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# Students live farm-to-table lifestyle

*At Clayton Learning Center students learn “food is power”*

**By Susan Hagar**  
*YourHub Contributor*

With a crisp hint of fall in the air, Clayton Early Learning capped off another successful garden-to-table season with the families who benefit from the program and the supporters who make it possible.

In addition to a pumpkin patch, the 20-acre campus boasts a small fruit orchard, and 20 fruit and vegetable garden beds used to teach healthy eating habits by involving children in growing their own food.

“The children are involved in our gardens right from the beginning,” said Kristen Wilford Adams, Clayton health and wellness specialist. “It all starts with their interest and imagination.

“They try a dish in the classroom, and wonder ‘Can we grow tomatoes? Can we grow this kale?’ Thanks to our amazing partners, Designscares Colorado and Hardy Boys Plants, the answer is yes!” she said.

Al Gerace, owner and president of Hardy Boy Plants, said: “Today more than ever, it’s really important that children become aware of where their food comes from. That’s why we provide hundreds of plants to Clayton every year. The children grow the vegetable plants, they see them produce food, and they eat what they’ve grown. We’re very proud to be a part of that.”

Employees of Designscares Colorado, a local landscape company, work alongside the children, providing labor and expertise to plant and tend the gardens all season.

“The interaction between the Clayton kids and our employees is one of the things that I get most excited about,” Designscares CEO Phil Steinhauer said. “It’s a joy to help teach them about gardening, and knowing we’re helping put food on the table is especially gratifying.”

Clayton’s focus on health and wellness is just one component of the comprehensive, two-generation



**Kristen Wilford Adams, health and wellness specialist at Clayton Early Learning, works with children in Clayton's Moonbeam Gardens earlier this month. “We’re working to create food equity for our families. We want our children to know how to feed themselves, their families and their communities.”**

*Photos by Scott Dressel-Martin, provided by Clayton Early Learning*



**Clayton families select produce fresh from the nearby gardens to take home and enjoy.**

approach that supports more than 500 families living below the poverty line.

“We’re working to create food equity for our families,” Wilford Adams said. “We want our children to know how to feed themselves, their families and their communities.

Food is power.”

To learn more, visit [claytonearlylearning.org](http://claytonearlylearning.org).

*Susan Hagar is a public relations and communications consultant, and the owner of Hagar Communications.*