

By Bonnie Prindle
bprindle@gbpnews.com

“There are two types of carrots,” exclaimed Isabel Lee, a student in Ms. Zeinemann’s class at Georgetown Elementary, “the ones in the ground and the ones in diamonds!”

Teaching students where their food comes from is one of the main initiatives of the Good to Grow Green project, a youth-led project developed by Miles for Merry Miracles.

The project was started by students Tori Floyd, Jacob Bennet, Parker Romney, and Analise Zeinemann. The idea for the project came after receiving a donation of 3466 packs of Ramen Noodles as a part of a Miles for Merry Miracles event.

That got the students thinking about the impact of eating healthy foods. Tori Floyd explained, “We wanted to make people more aware of what they were putting in their bodies.”

A part of the project includes the Indoor Vertical Tower Garden in the corner of Sarah Zeinemann’s Learning Differences classroom. The students set up the garden a few weeks ago, and already close to twenty-five leafy plants, including lettuce, basil, and tomato, are sprouting under the growing lights.

The class is planning a salad picnic for the end of the school year, but on Thursday morning they sat cross-legged around a large blue blanket in the center of the room for a practice picnic. They were joined by Representative Trey Hollingsworth, who visited the classroom to check out the vertical garden and chat with the founders of the Good to Go Green project.

“This really is the future,” Hollingsworth said about the vertical garden. “You can grow a lot more plants with a lot less space.”

Dixon Romney, who advocates nutrition education, led the class through their practice picnic. “Every time our food stops somewhere before it gets to us, it becomes less nutritious,” Romney told the students.

By the end of the picnic, one student confessed that while he usually enjoys Pringles and cookies for his snack, he doesn’t plan on eating them as much anymore.

The goals of the Good to Grow Green project include teaching the youth where their food comes from, how their food is grown, and how they can make healthy choices. They also hope that through their efforts, kids will be healthier; miss less school; and be ready for college, careers, and a lifetime of giving back.

Those on the board of Good to Grow Green hope to expand the project in the coming years. They plan to build more vertical gardens in classrooms and add some different plants.

For Floyd, the most rewarding part of the process is the students. “Personally, I loved watching the look on the kids’ faces when they saw the plants growing,” said Floyd. “Watching them grow their own food is so cool.”