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Interview with Julie Corpron, Raleigh Park Elementary Garden, 2013 (audio)

Julie Corpron

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW INDEX

INTERVIEWEE: Julie Corpron

Interviewer: Margret Harburg

Date: May 14th, 2013

Location of Interview: Julie Corpron's Home

Research Assistant: Christopher Taylor

Interview Series: SUSTAINABILITY HISTORY PROJECT

Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE) WITH AN
EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
0:00	Introduction and personal background
1:05	Interest in gardening
3:25	Introduction of interview participants
3:50	Origin of Raleigh Park Elementary School Garden
5:49	Placement of garden
7:07	Committee began developing the garden: developed mission statement; took two years of planning before they broke ground
8:38	Mission statement, getting parents and teachers on board
10:26	Broke ground in 2005: Hundreds of volunteers helped construct the garden; steering committee; help from neighbors
12:17	Original garden design
13:00	Sequence of construction: irrigation, sidewalk, clearing garden areas, Japanese tea house/shed, raised beds, garden sections
15:15	Elements in each garden
16:20	Monthly work parties with parent volunteers
16:53	Garden fence
17:40	Filling in the garden sections
19:22	Difficulties and challenges

21:08	As children leave the school, so do parent volunteers
22:03	Neighborhood interest in the school garden: Julie's neighbor has no children at the school, yet she attends almost every work party
22:29	Annual Garden Tour is a big source of volunteer support: Sponsored by Fir Grove Garden Club and Raleigh Park Parent Teacher Organization; Tour includes Raleigh Park Elementary School Garden, West Slope Community Library Garden, and 8 private gardens; tour raises funds for the gardens
24:06	Funding methods: Plant sales, donations from Parent Teacher Organization; volunteer donations of time and resources: Girl Scout troop donated money from cookie sales, 5 th grade boy asked for donations to school garden for his birthday, parent donated a tree for her birthday and celebrated with family and friends by working in the garden, architects, artists and designers lend their efforts to the garden, Boy Scouts work in the garden for Eagle Scout projects or merit badge requirements
26:40	Unexpected benefits: making great friends through the garden, having fun working with kids
27:18	Student involvement in garden and tastings in cafeteria: monthly tastings of vegetables; students help plant seeds and others harvest; parents love to see their parents eating vegetables
29:27	Nutritional benefits: Julie's background is in nutrition; the more that children garden, the more likely they are to have a varied diet
30:35	Amphitheater: good place to gather before a group starts gardening, area for classes to gather outside
32:30	How much time students spend in the garden
33:48	Chickens in the garden
34:50	Seasonality of the garden: designed to have vegetables that could be harvested during the school year
38:10	Sustainability of the garden
39:50	Changes
41:02	West Slope Community Library Garden: nearby library maintained by Fir Grove Garden Club; collaborates on the garden tour. Each garden earned \$2500 from garden tour for maintenance

42:00	Garden tour: Source of funding for the garden; Tickets are \$15, tour visited by neighbors and people as far away as Salem, Eugene and Vancouver. Neighborhood has a strong garden community, garden tour provides ideas for others to use in their own gardens
44:36	Fir Grove Garden Club: In existence for over 50 years; small, community-oriented club, very nice and supportive. Very helpful in development of Raleigh Park Elementary Garden. Club's main focus is the West Slope Community Library Garden. About 300 people came through the garden on the tour
47:20	The garden as a "place to be": visited by neighbors; garden differs each season and each year
48:47	Time spent in the garden: Julie has spent hundreds of hours in the garden each year
49:25	Garden has not partnered with a nursery; committee has always decided what will be planted
50:19	Composting: Three-bin system has been used often in the garden; compost tumblers need to be churned to heat up the compost and kill weed seeds
51:38	Child involvement happens most during weekday work parties; weekend work parties on Sunday afternoon draw parents and children, and much work gets done
52:42	Future of the garden: Hopefully, a paid person who could really dedicate themselves to the garden, someone who could be a liaison to the community; future leadership of the garden is uncertain
57:20	Final comments: Gardening is valuable to education; favorite vegetables and memories from the garden