

14 February 2009 (Valentine's day!)

Cottonwood Valley Charter School Gardening Committee

Attendees: Debra Shepherd, Liela Wheland, Mary Nutt

Meeting Notes

- What was done today:
 - Debra will set up a web site which will hold these minutes and other relevant information. She also created a google calendar which will be used to schedule volunteers and let everyone know who will be working each week. She invited Liela, Mary, Karin Williams and Lisa Ackley (volunteer coordinator) to the calendar. Everyone should have gotten an e-mail asking them if they want to view the calendar and get a google account if they don't already have one.
 - The google calendar is available at the web site:
<http://www.google.com/calendar>
 - The Gardening committee web site will be:
<http://www.aoc.nrao.edu/~dshepher/gardening>
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 - Michael & Karin provided a key to the storage container along with a new pick axe and hose sprayer nozzle paid for by a grant to CVCS from Home Depot.
 - Liela, Mary & Debra cleaned up the area around the garden boxes, and herb garden.
 - Someone had put straw on the herb garden, covering the mulch Liela and Debra had laid down 2 weeks ago. The rocks around the herb garden were also strewn about. We removed the straw (it is not needed since the rose bushes can survive well down to 20 deg F without problems) and it will only seed the herb garden with grass (there is a lot of grass seed in the straw that will be a pain to weed out later).
 - Mary trimmed the little trees next to the garden boxes.
 - We started to clean up the South garden area (with the trees next to the garbage bin), trimming bushes, raking up old grasses and bushes, re-mulching the trees, picking up garbage. Mary and Liela built rock borders around the trees. There was a big pile of leaves, sticks and garbage near the road – we cleaned that up.
 - Liela watered the garden boxes, herb garden, and compost bins, along with all the trees/bushes in the south garden.
 - Then we had a picnic – each person brought their own lunch, Debra provided chocolate cake and Valentine's cookies for dessert. After lunch, we had a meeting to discuss what to do next.
- Ideas for how to move forward:

- We need to get the boxes and gardens looking nice.
 - Repair the garden boxes:
 - Replace lids that are broken – each one costs about \$100
 - Repair boxes themselves – some need new wood.
 - Repair the water leak that is under the ground on the garden loop and repair the watering lines to the boxes themselves.
 - Jim Shepherd said he would help with the repairs. Leila suggested the Terry McGuire and Paul Malone might be willing to help – both are parents of children going to CVCS and are good at carpentry and/or maintenance.
- Once the gardens look more inviting, we (Debra?) should attend a teachers meeting. Ask the teachers how they want to be involved and how to get the kids involved.
 - Its important to get the kids involved because then they would take more of an interest and take care of the gardens more.
- It might be good to have some benches that can be put near the garden boxes. Something that will allow teachers to hold outside classes and for school gardening events. This is something we would need grant money for. Liela said the benches at the Middle School (?) look very nice – they are plastic and the back folds down so they become a desk for outdoor classes. We would need grant money to buy these benches if this is what the school thinks would be a good idea. We should talk to Karin and the teachers before proceeding with this idea.
- Volunteering:
 - Each week we need an “anchor person” – someone who will be responsible for being there, knowing where the key to the tools are and what needs to be done.
 - Liela & Debra will be “Anchors”.
 - Liela wants to work about once a month and also come to the monthly picnics/gardening meetings. Until we get more people to help, Liela will work every other week and probably come the other weeks if needed in March.
 - Debra will organize the picnics/gardening meetings and be the volunteer coordinator for the gardens. Debra will keep the school informed about what we are doing and keep the calendar/schedule and write up minutes as needed.
 - Mary Nutt will volunteer when needed (she will be gone for nearly 6 months this spring & summer).
 - Note: Debra will be traveling and out of e-mail contact from 6 March to 4 April. Liela will be doing most of the gardening and upkeep in March unless we can find more volunteers soon.
 - It would be best if people could garden in pairs but we don’t have enough volunteers to do this yet. Debra will start looking into who might be interested in helping with the gardens, either being an “anchor person” or who just wants to work with an “anchor” when needed.
 - Possible people who might want to join the CVCS gardening committee:

- Dale Frail – Dale is currently weeding the front bushes along the road. It looks great.
- Cynthia – Cynthia is the after school coordinator. Maybe she could get the kids involved after school. She is also interested in gardening.
- Jan Thomas – Jim Shepherd said that Jan has expressed an interest in helping with the gardens.
- Nichole Boudin – Nichole started the gardening at the school several years ago. She is now home-schooling her kids.
- Debra will do the following:
 - Call Dale, Cynthia, Nichole and Jan to see if they are interested in joining the CVCS gardening committee.
 - Call Karin Williams and Lisa Ackley to see about getting a news letter report out to parents. We also will need 3 or 4 new garden box covers (\$100 each). We probably want to get new covers for this fall. Maybe this spring, after the last frost, we should remove all box lids and store them somewhere so the uv radiation doesn't make the plastic brittle and they are less likely to break from wind or vandalism when school is out of session.
 - Talk to Jim Shepherd about repairing boxes and what needs to be done to repair the water lines to the gardens.
 - Should we organize a work day some Saturday with anyone interested in helping with the repairs?
 - Write up these minutes and distribute them to interested folks.
 - Create a web site to hold the minutes and other information.
 - Update the google calendar with the volunteer schedule.
- The next meeting of the gardening committee will be
 - **11 April 2009, Saturday at 10am.**

We will garden for 2 hours, then have a picnic at noon followed by our committee meeting. Everyone who is interested in helping out is invited. Debra will bring drinks and dessert for all.