



## How School Gardening Can Benefit Students Outside of the Classroom

By Educator Barnes – August 31, 2019

Before my education pieces were published online, I was publishing [blog posts](#) about urban gardening. My parents are gardeners and grow their own food and so do many of my relatives. When [Big Green](#), formerly called The Kitchen Community, came to Indianapolis, it was an

opportunity for me to mesh my two loves, educating children and growing food. I was able to [obtain a Big Green learning garden for Wendell Phillips School 63](#), now known as Matchbox Learning. I had an after school K-2 STEM Challenge Club through [The STEM Connection](#) which included caring for the garden and consuming the produce. During the summer, my sons and I took care of the garden in addition to our garden at home. Big Green helped the learning garden movement take off in Indianapolis, and it has had many benefits for school children and their communities.

Through the Big Green learning garden workshops, participants learn new garden tips and tricks. The workshops also connects you to others who are also passionate about growing food. One young man I learned about was Austin Hurt known as [The Young Urban Gardener](#). Not only did his previous school have a learning garden, but he was also teaching other children the importance of knowing where your food comes from and how growing your own food provides sustainability. Being able to help his mom and his family out is how he originally decided to grow his own food. His [story](#) was covered by Emily Longnecker of WTHR Channel 13 News; this story won Longnecker an Emmy.



*The Young Urban Market – August 25, 2019*

Now, his gardening passion has left the school grounds and is impacting the community. He recently started The Young Urban Market where youth who grow food can sell it to the community. I told my sons about it. They thought it was a cool idea, so I signed them up. Not only are these youth learning about gardening, but they are also learning about entrepreneurship and how to bring an important

resource to the community.

There are food deserts in Indianapolis and getting fresh produce is hard for some community members especially if they do not have transportation. I'm glad this market is giving our youth

an opportunity to make a positive impact. It all started from a seed planted at school that growing your own food is important.

Yes, English and math is crucial for students to master, but are we focusing on those subjects so much at the expense of other important skills?

I'm glad the learning garden movement has taken off in Indianapolis. Our youth need more hands-on opportunities that will help them in life such as growing their own food.

If you are interested in supporting The Young Urban Market, stop by First Trinity Lutheran Church at 5321 E 42nd St, Indianapolis, IN 46226 from 12:00-3:00 PM on the last Sunday of each month through October.