



2025-2026 SMART SPROUTS ANNUAL REPORT

In partnership with Monroe County School District

S.O.S.



Foundation

SMART SPROUTS

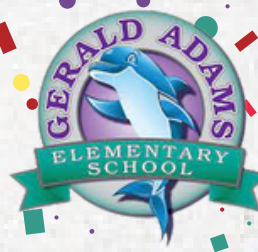


Since 2017, SOS has educated children and adults to empower them to make healthier choices. Over the years, this program has evolved into what we now call "Smart Sprouts." Through activities, guest speakers, hands-on cooking lessons, field trips, and more, students gain practical knowledge and skills to take initiative over their diet, health, and surrounding environment. Smart Sprouts students will carry this information and habits throughout their lives, contributing to a healthier Monroe County community!

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

SOS is proud to be a recipient of a second United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School Grant to continue facilitating our Smart Sprouts program for school years 2024-25 and 2025-26. The grant includes plans for program enhancements and expansion, such as 'Lunch and Learns' and a mini-summer series

THANK YOU TO OUR MCSD PARTNER SCHOOLS!



97%

of our 24-25 Smart Sprouts expressed that healthy eating is important to them.

"MY FAVORITE THING I LEARNED THIS SEMESTER IS HOW PROTEIN AND HEALTHY FOOD COULD HELP YOUR BODY."

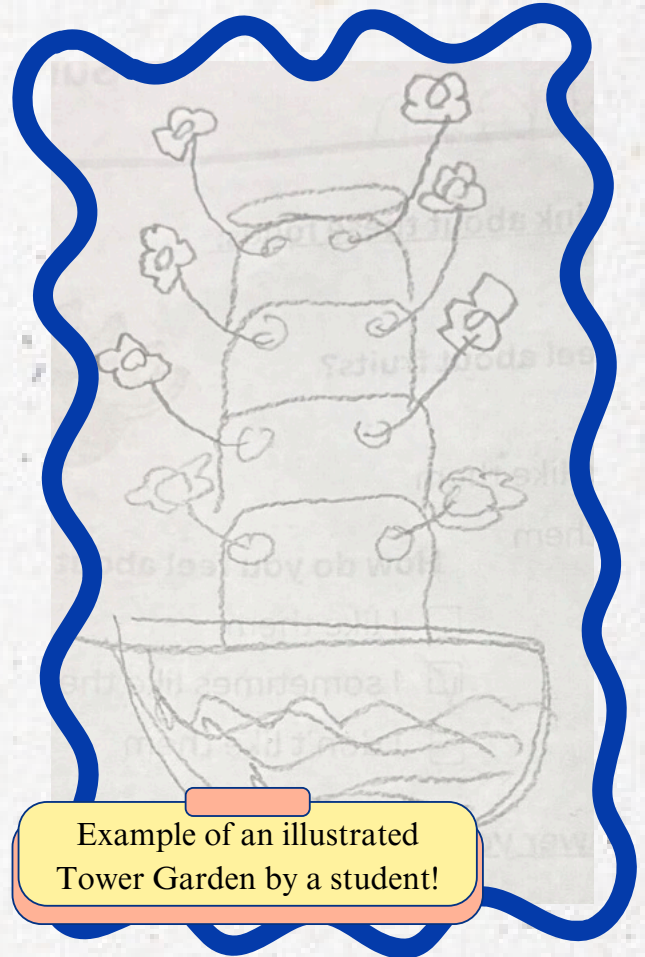
TOWER GARDENS

Each Smart Sprouts classroom operated its own aeroponic Tower Garden, growing plants such as basil, butter lettuce, green beans, and cilantro. Students can observe the full lifecycle of a plant—from seed to harvest! Some plants are even harvested and incorporated into the weekly snacks, creating an exciting farm-to-table experience for our students. Additionally, students conduct biweekly maintenance on the Tower Garden, such as checking the pH, adding minerals, and watering.



**LINDSAY'S
SPECIAL SALAD
FEATURING
FRESH LETTUCE
FROM THE
TOWER GARDEN!**

**WE GREW
THAT!**



Example of an illustrated
Tower Garden by a student!

**16% INCREASE IN
UNDERSTANDING THE
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE,
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
AND AEROPONICS.**

For many of our Smart Sprouts, Tower Gardens are their first true exposure to agriculture, and getting hands-on experience shows students how they are part of a larger food system and how they can further impact that system.



WEEKLY LESSONS

This year, SOS redesigned our 16-week curriculum to have a stronger emphasis on agriculture, along with fundamental nutrition education. Since farming in the traditional sense is not common in the Florida Keys, many students have limited knowledge of agriculture, such as farming methods and current farming technologies. These nuanced lessons aim to fill that gap by introducing students to the food system--from agriculture to harvest to health--to help them better understand where their food comes from and the impact the foods they eat have on their health. Our goal is to help students fuel their bodies and minds with nutritious foods, become more confident with their food choices and cooking skills, and be more aware of the environmental impact of their food.

