



Whole Kids Foundation  
Attention: Nona Evans  
550 Bowie Street  
Austin, TX 78703

Dear Ms. Evans,

Please accept the attached grant proposal as a submission to the Whole Kids Foundation from Live Oak Classical School in Waco, Texas. Live Oak Classical School educates students from the pre-kindergarten age to seniors in high school and is dedicated to rigorous, comprehensive, hands-on learning. Our education emphasizes molding students into whole beings, excellent citizens, and virtuous people. As a result, Live Oak's curriculum emphasizes stewardship, service, and community engagement. These values can all be seen in Live Oak's outdoor education program, which consists of a vegetable and herb garden maintained by students, as well as the detailed study of plants and animals through observation and recreation in realistic artwork. The garden is both a source of health and beauty in its urban location. With the monetary support of the Whole Kids Foundation, it can become a greater source for community growth and development in Waco, Texas.

Our hope and vision for this urban school garden is that it will have a positive impact on the community and on each of our students. Our school garden has the potential to instill values of stewardship, service, and community engagement and we are passionate about this potential. We believe that these values are essential to creating whole individuals and citizens and would love for the Whole Kids Foundation to be a part of this feat.

Currently, we incorporate the produce from our garden into school lunches and distribute the remainder among Live Oak staff and families. Our goal in expanding the garden is to institute a student-run project where meals are created from the produce then sold to faculty and staff for lunches, with the proceeds donated to a local charity organization. Additionally, we hope to partner with the local Salvation Army, located across the street from the garden, by donating fresh vegetables. The estimated cost of upgrading our garden is approximately \$2,500 and we are asking the Whole Kids Foundation to support \$2,000 and are seeking support for the remaining amount from other funding agencies.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Allison Buras  
Dean of Grammar School  
Live Oak Classical School  
420 South 5th Street, Waco, TX 76706  
(254) 714-1007

# **Urban School Garden at Live Oak Classical School**

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Submitted to: The Whole Kids Foundation

Fall 2015

Live Oak Classical School  
420 South 5th Street, Waco, TX 76706  
(254) 714-1007

## **Urban School Garden at Live Oak Classical School**

### **Abstract**

Live Oak Classical School, a private Christian school in Waco, Texas, is asking for money to augment our urban school garden to better serve our community. The purpose of this project is to cultivate the minds of elementary-age students by expanding the outdoor learning curriculum of Live Oak Classical School. We seek to provide our students with an education that prepares them to become considerate and active citizens who work for the good of their community. We emphasize British educator Charlotte Mason's philosophy of fostering a love and stewardship of nature throughout our curriculum.

Instruction in and application of Mason's love of nature and Live Oak's passion for good citizenship are brought to life in our outdoor education program centered around our urban school garden. We would like to expand and develop further our already existing garden to help increase the amount of outdoor garden space to enhance our service of our students and community; while also beautifying downtown Waco where the school is located. Because the soil surrounding the school has been polluted and is not conducive to growing produce, our garden is maintained in raised wooden beds, flowerpots, and pallets hung on the walls.

For this project we are asking for the maximum amount that Whole Kids Foundation will award, \$2,000. Since the net cost of the garden is \$2,500, we are seeking support from other funding agencies. The monetary investment in our garden will substantially benefit our students and community. First, students will learn to apply to virtues of stewardship, diligence, and generosity through the expansion of the garden and partnership with local organizations. Second, we will be able to give fresh produce to and invest funds in people who live in a food desert area in Waco.

### **Background**

Founded in 2004 upon the principles of classical education, faith seeking understanding, and the hands-on teaching methods of Charlotte Mason, Live Oak Classical School is a private Christian school that has been serving the city of Waco for 11 years. Live Oak draws upon the classical tools of learning to prepare students to reason clearly, communicate effectively, and act responsibly in the world. The 375 children who attend Live Oak excel academically and are excited to pursue a challenging yet rewarding education. The families served through the school are of different denominations and backgrounds, currently representing 50 different churches.

