

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden News

PUBLISHED BY THE LOS ANGELES ARBORETUM FOUNDATION
Arboretum Library
301 N. Baldwin Ave.
Arcadia, CA 91007
626-821-3213

ROOTS & SHOOTS...

Tom Henry



"Dear Third Grade friend,
I recommend that you come to our Roots & Shoots program.
You get to do projects that other classes don't get to do
like plant beets, tomatoes, sunflowers and other vegetables."
Your Fourth Grade friend, Anthony Hernandez

Tom Henry



For over fifty years, The Arboretum has been a "living" classroom to children and students in our Los Angeles community. Today our programs are integrated into the curriculum of **15 Los Angeles area school districts**, and reach more than **28,000 children each year.**

Dear Third Grade friend,
I guarantee you will like the Arboretum because when I first went I was glad to be around trees and plants."

Your Fourth Grade friend, Daniel Leon

Roots & Shoots is one of our most important and innovative classroom programs. Yet, today there is only available funding for one East Los Angeles inner-city school to take part in this invaluable interactive outdoor nature experience. The Roots & Shoots program provides these students the opportunity to enjoy the open space,

learn about trees and plants and, for a brief time, escape the harsh realities of the inner city.

The two main program objectives are to teach students how to garden and to involve adult garden friends to work with them as companions and partners.

Simply, studying plants helps children understand the world around them. The Roots & Shoots curriculum, piloted at The Arboretum in January 1994, with the Gooden School of Sierra Madre, is based on that of the Elizabeth Gamble Gardening Center in Palo Alto, California.. With a focus on hands-on garden-based learning, our current program is comprised of 14 two-hour classes for 3rd- and 4th-grade students. The Arboretum grounds are used to teach the students how to explore scientific concepts related to plants, animals, insects and other natural phenomena.

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Tom Henry



"Dear Third Grade friend,
I learned how to look at plants, flowers, seeds, and more. I learned about the history of the buildings. My favorite spot is the waterfall. When you walk by it you can feel the mist. You see a whole bunch of animals like peacocks, coyotes, and squirrels."
Your Fourth Grade friend, Gina Lopez

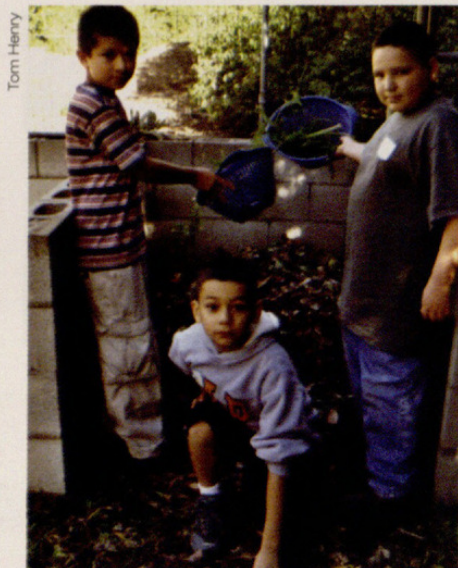
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"Dear Third Grade Friend,
I learned a lot of new things that I
never had learned before."

Your Fourth Grade Friend,
Fredy Magno

Besides **botany**, the Roots & Shoots program includes many other areas of science study, including **animal study** – peacocks, water fowl, squirrels, gophers; **simple plant life** – fungi, algae; **earth science** – weather and plants; **physical science** – heat energy use in plants.

The program also involves **language arts** – oral and writ-

ten language experiences, writing and reading; **mathematics** – measuring, counting, calculating, graphing, growing calendar; **social studies** – natural and human history of The Arboretum; **art** – drawing and sketching vegetables, birds and leaf print activities.

The children gain a clearer understanding of where food comes from because they grow fruit, vegetables, and herbs in their own classroom garden. They celebrate their achievements with a "Harvest Party." After they harvest the crops they have grown, they work with a professional chef to turn their produce into a meal... experiencing first hand the connection between the natural world and their own lives.

evidence is discovered in the gardening process becomes a lesson in life.

Responsibility is learned along with teamwork, job-sharing, and cooperation. Skills in listening, paying attention and following directions are developed. Self-esteem is realized.

"Our knowledge of the world around us is incomplete if we do not include plants in our discoveries, and it is distorted if we do not place sufficient emphasis on plant life," states the National Research Council.

Yet over the years, botany has been reduced from a core subject to a secondary component of one area of the modern science curriculum. Most schools lack the infrastructure and resources—schoolyard gardens, laboratory facilities, etc.—to pursue this area of study.

That is why it has become so important for programs like The Arboretum's Roots & Shoots to grow.

Unfortunately it takes more than good soil, water and sunlight...it requires the funding necessary to implement the program.

We are asking for your help so that we can bring this program to more inner city children. We have the students, teachers and volunteers at the ready...we just



"Dear Third Grade Friend

I think the Arboretum can be improved if more people can join the Roots & Shoots program, by planting more flowers and by seeing more animals."

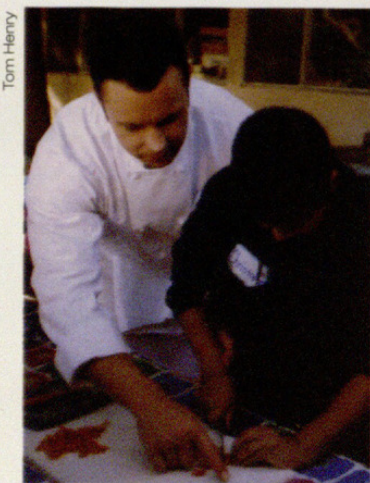
Your Fourth Grade Friend,
Jose Sifuerites

need contributions from our community to make it a reality.

To add a classroom of 30 students from the inner city, it requires approximately \$7,500. The money covers bus transportation to and from The Arboretum, classroom supplies and materials and instructor costs. That breaks down to \$9.00 per hour—15¢ per minute—per child to give them an experience that will change their life.

If every Arboretum member contributed—if even only a small amount—more inner city children could benefit from this special program.

If you would like to help more children to participate in this important program, please send your contribution in the enclosed envelope to the Los Angeles County Arboretum Foundation. For more information on supporting Roots & Shoots and other vital programs and projects, please contact Lisa Rupp, Director of Development at 626-821-3237.



"Dear Third Grade Friend,
The part that was my favorite part was when we had the harvest party... you get to make a salad and a chef comes to help the class. He also shows you how to chop vegetables."

Your Friend, Jacqueline Leyva



"Dear Third Grade Friend,
Leigh is a very nice lady that you will meet. She has a good imagination. She comes up with lots of ideas."

Your Fourth Grade Friend,
Sabrina Reyes

Adult volunteers provide strong role models, helping the students better understand and appreciate the importance of respect between child and adult, young and old. Through the process of working together, side-by-side, on hands and knees, in the dirt, trust is established. A willingness to change ideas as new



2003. "Roots and shoots...help us grow our "living classroom" that sprouts young minds." *Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden News* (2003: Aug.-Oct.), 1, 8.

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