

Email letter sent from a teacher at the Youth Gardening Program sent to Carol Lambert (April 2025)

My students loved the Garden Club. I have too. Your dedication and positivity is so valuable to these students and I don't say that lightly. In my 30 years of teaching, teaching has changed, a lot. The kids have changed. Parenting has changed. I have my opinions, but like it or not, these are "my babies" for the year and somebody has got to love them. I am given one year to touch them and hopefully, plant a seed. It may be a seed of something academic or a seed of a social skill or an emotional regulation skill. Some of these students will bloom right away, but some will need more time. In my 30 years, this is the most "dysfunctional" class I have ever had and I say that with affection. There is no "normal" anymore within a classroom. What you may not know is that I have kids on medication for ADHD and ODD. I have kids whose fathers are not present and other kids whose fathers are in jail. I have students who parents have died and others whose parents are struggling with addiction. I have kids who are being raised by grandparents and others who are in foster homes. I have kids with truly very little food in the home. And sadly, I have more

than one kid who has been sexually abused. My kids are starving for positive attention and affection. They act up because that's what they know. It's a reflection of the chaos that is going on in their personal lives. If I could take these kids home and rear them all, I would. Since I can't, the best thing I can give them is calm, consistent expectations at school so they learn a "new normal". I do a lot of story telling and a lot of listening. Your Garden Club has added to their new normal. They see you faithfully show up each month because you simply care about them. We've discussed volunteering and the commitment and sacrifice it takes to give to someone else whether it's your time, supplies, or gifts. Your commitment, kind words, smiles, laughter, story telling, modeling, listening etc means the world to these kids. So thank you again for everything you have given "my babies" and for helping them bloom!!! 🍷🌹🌸🌻🌺🌷🌼🌾🌽🌾🌽🌼



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