



Croydon schools develop Edible Playgrounds

Three schools in Croydon – one of the capital’s food flagship boroughs – are developing ‘Edible Playgrounds’ as part of an exciting new approach to healthy eating and food education.

This week, Rockmount Primary, Fairchildes Primary and Meridian High (formerly Addington High) and St Giles Primary will officially launch the edible playgrounds.

The Edible Playgrounds project is led by Trees for Cities and provides schools in urban areas with the opportunity to grow food in their playgrounds. Trees for Cities’ worked in partnership with each school to create an outdoor area with raised beds, allotments, a fruit tree orchard and an outside teaching space. Earlier this year, the children prepared the soil, began sowing seeds and potted plants to grow strawberries, tomatoes, green beans and other produce to be ready in time for the summer.

Chair of the London Food Board, Rosie Boycott, said: “It’s fantastic that these three schools have really taken food growing to their hearts. Croydon is one of London’s two food flagship boroughs and is setting a great example by working with Trees for Cities to develop these edible playgrounds. Helping children grow their own nutritious food can have so many benefits to their health and wellbeing.”

Trees for Cities has also formed valuable partnerships with Chefs Adopt a School, whereby chefs work with pupils to cook using the Edible Playground produce and School Food Matters, who support schools to achieve their Food for Life Award.

Helen Carvall and Tracey Langridge, Head Teachers at Rockmount Primary School said: 'The completion of our Edible Playground has sent us on a very exciting new journey here at Rockmount Primary School. Children have delighted in planting a wide range of fruits, vegetables and herbs and are impatiently watching them grow! The outdoor classroom provided by our Edible Playground has become a popular learning hot spot and supports the whole primary curriculum. We can't wait to taste our first harvest and use our produce to cook some healthy and nutritious meals!'

Virginia Marshall, Head Teacher at St Giles said: “Trees for Cities has worked closely with us to develop an Edible Playground that is accessible to all our very special learners. Each class has planted salads and vegetables in their new wheelchair accessible raised beds. They are looking forward to harvesting and tasting their produce before the end of term. This is fantastic, hands on learning that really develops an understanding of where our food comes from”.

Ros Sandell, Fairchildes Primary School said : “From the first handling of cultivators and dibbers (and learning what these were) through seed planting, watering and weeding, we now have our first produce in the form of baby carrots! All the children are enjoying the experience and opportunities that Trees for Cities has given us in creating our Edible Playground and all are looking forward to harvesting and tasting the fresh fruit and vegetables to come!”.

Mr Martin Giles, Head Teacher at Meridian High said: “All too often young people are growing up without a good understanding of the benefit of balanced healthy eating and an appropriate knowledge of the danger of eating too many processed foods. The impact of our edible playground has been immediate and deeply felt by our garden ambassadors. We have very quickly seen that the students have a real ownership of, and pride in, what they are doing in the garden. Their minds have been awakened to new possibilities and there is a tangible excitement about how this project can be developed in the future. We are grateful to Trees for Cities for being such fantastic partners and we feel lucky to be able to benefit from their passion and commitment. This is an important element of our Healthy School status and we look forward to strengthening this partnership in the years to come”.

Trees for Cities has been working in schools to plant fruit and nut trees since 2000. With this track record and experience, TfC’ technical expertise in the delivery of Edible Playgrounds and operations is well established and highly regarded. The first Edible Playground was created in 2003. There are currently over 30 Edible Playgrounds in the UK with a further 40 to be rolled out over the next three years.

David Elliott said: “Our Edible Playground community is growing across the country and addresses several key areas of concern around children’s health. They teach pupils where food comes from, that healthy food can be the easy choice, in and out of school and encourage physical activity. Edible Playgrounds are part of our overall goal to plant trees and green communities across London boroughs, revitalising these areas and improving the lives of the people that live in them”.

The schools have also been kindly supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery, Tesco Bags of Help and Marsh.

Ends

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Images available upon request

Notes to Editors

Launch Dates

Meridian High with Fairchildes Primary School

2pm - 4pm Tuesday 28th June

Meridian High School, Fairchildes Avenue,
New Addington, Croydon, CR0 0AH



St Giles School

10.30am - 12.30pm Wednesday 29th June

Pampisford Road, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 6DF



Rockmount Primary School

2pm - 4pm Thursday 30th June

Chevening Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3ST



The players of People's Postcode Lottery have awarded Trees for Cities and its partners – Chefs Adopt a School and School Food Matters, nearly £250,000 Dream Funding to create ten edible playgrounds over two years in schools across the UK. Fairchildes and Meridian High, share an edible playground and were one of the lucky ten to receive funding. Over the last ten months Trees for Cities and its partners, School Food Matters and Chefs Adopt a School has been working in partnership with Fairchildes and Meridian High, to bring together growing, cooking, and learning about the importance of eating healthy food.

