



Partnership Press

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Kudos to Steller's Gardening Gurus!



If you walk past the entrance of **Steller Secondary School**, you can still see iris, forget-me-nots, roses, and other perennial plants in great shape. These are actually two *stellar* rain gardens! These scientifically engineered environmental systems are not only pleasing to look at, but they also save taxpayer dollars.

Last May, Steller art teacher Jean Poulsen and seminar teacher Danielle Sjoden teamed up to sponsor a Community Gardening Intensive. Working with a program sponsored by the Municipality of Anchorage, twenty-five Steller students built two rain gardens.

A rain garden is a depression in the landscape designed to catch and filter the water that runs off impervious surfaces. Rain gardens filter storm water runoff and improve water quality before it flows into streams, rivers and lakes. Particles from snow melt and rain can clog the drainage system, costing taxpayers a great deal of money to periodically clean out.

Students tirelessly dug holes and layered sand, gravel and native soil. Parents donated most of the native, and Danielle purchased two rose bushes and gravel. Students decided where to place the plants. Kari Sherman of the municipality's rain garden program helped the students determine the size and location of their rain gardens.

Steller students also worked with Ryan Gallman from the **Alaska Community Action on Toxins (ACAT)** to build a peace garden next to the school's gazebo. ACAT helped Steller build a community peace garden free from pesticides and chemical fertilizers, which create severe ocean pollution. Vegetables planted included snap peas, carrots, potatoes, beans, lettuce, chard, zucchini, and other squash. Over the summer, students Sean Kelly and Alexandra Gerlt carefully tended the garden with Ryan, making frequent trips to school to water and weed. Last month, Jean and students carefully harvested, cut, washed, and wrapped lettuce and chard, eventually delivering over three industrial-sized drums to the Food Bank of Alaska. Food Bank employees were thrilled, and shared with Steller their delight at receiving fresh produce for their clients for the very first time in memory.

At right: Senior Arvin Ting creatively illustrates the "Peace" Garden sign as he and C.J. Montano harvest carrots.



Great Growing, Steller!

More From Steller SBP

Annual Banned Books Reading

This September, **Steller Secondary School** and **Title Wave Books** celebrated Banned Books Week by hosting their Third Annual READ-OUT LOUD! Steller students, staff, and celebrity guests, including Lauren Maxwell of Channel 11 News and ASD Superintendent Carol Comeau, read aloud selections from their favorite previously banned or challenged books like *Catcher in the Rye*, *Harry Potter*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, among others.



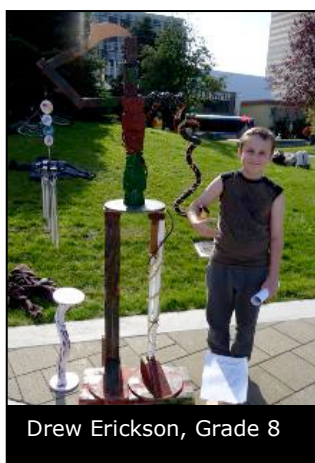
Observed since 1982, Banned Books Week is an annual event sponsored by the American Library Association. It celebrates the freedom to read and reminds Americans not to take this precious democratic freedom for granted.

Town Square Sculptures

Steller SBP, **Anchorage Downtown Partnerships**, wrote and received a grant to bring up a well-known artist to work with students during an intensive. Students created outstanding sculpture pieces that were exhibited at the opening of Anchorage’s remodeled Town Square.



**Guest Reader
Lauren Maxwell.**



Drew Erickson, Grade 8



Cassie Sneddon, Grade 9



Marylanz Young, Grade 11