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For Immediate Release

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National School Garden Network Brings School Garden Professionals Together

Santa Cruz, CA – At last year’s National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, school garden professionals convened to create a national network for supporting regional school garden programs. Through sharing resources and engaging in dialogue, the newly formed National School Garden Network (NSGN) strives to eliminate redundancy and help facilitate regional-based school garden programs. The Network is calling organizations and individuals that support multiple school garden programs at a regional, school district, or state level to join the online forum.

“There is no one way to create and sustain school gardens”, states Life Lab Outreach Director John Fisher, founding member of the NSGN. “The recipe for a successful school garden program varies from region to region, but organizations often have similar needs such as acquiring funding, creating policy, training teachers, and creating valid assessment tools. Our Network’s goal is to create an ongoing dialogue to share best practices.”

School garden support organizations can visit www.nationalschoolgardennetwork.org and join the online forum or browse webinar topics related to school garden program development. Additionally, national and regional conferences are listed to encourage school garden support professionals to meet face-to-face.

“Managing school garden programs is a challenge, but I believe creating a support community for its professionals is the key to sustainment ,” says Sam Ullery, school garden specialist at the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education. “My experience supporting more than 90 school gardens in the District of Columbia is successful, in part, because I’ve had a network to rely on. I look forward to participating in this new forum where I can expand my network and share what I’ve learned with others.”

The National School Garden Network is comprised of the following Advisory Committee organizations from across the nation:

- Life Lab – Santa Cruz, CA (John Fisher)
- UC Davis School Gardening Program – Davis, CA (Jeri Ohmart)
- DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education School Garden Program – Washington, DC (Sam Ullery)
- Community Groundworks – Madison, Wisconsin (Nathan Larson)
- New Jersey Farm to School (Beth Feehan)
- Whitson’s Culinary Group – New York (Bill Whitcomb)
- Edible Schoolyard Project – Berkeley, CA (Emilie Gioia)
- National Farm to School Network (Mary Stein)

Visit www.nationalschoolgardennetwork.org to learn more.

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