Edible Playgrounds transform areas in school grounds into vibrant outdoor spaces that excite and teach children about growing and eating healthy food. By instilling healthy eating habits at an early age, they help tackle obesity, food poverty and lack of access to nature head on, and provide a platform for fun and engaging lessons that support the school curriculum.

Edible Playgrounds is a programme led by Trees for Cities who have been working in schools to plant fruit and nut trees for over 10 years.

An Edible Playground typically includes raised beds, a greenhouse, a tool shed and tools for children, wormery, compost area, fruit trees, fruit and vegetable plants and an irrigation system. The school is also supported for 12 months post build with capacity building, including management planning and teacher training.

www.edibleplaygrounds.org

Trees for Cities is the only charity working on an international scale specialising in **planting urban trees** and providing **volunteering opportunities** to bring local people together. We are a game-changing, ambitious organisation that sets the standard for urban forestry worldwide. Our groundbreaking Edible Playground programmes **inspire children to grow and eat good food**, and create a lifelong connection with nature. Since we started in 1993, we have engaged over **70,000 people** to plant over **600,000 trees cities worldwide**. **We plant trees** in parks, streets, schools and housing estates.

School Food Matters is a registered charity based in London that campaigns for fresh sustainable food in schools and for children to understand where their food comes from. To achieve this SFM listens to schools, parents and children. Together they urge local authorities to improve school meals and to support food education through cooking, growing and links with local farms. <http://www.schoolfoodmatters.org/>

Chefs Adopt a School founded in 1990 by the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, Adopt a School, which includes Chefs Adopt a School and Hospitality in Schools, is a national charity which teaches children – in a holistic way – about food, cookery food provenance, food growing, healthy eating, nutrition, hygiene, table etiquette and the importance of eating together. Professional Chefs deliver sessions in the classroom which range in content from the four tastes and the five senses, to advanced practical cookery. The charity reaches over 20,000 children every year and we work with primary schools, secondary schools, SEN schools, hospital schools, pupil referral units, sports centres and food festivals. We believe that every child should be taught about the importance of food and the significance it has in our lives. <http://www.chefsadoptaschool.org.uk/>

About People's Postcode Lottery

- People's Postcode Lottery is a charity lottery. Players play with their postcodes to win cash prizes while raising money for charities and good causes across Great Britain and globally
- People's Postcode Lottery is an External Lottery Manager and manages multiple society lotteries promoted by different causes supporting a range of good causes. For details on which society lottery is running each week, visit www.postcodelottery.co.uk/society
- Postcode Lottery Limited is regulated by the Gambling Commission under certificate nr 829-N-102511-009 and 829-R-102513-008. Registered office: Titchfield House, 69/85 Tabernacle Street, London, EC2A 4RR
- People's Postcode Lottery players support the following Trusts – Postcode African Trust, Postcode Animal Trust, Postcode Care Trust, Postcode Children Trust, Postcode Community Trust, Postcode Culture Trust, Postcode Dream Trust, Postcode Global Trust, Postcode Green Trust, Postcode Heroes Trust, Postcode Planet Trust, People's Postcode Trust and Postcode Sport Trust. These Trusts are funded entirely by players and support a variety of good causes. For further information on each charity, visit: www.postcodelottery.co.uk/charities
- 50p from every £2 ticket goes to good causes and players have raised over £66.4 Million for good causes across the Great Britain and globally
- There are five draws a month with prizes every day and each ticket costs £2 – paid monthly in advance by direct debit. For further prize information, visit: www.postcodelottery.co.uk/prizes
- Maximum amount a single ticket can win is 10% of the draw revenue to a maximum of £400,000
- Players can sign up by Direct Debit, credit card or PayPal online at www.postcodelottery.co.uk, or by calling 0808 10-9-8-7-6-5.

Tesco bags of help funding supported St Giles to develop a fruit garden within the Edible Playground

Marsh London volunteers helped clear beds, construct the gourd walk way, fill new raised beds with soil and install the greenhouse and garden irrigation at Rockmount Primary School. They also match funded part of the cost of the Edible Playground through Trees for Cities three year charity partnership with Marsh.

<https://www.marsh.com/uk/home.html>

