

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Life Lab Science Program Celebrates 30 Years with Garden Festival**

**Santa Cruz, California, May 15, 2009** - For 30 years, Life Lab Science Program has been helping educators and students bring learning to life in the garden. Based in Santa Cruz, California, Life Lab has been a leader in the garden-based learning movement locally and across the nation.

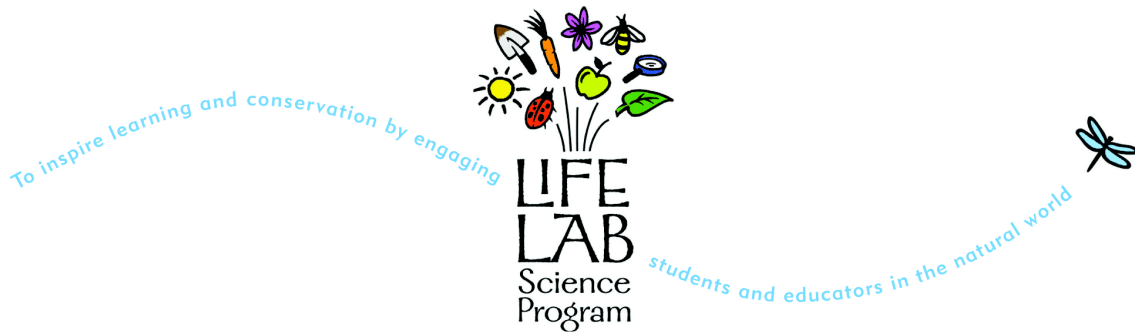
On Saturday May 30th from 10:00am-2:00pm Life Lab will celebrate its 30-year history with a Birthday Party at The Garden Classroom, located on the UCSC Farm. This free, garden-based family festival is open to all and will feature music from the Banana Slug String Band and the Rolling Cultivators along with a variety of kid-oriented activities.

George Buehring, the principal of Green Acres School in Live Oak, California, never would have guessed that the school garden he helped to start in 1978 would still be thriving today.

"He said, 'You know how to garden, right?'" recalls Life Lab's founder Robbie Jaffe. "I said 'Sure!' And he invited us to create a garden right outside his office." Once an overflow parking lot, this garden literally transformed the school. Thirty-one years later, the Green Acres School Garden is still thriving, and has become one of the longest continually running school gardens in the nation.

The power of what a school garden could accomplish has since spread far beyond its parking-lot roots. The momentum behind the Green Acres garden evolved into the Life Lab Science Program, a nationally renowned not-for-profit organization that supports science and nutrition education through land-based learning.

Life Lab has sold over 100,000 copies of its curricula and trained tens of thousands of educators in more than 45 states and a handful of other countries. "Seeing Michelle Obama and Maria Shriver installing edible gardens with children is one of the best birthday gifts Life Lab could receive," says Life Lab's Executive Director Gail Harlamoff. "It's encouraging to see the type of work we've been doing for years going mainstream and getting national exposure."



Closer to home Life Lab has had an impact on school gardens as well. "The Santa Cruz area has one of the strongest school garden scenes in the nation. Most schools in the county have a Life Lab Garden" states John Fisher, Assistant Director at Life Lab Science Program. "People are often confused about the connection between the organization Life Lab and their school Life Lab Garden. Over the years Life Lab has been involved one way or another with most of our local school gardens but school gardens primarily rely on support from within the school."

In 2001, Life Lab collaborated with the UCSC Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems to create the Garden Classroom, a model educational garden located on the UCSC Farm. This garden site hosts thousands of children, youth and educators in land-based programming from school field trips to day camps and teen programs to teacher training. The site is an inspiration for all those learning and teaching outdoors.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party will take place in and around the Garden Classroom and feature garden crafts, visiting the chickens and goats, honey tasting, wheat threshing, tractor rides, and of course, carrot birthday cake! Woodoven pizzas, strawberry tarts, fresh squeezed lemonade and hand-cranked ice cream will be available for sale.

**Schedule of Events**

- 10:30am The Rolling Cultivators Band
- 10:45am and 12:00pm Farm Tours and Story Telling
- 12:30pm Banana Slug String Band
- 1:15pm Birthday Cake

**Festival Activities**

- |                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Honey Tasting                    | Pond Exploration   |
| Tractor Rides                    | Face Painting      |
| Lemonade Squeezing               | Garden Crafts      |
| Chicken Feeding and Goat Petting | Ice Cream Cranking |
| Wheat Threshing                  | Story Telling      |

**Event parking is free. Follow signs to the Campus Facilities Parking Lot near the UCSC Campus Main Entrance.**

**For more event information visit [www.lifelab.org/birthday\\_party.php](http://www.lifelab.org/birthday_party.php)**

**Ride your bike to the event and receive a free lemonade.**

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