

In 2009, Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO) awarded a \$25,000 grant to PV to create a student greenhouse garden. Curtis Millsap, a local farmer, the Missouri University Extension Service and members of Springfield Urban Alliance Coalition (SUAC) worked with staff members to provide technical expertise on the project from planting to preparation. In 2010, the DIRT Project, a project of SUAC, was created to provide students with a hands-on approach to their learning. Lessons taught in the greenhouse are tied to what they are learning in the classroom. Additionally, their work in the greenhouse reinforces concepts like problem-solving and teamwork. The DIRT Project encourages youth engagement and physical activity and allows students to take part in the production and consumption of locally grown and sustainably grown foods in their own communities.

This year, fourth and fifth grade students rotate every 3rd week through the greenhouse to learn about such topics as Water cycle, seeds, parts/functions of plant parts, and autumn equinox. Farmer Curtis and volunteers from SUAC not only provide the hands-on lessons for our students, they also keep our greenhouse in great shape year round. Students LOVE the time they get to spend in the greenhouse.

