

For immediate release

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Sodexo expands dig for future schools initiative

This autumn saw Sodexo, a leading provider of on site service solutions, provide some 150 of its client schools across the UK with a year's supply of grow-your-own kitchen gardens as an extension to its partnership with supplier of organic vegetable and herb plants, Rocket Gardens.

Sodexo has implemented the project as part of its STOP Hunger² campaign with sponsorship from its own charity the Sodexo Foundation. Each recipient school has been sent a Sodexo/Rocket Garden voucher box and once the school has redeemed the voucher they start to receive one of three deliveries of baby plants. The deliveries come in the form of three boxes of seasonal fruit and vegetable plug plants that are made available to ensure schools have year-round produce that can be planted and harvested during term time

Many schools have already received the autumn/winter garden which included baby plants including spring onions, pak choi, turnips, broccoli, broad beans, including Our Lady's Abingdon school near Milton Keynes.

Karen Gackowski, a teaching assistant at the school said: "It's an amazing opportunity for us to expand our garden, the gardening club really enjoy planting then picking their own vegetables they are so proud to take home even one onion to share with their family. With so many plants from the Rocket Garden we hope to increase are growing area using old tyres which we can get for free and more large containers."

The schools will receive a further two deliveries, the schools fruit garden, a collection of soft fruit bushes, canes and plants will be delivered in the winter term followed by a spring garden which will comprise a selection of baby plants including lettuces, spinach, carrots, leeks, tomatoes, runner and green beans, courgettes, cabbages and potatoes, which will be delivered after the Easter holidays.

Jane Bristow, managing director for Sodexo Education said: "We are delighted to support Rocket Gardens and its Dig for the Future project. Through the project we hope to children encouraged and excited to grow organic vegetables and learn about the food they eat."

Earlier this year Sodexo launched the initiative with its Prestige London; Defence and Horticultural Services businesses nominating schools to receive the school gardens as part of Rocket Gardens' 'Dig for the future' project which encourages schools to get children growing organic vegetables and learning about the food they eat. A competition was also held for ten of Sodexo's employees to nominate a local school to receive one of the school gardens.

One of the first schools to receive the year's supply of gardens is Montem Primary School in Islington, London. Sophia Ioannou, environmental tutor at the school commented on their gardens progress and impact: "We were delighted to receive the Rocket Garden from Sodexo, it is perfect for our Environmental Education and Global Food Growing Project. The children were very excited about planting, nurturing, harvesting and then eating the fruit and vegetables they are growing.

"This year has probably been the garden's best year. It looks stunning - full of lots of edible plants and beautiful wildflowers. We have had far more bees visiting the garden and lots of fresh fruit and veg to eat. Peas were bountiful as was the never ending supply of lettuce and spinach. We have had lots of food related workshops in the garden with children and families."

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