

# 2024 SEEDS FOR EDUCATION GRANT WINNER PRESS RELEASE

\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

News from: Corpus Christi Catholic School

Date: February 13, 2024

Phone: 309-662-3712

E-mail: [karbogast@corpuschristisaints.org](mailto:karbogast@corpuschristisaints.org)

For grant information, visit <https://wildones.org/>

\*\*\*\*\*

PROJECT CONTACT: Kristen Arbogast

Person #1 Phone: 309-662-3712

email: [karbogast@corpuschristisaints.org](mailto:karbogast@corpuschristisaints.org)

Person #2 Phone: 309-662-3712

email: [astanko@corpuschristisaints.org](mailto:astanko@corpuschristisaints.org)

---

## LOCAL YOUTH FROM CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC SCHOOL GROW SEEDS FOR EDUCATION TO BENEFIT POLLINATORS AND WILDLIFE WITH NEW NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

**Bloomington, IL, February 13, 2024** – Dwindling biodiversity is a threat to the foundation of life on earth. In the last century alone, we've lost millions of acres of diverse ecosystems to urbanization. "The conservation of Earth's resources, including its living biological systems, must become part of the everyday culture of us all, worldwide." explains Doug Tallamy, Wild Ones Lifetime Honorary Director in his book, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*. Native plants help protect and restore biodiversity, improve air and water quality and provide wildlife with quality food and shelter. Wild Ones' vision is native plants and natural landscapes in every community and the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Program helps achieve this.

Youth, staff, and volunteers at Corpus Christi Catholic School are excited to help reverse that trend and bring back critical wild space and instilling an appreciation for nature in Bloomington's youth by planting a Native Plant Rain Garden at our site this year with funds from the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program (SFE) administered by Wild Ones. The youth involved will learn about the benefits of native plants while getting a close-up view of butterflies, songbirds and other creatures that use these plants for vital food or shelter.

Site preparation of Corpus Christi's Native Plant Rain Garden has been meticulously completed, laying a robust foundation for the upcoming growing and planting stages of the project. The area designated for the garden underwent thorough cleaning and clearing, removing any debris, weeds, and non-native species that could impede the growth of the new plants. A layer of biodegradable cardboard was laid to suppress plant growth. High-quality, environmentally friendly mulch was then applied to enrich the soil, retain moisture, and further suppress any unwelcome weed growth.

The Seeds for Education Grant Program honors Lorrie Otto, who inspired school garden projects in the 1970s in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. For more than 20 years, Wild Ones has awarded SFE grants to youth-serving organizations for acquiring native plants and seeds for outdoor learning areas that engage youth (preschool to high school) directly in planning, planting, and caring for native plant gardens throughout the United States. In 2023, Wild Ones received applications from more than 150 projects and garnered requests totaling over \$60,000. Out of this impressive pool, only 23 projects, including this one, have been chosen for participation. For more than 25 years, this donor-funded program has provided grants ranging from \$100 to \$500 to over 300 native plant gardens and landscaping projects.

Jen Ainsworth, Executive Director of Wild Ones, said, "With the Seeds for Education program, we are supporting the next generation of environmental stewards at Corpus Christi Catholic School, with these students and native plants for a healthy planet."

Kristen Arbogast said, "This will be an exciting hands-on learning experience for our youth. They will be fully engaged in this project and learning about how growing native plants from our local ecosystem supports wildlife. This grant will help us purchase the native seeds and plants we need. The kids can hardly wait to get started!"

Wild Ones is a nationally recognized, membership-based non-profit organization with a mission to promote native landscapes through education, advocacy, and collaborative action.

Wild Ones achieves the mission by providing quality, online learning opportunities open to the public that feature experts in the native plant movement, producing free, region-specific, native garden design templates to help people start their first native garden, awarding Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education grants that engage youth in planning, planting and caring for educational natural landscapes, publishing a quarterly, award-winning journal featuring valuable native plant information and resources, and supporting the grassroots efforts of 100+ nationwide. With over 100 chapters and nearly 10,000 members across 34 states, Wild Ones is building a movement of native planters growing healthier landscapes.

For photos or information about the project, please contact Kristen Arbogast.

###