11

CLASSROOMS

246

STUDENTS

16

WEEKS

1. CHEFS PLATE

2. AGRICULTURE & SEEDS

3. ROOTS, STEMS, & LEAVES

4. FLOWERS, FRUITS, AND VEGGIES

5. NUTRITION LABELS

6. PROTEINS AND FATS

7. AGRICULTURAL COMPARISONS

8. WHOLE GRAINS

****NUTRITION LESSON**

9. SEASONALITY

10. HYDRATION

11. REVIEW OF PLANT CYCLE & COMPOSTING

12. FACTS ON FATS

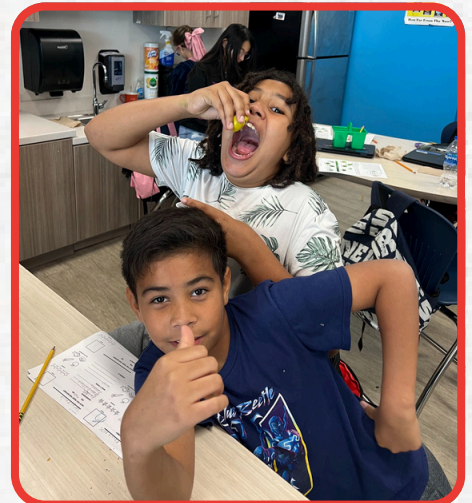
13. ECO FARM FIELD TRIP

14. HANDS- ON COOKING CLASS

15. REVIEW LESSON

16. POST SURVEYS

****AGRICULTURE LESSON**



WEEKLY SNACKS

Each weekly lesson is accompanied by a delicious, healthy, easy-to-make snack for students to replicate and make at home. From basil hummus to a freshly prepared strawberry pineapple frozen fruit pop, these snacks are constantly impressing our students! Some snacks even incorporate greens grown in their class's Tower Garden.



FAVORITE SNACKS OF THE YEAR:



1. FRUIT AND CHEESE CHARCUTERIE



2. LOCAL FRUIT TASTING



3. SEED TASTING



4. FROZEN FRUIT POPS

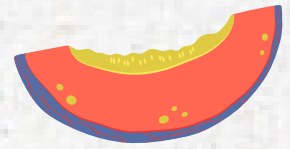


100% OF STUDENTS TRIED A NEW FOOD!

"MY FAVORITE PART WAS TRYING ALL THE NEW HEALTHY AND YUMMY FOODS."

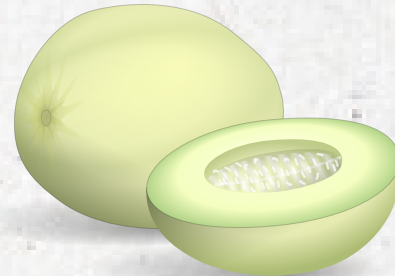
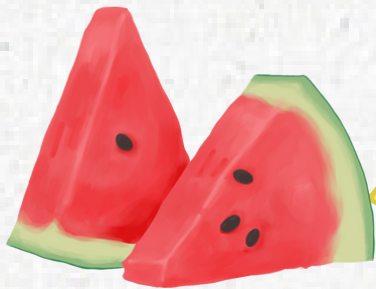
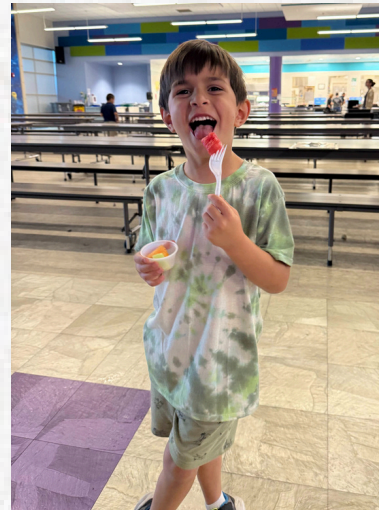
-ISABELLA
POINCIANA ELEMENTARY

TASTE TESTS



Honey Mint Melon Salad

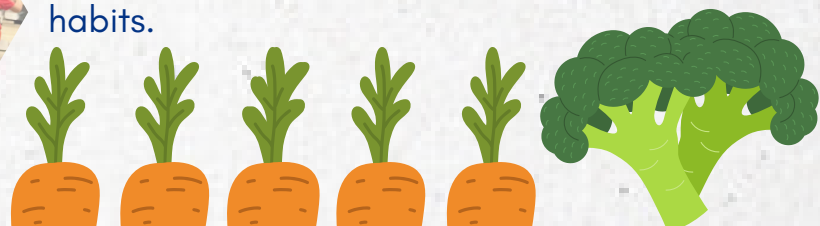
- This program encourages students of all ages to try new fruits and veggies by offering a taste test of delicious, locally sourced recipes!
- Three schools visited (Poinciana, Gerald Adams, & HOB)
- 84% of students loved the honey mint melon salad



LUNCH & LEARNS

This year, SOS launched our new event, Lunch & Learns! This fun and engaging program gives all students the chance to learn about healthy foods through a trivia activity and samples right in the cafeteria.

