Seven Arrows School: Fully In Bloom!

Description

Welcome to Seven Arrows!

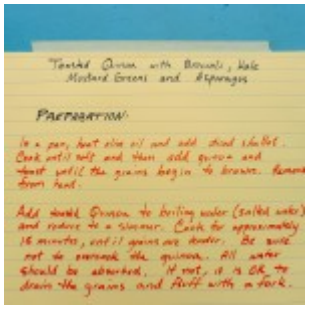
When Jamie Oliver, the British celebrity chef, cookbook author and Food Revolution guru is a former parent at the school, you can imagine what its gardens look likeâ€¦theyâ€™re amazing. Jamie is a former parent at Seven Arrows School. While there, he inspired a series of gorgeous edible gardens that fill every nook and cranny of the compact campus. Working his magic with kids and plants of all shapes and sizes, Jamie infused the school with edible gardens that combine healthy eating and knowledge of eco-friendly gardening as part of the curriculum. This flagship program is the first thing you notice when you enter the school!

Seven Arrows is an urban school located in suburban Pacific Palisades. It is a small K-6th school, with a total of 120 students and one class per grade. Walking into Seven Arrows on a recent morning, I was immediately impressed by the schools visuals, which are a mix of subtle and dramatic. Bold colored buildings stand out against the bright green gardens, sprinkled with barely blooming flowers. Shade and sunny areas combine to create a pleasant outdoor space. Edible plants add a sublime touch.

An edible garden

The school reflects the vision of its founder and head of school, Margarita Pagliai,â€¨ a very dynamic educator originally from Columbia. Seven Arrows, just 15 years old, has a very vibrant, energetic feeling, much like the personality of its founder. I chatted with Margarita, who is earnest and expressive, as she oversaw the Wednesday preparation and cooking of the garden harvest of fruits, vegetables and herbs in the outdoor classroom. â€œGardening is a part of the school culture,â€• Margarita told me. â€œEvery kid is engaged!â€• she said.

Getting ready to cook in the outdoor classroom



A recipe

From earth to table

Excitement was palpable as various stations were set up and kids utilized the outdoor classroom to chop, clean, cook and eat food fresh from the edible garden. Serving as a roadmap for a lifelong approach to healthy eating, the gardening program stands out for its innovative qualities. The school gardens and the outdoor classroom are a defining element of this cohesive school where healthy meets delicious!

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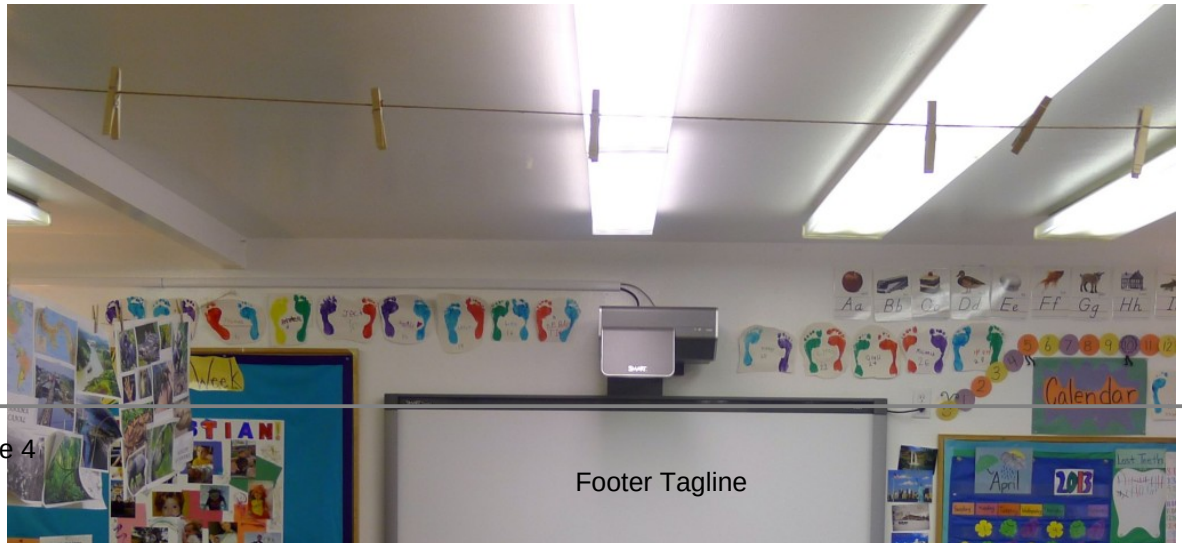
Outdoor Classroom

