Operation Courtyard Chickens

Objective: Purchase six laying hens for the courtyard in order to provide our students with new learning opportunities.

Materials Needed:
1. Chickens ($15 each x 6 chickens = $90 unless Ms. Dragonchuck owns so many chickens that she wouldn’t mind donating a couple)
2. Chicken Coop ($200-300 depending on model)
3. 2 gallon hanging water bucket ($20)
4. 11 lb. Hanging Poultry Feeder ($15)
5. Chicken Feed (Approximately $15/month)
6. Bales of straw ($5/3 weeks)
7. Rain Barrel ($100)
8. Pitch fork ($30)

Care Plan:

*The chickens will be free range in the courtyard. The courtyard will provide predator protection, and also allow the students to interact with the chickens without them running away. Chickens can fly over a 3-foot fence if scared of a mammal that might eat them, so the courtyard will keep them contained.
*Early Arrival and LAFS students will cooperatively care for the chickens but they will be for the enjoyment of the whole school.
*Each morning, the students will ensure the chickens have fresh water and food. They will clean the nesting area and put fresh straw down. They will also collect the fresh eggs!
*Miss Markus will oversee all care operations, as she has chickens of her own and knows what to expect and how to care for them.
*A rain barrel will supply fresh water to chickens
*Chickens are cold-weather hardy, so winter temperatures will not affect them.

Weekend/Vacation Care:

*Chickens are very self-sufficient. Although it is best to care for them daily, chickens can go for up to 2 weeks at a time without needing fresh food or water. Food and water is held in large, slow release containers.

Benefits of Chickens:

*Chickens are friendly and can be tamed when handled regularly.
* Chickens are actually very therapeutic to watch and interact with. It can be very beneficial for children to love and care for animals. It teaches responsibility and empathy.
* Chickens will lay eggs each day for the children to collect- everyday is an egg hunt!
*Chickens eat insects such as ticks and fire ants. Free exterminators!
*Chickens can be read to! (see picture on next page)
*The chickens will give Early Arrival/LAFS a special opportunity that they otherwise might not get.
*We can start a compost pile, which is where we will put the straw after cleaning the coop. In addition, all of the organic LAFS snack waste (banana peels, apple cores, etc.) can be added to the compost pile to teach students about composting. The soil generated from the compost pile can then be used in our garden!
*They will give purpose and use to the courtyard!

**Plans for Growth**

It is possible that with discussions and continued research that our school could benefit from a “petting zoo” on our campus. If we do decide to pursue that endeavor, the chickens would, of course, become part of it.

This plan was created by Aidan Scott, Xavier Thomas, Mary Blum, Savannah Gracey, Nolan Wyss, and the students of Early Arrival (with the help of Miss Markus). All research and price quotes were completed by the students, who are already taking very strong ownership of this project!

*Thank you for your time and consideration.*

Children reading to chickens at Miss Markus’ Summer Camp