

# 'Secret Garden' at Yankton Middle School

*"As long as you have a garden you have a future and as long as you have a future you are alive." — Frances Hodgson Burnett (The Secret Garden)*

Three years ago the Yankton Middle School Courtyard was in need of some TLC and teachers Stacy Ryken and Doug Winstead set to work to make it not only more eye-appealing but also a usable space for classroom activities.

"In 2008, Doug had gone to a workshop about outdoor classrooms and how to set them up," Ryken said. "We had this courtyard but it was half lawn and half overgrown prairie grasses. It wasn't very nice to look at and it wasn't some place anyone liked to utilize."

Winstead knew Ryken was an avid hobby gardener and he asked her if she would help him landscape the courtyard into an outdoor classroom. She agreed and the two of them spent that summer donating their time to the project.

"The first year we got some funds from the PTA to start us out," Ryken said. "We did all

Yankton Middle School teacher Stacy Ryken, along with fellow teacher Doug Winstead, has worked long hours to develop the YMS courtyard in to a garden and outdoor classroom. The project has meant a lot of personal time for the volunteers, who have done everything through donations and grants.



## GESHUNDHEIT!

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Jeff Liudahl, MD

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