



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Marion County

Oregon Farm to School Project in Marion County
OSU Extension Farm to School Project

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Earlier this year, the Marion County Farm to School Project was awarded \$78,234 from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) over 2020-21 to partner with three Marion County priority schools and facilitate school health team workshops, support Healthy Celebrations, deliver educational workshops, and carry out a 2-year school garden action plan. With these funds, an Education Program Assistant 2 was hired

to build capacity and deliver youth development programming and engage with the school-communities to build and help sustain the school garden efforts. The Marion County Farm to School Project is a joint effort between Marion 4-H faculty and SNAP-Ed (Sustainable Nutrition Assistance Program) faculty and education program assistants to highlight the strengths of pairing quality nutrition education with positive youth development. Faculty include Carly Kristofik and Kelly Noack. Education Program Assistants include Yolanda Rodriguez, Francisca Lopez, and Sarah Contreras.

Within the project, each school health team will meet to collaborate on their chosen priorities. These teams are designed to encourage community and youth voices to develop and carry out a 2-year school garden action plan. In addition to this, youth and families will be encouraged to participate in healthy celebrations featuring Oregon grown produce. In 2021, educational workshops will include experiential garden and nutrition programs through after-school clubs, Food Hero tastings, and agricultural experiences. Through these activities, the school community will be engaged with sustained school garden education and youth will be empowered to increase their knowledge and consumption of Oregon fruits and vegetables.

How do you engage elementary youth in Oregon Farm to School when groups cannot meet in person? Sarah Contreras was hired in May 2020 as the project's EPA2 and has since created more than eight digital horticulture and nutrition videos with Yolanda Rodriguez (*see images*) to pivot the project from in-person to online due to COVID-19. Together, they meet with the youth from each school weekly through Google

Classroom to check-in about their garden progress. Because programming is currently all virtual, Summer Garden Kits were sent home to over 70 youth which included a tomato, pepper, or cilantro start and four seed packets with a garden container, soil, and a garden journal for weekly observations and participation in the club. All of the videos and virtual check-ins are offered in English and Spanish for all of the enrolled students.

If you would like more information about Oregon Farm to School and School Gardens, Oregon Harvest for Schools or Food Hero, please see the links below. School and community programs do not need to have an ODE Farm to School grant to use the resources from Oregon Harvest for Schools and Food Hero.

- Oregon Farm to School and School Gardens: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/childnutrition/F2S/Pages/default.aspx>
- Oregon Harvest for Schools: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/childnutrition/F2S/Pages/OregonHarvestforSchools.aspx>
- Food Hero: <https://foodhero.org>
- Food Hero Gardening: <https://foodhero.org/garden-tips>



Ingredients for a healthy farm to school meal



Sarah



Yolanda