

Earth Keepers – Monarch Waystation

Early in the 2019-20 school year, first grade students studied butterflies. They learned the process of how a caterpillar turned into a butterfly. They were so interested in learning more, that one first grade teacher felt led to create a Formational Learning Experience (FLEx) for the students. It might not be for people, but Mrs. Lutke thought maybe the kids could use their research about butterflies to make the ACS campus a place that could be beneficial to these creatures.

The students began to research the migration pattern of the Monarch butterfly, and found that millions of Monarch butterflies travel to Mexico for the winter. The kids knew that when they take long trips, they need a break to rest and to eat. They started wondering if they could provide a place for migrating Monarchs to rest. They discovered what is called a 'Monarch Waystation.' A waystation is a garden of milkweed and nectar sources that provides the Monarchs with a place to continue to grow their population, but also gather energy for the long migration to Mexico.



Once the research was complete, the first grade students worked to create different designs for what their waystation might look like. They made sure that this was something they could establish and maintain right on the Allendale Christian campus. Finally, they worked collaboratively to create a presentation with the involvement of all students in the class to try to gain the approval of nature-based stakeholders in the school, from the principal, to teachers that are involved in nature-rich education at ACS. Their presentation was first class! We are so excited to see first grade students practice what it means to be Earth Keepers, Creation Enjoyers, and Servant

Workers (and more). We also look forward to reporting in future Growing Times about the creation and success of the ACS Monarch Waystation!

