

### **GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

- 1. Give a brief explanation of the scope to the project. Include number of Master Gardeners involved and hours spent. Please provide a list of all the names of the Master Gardener who participated in this project. (25 points).**

The Challenger school garden has been an ongoing project for 18 years. The garden was dedicated in honor of, Susan D. Burroughs, a former principal of the Challenger school. The garden was planted by Martin County 4-H youth, directed by Cindy Harris, Martin County 4-H youth agent.

Ms. Jodi Broeck, a fellow Master Gardener, was in charge of the garden. She passed the volunteer project to me (Carol Kay Furman). For the past two years and 443 volunteer hours later, it has been a special pleasure for me.

My goal as a volunteer with the school is to meld students and horticulture together. Challenger students are mentally and physically challenged. Working with the faculty, we have accomplished this goal by starting projects in the classroom and incorporating them in the garden.

- 2. What was the intended purpose of the project and the benefit to the Cooperative Extension Service. (25 points)?**

The school garden project started with making it a safe sanctuary for the students and staff. With the help of Ms. Mary McNulty, executive assistant Master Gardener, and Mr. Jim Lopilato of Parks and Recreation in Martin County, an overgrown ravine near the garden was cleared of trash and overgrowth of vegetation. This helped by getting rid of places for snakes to hide.

The older students helped to bring the garden back to life. They weeded, watered, raked and used leaf blowers during their lunch hours.

Mr. Harvey Cupaioli, (woodshop teacher) and I started a painting project in class. The children painted stepping stones with individual designs to be placed in the garden. We succeeded in bringing the classroom outside. The students felt ownership and pride in their work.

The Master Gardeners Cooperative Extension participate in the Martin County fair. They set up educational booths about horticulture. The students at the Challenger school, with the help of Mr. Cupaioli and I presented the Master

gardeners with a school display. The students made and painted park benches. The display included, plants from the garden, stepping stones and pictures of the students being active in the classroom and garden. The idea is to make the public aware of the community service that the Master Gardeners provide.

**3. *How was the project evaluated (20 points)?***

The evaluation of this project was made in an informal fashion. While evaluating the students in the garden, I noted the students to be more academically engaged. For example, the math department decided to conduct a class in Tessellation Theory. They incorporated small triangles within a large triangle by mathematics. The students were excited to paint the triangles on the sidewalk in the garden. I invited the Stuart News to come and see what we had accomplished. Ms. Deborah Silver, (staff photojournalist) put the story on the front page. A positive attitude among the students emerged, as well as more verbal and physical participation in gardening lessons. For example, one student who had poor attendance started coming more often to participate in the garden. I conducted a PowerPoint presentation and tour of the school for my fellow Master Gardeners. In the future, the members are going to volunteer to help with the students. More volunteers means more one on one time with the kids.

**4. *What were the results of this project (15 points)?***

The project is ongoing and self-perpetuating. After presenting the project to the board members of Martin County Master Gardeners, funding was allocated for the project. The planting area needed a new wood structure. With the new funding, the students under the guidance of Mr. Cupaiuoli, constructed a new potting structure. This school season we are looking to replace one raised railroad tie bed with cinderblock. This will teach the students how to lay block and design such structures. I am investigating a design for hydroponics to replace one of the other beds.

**5. *How has this project helped the targeted audience (15 points)?***

The students are our audience. As I have said before, "it is amazing the transformation the kids have when they are in the garden." In the beginning the garden was a place to calm students, and sometimes, staff from their problems resulting from stressful school situations. For example, a student was running away from the school, in the parking lot, I asked the student to help me in the garden; he stayed. Now they also come to the garden for fun. The

students are a part of the garden. They participate with respect and love, and are proud of their accomplishments within their garden. These special needs children have made the garden uniquely special.

**6. A 150 word (or less) summary of your project so that we can let others know of your accomplishments. Your application will NOT be judged without this summary included.**

In summary, the Susan D. Burroughs meditation garden at the Challenger school is a special place for all attending and working in the school. It provides educational therapy and sanctuary for the students. This children's garden has a special place in my heart. This garden is designed for wheelchair accessibility, including a ramp to an expansive gazebo. All students can enjoy the tropical plants, herbs and vegetables. For those students who cannot see, we have provided wind chimes and both aromatic and tactile experiences. For those who cannot hear, we have herbs and flowers they can taste and smell and see. Students participating in the care of the meditation garden become highly motivated. Challenger school students participating in the garden project are exposed to a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary learning experiences. Subjects include horticulture directed by me, as well as comprehensive gardening skills. Other subjects include zoology, physical science, mathematics, and construction mathematics and Tessellation theory. Some plant selection is made in the elementary school classrooms, for example, corn, beans, tomatoes. From the donations of the Martin County Master Gardeners, students learn planting, composting and other methods of fertilization through our garden project. The use of chemical fertilizer is almost non-existent.

*Please add a few paragraphs describing any problems you encountered or things you might change if you were to do the project again.*

In the future, I would like to expand the garden to include plant ID for the students. I would like to include a committee of Master Gardeners to landscape the front of the school. The problems encountered in the garden pertain to the water supply. This is limited to hand watering. Hand watering becomes a daunting task, especially during our hot summer months. I would like to work on a plan with the school to bring in some form of irrigation.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my experience that Martin County Master Gardeners have provided through the Challenger school garden project.

