



## A fruitful project: Cafeteria will serve food that kids grow

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Despite being on summer break, Kepner Middle School and Denver School of Science and Technology students showed up at school last week, not with books, but with shovels.

They were there to plant fruit trees in the school's garden that when full grown, will bear apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums and pears. The fruit will then go in students' lunches and to community members who help plant and harvest the trees.

The effort is part of a multi-organizational push to promote urban gardening and particularly school gardening at districts metrowide, including Denver Public Schools, especially in "food deserts," or areas with limited access to healthy food, such as the area in which Kepner sits.

"It's good for the community because it brings people together," said Alondra Sandoval, 14, who helped plant trees with GRASP, or Gang Rescue and Support Project.

The expansion of Kepner's Garden of Hope in southwest Denver with 39 fruit trees is part of The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation's and Stretch Island Fruit Co. "Fruit Tree 101" program, which is planting fruit tree orchards nationwide to educate students about the importance of eating fruit and caring for the environment.

In addition to bearing fruit, the orchard will serve as an outdoor classroom.

"We have silent reading time and I have visions of students coming out to have a nice, pleasant sanctuary to read," said Kepner teacher Tamar Rosenberg, adding that she envisions it also being a community gathering place.

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Memo Perez, of Denver, shovels dirt around the base of a fruit tree last week for the Fruit Tree 101 project at Kepner Middle School in Denver. Produce from the fruit trees will be served in students lunch when the trees are fully grown. Trees also were planted at Denver School of Science and Technology in Stapleton.

Provided by: Kristin Morin/YourHub.com