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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MES Fourth Graders are Growing Up

Fourth graders at Madeira Elementary School (MES) recently reaped the benefits from the first crop of their brand new Tower Garden with a green smoothie party. Twelve fourth grade peer-elected Student Leaders planted the vertical aeroponic garden this past fall, then spent the last few months maintaining and caring for the plants.

After the harvest, all fourth-grade classes were treated to smoothies made from the harvest as part of their first-ever "Fourth Grade Wellness Wednesday." Armed with blenders, parent volunteers created the smoothies with bok choy, rainbow chard, and kale straight from the Tower Garden - as well as fruit, protein powder, juice, and milk, contributed by fourth-grade families. The fourth graders enjoyed their green beverages with other healthy snacks while reading, listening to relaxing music while stretching, writing positive messages to classmates, and creating classroom chains of gratitude.

The garden was purchased by the school's Lifetime of Giving Grant Committee, which recognizes that good nutrition affects the health and well-being of the district's students. Seeing that there is a positive correlation between a student's health and well-being and his/her ability to learn, the committee works closely with the Fourth Grade Student Leaders each year to execute a project in which fourth-grade families work together to better the Madeira Elementary School community.



Pictured above l to r: Front: Juliann Rutherford, Elizabeth Zalba. Back: Adelyne Chu, Olivia Naegeli, Chloe Jones.



The Tower Garden offers a cleaner, simpler, more efficient way to grow healthy produce by using a vertical design along with water, liquid nutrients, and a soilless growing medium. The fourth graders will soon plant a second crop in the Tower Garden, after analyzing the results of an online survey completed by all MES fourth graders.

The MES Lifetime of Giving Grant Committee members leading this project included Jenny Combs and Meredith Cecil, as well as Student Leader advisors Brigid Williamson and Katie Naegeli. Other fourth grade teachers who were a part of the special day were Jackie Jansen, Michelle Marketos, and Angela Young.

Pictured left: Parent volunteer Kristin Theobald serving fourth grader Bella Zoekler