Community Gardens and Propaganda Posters

Grades: Middle School
Subject: Health, Social Studies, Creativity
Time: Three 50-minute class periods

*** Standards:** Students will…

Visual Art Connections Standard 1: Understand connections among the various art forms and other disciplines.
Benchmark #4: Know how various concepts and principles are used in the arts and disciplines outside the arts (e.g., balance, shape,pattern).

Visual Art Standard 1: Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.
Benchmark #2: Know how the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes can be used to enhance communication of experiences and ideas.

Visual Art Standard 5: Understand the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork. of others.
Benchmark #2: Understand possible contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks.
Benchmark #3: Understand how one's own artworks, as well as artworks from various eras and cultures, may elicit a variety of responses.

Health Standard 2: Know environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health.
Benchmark #1: Know cultural beliefs, socioeconomic considerations, and other environmental factors within a community that influence the health of its members (e.g., relationship of values, socioeconomic status, and cultural experiences to the selection of health-care services).
Benchmark #3: Know local, state, federal, and international efforts to contain an environmental crisis and prevent a recurrence (e.g., acid rain, oil spills, solid waste contamination, nuclear leaks, ozone depletion).

History Standard 1: Understand and know how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.
Benchmark #3: Know how to interpret data presented in time lines (e.g., identify the time at which events occurred; the sequence in which events developed; what else was occurring at the time).

History Standard 44: Understand the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.
Benchmark #6: Understand the emergence of a global culture (e.g., connections between electronic communications, international marketing, and the rise of a popular "global culture" in the late 20th century; how modern arts have expressed and reflected social transformations, political changes, and how they have been internationalized).

Geography Standard 14: Understand how human actions modify the physical environment.
Benchmark #1: Understand the environmental consequences of people changing the physical environment (e.g., the effects of ozone depletion, climate change, deforestation, land degradation, soil salinization and acidification, ocean pollution, groundwater-quality decline, using natural wetlands for recreational and housing development).

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Objectives: Students will be able to…
- Analyze meanings in their work and the work of others.
- Understand the connection between art and other disciplines.
- Recognize the effect of environmental factors on health.
- Interpret historical time line data.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how people's choices can effect the environment.
- Apply art media, techniques, and processes to create a persuasive poster.

Materials:
- "Victory Garden" worksheet provided
- "What a View" worksheet provided
- "Get the Scoop" worksheet provided
- "Think Green" worksheet provided
- Access to computers
- Relative links:
Victory Garden Video
Victory Garden Propaganda Posters
- 11 X 17 inch white paper
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Markers

Overview: In March 2009, Michelle Obama created a vegetable garden with the help of local Elementary students. It is the first of its kind on the White House property since Eleanor Roosevelt's Victory Garden during the Second World War. It not only provided food for the Obama family, it symbolized their efforts in promoting locally grown, organic food. They hope the children involved with the garden program will teach their family, and they in turn will teach their community about the benefits of gardening.

Community gardening dates back as far as the 1800's, when an economic downturn led to job loss and poverty. Seeds and shovels were handed out, in an effort to provide homes with work and food. During WWI, Liberty Gardens were created, soon followed by the Relief Gardens of the Great Depression, and Victory Gardens of WWII. Although their tone differed greatly, their goals for the gardens remained the same: reduce oil usage, create jobs and food. To aid in war efforts, natural resources such as oil, were sent to troops over seas, as well as some of the food created by the gardens. The rest of the garden's produce was used for the community's families. In fact, during WWII, 40% of the country's produce was grown from community gardens alone.

To this day, community gardening efforts focus on the same goals, but for different reasons. With new research on gas emissions and its effect on the environment, a growing concern has been raised about how much of the pollution is related to food production. Another cause for concern is chemicals found in food production, such as chemical fertilizer, pesticide and preservatives. Some scientists have linked exposure to these chemicals to causing incurable diseases such as cancer.