Students tested their trivia skills on broccoli and carrot facts before trying these delicious vegetables! Introducing kids to healthy foods early on is essential, and Lunch & Learn is one more way we're helping build lifelong healthy habits.





HANDS ON LESSON



SOS believes in equipping our students with the skillsets needed to adopt a healthy diet, so we host a hands-on snack prep lesson for each participating class!

Students gain valuable cooking skills by making a delicious avocado and cucumber rice cake, practicing recipe-following, chopping, and more. Later, students bring their creativity into the kitchen and design a unique "sweet cake" recipe with toppings like fresh fruit, jellies, and more.



86% OF STUDENTS EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN PREPARING AND PLANNING HEALTHY SNACKS.

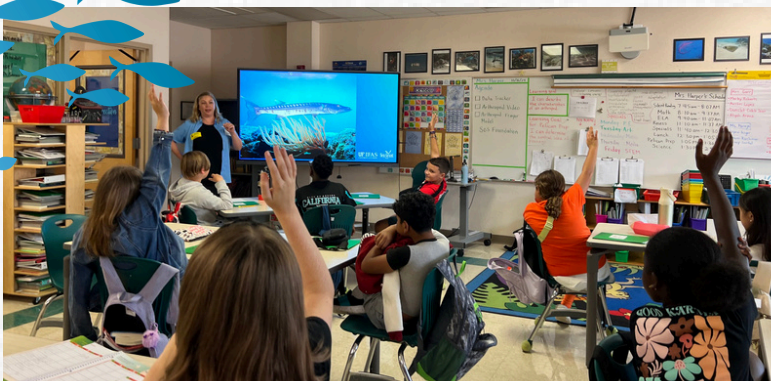
GUEST SPEAKERS

In partnership with the University of Florida's Extension Program, SOS invited three guest speakers to share their agricultural knowledge and expertise.

Thank you to **Shelley Krueger, Brynn Morey, and Liah Continentino!**

Students learned all about pollinators, including how pollinators affect our food systems and our climate.

Students also learned about aquaculture and fisheries, both of which are important industries in the Florida Keys!



FIELD TRIPS



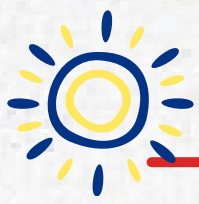
The Smart Sprouts program includes field trips to The SOS Eco Farm, a 60-aeroponic Tower Garden farm located at MARC Plant Store. During the field trip, students have the opportunity to apply the sustainable agriculture concepts they learned in the classroom to a working, innovative urban farm.

Students learn about farm mechanics, such as irrigation, discuss barriers to in-ground agriculture, and the success of alternative agriculture, and at the end of the field trip, students share a delicious farm-to-table snack from seasonal ingredients grown on the farm. For example, in the fall, students enjoyed a tasty cucumber-tzatziki dip, and in the spring, students tried basil pesto.



**STUDENTS SAMPLING
FRESH CELERY GROWN
AT THE SOS ECO FARM**





SUMMER SPROUTS

In the summer of 2025, the SOS Foundation launched a new Summer Smart Sprouts Agricultural Program at the Key West and Big Pine Boys and Girls Clubs. This hands-on educational initiative was designed to teach children about agriculture, food origins, and the environment in a fun and engaging way. The curriculum was thoughtfully developed by our AmeriCorps VISTA, Ari, who plays a key role in our educational programming and curriculum development.

At the SOS Foundation, we believe it is essential for the next generation to understand where their food comes from and the importance of protecting our environment. Through this program, we aim to empower youth with knowledge and inspire them to become thoughtful, informed contributors to a more sustainable future.



LOOKING AHEAD

SOS is excited to facilitate another year of Smart Sprouts at Poinciana Elementary, Gerald Adams Elementary, and Horace O'Bryant!

NEW

New this year: SOS will expand the 'Lunch and Learn' activities at the Key West High School.

**INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED
WITH SMART SPROUTS? REACH OUT TO
NUTRITION PROGRAMS DIRECTOR,
REBEKAH, AT
REBEKAH@SOSFOUNDATION.ORG.**



MEET THE TEAM



Rebekah MacArthur

Smart Sprouts Program Director
SOS Nutrition Programs Director



Phoebe Ambrose

Smart Sprouts Educator
AmeriCorps VISTA
Poinciana Elementary & Horace
O'Bryant Elementary



Addisyn Michael

Smart Sprouts Educator
AmeriCorps VISTA
Poinciana Elementary & Gerald
Adams Elementary



Ari Kabat

Smart Sprouts Educator
AmeriCorps VISTA
Poinciana Elementary & Horace
O'Bryant Elementary



Andrea Garduno

Smart Sprouts Educator
AmeriCorps VISTA
Gerald Adams Elementary

Our volunteers joined each week to assist in each classroom!
Thank you to Lawrence, Sandra, Shelley, Susan, Ruth, and John.



John

Horace O'Bryant



Lawrence

Horace O'Bryant



Shelly

Gerald Adams



Ruth

Poinciana



Sandra

Gerald Adams

[Not Pictured]

Susan

Poinciana