

Willet Garden of Learning

Scarecrows in the Garden

October 15-19, 2007

Activity: Building scarecrows

Goals: To have fun and be creative; to decorate our school grounds; to raise money for the classroom (if the scarecrow will be auctioned at the Avenue of the Scarecrows)

Supplies: wooden frames (in adult and child size), safety pins, twine, shears, Sharpie markers, card stock for labeling scarecrows, hammer, pliers, rakes, brooms in shed. Straw in bales under the willow tree (located outside room E25 next to CDC and Sycamore Park). Class provides clothing, material for the head, and design ideas.



Also in the shed: *Scarecrows: Making Harvest Figures and other Yard Folks* for ideas, *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant, which may be read in conjunction with the lesson.

How to proceed:

In Advance of the Lesson

This lesson is a little more involved than our typical lesson. Look over the detailed instructions on how to assemble your scarecrow. Review these ahead of time to make the construction go more smoothly. You might like to plan your design ahead of time and have the appropriate clothing and accessories on hand. Below are some tips from the Davis Farm to School Connection who are hosting the Avenue of the Scarecrows:

HEAD

- Be creative! Think about using a pillowcase with a face painted on it, paper mache, gourd, mask, clay pot, fruits and vegetables, etc. Support the head atop the stake firmly.

BODY, CLOTHING AND STUFFING

- Be thematic in designing the scarecrow. Get students to brainstorm a personality to accompany the figure with clothing and accessories.

- Feel free to use twine, safety pins, cinch ties, or long twist ties to make it secure, but try to hide the mechanics.
- Have the students bring clothing and items to share and personalize their scarecrow. Hats, tools, canes, and the like will be just the added touches that will appeal to a buyer and show off the creative thinking of the students.
- Make the figures marketable; two scarecrows which were connected in a special way sold well last year. Big family groups are discouraged and don't sell well.
- Most of the scarecrows will be placed in front yards around Davis to celebrate the wonderful fall season.
- Experiment with all ages of male, female and animals. Dress cleverly and appropriately.
- Secure clothing firmly onto the frame and figure so that it makes the trip safely in one piece to the event and home with its happy buyer.

Your class may also like to do a related activity such as sharing the book *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant and/or writing a story or in student journals, since it's tricky to have all students involved in scarecrow building at one time. Another approach is to have teams such as head/face designers, pants team, shirt team, glove/sock stuffers, people tying off arms, legs. Also, a crew can be in charge of raking up stray straw.

Additional background information (history, pictures, poems, songs, etc.) is available on the Willett Garden of Learning website at <http://www2.dcn.org/orgs/willettgarden/spages/SD1143384095>.

This lesson can be chaotic and crazy, but it is fun, and the scarecrows always look great.

On the Day of the Lesson

Supplies will be in the garden cart in the shed. Select your frames and transport everything to the willow tree for scarecrow building. It is helpful if we all work in the general vicinity of the willow tree to limit the scattering of straw.

The keys to successful scarecrow are involving all of the children (though not necessarily at the same time), and creating a scarecrow that holds together during transport. See detailed instructions which follow.

At the end of the lesson, tidy the straw and ground where you built your scarecrow and return all materials to the shed in some semblance of order.



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How To Build A Scarecrow

1. Pull pants on to the main stake, placing stake down one leg of pants. Stuff legs and tie at the ankles and waist. Tie the pants to the frame by running a piece of twine through the back belt loop, then around the stick.
2. The short stick is for the scarecrow's arms and for reasons of stability is fixed in place. Button shirts work best, although clothes can be cut to get them on the stake and then pinned back together. Put on the shirt so that the ends of the stick go through the armholes. Tuck the shirt into the pants, safety pin the shirt to the pants to hold pants up. Button the shirt most of the way and stuff torso and arms with straw. Tie the arms closed at the cuff. *Safety pins can be difficult for children to use, please be cautious. Be careful about dropping them as they become a safety hazard later – the old needle in the haystack problem.*
3. Draw the face of your scarecrow with permanent markers onto your pillowcase, bucket, pot or whatever you are using. Attach head to the top of the stick. Note: You may want to put the head on loosely at first so that you can remove it to pound on the top of the vertical stick when placing the scarecrow.
4. Select a location to display your scarecrow on campus. A fence is best, but don't block walkways and or place them inside the Kindergarten Yard (although the outside of the fence is fine.) Stay away from walls and buildings due to fire hazard, but trees work well. Secure your scarecrow by pounding the T frame into the ground. If you have a fence or tree, tie the scarecrow to it.
5. Stuff the shirt cuff and ankles with straw. Add any accessories you wish.
6. Have the children name the scarecrow and create a sign for it with the name, the teacher and grade, and the school. For example: *Miss Suzi Fanci-poo, Ms. Krich's 2nd Grade, Willett Elementary.* Hang the sign on the scarecrow.
7. If you will NOT auction your scarecrow(s), they may remain on the school grounds until the end of October. Please take them before November 1, or they will be removed before the rains turn them to mush.