A recent study conducted by the US Department of Health and Human Services focused on food source traceability. Researchers chose a selection of 40 food items, and went through the process of working backwards to find out the food's location. Only five items out of the 40 could be traced back to the source. Only half of the facilities followed the FDA standards of food production, and a quarter of them weren't even aware of what those standards are. One reason for the lack of traceability of food is the extensive food supply chain consisting of six different components. With so many middlemen, the tracking of food can be difficult. Another reason is lack of enforced food industry regulations. Not all of the processors,

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packagers and manufacturers kept paperwork on which lot the food came from. Some facilities' policies didn't even require them to keep lot records. Retailers often receive the food without a label saying exactly where it came from. When mixed with products from other farms, the non-labeled food can be even harder to trace.

With these facts in mind, many people have turned to eating locally and growing their own food. By eating food within 100 miles of the home or growing food themselves, people can see exactly where their food comes from and what goes into the production of their food. Produce, such as tomatoes grown in farms that aren't local, is picked when it is not ripe, so it can last throughout shipping and manufacturing process. A gas is sprayed on the tomatoes to turn it red and make it seem ripened. Therefore, locally grown food contains more nutrients because it is fresher and ripened on the vine.

However, the benefits of community gardens reach beyond food traceability and production. It brings communities of all ages together for a common purpose. This type of environment has been known to reduce crime by creating outlets and support. Gardens also develop habitats for animals, encourage biodiversity, and reduce heat from city streets. Like the liberty and victory gardens, community gardens of today provide people with the economic opportunities to sell their produce, as well as a sense of pride for what they have accomplished.

Kidspeak: Community gardens have been around as early as the 1800's. Times of war and poverty caused people to try and find ways to save on gas and provide food and work for people in the community. In fact, during WWII, 40% of the entire country's food was produced through community gardens. Today, community gardens can be found in many places, even the White House lawn! Although the purpose of today's community gardens remains the same, to save on gas and create work and food for families, the reasons for the garden differ slightly. With new research on fuel emissions and its effect on the environment, many people are trying to reduce their carbon footprint, or amount of greenhouse gases their home produces. Another reason for community gardening is health. Not only does growing your own food help promote healthy eating, the food itself is better for you too. With most farms being so far away it's hard to observe exactly what goes into your food. Many farms use harmful chemicals to kill bugs in their gardens and to fertilize the ground. By growing your own food, you can grow it organically by using natural fertilizer, like compost and natural pesticides like ladybugs. Also, the food has more nutrients since it gets to your plate faster than food shipped across the country. Community gardens also help bring people together for a common cause. Even the smallest community garden creates a habitat for animals large and small. People can even sell their food to help support their families.

Eco-Fact: During WWII, 40% of the country's food was made through community gardens.

Procedure:
Introduction:
1. Hand out the Victory Garden worksheet.
2. Have the students watch the PBS episode on Victory Gardens and fill out the Victory Garden worksheet: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/victorygarden/watch/video_3301_fl.html
3. Begin a discussion about community gardening by going over some of the questions on the worksheet. Key questions to consider are: What are Victory Gardens? Why create a community garden? What are the benefits of the community gardens? Explain to the class the project we will be focusing on these questions
4. Continue class discussion by asking the class: How long ago did the video say the first Victory Garden was made? The earliest Victory Garden was made during WWI. It was actually called a Liberty Garden, but served the same purpose. However, community gardens date back as early as the 1800's. During times of war and lack of money, seeds and shovels were handed out to provide people with work and food.

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5. Then ask students about the purpose of the Victory Garden in San Francisco. It was created to promote and educate people about the benefits of gardening, and get people talking about it. Their ultimate goal was to create a nationwide gardening program. Through media such as TV and Internet, this information can spread quickly. However, during WWI and WWII, how do you think the word was spread about Liberty and Victory Gardens? Throughout this time period, propaganda posters played an important part in spreading information and gaining interest in the community gardening program. Propaganda posters are a type of advertisement that tried to influence people's opinion on an issue. One propaganda poster was even included in the beginning of the PBS Victory Garden video clip.
6. Reshow the first 30 seconds of the PBS Victory garden video clip, and have students point out the poster.

