



## Anita's Garden

### **Program Summary**

Located adjacent to our outdoor environmental education classroom, Anita's Garden is a collection of annuals and perennials strategically placed along the water's edge to attract to attract butterflies, birds, and bees providing students with an up close and personal look at nature in action! Children are provided hands-on opportunities to explore nature and plant science by rolling up their sleeves and lend a hand in the garden. They learn about the biology of plants, how bugs and bees act as pollinators, the importance of plants in the food cycle of animals like birds, and much more! Exposure to the natural world helps to instill a lifelong love of gardening as well as an appreciation for the outdoors and the natural world in which we all live.

The garden is named after Anita Minelli Salerno spent 38 years touching the lives of children, 27 years of which were spent at Bear Creek Elementary School. Anita was a kind-hearted, special woman. The children who were blessed with the privilege of being in her class recall her many wonderful attributes and have so many great stories to tell. Upon retiring, she donated her time helping in the fight to open Bear Creek Community Charter School, serving as one of the School's original Trustees. One of the fondest memories of Anita's teaching career was her annual Monarch butterfly project, where she collected caterpillars, bringing them into the classroom and mentoring her students through their life cycle until they blossomed into beautiful butterflies, finally releasing them back into the wild so others can enjoy their beauty. Although we lost Anita, her spirit will continue to live on in the hearts and minds of the hundreds of children whose lives she touched.

Students are also engaged in maintaining the garden through planting, weeding, mulching, watering and harvesting dry flowers. Some of the flowers are raised by students and staff volunteers, using the school's mini-greenhouse located nearby.

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Implementation Timeline:** Annually: September, April, May and June.

**Program Coordinator:** Jim Smith  
(570) 820-4070, extension 6204  
jim.smith@bearcreekschool.com