

# Peshtigo third graders grow lettuce, have a salad party

SPECIAL TO THE EAGLEHERALD

**PESHTIGO** — Third-grade students from Peshtigo recently celebrated their successful FlexFarm harvest with a salad party. Thanks to a grant from the Provident Health Foundation, the Peshtigo School District purchased two hydroponic growing stations called Flex Farms from a company in Green Bay called Fork Farms. One is shared among the high school science classes and one rotates among elementary classrooms.

Emilee Cook's third-grade class got to use the flex farm for the past two months.

In early January, Cook's class received the indoor growing station. "This was a great learning experience for students," she said. "We researched the best lettuce and herb varieties to grow, and chose romaine, green star lettuce, basil, sage and lavender. Students were able to monitor the whole growing cycle, from planting to harvest."

Kids took care of their produce, and had ownership over the experience. "Every morning students were assigned to monitor the pH levels and add nutrients," Cook said.

She added that she loved to see students express such interest and enthusiasm for the science of growing food. "It was incredible to see our produce grow,

especially after the weekends," she said.

After two months, it was harvest time. "As a class, we discussed plans for a salad party," Cook said.

Kids brainstormed toppings to add to the bounty, including dressings varieties, croutons and a dozen veggie topping choices. Cook adds, "Someone suggested that basil infused water can increase focus and concentration, so we tried topping off water with basil."

All helped with the harvesting. "Kids tore the salad into manageable pieces and we borrowed the biggest salad spinner you've ever seen from our cafeteria," Cook explained. "We decorated the serving area like a cafe, including use of tablecloths and tea lights."

Third-grade student, Brissette Fynlee, said, "Lettuce party! Do you get it, Mrs. Cook?"

"We had several students who asked for seconds. Five students said that was the first time they tried a salad," Cook said.

Student Brody Trabulsi was very grateful, "Thank you for letting us have a salad party."

Cook said she loved the excitement and enthusiasm from the students. "Those eureka moments, when learning clicks for students, is what I love about my job," she said.



SUBMITTED

Peshtigo third-grade students Olivia Seefeldt, Austin Seymour and Kenzie Nault decide what lettuce should be harvested.