Garden from A1

vegetables. Depending on the time of year, fava beans, basil, tomatoes, collard greens, garlic, broccoli, lettuce, carrots, cabbage and shallots are harvested from the modest plot of land beside the school.

The additional garden space now adds more variety to that list.

"We planted what I'm calling 'the Four Sisters Garden," said Matt Hall who manages the school's garden, "which is sunflowers, corn, beans and squash."

blue sweet corn, green beans, lima beans, blackeyed peas and various types of winter squash have burst through the soil and now fill the plot as sunflowers stand tall above the vegetables, at-

Hall said he takes his inspiration for the new garden space from Native American growing techniques as some of the corn and bean varieties were traditionally grown by regional tribes.

"Not mounds like they did

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Al Kennedy High School looks to expand its garden project as part of an ongoing learning opportunity.

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four students at a time got the chance to plant seeds and tend to the new land recently tilled with the help of South Lane School District board member Jerry Settelmeyer.

"I wouldn't have been able to get this far if I hadn't been able to get the students back on site," he said.

Hall said he also owes a good amount of thanks to Oregon Youth Corps (OYC), a statewide program which grants funds for youth to gain stewardship experiences through work outdoors.

"And I wouldn't have been able to do this without the students being paid by OYC to help me," he said.

OYC recently pay rolled students to work over last winter to plant trees in Silk Creek Park

In addition to the educational benefit, Hall also decided to expand the garden due to concerns over the impact of the coronavirus on the nation's agriculture industry.

"My other concern was that temporary work visas are not being granted to people south of the border," he said. "So the people this country's agriculture relies on to plant and harvest and process the crops are not coming into the country. I don't feel that American citizens are going to

fill that role."

In that case, Hall worries that food prices may increase in the coming months, putting extra strain on families already struggling to make ends meet.

With the additional food production at the school's garden, Hall hopes to do his part in mitigating any local impact.

"If this works, then there's going to be an abundance of food here," he said.

The community has already been benefiting from the existing garden. Ripe vegetables are regularly taken to food distribution groups such as the Rural Organizing Project, Soup's On and Community Sharing or otherwise distributed to people who need them.

Wanting to see more fresh produce on the distributors' menus, Hall recalled recently harvesting six cabbages to

take to the Rural Organizing Project.

Two families eagerly accepted his donation before he got through the door.

"And that, to me, it makes it worthwhile," he said. "I know there are people that are going to use those cabbages and eat them up."

The garden's vegetables are even used within the school itself in situations such as camping trips.

"So it saves a lot of money that way and they get good, organically grown food," Hall said.

The new garden space will likely see green beans ready for harvest in a matter of weeks, with the other beans, corn and squash coming in the succeeding months.

"There will probably be corn that the students could eat if they let us have students back on site in the fall," said Hall. As new models of ed-

ucation are being developed with remote learning and social distancing in mind, it remains to be seen how much handson experience students will have come fall. The garden expansion may also provide more educational opportunities for the students at Al Kennedy High School as Hall intends on incorporating more CTE (Career and Technical Education) training into his curriculum.

Whatever the outcome, Hall is eager to keep plants and garden space growing in the years to come.

"I could always use more space," he said.



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