

Blanton Elementary School
It Came from Planted Earth!

Blanton Elementary School staff is committed to educating youth across the curriculum. Agriculture affects all areas of life and is therefore a perfect medium for engaging families and youth about important health, environmental, and community issues. Youth in urban communities lack knowledge of where their food comes from. Ask a group of young students where milk comes from and are likely to name a grocery store. How their food is grown, processed and eventually brought to the table is a mystery to many students.

The goal of the Blanton Elementary School's collaborative project with Texas Cooperative Extension's 4-H CAPITAL Urban Youth Development Program is to create an agricultural awareness project that engages urban youth and their families in understanding important food and fiber concepts. An important component of this project is utilizing an on-site greenhouse donated by the Rotary Club of Austin. A three-prong approach to maximizing the use of the greenhouse to increase agriculture awareness includes training and encouraging teachers to increase targeted programming in science and social studies classes; incorporating gardening and animal science in afterschool programs, and encouraging parent participation in targeted programs.

A partnership with Texas Cooperative Extension-Travis County will provide an agriculture educational infrastructure that will insure success of the program. Cooperative Extension staff members and volunteers have expertise in a variety of agriculture areas for both youth and adults and are committed to a partnership that will benefit our school and ultimately our community.

4-H CAPITAL through Texas Cooperative Extension has been a part of our afterschool and in school programming since 1999. 4-H CAPITAL's goal of providing positive youth development for limited-resource youth is congruent with Blanton's goals. Blanton is a Title 1 school with more than 85% of youth considered low socio-economic status and eligible for free or reduced lunches. 4-H Afterschool will play a key role in providing opportunities for these deserving youth to learn the complete agriculture process - from the field to the table. The Blanton Agriculture Awareness planning team has commitments from 4-H and Cooperative Extension to provide or assist with the following projects:

Afterschool: Urban Animal Science, Jr. Master Gardener; In School: Food and Fiber Expo, the Mobile Dairy Truck, Egg to Chick; Parent Involvement: Master Gardener, Entomology (pest management), Nutrition Education.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom is designed for youth in grades K-5. This interactive learning module teaches: that the milk we drink comes from dairy cows; the major nutrients from the dairy group; other products made from milk; and provides an overview of a modern dairy operation. Blanton's 4-H program staff will arrange for Southwest Dairy Farmers to provide the Mobile Dairy Classroom, which includes a live animal and a subject matter expert. The presentation includes a demonstration of the milking operation using a live dairy cow.

Youth in grades 3-4 will explore the Food and Fiber Expo, coordinated by Texas Cooperative Extension staff in collaboration with Pioneer Farms and Texas Farm Bureau. The Food and Fiber Expo teaches the relationship of agriculture to people's lives in an urban setting. Central Texas agricultural

commodities will be highlighted with sessions on cotton, wheat, beef, swine, poultry, goats/sheep, vegetables, and water. Other sessions of importance to central Texas are entomology and food safety.

The Food and Fiber Expo teaches students about the following: history of cotton farming, products produced from cotton, and cotton pests; animal industries of the area such as beef, swine, poultry, and goats/sheep; vegetable gardening teaches about food production and food safety. Participants are encouraged to try new foods, increase vegetable consumption of locally grown items and to plant "backyard food factories". Clean water and hand washing, important to food safety are also critical to agriculture issues.

Blanton students in grades K-5 will benefit from hands-on experiences with planting and growing using the greenhouse. Youth in grades k-1 grades germinate seeds in the greenhouse then transplant to mini vegetable gardens. The harvested produce and related hands-on activities teach youth about the health benefits of a diet high in fruits and vegetables. Students learn how produce and other food products start from farms and ranches and finally arrive on their dinner tables.

Grades 2-3 teach the science of agriculture through embryology projects. Egg to Chick guides students through the life cycle process as they hatch eggs in the classroom.

Grades 3-5 teach about animal science topics. Blanton students raise meat goats through 4-H to exhibit in local livestock shows. Classroom activities that are related include food preservation such as drying foods for longer storage. Examples of dehydrated foods are meat jerky, dried apples, dried herbs

and vegetables. These students also germinate and grow herbs using the greenhouse. Herbs will be used in food preparation and related projects. Herb gardens will be included in 4-H afterschool programs.

Grades 2-5 teach about environmental issues important to wildlife and range management through multimedia teaching modules: Somethings's Fishy, Wildlife Success Stories, City Critters, and White Tail Deer. These teaching modules address issues that impact agriculture and urban families.

Support from the Texas Department of Agriculture will provide opportunities for Blanton youth to become more aware of agriculture by raising livestock while they learn about animal science, veterinary science, and agriculture; germinating seeds and planning gardens with a focus on greenhouse activities.

Blanton Elementary School has strong support from community groups that provide resources including volunteers for this program. Rotary, Texas Cooperative Extension's nutrition and horticulture staff, 4-H staff and others will collaborate to oversee some of the programs, provide staff training, and resources to supplement this project. Blanton is committed to work with the community to increase agriculture awareness for youth and families.

It Came from Planted Earth! brings agriculture alive in an inner-city setting and will benefit our youth and their families as they discover the importance of agriculture and agricultural products. Blanton's leadership team believes in community partnerships that include Texas Cooperative Extension's many varied programs. We believe that agriculture is an important teaching tool for engaging families and community organizations.

It Came from Planted Earth!

Budget

Greenhouse Maintenance	\$200.00
Soil, seeds, pots for in-school projects	\$400.00
Supplies for nutrition education projects for Youth and parents	\$200.00
Transportation to Food and Fiber Expo – 2 buses	\$400.00
Expenses related to Mobile Dairy Classroom	\$100.00
Animal Science Expenses	
Goats, feed, vet supplies, Embryology supplies	\$900.00
Bus transportation to animal science events	\$200.00
Consumable Materials & Supplies	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total Budget	\$2500.00