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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Get Involved in California School Garden Week

School Garden Week is October 25th – 31st and the Sacramento County Fair offers fully-funded opportunity for classroom wheelbarrow gardens.

Sacramento, CA -- The California School Garden Week is October 25th – 31st. How can your school or student get involved? One way to get started is to join the Sacramento County Fair's "Garden in a Wheelbarrow" Program and now is the time to get established.

The Sacramento County Fair's "Garden in a Wheelbarrow" program gives students in Sacramento County public, private and home school classrooms a fully-funded opportunity to gain and exhibit the knowledge and experience needed to plant, keep, and harvest a garden. A plot of land is not needed for a successful garden. Plan your garden in the fall, plant in the spring, and exhibit your wheelbarrow at the Sacramento County Fair in May.

"Mom, where do carrots come from?" - A question difficult to thoroughly answer without experience in agriculture. "The Sacramento County Fair believes that the curiosity and eagerness of youth to learn should be rewarded with hands-on opportunities," says T.J. Plew, County Fair C.E.O. The practical skills learned through this project will give the students the ability to grow their own gardens and learn where their food and fiber comes from too!

"My students gain so much from this experience because many of them live in apartments and don't get to do much gardening," says Carol Cleland of Isador Cohen Elementary. Using the materials provided by the County Fair, Ms. Cleland develops an interdisciplinary experience with a low-tech portable garden. The project is integrated into a unit on plants, includes extensive observation and journal writing, experiments in the classroom, explorations on the playground, and research into beneficial insects. The class even examines the various seeds and graphs their growth. "It is really an exciting event to see their faces light up when they find the radishes popping up above the soil," she adds.

The Sacramento County Fair will fund 50-75 kindergarten through 6th grade classrooms for this project. Each classroom is invited to display their wheelbarrow garden at the Sacramento County Fair where it will be judged. The top three gardens will be awarded cash prizes given directly to the classroom for further enrichment in the learning place. Educators interested in applying for this program should go to www.SacFair.com to download an application or call (916) 263-2975 for program details.

Partners are needed to assist with the funding for this program. If you can provide financial assistance, services or materials, please contact the Sacramento County Fair.

The 73rd Annual Sacramento County Fair will be held May 21st – 25th at Cal Expo. The 2009 County Fair will include an educational focus on making healthy choices in nutrition and fitness.

This press release was submitted by Mary Menke, Elk Grove FFA Member, as a work-experience collaboration between the Sacramento County Fair and the Elk Grove High School Agricultural Leadership Class. For more information about the Elk Grove High School Agriculture Program, go to elkgroveffa.com.

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