If your scarecrow(s) will be auctioned at the Avenue of the Scarecrows, please arrange for someone to transport it the Saturday before Halloween between 8:00 and 9:30 am. The Avenue is usually set up in the vicinity of the carousel. You will need to take the scarecrows to that location, help to display them in the hay bales and fill out any paperwork requested. Request that checks be made out in your teacher's name. This is to be sure that the money your scarecrow(s) earns will be returned to your classroom. More details of the day follow.



START... The building of scarecrows can start anytime in October that you wish. Straw will not be available at Pioneer School this year. Each site is to

get its own stuffing material. Gardens could use some straw dressing at this time of year. Other materials to use are newspapers for stuffing and wire hangers for making creative movement in arms and legs.

PROMOTIONS... Start in the October school newsletters. Schools will be given recycled campaign signs at the October 4th meeting at Birch Lane to attract attention at their sites to support the October 27th Ave. of Scarecrows at the Central Park. Feel free to advertise at the schools site for the Sat., Oct. 27th event in any way that is eye-catching. Have students design posters to staple over the campaign signs and stick in the ground around the school campus to catch the interest of parents and the public passing by the schools. Schools are encouraged to create a short story to accompany their scarecrow. This is a good written language tie-in project.

BUILDING PERIOD... Scarecrows will be designed and constructed by classes in the Davis Schools; based on individual site planning needs and curriculum integration by parents, students and teachers assisting in creating, the finished scarecrow.

SHOWCASE AT THE SCHOOL SITES... Once the scarecrows are completed at the sites, schools are encouraged to promote the Ave. of Scarecrows by displaying on the grounds for publicizing the event to garner parent interest. Stage the scarecrows around the campus ahead of the October 28th showing at the market and to capture attention to advertise for the event. Create a harvest feeling around each campus with harvested items from the garden with the scarecrow displays. You may wish to bring them in at night. Two schools experienced some vandalism last year.

DELIVERY... All scarecrows are to be at Davis Farmers Market between 8 and 9:30 AM.

SIGNAGE... The individuals delivering the scarecrows need to bring the creative scarecrow story and bid sheet. This is absolutely necessary to accompany each figure upon delivery.

9:30 AM ANNOUNCEMENT... **One scarecrow will be chosen as most outstanding...** It will be determined by a panel of three judges from The Davis Farm to School Connection.

RAFFLE... That specific scarecrow will be showcased as a special raffle where tickets will be purchased for \$2 each and dropped into a large jar for a drawing to take place at 12:30p.m. The DF2SC will photograph and highlight the outstanding scarecrow to assist with promotions for the 2008 Ave. of Scarecrows. Funds from this scarecrow raffle goes to the class, which designed it.

SILENT AUCTION... All other scarecrows will be included within the silent auction format as in past years. Bid sheets will be attached to the scarecrows. All funds will return to the individual schools as so designated on the bid sheet.

AUCTION HOURS..9:30 AM to 12:30p.m.. The winning raffle ticket will be drawn at 12:30p.m. The silent auction will close at 12:30p.m.. Purchasers will write the checks or provide cash for their scarecrow. The checks will be written as the bid sheet mandates.

MONEY TO SCHOOLS... Checks or cash will be delivered to the participating schools within two weeks following the event by Garden/Recycle Coordinator, Dorothy Peterson.