



## NEWS FROM...

Jan. 16, 2009

### **The Swain School receives state award from Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** *New organic garden program praised as 'model for other schools'*

The Swain School, an independent school in Allentown for preschool-8th grade, is one of five winners of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's "Keeping Pennsylvania Growing" awards, presented on Jan. 9 in Harrisburg.

Swain adopted the Department of Agriculture's 'Healthy Farms and Healthy Schools' program, establishing the link between farm and school by growing fruits and vegetables in an organic garden on their Salisbury Township campus. Elementary students planted, tended, and harvested the produce, as well as sold it at the Emmaus Farmers Market. The initiative also included the construction of a chicken coop, and the eggs and produce are used in the school's lunch program.

"Your school's work is a model for other schools to aspire to. From the engagement of the local community to the interactive way all of your students participated in special events, you really embraced the intent of Healthy Farms and Healthy Schools," said Secretary Dennis Wolff in presenting the award to Todd Stansbery, Swain's Head of School. The recognition was made at the Department's 2009 Pennsylvania Farm Show dinner in Harrisburg.

Swain's lower school science teacher Cynthia Bardman spearheaded the \$15,000 grant project from the Ag Department to construct the organic garden, including child-friendly beds, fencing, benches, shed, the chicken coop, and a rain collection barrel system. Matching resources were contributed by the Rodale Institute and Ardath Rodale of Rodale Inc. in Emmaus.

Professional farmers, George and Don DeVault of Pheasant Hill Farms in Emmaus worked with Bardman to complete the garden design and assisted in teaching the children on how to take crops to market.

"The Swain School organic garden project is such a great way for young children to learn where food comes from and how it finally gets to the farmer's market or even the produce aisle at the grocery store," said Stansbery. "These lessons will be for life."

Swain is a co-educational, independent school offering an education of exceptional quality to 300 students who come from 22 area school districts. Small class sizes, an integrated curriculum, state-of-the-art technology resources, and a thorough program of character education, arts and athletics are features of the school, which was established in 1929.

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