

GROWING ENTHUSIASM

Park Slope's PS 107 has a garden party that puts produce on menu

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PHOTOS BY JAMES MONROE ADAMS IV

IT'S HARVEST time in Park Slope.

Students at Public School 107 on Eighth Ave. enjoyed the fruits of their labor last week, picking herbs and vegetables they planted in the school's garden in the summer.

The PS 107 garden was part of the pilot Garden to School Cafe program, launched in several public schools around the city to get kids to eat healthier by growing their own food.

"The goal is to have kids eat things they normally would not," said PS 107 parent association official Michele Israel, adding that studies show kids who plant their own veggies are more likely to eat them. "Planting the food they eat themselves gives them a sense of ownership."

Back in June, students planted herbs and vegetables such as

eggplant, tomato, kale, rosemary, chives and thyme.

Then, some of the produce was used to make a few dishes. A rice-and-herbs dish won a kids' taste test earlier this month and will be added to the school's regular lunch menu.

"Kids ate kale slaw and loved it," said Israel. "Sometimes they don't make the connection that this stuff they see in the supermarket actually grows.

"They learn about the weather, wind, soil, seeds," she said. "This is a hands-on scientific learning opportunity that you can't get from a textbook."

Parent association official Randi Roberts said she hoped the garden would continue to improve the school's lunch menu.

"We are riding a wave of momentum," she said, "and it's just a matter of time before other schools start catching on."



PTA official Michele Israel offers a student to smell thyme, while other kids find a slug in the soil (top photo). "This is a hands-on scientific learning opportunity," Israel said.