I met with Omid Kheiltash, PhD, Seven Arrowsâ€™ assistant head of school/admissions director and Lindy Berman who also works in admissions. They are both engaging, friendly and very knowledgeable, talking about the type of learning that takes place at their school and its signature programs.



The kindergarten classroom

Omid told me that Seven Arrows is a school where academics are the result of the intersection of old and new concepts. The curriculum is versatile and streamlined, with a focus on academic rigor taught within a progressive approach. Taking the best from tradition, â€œdrill and thrillâ€• memorization are used, but progressive elements like *collaboration* and *choice* balance the approach to learning.

Spanish!

â€œEducation canâ€™t stagnate,â€• both administrators emphasized. Seven Arrows makes sure the staff utilizes the latest technology and teaching tools. The school is a big proponent of technology. There is a math/technology specialist on staff. All technology is integrated into what the kids are

learning in the classroom. In 5th and 6th grades, students have iPads and laptops. Bringing these resources to lower grades is the goal for next year.

First Grade classroom

One of the most compelling aspects of the school is its emphasis on values and beliefs. There are seven concepts that form the centerpiece of the schoolâ€™s expectations for behavior and learning, including *Respect, Pursuit of Excellence, Fairness and Empathy.* There arenâ€™t just words on a page. They are ideas, which are thoroughly embedded in the schoolâ€™s programs through a monthly focus on a different value each time. Counsels (school meetings) are used to discuss issues like cliques, emotions and empathy. â€œThe messiness of life is learned in a safe place,â€• says Omid.

Edible garden

â€œJamie Oliverâ€™s legacy at Seven Arrows resulted in â€œWoolly Pocketâ€• gardens are brimming with plants, herbs, and vegetables on virtually every outdoor surface. These â€œWoolly Pocketâ€• planters maximize planting potential and are one of several innovative ideas we hope will be emulated by other organizations interested in edible gardens located in urban areas. A visitor to the school may also wish to test their knowledge of fruit trees as you stroll through the campus (beautiful signs will aid you if you need to take a peek!)â€• (*Source: Seven Arrows website*).

Science!

Kindergarten is a time for individualized attention in a warm, supportive environment designed to foster a life-long love of learning. By 5th grade, students are writing seven page multi-media research papers on their chosen topic. Global and world festivals throughout the year are a time for celebrating diversity of all kinds. Fridays are Kuyam or all-school assembly days where parents and the entire school comes together as a community to hear guest speakers, see kids perform, sing and celebrate the Seven Arrows community.

When I asked Omid and Lindy what their admissions team is looking for, the answer was, â€œParents who want what we have to offer.â€• Good to know!

Placement at top-tier secondary schools is taken seriously by Margarita. She makes in-person presentations to the schools where her 6th graders are applying. As a result, 94 percent of students are accepted at their first or second choice school including Harvard-Westlake, Brentwood, Viewpoint, Crossroads and other highly competitive schools.

Seven Arrows truly shines by drawing inspiration from its surroundings, with just the right mix of whimsy and seriousness. Unexpectedly, delightfully green, the school is complete with everything a child needs to flourish. Clearly, no dream is too big at Seven Arrows!

Veggies ready to cook!

Lemons and Poppys

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Details

For more information, visit www.sevenarrows.org

Category

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Tags

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