Introductory Activity:
1. One artist named Joe Wirtheim began making modern day propaganda posters based on the posters created during WWII. Show the class examples of a Victory Garden propaganda poster.
2. Explain that these posters are made to look like old posters from WWII, but contain the modern messages about community gardening. Let's take a closer look at these posters, to see what they are trying to say! The goal is to figure out what the poster is about, using the "What a View!" worksheet. A viewfinder is an object that helps us look at things like poster and pictures more closely. It can be made by cutting out a whole about one-inch diameter in the center of a large piece of paper. It blocks out the rest of an image, so we can look more closely at parts of the picture.
3. Hand out copies of the Victory Garden propaganda poster, viewfinders for each student and "What a View!" worksheet and go over the directions. Students are to examine the poster for one minute, trying to look carefully at everything in the picture. Using, the viewfinder, students' will then examine all the details of the poster and record their findings on the "What a View! worksheet.
4. Once each group has finished their analysis, begin group discussion about the propaganda posters. Key questions to ask are: What are the posters trying to say? Are they successful in trying to persuade you? How does the imagery and words help make the poster more persuasive?

Convince Me, Garden Propaganda Poster Project:
1. Split the class into groups of four students.
2. Explain that our goal now is to make our own propaganda posters convincing me to grow a community garden.
3. Ask the class: If we want to make a convincing propaganda poster, what do you think our first step should be? Accept all answers, and then explain that our first step will be to research ideas about community gardening and it's history. Once we know more about the topic, we can make an even more convincing poster.
4. Handout the "Get the Scoop" worksheet. Have each student visit both websites, and write down five fun facts about the history of community garden and it's benefits.
5. Once everyone has finished their research, have the students share their fun facts with their group members. Then, have each group choose three facts to share with the class.
6. Begin a class discussion by having each group share their facts. It can be about community gardening history, or its' benefits. Continue discussion by asking how they feel about community gardening after researching it.
7. Explain that now that we know more about community garden, we can make an even more convincing propaganda poster.
8. Hand out the "Think Green" worksheet. Have each group work together to brainstorm ideas on creating their propaganda poster, using the "Think Green" worksheet.
9. Once the worksheet is completed, hand out the materials to make the propaganda poster: one 11 X 17 inch piece of white paper, pencils, erasers and markers.
10. Students can then sketch their ideas on the white papers, including the catch phrase and a picture to go a long with it and then fill it in with marker.

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Closing:
- Once students have finished their posters, they can present them to the class. Remind the class that each group's job is to try and convince me to start a community garden. They can use facts they learned as well as the poster they created to make their case for community gardens.

Adaptations:
- To make the lesson easier, decrease the group size to pairs. Showing examples of completed posters made by students and modeling how to make a poster will also help. Instead of drawing the words and images, students can use photos from magazines and computer printouts on their poster. Remind the class that it is the process not the product that's important. They aren't any mistakes in art! If students aren't comfortable presenting their posters, they can write a paragraph about their poster instead.
- Alternatives to creating a poster that students can choose are: writing a persuasive essay about community gardening, or creating a song or rap about the benefits of community gardening.
- To make the lesson more challenging, increase the poster size and eliminate the "Think Green" worksheet. Instead, have students use scrap paper to brainstorm ideas for the poster. The use of words and imagery is up to them.

Extensions:
- After completing the poster, students can go to other classes and teach them about community garden, using their posters. Then hang up the posters around the school for everyone to see.
- The class can create their own school garden to use for school lunches.
- Students can visit local community gardens. To find a community garden, go to the American Community Garden Association at: http://www.communitygarden.org/

GEF Community: Join the GEF Community online. Students can share their propaganda posters with the GEF Community. In addition, students can discuss personal experiences with community gardens.

* All lessons listed on the GEF website have been aligned with the McREL Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education. GEF curriculum has been developed in accordance with the McREL standards in order to reflect nationwide guidelines for learning, teaching, and assessment, and to provide continuity in the integrity of GEF curricular content from state to state. The decision to utilize McRel's standards was based upon their rigorous and extensive research, as well as their review of standards documents from a variety of professional subject matter organizations in fourteen content areas. Their result is a comprehensive database that represents what many educational institutions and departments believe to be the best standards research accomplished to date. To access the McREL standards database, or for additional information regarding the supporting documentation used in its development, please visit http://www.mcrel.org

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