



## Food for Thought

*Mariah Mellinger, 9th Grade Chemistry*

*Colleen Green, 9th Grade Humanities*

*High Tech High International*

The goal of this project was to create a 100% sustainable aquaponics garden that the school community could enjoy and use. Students learned how urbanized gardens positively affect the community, how the aquaponics system itself works and is regulated, and how other sustainable garden practices, such as vermi-composting and use of heirloom seeds promote sustainability. In humanities, students wrote OpEd pieces and created original political cartoons on topics relating to controversial food topics (such as fat shaming, false advertising, misleading nutrition, etc.). In chemistry students learned the science behind what fat does to our body as well as the chemistry of aquaponics.

### Teacher Reflections

This project was truly student-led and student-driven throughout. They made daily work plans for themselves (and followed through), encouraged each other, problem solved together, and made connections within their communities to make this project a success. They also articulated their vision in their writing and political cartoons, revising their work five and six times, for no grade, to make sure they were proud of their finished products. At exhibition, all students were fully engaged, passionate, and eager to share what they had learned and what they had worked so hard to build. At every step, the students showed resilience and tenacity, completely driven by their passion to make the world a better place. In the process, we felt much less like teachers and more like mentors, working to support the vision and excitement of our students.

### Student Reflections

I really liked how we took a serious look about what comprises the American food diet especially the industrial side of it. It has made me conscious about what I eat. I enjoyed seeing this project come together and seeing everyone working as a well-oiled machine. —Will

I enjoyed building the aquaponics system and learning that we can use environmental resources to make a sustainable garden —Rebecca

I learned a lot about wood building, chemistry, writing OpEd pieces, aquaponics, gardening, and most of all friendship. —Connor

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