
ROOSEVELT CENTER YOUTH AND ART GARDEN



April 6, 2026 Springs First Bloom in the Garden

Gearing Up

Many wheels have been spinning since the end of February, getting the garden ready for a full summer of planting and programming for the youth of our community. “If we build it, they will come back”, has been our moto since we first set foot in the garden three years ago to pull bind weed that had overgrown so much of the garden floor and in aged boxes seriously weathered by time. We stayed focused on our tasks - clear solar construction piles, remove loads of other debris, create and implement a new footprint and help secure volunteers - to restore the garden back to a day when it was a thriving part of Red Lodge. We believe after much effort and team work, the garden has arrived this summer 2026, thanks to the support of the Roosevelt Center Staff, Kat, Mitch, Jennifer, RJ and (formerly) Susan, the incredible vision of Kat Healy, and our volunteers, Ruth Moon, Mary James, Kris Kallinen, Susan Maisenbach and Leslie Hawk. We are grateful for Kendall Ard and Alexis Kreatz from the Red Lodge Area Community foundation for their support and contributions as well.

Spring Plans

- 1) Planting plans for the garden boxes have been developed to include vegetables, flowers and herbs that work well together in each box, provide complimentary nutrients and detract pests. Many thanks to Kris Kallinen, Master Gardener, for providing educational information on plants that grow well together. The boxes will be full and beautiful this year, attracting a host of pollinators, youth and community folks.
- 2) Soon, the garden boxes will receive beautiful Mexican-style tile letters, which will help with planning, education and discussion by box. Thank you to MEDEACC for providing us with discounted tile letters from their shop in El Paso, Texas. The tiles will be mounted over the current letters written on the boxes in a Sharpie.
- 3) High School Art Teacher Betsy Lauritzen and her art classes are in the process of making garden markers for the garden. The ceramic markers will stand the test of time and add beautiful color to the garden. Once complete, our hope is to have the art classes come to the garden, celebrate this amazing space and the beauty they have created, and place the markers as appropriate per the garden plan.
- 4) Thanks to the unbelievable efforts of Ruth Moon, a garden volunteer extraordinaire and substitute teacher in Red Lodge K-5, nine different K-5 classes are growing seedlings or will be planting seeds in the garden the last week of May. This is a gigantic accomplishment and fulfills a major goal of rebuilding the Roosevelt Center’s Youth and Art Garden - having our youth grow and plant the vegetables, flowers and herbs, forming the foundation of our programming and experiential learning.



Seeds, Soil and Pots Delivered to K-5 April 6, 2026



- 5) Community members Susan Maisenbach and her kids Lyla Mae and Levi, as well as Sammy Wicks, are also growing vegetables for the garden. We are grateful for these community volunteers and the help these families continue to provide in support of the garden and the youth of Red Lodge.
- 6) Kris Kallinen, Master Gardener, and Jim and Jannette Swanson, are working to provide educational material for the K-5 classes when they arrive in the garden to plant at the end of May. We are using the model established last October when garlic was planted in the garden - providing garlic facts both fun and informative, as well as a few recipes. We look forward to sharing the love of the garden with many youth who will play a role in the garden come this May. Another goal being fulfilled - growing little gardeners.
- 7) As soon as time and weather permits, the frame of the new youth kitchen will be placed into the northwest corner of the garden. Once in the garden, the kitchen will be completed in place with added ovens, stove tops, sinks and more. The kitchen backsplash will use the old tiles pulled from the Old Roosevelt School front desk, before it was converted to the Roosevelt

Center. We are super excited to make use of these fabulous, historic tiles and will work with the Roosevelt Center team to create an appropriate marker for the tiles. Once the project is finished, younger kids will have a special place to gather and play in the garden, and continue to learn of the connections between garden and kitchen, and so much more.



Historic Photo of Tiles on Front Desk of the Old Roosevelt School

- 8) A flyer was sent to Red Lodge High School, informing the counselors and teachers of other volunteer or service opportunities in the garden, specifically to help prepare the boxes for the K-5 plantings at the end of May.
- 9) A flyer was posted at the Senior Center seeking volunteers to help with the May planting, programs this summer, and general garden care. We hope to make the Youth and Art Garden a place with beautiful collaboration between multi-generations here in our community.

- 10) Finally, we are in the process of securing gardeners from the The All Nations Garden Club and The Master Gardeners group to help plan and run programs for both the Boys and Girls Club summer visits to the garden, and the Carnegie Libraries summer storytime. We are eager and excited to fully develop these programs, bringing more engagement, fun, learning and opportunity for the little gardeners we are growing. Thank you Kat Healy for the continued connection with Boys and Girls Club, as well as Olivia Heimer (B&GC) and Jodie Moore (Carnegie Library) for being on board to incorporate these youth groups into the garden this summer.
- 11) We are making an effort to enhance our presence in the community.
- a) Soon, we will be updating the sign directly outside the garden to explain the garden, the solar panels and how to get involved.
 - b) A large sign will be placed on the shed, so families, classes and students can indicate the date, teacher/family/class and item planted. For example, 6/1 - Ms. Swanson's 1st Grade Class - Beets.
 - c) An additional sign will be placed on the shed for garden visitors to indicate what they might have spotted while observing in the garden - Flycatchers, Robins, Butterflies, Worms, Bumblebees, Sparrows, Moths, etc.
 - d) We are working on updating and keeping active the gardens website on the Roosevelt Center website, as well as adding events to the Roosevelt Center calendar.
 - e) We are sending weekly handouts to the K-5 classes, building on the seedlings they are growing for the garden - learn about seeds, plants, soil - as well as garden opportunities throughout the summer.

Looking Forward

Our next newsletter will highlight more final plans and other partners who are pitching in to make this garden successful. We are grateful for all the support provided by the Roosevelt Center team as well as the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation. Our youth in Red Lodge and surrounding community have so much to gain and we remain extremely optimistic on the role this garden will play in our community.