

## Watch Me Grow School Garden Project

Students enrolled in EXL204 *Learning & Serving Hunger & Homelessness* (spring 2011) and EXL201 *Learning and Serving the Environment* (fall 2011) as well as students from BIO106 visited Springfield District 186 schools weekly as part of the Watch Me Grow School Garden Project. Armed with Watch Me Grow journals and worksheets created for the elementary students, the college students explained the importance of environmental responsibility and sustainable gardening techniques. They helped the classes start growing plants from seeds in their classrooms, so once the weather was warm enough the students began working side-by-side in the school garden. They established compost piles and set up rain barrels, transplanted seedlings, weeded, watered, learned about natural pest prevention techniques, measured the height of the plants they grew, weighed the fruits of their harvest, and tasted the fresh produce they had grown themselves. At the end of the season, elementary students will learn how to prepare their garden for winter and care for their tools. Along the way, the college students will fulfill outcomes related to their college courses and will develop a deeper understanding of interest in environmental science, agriculture, and more. And they will have helped plant seeds of a lifelong interest in growing and enjoying fresh, local produce in the minds of their elementary-school peers.

