

# Introduction to the Pesto Project



by Molly and Olivia

Dear Readers,

Hi. Our names are Olivia and Molly. We are in second grade and we are good friends. Here at The College School, we and our teachers, Colleen and Cristina, and the first graders and their teachers, Melissa and Kathy, made pesto and pasta. Pesto is made from basil, garlic, oil, cheese and nuts. To make pasta from scratch you use eggs, flour and water to make dough. You also need a pasta maker and you can get one at a kitchen supply store.

To make the pesto we picked lots of basil from our garden at The College School. Some of the first and second graders harvested the basil after it grew for three months. Tim, our horticultural coordinator, planted the basil from seed in his garden at home and then transplanted it in the school garden. Our school greenhouse and gardens are new. The construction workers started last spring and it took them five or six months to finish. The gardens were ready during the first weeks of school.

We had a warm fall so the basil and other vegetables had plenty of time to grow. In winter, it is too cold for the basil to grow. The puddles freeze and so do the garden beds.

When we were cooking the pesto in first grade, it was fun because we smashed the basil and turned it into little pieces. It needed to be in little pieces to put it in the grinder to really smash it.

It was also fun to shred the cheese for the pesto. After we looked at how much we got, it was a whole bowl. We had little samples of cheese to check to make sure it was good and okay. The cheese was so good. Be aware that you might keep eating samples if you are like us, and then you won't have enough.

What is special about making your own pesto and pasta? It is not processed. It is not wrapped in a bag. Machines did not make it. Plus, it is not sitting in a grocery store for awhile. It just tastes better when you grow it yourself. It is fresh!

The eggs came from Bonne Terre, Missouri. The nuts came from Stockton, Missouri, and the garlic was grown in a St. Louis garden. We like that we used local ingredients. If ingredients come from far away, the boxes might be thrown around. And you don't know how or where the food was really grown, how it was processed or handled. It might have traveled in a truck that got

hot in the sun or wet if it rained. If you were ordering nuts, your order might get canceled.

It is just better to get ingredients from closer by. If you live in California, you should get nuts and eggs from California. If you live in Missouri, you should get nuts and eggs from Missouri.

To make pesto, we recommend that you use fresh ingredients. Then, your pesto will taste really good. We don't want people to feel that they have to grow basil or garlic. If you want fresher pesto, you might be able to get basil and garlic and some of the other ingredients from your neighbor's yard or a farmers' market.

We like doing things like cooking in a little group. It feels more unique. We felt lucky that we were a part of this project.

If you read this little book, we think you will want to try making pesto and pasta too.

Sincerely,

*Molly and Olivia*

Representatives from the Second Grade