

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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DEF Supports Hands On Learning at FFES



Pictured Above Left To Right: First Flight Elementary School students Ethan Lowe, Cody Lewis, Vega Sproul and Bryce Pugh get their hands dirty while helping to build the new outdoor living classroom at First Flight Elementary School.

Students at First Flight Elementary School are proud of their outdoor living classroom. The classroom provides a 21st Century Skills hands-on learning environment for a school-wide project known as Rooted in Learning.

Rooted in Learning is the vision of 4th grade FFES teacher Penny Pugh. Many community supporters, including the Dare Education Foundation (DEF), have provided seed money and in-kind services to give the project its start. Lowe's, DeBoy Construction, Coastal Marine Structures, Herman Norfleet, Fred Toney, Wrangler Farms, students, parents, teachers and community volunteers have also provided support for the project.

DEF support was provided in the form of a 21st Century Skills Grant.

DEF's 21st Century Skills Grants encourage students to learn by doing, work with one another and become more socially responsible. Rote memorization is OUT. Thinking, planning, collaborating, communicating and being creative are IN.

Rooted In Learning is a creative project that accomplishes each of these elements. Best of all, students have been involved in growing the living classroom from the ground up. Every FFES student, from pre-K to fifth grade works in the outdoor living classroom. The classroom provides creative ways to teach many areas of the curriculum.

Hands-on science experiences include soil, plants, composting, weather, rocks and minerals just to name just a few. Math students graph plant growth and rain fall and figure perimeter and area. For social studies, a goal is to develop an area of the classroom where the students can explore as if they are Native Americans living in the Coastal Plain Region trying to figure out how to make some of their tools. Students can also enjoy the reading garden where they are able to enjoy reading in a very special environment.

What's next? Now that the seeds have been planted and the roots are in place, students and staff would like to see the project grow. Mrs. Pugh would like to add a greenhouse and many more learning opportunities for students.

For more information about the outdoor living classroom at FFES, contact Penny Pugh at 441-1111. For more information about DEF's 21st Century Skills Grants, visit www.dareeducationfoundation.org or call the foundation office at 255-5545.

The Dare Education Foundation is an IRS-qualified non-profit organization that raises funds to help every student and every teacher in every public school in Dare County. DEF is funded by private donations large and small, grants, sponsorships and special events. Funds are used to advance teacher training, create access to new educational opportunities for students and provide support for innovative programs in our schools. DEF's efforts in putting "Schools First" enrich education for all our students and encourage community involvement in education, which provides the foundation for a strong and vibrant quality of life in Dare County.