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PRESS RELEASE

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A GARDEN OF HONORS FOR JOHN MUIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SAN BRUNO, CA. The National Wildlife Federation, America's largest conservation organization working to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future, has recently honored John Muir Elementary School's Room 1 Garden with its **Certified Schoolyard Habitat Site** recognition that the site gives students a place to learn outdoors and connect with nature while providing the habitat elements wildlife need to thrive: food, water, cover, and places to raise their young. Earlier in the year, the Federation also recognized the school as a **Certified Wildlife Habitat** for gardens that provide the four basic elements named above for wildlife to thrive.

The Garden has also been recognized twice by the San Mateo County Food System Alliance and is the recipient of a grant from the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

Background:

For the past eight years, **John Muir Kindergarten Teacher, Cynthia Marconi**, has creatively integrated the fundamentals of gardening and sustainability with her teaching of art, music, science, math, and language arts. Beginning her 34th year in the District, Ms. Marconi's enthusiasm for her students' well-being has translated into a curriculum that has attracted recognition from local, state, and national agencies.

The Room 1 Garden, as it is known at the school, measures 60x8 feet and produces vegetables, fruits and flowers while providing an inviting home for birds to nest and raise their young, along with lizards, squirrels, and butterflies making their frequent appearances. In addition to teaching them how to plant, sustain, and cultivate a garden, Ms. Marconi's students discuss how caring for a garden relates to caring for their school, their community and their world. While learning about becoming good stewards of the earth, they also learn about good health and nutrition, enjoying the vegetables and fruits they harvest for snacks.