



NH Farm to School Case Studies

Plymouth Elementary School Garden
Plymouth, NH

Grant helps fund school garden in Plymouth

The Plymouth Elementary School garden is a project of the **Eco Learning Farm Stand (ELFS) program**. Julie Bisson, a teacher at Plymouth State, started the ELFS program a couple of years ago, with the garden at Plymouth Elementary breaking ground this spring, 2011. The ELFS program provides a hands-on experience for kids that promotes cooperation, wellness and wonder while embracing sustainability through a connection with nature.

The ELFS program applied for and received a \$500 grant from the National Gardening Association and Home Depot, which they used to purchase stakes and grow lights for the school garden. The stakes are to trellis the tomato plants and the grow lights became part of stands built by New Hampton School students as part of their required community service hours. Each classroom at Plymouth Elementary now has their own grow light to start seeds for their garden. The green house on site has been part of the eighth grade curriculum for many years and will now be utilized in the fall

and winter by the garden program.

Student involvement in the garden includes pre-schoolers, first and second graders, who help to plant seeds and seedlings. The Student Council helps to maintain the garden during the school day. Over the summer, family volunteers regularly weed, water and harvest. Next year the school plans to almost double the size of the garden, including the planting of fruit trees and berry bushes. Learn more: <http://ecolearningfarmstand.wordpress.com/about/>.

--By Stacey Purslow

NH Farm to School (NHFTS) is a statewide program working to connect NH farms and schools. Farm to school connections enable schools to serve healthy, locally grown foods in their cafeterias, integrate farms, food, and nutrition into their curriculum, and explore food and agriculture-based learning opportunities. NHFTS is a program of the University of New Hampshire's Sustainability Academy, and is grateful for the generous support of Share Our Strength and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

