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Media Contact:
Sarah Christ
Public Relations Coordinator
Work: 585-899-3271
sarah_christ@dixonschwabl.com

Teaching Garden at East Aims to Produce More than Just Produce

- Local Organizations Partner to Build and Maintain Teaching Garden at East -

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — American Heart Association, Dixon Schwabl and East Upper & Lower Schools have joined forces to build East's first **Teaching Garden**. Leaders of each organization, East students and members of the Greater Rochester community gathered this morning to plant vegetables, fruits and flowers in the garden, which was built entirely by volunteers.

The initiative aims to improve overall heart health, re-establish what it means to be healthy and provide a hands-on learning experience for East's culinary students, who will be responsible for maintaining and caring for the 2,050-square-foot garden, which will include vegetables, fruits, herb planters, perennials, sunflower patches, rain barrels and more.

"Rooted in nutrition education and health literacy, this Teaching Garden seeks to positively influence healthy behavior, re-establish the value of good eating habits, and change the way this community and our youth think about food and its effects on quality of life," American Heart Association Executive Director Marc Natale said.

The Teaching Garden is part of the 2017 American Heart Association Heart Walk & Run Campaign, co-chaired by Lauren Dixon and Mike Schwabl.

"This has been a true community effort," said Dixon, CEO of Dixon Schwabl. "Heart disease runs in my family, so this cause is near and dear to my heart. Through this program, we have the opportunity to change children's lives and lifestyle habits."

The planted goods from the garden will be used in the Village Gate restaurant [RYCE](#), Rochester Youth Culinary Experience, which will open in September and be operated by East's culinary program. Students will be responsible for the restaurant's menu development, management and day-to-day operations.

"The Teaching Garden and RYCE will give students the opportunity to develop responsibility, leadership, team building, problem-solving skills and much more," East's lead culinary arts teacher Jeff Christiano said. "This kind of hands-on learning increases confidence and employability, which is the ultimate goal."

The Teaching Garden was designed by SWBR Architects with resources from Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care. For more information on the Teaching Garden, please contact American Heart Association Senior Corporate Relations Director Jason Stulb at jason.stulb@heart.org.

About Dixon Schwabl

Dixon Schwabl, a full-service marketing communications firm established in 1987, provides marketing, advertising, public relations, social and digital media, research, interactive and media placement services to more than 200 clients nationally. The firm generated more than \$333 million in capitalized billings in 2014. Based in Rochester, New York, Dixon Schwabl has been ranked one of the 25 Best Small & Medium Workplaces in America by Great Place to Work® for 11 consecutive years, ranking No. 11 in 2015, and No. 1 in 2008 and 2010. The agency was also named one of the 2010 Top 20 Small Company Workplaces in the country by Inc. magazine and Winning Workplaces, as well as one of the Top Places to Work in PR by PR News in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Most recently, the agency ranked No. 22 on Ad Age's 2015 Best Places to Work in Advertising & Media list. For more information, visit dixonschwabl.com. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

About American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers in Rochester. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved with the Rochester affiliate, call 1-585-371-3112, visit the local Rochester website www.heart.org/RochesterNY.

University of Rochester/East EPO Partnership

The University of Rochester, as the Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) for East High School, has assumed full management responsibilities for East, effective July 2015. The new East (<http://www.rcsdk12.org/east>) consists of a Lower School (grades 6-8) and an Upper School (grades 9-12), and aims to prepare all students for a successful transition into adulthood. A comprehensive community school with a robust set of services to support its diverse students, East offers a strong academic and career preparation program, including a daily advisory program and a full complement of athletic and extra-curricular activities that support and engage students.

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