

## Wagner Students Grow Nutritious Food for a Healthy Life

### Summary

The students have fun while learning life-long lessons about nutritious foods. The Wagner School hopes they are helping to create new generations of South Dakotans who understand and appreciate the importance of nutritious foods and the art of gardening.

### Challenge

Students, in today's world, often do not understand where their food comes from nor what kinds of foods are nutritious for them to consume. Additionally, many families do not have access to places to grow their own food, nor they may not understand how to plant and manage a garden.

### Solution

The Geodesic Dome Greenhouse project addressed these challenges by giving Wagner students the opportunity and space to grow fresh fruits and vegetables year-round. As part of the project, students learn how to use containers to grow their own food.

### Key Components

The entire student population (Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12) has access to the Geodesic Dome Greenhouse during the school year. The dome includes a food production system, called aquaponics, that couples raising aquatic animals (i.e. fish) with plant cultivation in water. Students enjoy learning how to grow and prepare the fruits and vegetables harvested from the garden. They can also take this life-long knowledge home to their families.



### Timeline

The Geodesic Dome Greenhouse was built in 2015 with students helping build the aquaponic beds and dry beds. The dome was funded by the school district and the aquaponics beds and plumbing were paid for through a Wells Fargo Grant. It took one year of construction to get the entire system up and running, and it has been actively used by the school district ever since.



## Results

The community, staff, and students love this program. As a result of the project, students get to harvest and cook with fruits and vegetables—some of which are not typically grown in South Dakota, such as lemons and bananas. Students have also participated in a fish fry celebration using tilapia that were raised in the aquaponics system. These experiences help students learn about the benefits of eating well and growing their own nutritious food.

## Evidence-Based Interventions

[Gardening Interventions to Increase Vegetable Consumption Among Children: Recommended Intervention](#)  
(Strong Evidence)

### Resources:

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<https://www.sdpb.org/blogs/savor-dakota/student-growth-in-wagner/>

