Sowing Seattle Seeds for the Green Apple Day of Service

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Center for Green Schools Staff Emily Knupp with Seattle Mariner Lucas Luetge

Last week, I had the opportunity to travel to Seattle for our very first Day of Service project. I joined the Seattle Mariners, Seattle Seahawks, Seattle Sounders and Seattle Storm, along with Washington Green Schools and Seattle Public Schools, the Green Sports Alliance, Skanska, community volunteers and students from Denny International Middle School and Chief Sealth High School to conduct a service project to gain momentum leading up to the official Green Apple Day of Service on Sept. 29.

The goal for the day was to expand the garden. We were tasked with building three plant beds and filling them with compost, soil, and plants, installing shelves in the tool shed and building a few benches. There were 22 middle and high school students there to join including the garden clubbers and some of the school's athletes, new Seattle Public Schools Superintendent José Banda, an amazing crew from Skanska, the Washington Green Schools program, Cedar Grove Composting who even donated a truckload of composted soil, as well as players past and present from the Mariners, Seahawks, Sounders and Storm.

In four hours we unloaded the soil, built three beds, two benches, planted kiwi, lavender, blueberries, strawberries and flowers, made an amazingly tasty lunch with ingredients from the garden, got really smelly and pretty much had the greatest day ever. The players were super engaged and excited to be there. I showed the Mariners relief pitcher Lucas Luetge (who pitched half an inning later that night!) how to plant a lavender bush and helped Superintendent Banda put a blueberry bush in the ground. They had a great time. The team from Skanska taught the kids about the company's "Stretch and Flex" program which encourages job site safety and about being great advocates for Green Apple Day of Service.

This project realized everything Day of Service has the potential to be:

- A diverse group of students engaged and excited to get dirty and learn new things.
- Community organizations and companies partnering together for a great cause (including local celebs!)
- Local media coverage - West Seattle Herald as well as a couple of local news outlets and the sports radio station
- Hard work with tangible results and something the community put their sweat into, will maintain, and be proud of.

Start to finish, the trip to Seattle could not have been better. Our new friends from the Mariners, Skanska and the Green Sports Alliance treated us like family the entire week, and we even got to spend an evening on the owner's suite at the Mariners game. It was awesome, but was really just a treat on top of the experience we had the day before yesterday.

Thanks to everyone who made this day such a success, and we're look forward to many more projects like this to come!

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