



# Maggie's Activity Pack

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Garden Power for Healthy Living: The Yellow Tractor Program

*"Dude, come back here!" yelled Maggie. The little dog ran to the fence. Many children and their parents were planting seeds. "What are you doing?" asked Maggie.*

*"We're doing our spring planting," said a boy. "We each have a little piece of dirt. We plant fruit and vegetables. It's fun to work together and we get a nice treat – fresh food!"*



Many people are growing their own food. From the United States to Borok, Russia, families and schools are tending small gardens. These produce fresh, healthy food and they help the environment. The Yellow Tractor Program is one project that encourages people to grow food for their homes, and nearby community centers.

The Yellow Tractor Program hopes gardening will encourage people to be healthy. Time spent working out-of doors, planting, weeding, and harvesting gets us away from too much sitting in front of a television.

Many people do not have a near-by store that sells healthy food. When people grow more of their own food, produce from faraway farms does not need to be shipped. Pollution is reduced.

Eating fresh food improves our nutrition. This helps our heart and other systems stay healthy. Fresh food also tastes good. Have you ever had a newly picked ear of corn? Yummy!

The Yellow Tractor Program hopes schools and businesses will join this healthy movement. When people work together, they are better friends. They get along. Schools can even use gardens to do math problems. Students can also learn about science as gardens grow.

So, find a friend. Ask someone about using a small space for a garden. Even a 4 foot by 8 foot piece of dirt can give you 100 pounds of food every month. So, grab your tools, and plant your way to a healthy life for you and the Earth!

Make a poster to support the Yellow Tractor Program. Think about WHAT and WHY you want someone to help. Think about who will see your poster. Write a headline for the posters.

Idea:  
Encourage healthier eating

Audience:  
Students in a high school

Idea:  
Encourage math learning

Audience:  
Students in a third grade

Idea:  
Reducing pollution

Audience:  
Workers in a local business

Idea:  
Making your heart healthy

Audience:  
Students at a local college

Dear Colleague,

The other day I was walking down a street in Washington D.C. and I saw a little display in a window. Tiny figurines and gardening implements showed a community working to create a garden. I thought back to all the encounters with these small plots of produce I have seen over the years, beginning with a trip to Borok, Russia where kitchen gardens provide residents in this village with needed fresh food. This past summer when I accompanied my niece to her new home, I delighted in spotting pieces of land set aside for town residents near the dog park. Look around you to see if any such projects are in progress near you.

As I think back to that D.C. window, I imagine a display in your classrooms showing a garden and the many people who work together to care for the plants. Have groups of children work together to create sequential scenes showing planting, tending, harvesting, and the many benefits of food from these shared workplaces. And to find out more about the specific project, The Yellow Tractor Program, discover more about this organization. Below is an excerpt from a written interview the kind folks from the project gave to Maggie's Earth Adventures. We hope it will give you your own ideas about answers to activity questions and provide ideas for the sequence story displays. Happy teaching,  
Dr. Kathy

We started Yellow Tractor in 2010 after publishing a book called, **Our Generous Garden**, by Anne Nagro. It is the story of a class of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who build a vegetable garden and feed their community with what they grow. In one summer they grew 900 pounds of food to give to the local senior center. So many people loved the book and wanted to know how they could build a vegetable garden. We started with a neat program with the Florida Department of Education where they read the book and then went out and built their own gardens in 13 counties. We want to empower as many people as possible with growing their own food. Many areas in our country have "food deserts" where there is not a local grocery store selling healthy food. Many people (about 20 million people everyday) do not know where their next meal will come from. Many people (one in four) struggle with nutrition issues related to their health like type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. We want vegetable gardens to provide a solution for many of these issues facing our country today.

**Goals:**

Students will read an article describing the importance and benefits of community gardens. They show their understanding of the scientific and sociological perspectives by writing poster headlines for specific ideas and audiences. This unique way to check for understanding also encourages students to consider perspective when reading and writing in the content areas. The WAP is available on the primary and intermediate levels and correlates with Content Standard F, Science in Personal and Social Perspectives and Science as a Human Endeavor (Content Strand G) of the National Science Standards.

