knowing!

Will laughed beside me. I groaned and plunged my hand back into the murky water. About fifteen minutes after the whole spider fiasco, it was time to clean the pond waterfall filter that was on the other side of the pond. I did not want to continue, but of course Will did, and we

had to finish what we had started. I trudged over to the waterfall, and we took off the top and inside was a large, square sponge. Our job was to spray it off with the hose.

“Okay let’s bring it over to the sidewalk. We can spray it over there,” I said.

“Alright,” Will replied. We carried the large sponge over to the sidewalk and put it down.Then we unraveled the hose and brought it over.

I ran back to the faucet to turn the water on. As I turned the knob an icy jet of water immediately came rushing out of the sprayer and straight out in front of Will. He aimed it at the sponge and I ran back to to help out. That's when we noticed. “Oh! Eww!” I said.

“Augh! What are those?” asked Will.

“I don’t know!” I replied. Wiggling around in the sponge were a whole bunch of small worm-like creatures. We tried and tried to spray them off but it was not working! So we just decided to put the sponge back.

Finally, after closing the waterfall filters top we headed inside to wash our hands. After all, tons of water had made its way into our gloves when we were cleaning the first filter. After washing my hands, I headed back outside glad we were finished.

Although I didn't feel like it then, I am glad we cleaned those filters. I also feel I was very lucky that I got to have that experience. It is not something I would’ve done anywhere else other than Campbell, and it is something I will rem ember for a long time.

Cilantro Transplant

By John

“Today we will transplant our cilantro,” Ms.Olson said. It was a warm spring morning in Arlington Virginia, we were in the middle of our *Secret Life of Cilantro* expedition (an expedition is a big unit).

Hesitantly, I decided to raise my hand and ask, “What does transplant mean?”

“It means to take something out of something else and putting it somewhere else,” Ms. Olson said.

Jeff said, “Can we play silent ball until Ms.Christy comes?”

“Sure, here’s the ball,” Ms. Olson replied as she tossed the rainbow ball to Jeff. The whole room became silent. It was silent for about two minutes, and then Ms.Christy walked in the room.

“Gelila will you toss the ball?” Ms. Olson said.

“Sure,” Gelila replied. Then we gathered on the rectangular carpet.

“Today we will transplant cilantro,” Ms.Christy said, “Let’s line up. I will tell you what to do in the courtyard.” It took about thirty seconds to travel from the classroom to the courtyard. “Now Ms. Olson and I will decide your partner group of four to dig your hole in the garden bed and transplant your cilantro in.” Ms.Christy had me a partner up with Richard, Will and Frank. I was happy since I did not know Richard much and thought maybe we could become friends. “Now you are in a partner group of four decide who wants to dig a hole in the garden bed,” Ms.Christy said.

“I will dig in the hole,” Will said.

“I will go get the bucket,” Frank said.

“Then I guess me and Richard will help Will dig” I said.

Finally we finished, “Time to get the cilantro. I think Frank should get the cilantro plant,” I said.

“Okay,” Frank said as he walked to go get it. When Frank came back we went all carefully to the bucket and slowly pulled the cilantro out by its root. It came out of the soil very fast.

“I did not know that it would come out so fast!” said Will.

I couldn't believe it I thought to myself. Then we carefully placed the cilantro in the garden bed. Then we placed the soil around the plant.

“Done!” I explained. This was the first time I transplanted something.

A few days later, you could see the the cilantro plant thriving in its new home in the garden bed. Also, I could not wait to eat it!

The Mantises
By Max

Huh, I wonder where she could be. I walked into class searching for my teacher, Ms. Berg. “Good morning, Ms. Berg,” I said confused, “I hope she’s here,” I thought. It would be embarrassing if she wasn't.

We had been keeping a praying mantis egg in our classroom for around a month, and

everyone wanted to know when it would hatch. “Oh. you are on the floor picking baby praying mantises. They must’ve hatched!”

“Yeah they did hatch, can you help me pick them up?” She asked

“Sure,” I said. So I dropped my stuff and started to pick them up “There are soooo many, I thought there would only be like ten or something!” I exclaimed while picking them up off the ground.

“Let's take this into the courtyard” she said.

“Got it” I said while picking up the cage. Some of my classmates were walking into class and decided to help us so we walked out.

