

# Burleson ISD Tower Gardens Grant Proposal

**Date:** 08.29.2017

**Project Title:** Garden Towers at BISD

**Submitted By:** Dr. Leslie Bender Jutzi

**Location of Project:** Burleson ISD

**Daytime Phone Number:** 817-245-1133

**Email Address:** [lbenderjutzi@bisdmail.net](mailto:lbenderjutzi@bisdmail.net)

**Total Amount of Request:** \$3,500 for support of the creation of 9 Garden Towers at 3 campuses - Frazier, Hajek and Taylor Elementary Schools

**Dr. Teresa Huffman**

**Burleson Area Mid-Day Rotary Club**

Ph: 817-845-8042

Email: [teresa.huffman@ahss.org](mailto:teresa.huffman@ahss.org)

**RE: Burleson ISD Garden Tower Grant**

Dear Dr. Teresa Huffman:

Burleson ISD is proposing to purchase Garden Tower School Bundle Kits for our three elementary campuses: Frazier, Hajek and Taylor Elementary Schools. The School Bundle Kits we propose to purchase will include tower gardens each with the following items:

- 50-plant composting container garden;
- caster wheel kit;
- 2 Save a Drop hose water meters;
- 72 seed starting greenhouse;
- high dome for the greenhouse;
- seedling flat heating mat;
- 72 peat pellet seed starting inserts;
- tank sprayer;
- \$20 Gift Card for Baker's Creek Non-GMO seeds;
- Thirsty Light (electronic plant moisture sensor); and
- 50 pack reusable plant marking sticks.

The Kits also include, a safe watering package with water filter, BPA free watering hose, and a brass "Y" valve. In addition, the Kit will include ProMix MX potting mix, Organic Soil Amendment, 500 red wiggler worms, and a discount on shipping for a total cost of \$616.44/Garden Tower. The generous pledge of support of the Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary

Club will fund an appreciable portion of the costs for 5 Garden Towers. The support of the Johnson County Alliance for Healthy Kids by Cook Children's will allow us to purchase the other 4 Garden Towers.

### **Background Information**

Garden towers are just what they say they are, i.e., gardens in tower form. Specifically, the garden is a vertical, organic, composting system. Plants are grown with peat pellet starter inserts, with 50 plants to a tower. All growing material is BPA free, and organic, and the seeds are non-GMO. Our campuses intend to grow several herbs and vegetables, including tomatoes, lettuce, basil, onions, peppers, eggplant, squash, spinach, turnips, peas, beets, carrots, and cucumber.

The garden tower system is innovative! It will help students study plants, while conserving the earth's resources. It will save water and dirt, shrink the growing footprint, and allow students to monetize their plant process by selling locally, and sustainably grown food, to local businesses. It will also allow students to engage in community service by distributing food to local pantries that support BISD students during the summer. It's the healthiest option for our students and will promote healthy eating in our entire community!

Garden Towers will provide students an authentic learning experience. Our teachers will be able to use them to support myriad of topics, e.g., the life cycle of the plant, the math associated with fertilizing, descriptive and technical writing, presentation skills, the art of pitching a product, the science associated with seed germination, pollination, etc., the topics are endless. In addition, students will learn how to manage their harvest time frames. With this vertical technology, less time than normal will be required for plant growth.

### **Project Description**

Garden Towers will be mobile and may be moved from class to class. They will be placed in high visibility locations on each campus, thereby allowing students easy access to tend to them as well as opportunities for the community to visit and learn about the Garden Towers. The first growing cycle will be timed to the First Semester's end. During the First Semester, students will plant and document their growing process. In addition, they will monitor costs and begin developing relationships with local restaurants in anticipation of a yield that will allow them to provide sample produce during the first 9 Weeks of school and at local, regional, and national events that promote sustainability, and farm to market produce.

Once food is harvested from the gardens, students will provide samples to local restaurants and organize promotional events that tout their produce. Students will also work with the BISD Food Service Team to provide samples of the produce to the students in campus cafeterias. Each campus also intends to have a harvest celebration coinciding with the Thanksgiving Holiday. Presuming that the student expectations are met or exceeded, during the Second

Semester, students intend to focus on maximizing their yield so that they may arrange to sell their products to local restaurants, provide their produce to the students in the cafeteria on a routine basis, and donate a portion of their produce to local food pantries.

The Garden Tower growing process is not only innovative, but it is also nutritious and follows the “[Going Green](#)” nationwide efforts. (Please also see this [LINK](#).) BISD Student Clubs, typically called, “Green Teams” will be in charge of the Garden Towers. Teachers will use the [Project Based Learning instructional methodology](#) and implement the Garden Towers as a cohort of projects. Student progress will be measured based on a series of formal and informal assessments.