Live Oak has a vision for education that equips students to become not only well-educated citizens, but also fully formed human beings with a love of learning and a true desire to work for the good of the world around them. A major aspect in the carrying out of this formation is an urban garden project in which students learn through active participation how to grow and nurture a successful garden.

Live Oak finds its home in Waco, Texas which has a diverse mix of residents. Waco houses an up and coming commercial movement, Baylor University, and also unprecedented poverty. McLennan County residents, the county in which Live Oak is located, are 19% food insecure. Meaning that 19% of people have trouble securing food because of economic or situational issues. Many times it is a combination of the two, as McLennan County is also a food desert: a “geographic area(s) where access to affordable, healthy food options (aka fresh fruits and vegetables) is limited or nonexistent because grocery stores are too far away.” With cultivation and the proper investment, our garden could begin to mitigate this severe area of need. Our garden is located across the street from the Salvation Army, which regularly serves meals to the homeless and hungry, and we plan to partner with them in this service when our garden is large enough to produce a good yield.

Thus, Live Oak wishes to secure money from the Whole Kids School Garden Grant to further outdoor education and appreciation of nature, as well as to better serve the community around us.

### **Current Status of Urban Garden**

With the help of organizations such as University Bible Church and the Boy Scouts, Live Oak has already developed an urban garden that produces a wide range of seasonal vegetables and herbs. Currently, the produce is harvested by students at Live Oak and distributed among students and faculty of the school.

The garden currently consists of the following features:

- 5 Large raised beds (8' x 2' x 2' approximately) located on school property;  
Transported and set up by University Bible Church
- 2 Medium sized wooden beds (3' x 2' x 1' approximately) on school property;  
Project of Boy Scouts
- 3 Pallets used as wall planters; Project of Boy Scouts
- 7 Planters of various sizes; Project of Boy Scouts
- 2 Hay bales for growing plants on

- 8 Small raised beds from Sam's Club (2' x 2' x .5' approximately) which cost about \$50 each and are located on church property, but movable; Access to water through hose
- 1 old, wooden pergola that seats about 15 small children property of church (?)
- 1 small rain barrel (2.5' high, 1.5' wide approximately)
- 1 lunchroom table repurposed with wood to create an outdoor table
- 2 outdoor chairs

\*Because the soil around the school is not safe for growing vegetables, we are limited to the space within the raised beds and must bring in soil for our garden. Additionally, we have limited seating and no covered space near the garden for students to work and congregate.

### **Needs of Live Oak Classical School**

Live Oak is dedicated to outdoor education, but the land the school has taken root on is not conducive to gardening. The soil surrounding the campus of Live Oak is not favorable to the growth of produce because of the contamination from the nearby railroad and because a motor shop used to occupy the lot, which introduced a large amount of automotive fluid and motor oil to the soil. Therefore, we must use raised beds with soil acquired from a store, or, occasionally, donated by a local dairy farm. The five beds we currently use were put in place by University Bible Church and a local Boy Scouts troop. However, the space in these beds is limited and is not currently adequate to produce a large enough output of vegetables and herbs to distribute outside of the outdoor classroom environment. Live Oak does wish to serve others by the gifts they receive, as service in the community is held as a core value in all endeavors of Live Oak. The Waco community is in great need of fresh produce, and this garden could be a step towards providing healthy food to the needy. The hope of Live Oak is for this community garden to instill value for service in each of its students while providing services for the community.

We have a vision for our outdoor learning environment that goes far past its doors, and thus desire to install two more raised beds in their garden. This will enable us to serve the community with the gifts we have been granted. This would be done in several ways:

- Over time this community urban garden would be used to feed the homeless at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, located directly across from the Live Oak campus, with fresh produce from the garden.
- The produce grown in the garden could also be used as ingredients for meals that students could make and then sell for profit that would be then donated to a

local charity. Therefore, the beds would be a conduit for a cycle of investment in community growth in Waco.

