



School Garden Success Story Sen' Pok' Chin Independent School, Oliver

Sen' Pok' Chin Independent School is a level 2 school operated by the Osoyoos Indian Band with Heather Kelliher as principal. It has 48 students from junior kindergarten to grade 7. The school shares a gym and commercial kitchen with the community within the same facility. The administration and staff supported a 5 day a week lunch program and daily breakfast program. The school signed up for the Farm to School Salad bar program 2x/week. Healthy snacks with milk were provided in each classroom. They planted a school and community garden to connect with the land and how food is grown.

The garden consists of 21 garden boxes measuring approx 10' x 6'. As well, the 3 sisters were planted: stalks of corn in the centre, with squash and beans surrounding the corn. The garden has had one year of crops which the school harvested, froze and have used for cooking at the school. The funding allowed them to hire a cook for the school who will use the garden produce in the recipes.

The funding for a garden was provided by the federal



government through the health and nutrition portion of the "Headstart" funding initiatives for 0-6 year olds (available for all band communities). The garden is school initiated with the community taking a plot to plant too. The personnel who believed in the gardens have made it a success. There was a farm to school launch involving the media. All the teachers took on a theme. The maintenance person at the school is a farmer himself, a valuable resource. A deer fence was built to keep out the wildlife. A shed and a greenhouse were built as well as a compost heap and an irrigation system. Organic seeds were bought but the school will use what seeds that

can be gleaned from this year's crop to continue planting. The saved seeds were planted in the greenhouse and will be transplanted to the beds this year.

When asked about barriers to success, Heather described a successful community and school effort that covered all possible problems including vandalism. The fences kept out the animal life and the unlocked gate allowed users access. Irrigation was set up for watering and the compost was no problem so far.