



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bowie Elementary, San Jacinto hospital team up for teaching garden

The staff and students at James Bowie Elementary joined a very select company of schools in the nation to be included in the American Heart Association's Teaching Garden program, which will provide hands-on learning experience rooted in offering students nutritional food choices.

The garden will serve as a real-life laboratory where students learn how to plant seeds, nurture the growing plants, harvest the food and ultimately understand the value of good eating habits and the importance of physical activity.

The Teaching Garden is part of a larger American Heart Association "healthy behavior change revolution" designed to help Americans understand what it means to be healthy and to take action.

The multi-year initiative will reinforce the value of eating well, being physically active and creating a healthy body and mind.

James Bowie Elementary is sponsored locally by San Jacinto Methodist Hospital.

"Thanks to the American Heart Association and San Jacinto Methodist Hospital, students at Bowie Elementary will plant a Teaching Garden as part of an education initiative to help build healthy bodies and minds," said Bowie Principal Jaime Lannou. "Children don't have a great understanding at this point of eating healthy," Ms. Lannou said. "If children are actually able to see fresh vegetables being grown, they're much more likely to enjoy those as part of a heart-healthy diet."

The Plant Day Celebration was held on March 21 in the gymnasium at Bowie. But because of rainy weather, the actual planting was done of March 23 when students placed the vegetable seedlings — tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, bell peppers and more — into the dirt.

"I like planting very much," said Jose Santillan, Bowie fifth-grader. "My favorite vegetable is the carrot."

Throughout the rest of the school year, different classrooms will take care of individual beds in the garden.

Students will be able to participate in other educational activities - vegetable tastings, recycling, art and craft projects, physical exercises and much more.

Ms. Lannou said they hoped to harvest vegetables in May.



James Bowie Elementary students planted vegetable seedlings as part of the American Heart Association's Teaching Garden program on March 23. See more photos [here](#).

"This has been a great event for all of us at Bowie Elementary," Ms. Lannou said. "This garden is a great opportunity for us to use real life experiences to help students learn. This gives them all the opportunity to learn about healthy food, where it comes from and how to grow it."

The American Heart Association Teaching Gardens, founded by Kelly Meyer, is a national, school-based program to re-establish what it means to be healthy. Aimed at elementary school students, the Teaching Garden program aims to help elementary students to build healthful eating habits. According to the American Heart Association, studies show that healthful behavior positively impacts learning.

"The goal of this program is to improve children's health, which often correlates to improvements in children's academic and physical performance," said Shelly Millwee, Director of Communications of the American Heart Association. "I'm delighted that Bowie Elementary is one of hundreds of schools across the nation to implement this program. ... it is important that we teach our children now the importance of eating healthy to create a brighter future for them."

With the addition of the Bowie garden, the American Heart Association now has three in the greater Houston area, with more planned in the coming years.

For more information about the Teaching Gardens program and how you can participate, visit www.heart.org/teachinggardens

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