Engaging students outside of the normal classroom setting, as we currently do in our garden and through educational field trips to Cameron Park, is a vital part of Live Oak curriculum. We require students to learn about nature through creating realistic artwork of plant life and animals on a regular basis. Though these projects are intended to immerse students in nature, the drawing or painting often takes place indoors. Currently, there is limited seating in the garden areas and there is no form of covered space for students to work while outside. An addition of seating and covered areas outside, in the form of a canopy, would be beneficial in several ways:

- It would enable students to recreate images of nature while being surrounded by nature
- It would enable teachers to use outside spaces more frequently and easily because they could work outside with protection from rain and sunlight
- It would provide a physical space for teachers and students to live out the Charlotte Mason method of hands-on learning in the study of the children's environment.

### **Personnel**

Allison Buras, Dean of Grammar School

Alison Moffatt, Head of School

Carolyn Still, Dean of Rhetoric School

Shanie Wenzel, Outdoor Education Coordinator

Parent and Community Volunteers

### **Budget and Justification**

The proposed budget for the outdoor garden of Live Oak Classical School is as follows:

Raised Flower Beds	\$900.00
<i>This cost includes all materials needed to build two additional raised beds (i.e wood, liner, fertilizer, soil, seeds, etc.)</i>	

Shed Storage Unit \$300.00

*This storage unit would be used to house garden tools and supplies so that materials could be reused and recycled.*

Outdoor Seating \$1,000.00

*This outdoor seating will be key for holding class outside of the classroom. Seating will be made from re purposing old cafeteria tables.*

Canopy \$300.00

*This canopy will be used for holding class outside and for trips to nearby parks. The canopy will be an "easy-up" canopy so that it will be movable.*

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**Total Cost:** **\$2,500.00**

Through research and careful consideration of our needs, Live Oak has created a budget that will help to enhance our outdoor learning and urban beautification. By your financial support the students of Live Oak will gain hands on experiences through the use of a larger urban school garden and covered area. This financial support will also benefit the greater Waco community as it will cultivate a greater desire in students to give and serve local charities and soup kitchens.

### **Schedule**

We would like to have the garden in place by the start of the 2016-2017 school years. This schedule includes submitting the grant, receiving notification about the grant, his system in the construction and installation of the raised beds.

Currently, parents of Live Oak students are required to volunteer with the school for three hours a year. If we receive a grant from the Whole Kids Foundation, we will utilize this system in the construction and installation of the raised beds. We will designate weekends in April and May for building the beds and filling with soil, plants, and seeds. We will designate weekends in April and May for building the beds and filling with soil, plants, and seeds.

Action	Date
Submit grant application to Whole Kids Foundation	September 2015
Receive notification from Whole Kids Foundation	February/March 2016
Begin organizing parent volunteers for raised bed building	March 2016
Implement Garden Improvements and Expansion.	April 2016-May 2016

### **Conclusion**

Live Oak classical school wishes to enhance the learning environment for their students and serve the community in which they find their home through the expansion and development of their already existing school garden.

The benefits that would be reaped from being granted money from the Whole Kids School Garden program are numerous. Among these benefits are:

- Service to the Waco community by means of donating fresh produce and monetary gifts.
- Support of an engaging, immersive curriculum for students that instills in them the values of giving back as well as appreciation for the environment.
- Service-oriented learning and community engagement.
- Focus on nutritious food and the retention of knowledge about the right kinds of food to eat for the rest of the student's lives.

With these benefits, Live Oak will be able to thrive and become more evolved within the community as well as engage and expand the minds of the students.

## Works Cited

- "11 Facts About Food Deserts." 11 Facts About Food Deserts. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Apr. 2015.
- "Hunger Statistics." Waco Regional Baptist Association. N.p., n.d. Web.