

Can you think of anything more fun and rewarding than starting your day by playing and digging in the dirt with kids? Or what about getting a chance to plant, pick and explore a garden filled with fabulous fruits and veggies (including a few exotic ones, like Dragon Carrots), all while knowing everything you're doing directly helps people in your community? Well that is exactly what PowerUp was lucky enough to experience one sunny morning in late June at the RCS Giving Garden in Lake Elmo, MN.



"I love the surprise of seeing what grows and tasting it!"
Evan, 8



Avery, 6, enjoyed telling the Legend of Love story, *"If one shares a 'double' strawberry with someone special they may fall in love!"*

On this particular day, PowerUp had the opportunity to meet and learn all about "Strawberries" from three very bright and inspiring junior gardeners — Avery (6), Evan (8), Sydney (11) along with Master Gardner, Kathy Luoma (who offers a Jr. Gardening after-school program, through Rutherford Elementary).

However, this experience at RCS wasn't reserved just for PowerUp. It's open to all kids, families and those in the community who want to dig in and experience planting, growing, harvesting, learning how "Real" food grows and even better — the act of giving, as 100 percent of the produce grown is harvested and donated. In fact, because of the volunteer efforts of so many people and school programs, along with generous community donations, the Giving Garden has donated over 10,000 pounds of produce to the local community food shelves from 2009 through 2012! *"This year's goal is to donate 3,000 pounds"*, said Joni Fletty, COO/VP of RCS.

Joni also noted *"It takes a whole community"*. And from our experience, the Giving Garden is truly an example of a community coming together to learn, grow and share!

So how can you volunteer? It's simple. Log on to www.rcsgivinggarden.blogspot.com, click on the calendar and sign up. You will find the PowerUp team along with other Lakeview Health employees digging in to help at the Giving Garden on September 4, 2013 from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Come out and join us, or pick another day and just sign up!

Again, PowerUp wants to give a BIG thanks to RCS for letting us hang out with you and the kids in the garden. It truly was a wonderful way to start the day!



"I love planting and then watching it grow!"
Sydney, 11

The PowerUp Team at Lakeview Health