Sincerely,

Carol Kay Furman, Master Gardener



## Florida Master Gardener Awards and Recognition Form Awards of Excellence

Each county is allowed **ONE ENTRY PER CATEGORY**. Although your Master Gardener Coordinator may have been heavily involved in this effort, only the efforts of the Master Gardeners themselves are to be evaluated. Points will be deducted if it is perceived that most of the effort or submission of entry forms came from the Master Gardener Coordinator.

Only efforts made since the last awards ceremony will be considered by the judges. Any new or recertified active Florida Master Gardener(s) are eligible. In the event your entry does **not** take top honors in this category this year, we would encourage you to improve your submission and resubmit your entry next year should you *repeat or continue* this project. If your project has won in **ANY** year, it **CANNOT BE REENTERED** again, despite any significant changes in format or participants.

Judges for the awards shall be appointed by the State Master Gardener Program Leader, University of Florida. Decisions by the judges will be final.

### **ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT**

#### **SEE BELOW FOR APPLICATION CRITERIA:**

The correct and completed award application forms including:

- A typed application form not to exceed 3 pages in length. Supporting materials (where requested may be additional pages)
  - The three pages must include the 150 word project summary.
- 12 point font
- No more than 8 photographs in addition to the three pages of text. (Photos no larger than 8 x 10)
- This form typed and completed including: appropriate category checked
- Name of MG Coordinator (The coordinator must approve application prior to admission)
- Application, photos and supporting materials must all be in PDF format and packaged into one document. Submissions are to be emailed to: [twichman@ufl.edu](mailto:twichman@ufl.edu)

County: Martin ...

Name of Project: Challenger School Horticulture Therapy Garden

Project start date: August 2010      Project end date: August 2012

Name of person(s) typing application: Carol Kay Furman

Name or names of Master Gardeners preparing application: Carol Kay Furman

Name of Agent: Yvette Goodiel

Revised 06/2012

**CATEGORY: Indicate only one category per entry form. You must assign your entry to a specific category to be considered for an award in that category. Entries are limited to the categories indicated below.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 11 Beautification                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Form 18 Personal Communications           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 12 Demonstration Garden                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Form 19 Service to 4-H and other youth    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 13 Educational Materials Development     | <input type="checkbox"/> Form 20 Special Audience                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 14 Extension Awareness                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Form 22 Written or Verbal Mass Comm.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 15 County Displays/Exhibits              | <input type="checkbox"/> Form 23 County Master Gardener Newsletter |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Form 16 General Achievement</b> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 17 Outstanding Master Gardener           |  |

**Email PDF Applications to:** Tom Wichman  
[twichman@ufl.edu](mailto:twichman@ufl.edu)

**TO BE ELIGIBLE ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 1, 2012**

**Martin County School District  
Outstanding School Volunteer Award**

Is hereby presented to

*Kay Furman*

For outstanding commitment and lasting contributions to  
Challenger School and the Martin County School District.

Wednesday, April 25, 2012



*Nancy Kline*

---

**Nancy Kline  
Superintendent**

*Elena Rish*

---

**Elena Rish  
Volunteer Services Liaison**



# GARDEN THERAPY



**Above:** Wood shop teacher Harvey Cupaiuli (left) hangs a wind chime with Alex Robles, 11, while other students and staff work in the Susan D. Burrows Meditation Garden at Challenger School in Stuart on Thursday. **Top:** Eight-year-old Juan Rodriguez-Sullivan smells a snip of fennel after smelling rosemary that Kay Furman of Stuart gave him in the meditation garden at the Challenger School in Stuart on Thursday. Furman, a master gardener, is in her second year volunteering at the school, adding her expertise to the school's garden.

## ■ Gardeners work with special needs children to cultivate growth

**Story and photos  
by Deborah Silver**  
deborah.silver@scripps.com  
772-286-4691

### TCPALM.COM

See more photos at [TCPalm.com/challengergarden](http://TCPalm.com/challengergarden).

STUART — Master gardeners in Martin County are devoting their time to tending a special garden for special needs children.

"We call it horticulture therapy," said Kay Furman, a University of Florida Martin County master gardener and volunteer at the Challenger School in Stuart.

Furman, 60, of Stuart, started spearheading the garden's rebirth at the school for the mentally and physically challenged after Jodi Broeckl — a fellow master gardener and former volunteer at the school — handed her the project

two years ago. "It's amazing the transformation the kids have when they are in the garden," said Furman, a retired flight attendant.

The meditation garden, now dedicated in honor of Susan D. Burrows, Challenger School founder and its principal for 18 years, was started by Cindy Haris with the University of Florida of Martin County 4-H Youth.

The garden now sports a wheelchair-accessible ramp that leads to an expansive gazebo surrounded by indigenous tropical plants, herbs and small vegetables.

"Almost all of the big plants have

**“It's amazing the transformation the kids have when they are in the garden.”**

**Kay Furman, master gardener**

been planted in memory of past students," said Harvey Cupaiuli, the wood shop teacher at Challenger.

In the future, the school would like the gardening group to landscape the front of the school and expand the garden to include benches made by the students and led by Cupaiuli.

"As long as the school is there, we'll keep expanding," Furman said.