### **Impact of Garden Towers on Campus Student Populations**

The campus student populations that will be served by the BISD Garden Tower program are as follows:

#### **Youth Ages: 4-10**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
<b>Pre-k</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>1st Grade</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>2nd Grade</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>3rd Grade</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>4th Grade</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>5th Grade</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1726</b>

### **Sustainability**

The typical single Garden Tower is 6 feet tall and will hold a total of 50 plants without extension. The only items that are needed to sustain the Garden Towers are the water, light, and organic soil amendment (4 pds/\$17.99). The sustaining items should last us for at least a year and can be purchased as needed per the yield our garden produces.

We seek to grow Garden Towers to further the BISD Mission of engaging and supporting every learner with a rigorous curriculum so that they graduate college and career ready. We are particularly interested in Garden Towers because they have inspired not just BISD students,

but several students around the world as a way to grow food sustainably. Our students have been invited to submit an article to the University of North Texas Sustainable Communities Review Journal documenting student research on the financial feasibility of sustainable food. They intend to share their findings with their peers around the world via this Journal and Social Media, including Garden Tower Facebook, Garden Tower Growing Circles, webpages, blogs, and Burleson ISD Facebook postings.

As you know, Dr. Huffman, Burleson ISD is a small community with big dreams. Our students seek to change the world with limited resources. This is why they are focusing on the cost/benefits associated with sustainable food production. Our students intend to sell their produce to local restaurants, and, if their hypotheses are correct concerning the sustainability of Garden Towers, they will share their model with neighboring school districts who also seek revenue savings and document their findings to promote global sustainability as set forth above. This will promote healthy, locally grown food in both schools and the wider community.

It will also facilitate community engagement with the school district, as our students also seek to distribute some of their produce to local food pantries, such as the Harvest House and Promises Community Ministries. This distribution will be conducted as a “student feeding student” model. Campuses will also coordinate with the Burleson ISD Food Service team to participate in additional community engagement programs such as [“Farm Fresh Fridays,”](#) “Harvest of the Month,” [“National School Lunch Week,”](#) and the [“Local Products Challenge.”](#)

### **Summary**

Dr. Huffman, Burleson ISD is very grateful for the consideration of the Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary Club to fund the initial costs of the Garden Tower School Bundles at Frazier, Hajek, and Taylor Elementary Schools. We propose to announce your sponsorship at our Garden Tower Launch Event in next month, and we would put the name of Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary Club on signage made for this event. We would appreciate your team’s presences at the Launch Event to be recognized for any contribution from the Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary Club. The total funding required for the 9 Garden Tower School Bundles, and additional gardening supplies is \$6,000, and we appreciate the consideration of the Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary Club as we continue fundraising for Garden Tower School Bundles at the 3 campuses.

The Garden Tower program is consistent with three of the 6 Areas of Focus of the Burleson Area Mid-day Rotary Club and Rotary International: Saving Mothers and Children, Supporting Education, and Growing Local Economies. A contribution of \$3,500 from the Burleson Area Mid-Day Rotary Club will fund almost 5 of the 9 Garden Towers and provide students the support that they need to kick off this project. It is an innovative program that will encourage our students to make healthier choices for their food options when available to them. It will raise awareness of nutritious, cost effective, options for the average family.

Please feel free to contact us if we may provide additional information about this program. We may be reached at 817-245-1133 and are tremendously grateful for your consideration of a generous pledge to this program.

Thank you,

**Dr. Leslie Bender Jutzi**  
**Chief Academic Innovation Officer**  
**Burleson Independent School District**

**Enc: Garden Tower Funding Proposal**

# Burleson ISD Garden Tower Funding Proposal

Burleson ISD requests a grant in the the total amount of \$3500 to support the creation of 5 Tower Garden projects at 3 elementary schools (Frazier, Hajek, and Taylor Elementary Schools).

## **Budget Information:**

**Proceeds from this request:** \$3500 (\$616.44/each campus)

### **Total Costs of 1 Tower Garden School Bundle Kit:**

\$616.44/Garden Tower School Bundle

Each Kit includes:

- 50-plant composting container garden;
- caster wheel kit;
- 2 Save a Drop hose water meters;
- 72 seed starting greenhouse;
- high dome for the greenhouse;
- seedling flat heating mat;
- 72 peat pellet seed starting inserts;
- tank sprayer;
- \$20 Gift Card for Baker's Creek Non-GMO seeds;
- Thirsty Light (electronic plant moisture sensor); and
- 50 pack reusable plant marking sticks.

Each School Bundle also includes:

- water filter;
- BPA free watering hose;
- a brass "Y" valve;
- ProMix MX potting mix;
- Organic Soil Amendment;
- 500 red wiggler worms, and
- a discount on shipping.

**Other Sources of Revenue:** Johnson County Alliance for Healthy Kids led by Cook Childrens'

**Other Expenditures:** Promotional Expenses for Launch Event and Grow Lights