

March 26, 2010

Public Hearing on the Healthy Schools Act.
John A. Wilson Building,
Room 500
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Dear Councilwoman Cheh:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the City Council in support of the D.C. Healthy Schools Act.

I want to offer my strong endorsement of the portion of the Act which includes school culinary gardens as a vital force in improving the health and learning in DC Schools. In the past two years I have designed, built and directed eight school garden programs, and have seen their impact as a wonderful teaching tool and meeting place in all the various school communities.

In the schools that we have built gardens, we have seen the gardens become a new hub of activity, not only for teaching about science, but also design, history, languages, cultural diversity and of course, nutrition and health.

In our school garden efforts we have had the financial support of State Farm Insurance, Kaiser Permanente and the American Forest Foundation's Project Learning Tree. They support these programs because they understand preventative health care and sustainable cities are good for business and good for their customers. Now I hope the Healthy Schools Act will also offer financial backing as well.

The culinary gardens I design and build are meant to be affordable and replicable – so that as many as possible can be built, they can get into production quickly and abundantly, and very importantly, not break the bank.

Specifically, the raised French beds that I build for my culinary gardens (which also include edible flowers & ornamental plants) are designed explicitly to be:

- * Organic
- * Avoid any soil contaminates,
- * To be very intensely planted,
- * High yielding,
- * Visually beautiful,
- * Require less watering than conventional gardens,
- * Easy to work in,
- * ADA accessible,
- * Safe to eat from
- * Never flood nor waterlogged

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(continued)

They are also meant to gathering places, and act as an outdoor classroom where any number of disciplines can be taught.

Again, thank you and please call on me if I can be of any assistance in the success of the DC Health Schools Act.

Sincerely,



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