Our school is lucky to have a giant courtyard so me and my classmates walked out to the courtyard with some other 3rd grade classes, and put the cage on the table and took the top off so the mantises could escape. They hopped out and bounced around the courtyard. We ran around catching them.

“This is James, Jr.," my classmate, James, said. Some of us started naming them juniors and other names. I wanted to keep them forever. Once we were done saying our final goodbyes, we went back into the building for reading.

“ Well that was fun," I said.

“It sure was," said some of my classmates while walking into class,

Immediately Ms. Berg looked at the time. She said, “We missed most of our class time!” So we hurried up and packed our stuff into our lockers while wondering, “What are those mantises doing?”

Bamboo Fence
By Richard

It was a hot summer day, and we were making a fence to protect a garden. Wok! wok! wok! went rock against bamboo as bamboo dug into dirt. We were in Ms. Olson's fourth grade, and Ms. Christy said, "Does anyone have any ideas for the fence?" Jeff, Anna and Caroline raised their hands Ms. Christy called on Caroline.

"How about we put up a metal fence?" asked Caroline.

But Ms. Christy said, "We are going to use pliers and saws from Campbell so we don't spend any money, and we are going to make it ourselves so we don't have to pay anyone to do it." Then Jeff raised his hand,

"How about we make a stone wall?" he asked, "That would protect the plants."

Ms. Christy said, “That would take too long, and I don't think we have that many stones here.”

Then John raised his hand. Ms. Christy called on him. John said, “Can we put up bamboo, and then put grape vines around the bamboo?” But Ms. Christy said, “We don't have grape vines we can use for the fence.

Then Caroline raised her hand, “Can we put up bamboo across and up?”

But Ms.Christy said, “How would we put the bamboo up horizontally?”

Then John raised his hand. “Maybe we could use string?” he asked.

Ms. Christy said, “We don't have time to go look through the whole school for it”.

Then the class decided we would put up bamboo sticks vertically. Next we had to come up with a size for the bamboo. “Remember we don't want to make it too tall, or it will block out the sunlight” said Ms. Christy.

Ally raised her hand, and Ms. Christy called on Ally, “How do you think we should we should make the fence Ally?” asked Ms. Christy.

“I think we should make it about 2 feet tall,”said Ally..

“I don't know” said Ms. Christy “It might be too tall for the plants to grow.”

“Oh,” said Ally, a second later my hand shot up. “But isn't less than two feet easy for deer to jump because, deer can jump pretty high?” I said.

”We’re only making the fence to discourage the deer,” said Ms. Christy, but I still thought that if dogs roll over for food what will stop a deer from jumping over a fence to get food?

Twenty minutes later, we decided to make it one foot and six inches. “Alright everyone, get in line. We are going to get some bamboo!”

We went outside, and cut the bamboo off with clippers then we used saws to saw it into smaller chunks piled it into a wheelbarrow then wheelbarrowed it through the building to the garden it went speeding with everyone pushing the wheelbarrow out of wanting to help. It felt like we were in a wheelbarrow parade. Ms. Christy said, “We can use rocks from the colonial garden to hammer in the bamboo.” I jumped down on my knees and started crawling frantically for a rock but all the rocks were taken before I could get any .I started looking other places for rocks in case one wasn't seen or got out of the colonial garden, sadly only one was and got taken so I waited for someone to do something else. Finally someone did something else so I took their rock and searched for some bamboo to hammer in I got some stuck it in the ground and hammered away then, I repeated the process. As I wiped dirt off my hands and looked back on that day I decided that even if deer would jump over the fence it was still fun to make it.

Fence

By Caroline

Last year, in the fall of 4th grade, we planted flowers with the Kindergarteners as they wrote it in their journals. Sadly, the 6th graders stepped on the flowers on their way to and from middle school. Ms. Christy told us about the problem, and we decided to make a fence with bamboo to protect the flowers.

So first, Miss Olson’s class started to cut some bamboo in the courtyard. Then we

carried the bamboo to the Colonial Garden, and we put it down. We had three different stations. The first station was where you had to pick a not-too-small or a broken bamboo. The second station was where you cut the size that Mrs. Christy told you to. At the third station, you put the bamboo in the ground and hammered it in so it would stay in the ground. We finally were finished! I felt excited at the beginning and helpful at the end.