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Prairie View students building butterfly garden

Terri Pederson Daily Citizen



TERRI PEDERSON, DAILY CITIZEN

Prairie View Elementary School fourth grade students Tessa Warden, left, and Sofia Mohammed look at books about butterflies. Two of them are among the students who wrote letters convincing principal Jesse Peters that a butterfly garden should be established on school property.

Fourth grade students at Prairie View Elementary School persuaded school officials to create a butterfly garden with a series of essays.

Heidi Graff's fourth-grade students wrote the essays as part of the writing curriculum.

"It requires different pieces such as problem/solution, persuasive, informational reports and friendly letters," Graff said. "I like to give the students real world topics."

In the past, students have written letters in support of funding Badger Honor Flight and the Waterworks Park playground project.

Last year, Graff read an article in The Daily Citizen by Beth Shambeau about butterfly gardens and the importance of saving butterflies.

"I had the children research butterflies and butterfly gardens in Wisconsin," Graff said.

The students then wrote letters to principal Jesse Peters.

"The essays were very convincing," Peters said.

Sofia Mohammed wrote: "One reason we should build a butterfly garden at Prairie View is because it would be a fast, easy way to study them. For example, it would be a good way for kids to learn without sitting in a classroom, and they could learn things scientists may not know."

Monarch butterflies migrate 3,000 miles to a warmer place for the winter, Mohammed wrote. "An enclosed garden would allow them a place that could lengthen their lives."

"Butterflies are in trouble," student Tessa Warden wrote. "The fourth graders can help them by planting a butterfly garden. One reason the fourth graders should be able to plant a butterfly garden here at Prairie View is because butterflies would have a chance to live in a safer home. "

The students will be go on a field trip in March to play recorders with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and on the way back stop at Ebert's Greenhouse Village in Ixonia for to learn more about planting.

"Kids will look at a bit of research on a plant or write a report about a butterfly," Graff said.

There is also a list of programs at monarchwatch.org that the class can use for the project. Graff said she is hoping local greenhouses will also help them with creating the garden.

The garden should be in place by the end of this school year.
