



Happy New Year! In this issue...

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1. Teacher Feature - Ezra Contreras

Teaches: Speech Pathology, School Garden

School: Willow Cove Elementary, Pittsburg, CA



California Foundation for
Agriculture in the Classroom

DID YOU KNOW?!

Choosing brussels sprouts that are similar in size makes them easier to cook evenly.

Ezra Contreras was selected as one of this year's 25 Literacy for Life grant recipients. She began working with her school's garden in 2014, when five fifth-grade students from the school were invited to attend a special [garden harvesting event at the White House](#) with Michelle Obama. Ezra will continue to improve the program with her new project.

What's your *Literacy for the Garden* project?

We have a strong garden and nutrition team at Pittsburg Unified School District. This year, our three main goals for the garden are 1) to focus on garden literature, 2) set up an outdoor classroom, and 3) increase parent /teacher participation. The Literacy for Life grant will allow for the garden to have its own library with garden books to link curriculum to our beautiful garden.

What inspired you to create this project?

I am blessed to have a Speech Therapy classroom next to the Willow Cove Garden. I discovered children like learning about the garden by exploring connections to almanacs and fiction books. I have used some of the Eric Carle books and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom lessons to link literacy and the garden. I also received the California Specialty Crops Taste Test Grant in 2014-2015. This program taught students about local fruits and vegetables, including preparation and taste comparison. The lessons were a huge success and were used to motivate students to improve behavior, nutrition and language development. When reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, we found three caterpillars in the garden. We kept them in an insect cage, and they had eggs. Students were amazed about the connection between the book and the garden.

2. Website Launch Party

Sign the guest book for a chance to win!



Our website, LearnAboutAg.org was updated on January 25, 2016. We're celebrating the new, easy-to-navigate, mobile-friendly website with a Website Launch Party. [Sign the guestbook](#) for a chance to win. The drawing will take place on **Friday, February 12, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.** Email Jennifer@LearnAboutAg.org with questions.

3. Seed Survivor Mobile - CA Tour

Schools in Southern California can now register for a visit from Seed Survivor Mobile! [Schedule a Seed Survivor visit](#) while the trailers are in your county.

Help present at Southern California tour stops!

Presenters will be paid for their time. Contact Liz Baskins at 916-561-5625 or Liz@LearnAboutAg.org.

Tour Dates and Locations:

February 8-12: Tulare/Kern County
February 15-19: Tulare/Kern County
February 22-26: San Luis Obispo County
February 29-March 4: Ventura County
February 29: Kings County
March 3-4: Imperial County
March 7-11: Los Angeles County
March 14: Sonoma County
March 14-18: Riverside County
March 18: Marin County
March 21-25: San Diego County
March 28-31: Orange County

3. *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest **Awards Ceremony: March 16, 2016**

State-winning authors will be recognized during **California Agriculture Day** in Sacramento on **Wednesday, March 16, 2016**. The new book,

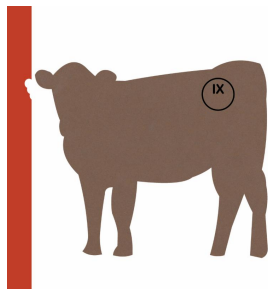
[Imagine this...](#) *Stories Inspired by Agriculture* 2015 will be published on that date as well. Here is sneak peak of one story illustration!



RESOURCES

4. Featured Resource - Ag-Bites

Ag-Bites are bite-sized ways to bring agriculture into your classroom. These one-page sheets explain how to perform hands-on learning activities with students in various grade levels (K-12). Download individual sheets or the entire set [online](#).



5. Grant Opportunities

[Lowe's Toolbox for Education Program](#)

- Apply for grants for school gardens and more.
- Deadline for Spring Cycle: **February 12, 2016**

[Look at Agriculture... Organically! Grants](#)

- Teach (K-8) students about organic agriculture.
- Applications **open April 1 and are due May 15.**
- Grants are provided through a collaboration between CFAITC and the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) Foundation.

6. Statewide Events, Competitions, & More!

A Garden in Every School Symposium 2016, Sacramento

- Saturday-Sunday, February 27-28
- Explore workshops, success stories, discussions, booths and more.
- Learn more on the Soil Born Farms website.

Clean Tech Competition - Worldwide design challenge for clean energy

- Students ages 15-18 can enter at no cost.
- Teachers must [register](#) by February 26, 2016.

LifeLab Workshops and Camps, UC Santa Cruz

- *Sowing the Seeds of Wonder: Discovering the Garden In Early Childhood Education*
 - Saturday, March 5, 2016
- *Summer Camps*
 - Register for camps for ages 4-18
 - Camp [registration](#) opens February 24, 2016
- Register for these activities and other LifeLab events at www.lifelab.org.

Education & Agriculture Together (EAT) Foundation- Summer Workshop Dates

- Session 1: June 13-16, 2016
- Session 2: July 11-14, 2016
- Learn more on the EAT Foundation [website](#).



7. County Ag Days

February 26, 2016 - [Napa County Ag Day](#)

March 1, 2016 - [AgVenture San Joaquin County](#) -
Lodi

March 1, 2016 - [King's County Third Grade Field Day](#)

March 8-9, 2016 - Kern County Farm Bureau's [Farm Day in the City](#)

March 15, 2016 - [Sonoma Ag Day](#)

March 17, 2016 - [Marin Ag Day](#)

May 10, 2016 - Solano County Fair's [Youth Ag Day](#)

May 10, 2016 - El Dorado County's [Farm Day](#)

8. More Ways to Learn About Ag

Santa Cruz County - [National Agriculture Day Poster & Poetry Contest \(K-12\)](#) Deadline: February 24, 2016

San Diego County - The Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCD) is offering [scholarships to high school seniors](#).
Deadline: April 11, 2016

Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado Counties and the City of West Sacramento - [Water Spots Video Contest](#) for middle and high school students.
Teachers must enroll by February 26, 2016.

Merced County- Hilmar Cheese Company offers [free educational tours](#) to K-12 students.



SUPPORT
AITC

Show Your Support for Agricultural Literacy

Help us continue to provide programs and materials to create an awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.

[Make a one-time or recurring donation.](#)

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