



PRESS RELEASE

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UGRA Supports Rainwater Harvesting at the Hunt School

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) awarded the Hunt School \$5,000 to support improvements to their 20,000-gallon rainwater catchment system. “This generous grant from UGRA allowed us to repair and upgrade our rainwater catchment system so that it remains useful for the Discovery Garden program and for our hydroponics garden. This catchment system was designed by students and is not only important to our garden, but also an important piece of Hunt School history,” said Luci Harmon, Hunt ISD Superintendent. The project was the 2022 recipient of UGRA Large Rainwater System Incentive Program funding. The program was initiated in 2017 to fund higher capacity rainwater catchment systems. These types of systems reduce reliance on surface water and protect spring flow by reducing demand for groundwater.



The Hunt School was the recipient of UGRA’s 2022 Large Rainwater System Incentive Program funding. Hunt School students pictured front row L to R: Catherine Ragsdale, Sienna Motlong, Abigail Livingston, Viola Bulkley, Allisson Garcia, Olivia Spencer, Javier Neave, Ayers Nelson, Preston Davis, and Kaylee Nichols. Hunt School students pictured second row L to R: Gilberto Neave, Caleb Chilton, Lizeth Soto, Harper Cobb, Julian Alva, and Felipe Falcon. Standing L to R: Faith Bradberry, Hunt School science teacher; Luci Harmon, Hunt ISD Superintendent; Maggie Snow, UGRA Treasurer and Outreach and Education Committee Chair; Diane McMahon, UGRA President; and Austin Dickson, UGRA Director.

The Hunt School, in conjunction with the Hunt Garden Club and community stakeholders, installed the rainwater catchment system in 2009 at the school Discovery Garden to create a practical learning experience for the students. Seasonal vegetables and flowers are planted in the Discovery Garden and irrigated with the captured rainwater. The Hunt Garden Club and the Hill Country Master Gardeners work with the school to teach lessons on soils, seed germination, insects, and pollinators. The rainwater catchment system was recognized by the 2009 Texas Rain Catcher Award from the Texas Water Development Board and the Discovery Garden has received numerous commendations from National Garden Clubs and Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.

During the February 2021 freeze, the system sustained significant damage and was no longer functional. The funding from UGRA not only supported the cost of a new pump and transport system, but also upgrades to the gutter system to increase capacity. Additional modifications to the electrical system made it possible to initiate an indoor hydroponic growing system and expansion of the greenhouse. With these improvements and guidance from dedicated educators like Hunt School science teacher Faith Bradberry, the students can learn about gardening and stewardship of natural resources year-round.

A sign describing the system and how it is used to conserve water and reduce runoff is prominently displayed next to the catchment tank as a resource for the community. “UGRA is proud to have partnered with the Hunt School to repair and expand their rainwater catchment system. I was amazed to learn how the system and the entire Discovery Garden are integrated into the curriculum and that the students work with the garden year after year to build their knowledge and skills,” said Maggie Snow, UGRA Treasurer and Outreach and Education Committee Chair.

UGRA also offers an up to \$500 rebate on rainwater catchment system equipment. Visit www.ugra.org for more information on rainwater harvesting or contact Matthew Wilkinson with questions (mwilkinson@ugra.org; 830-896-5445).

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