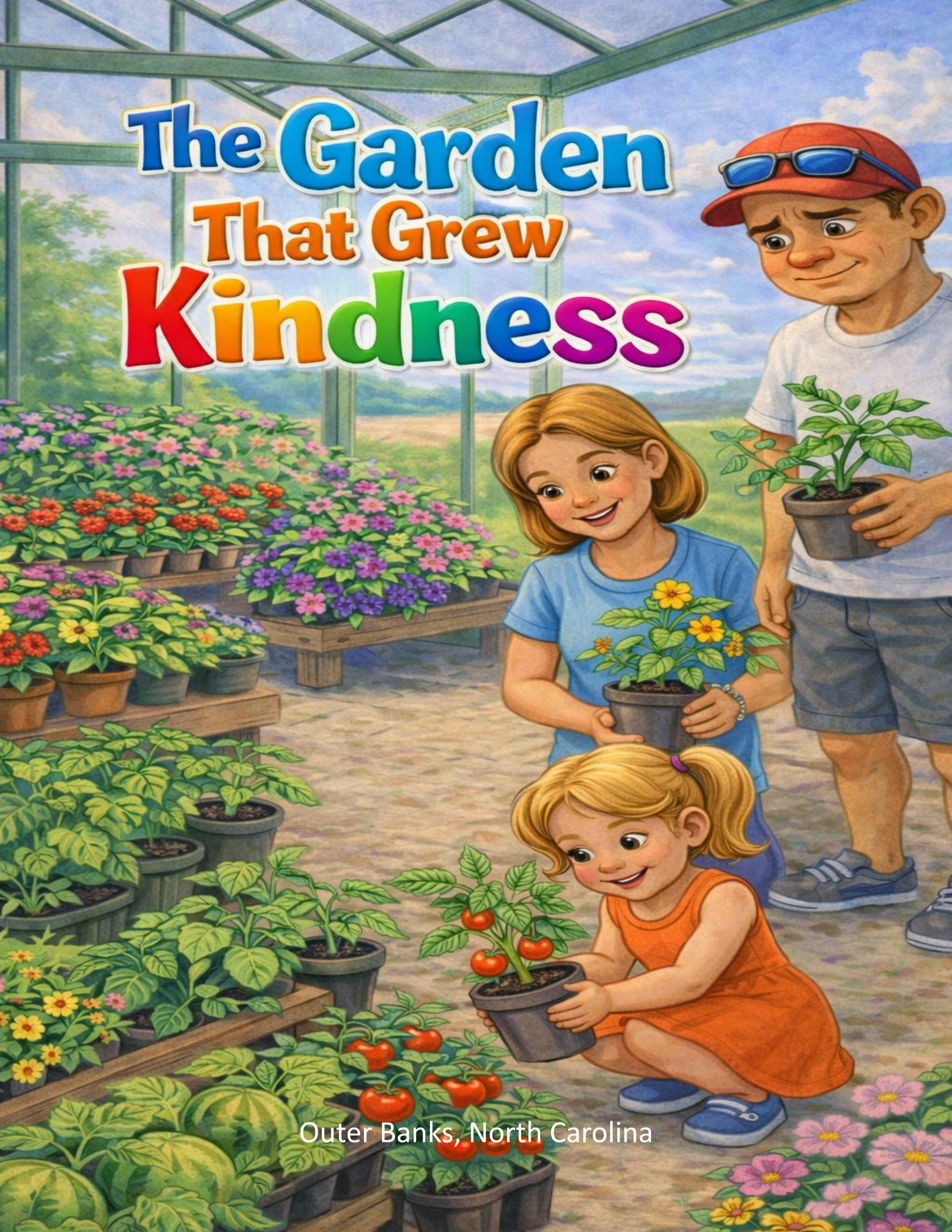


The Garden That Grew Kindness



Outer Banks, North Carolina

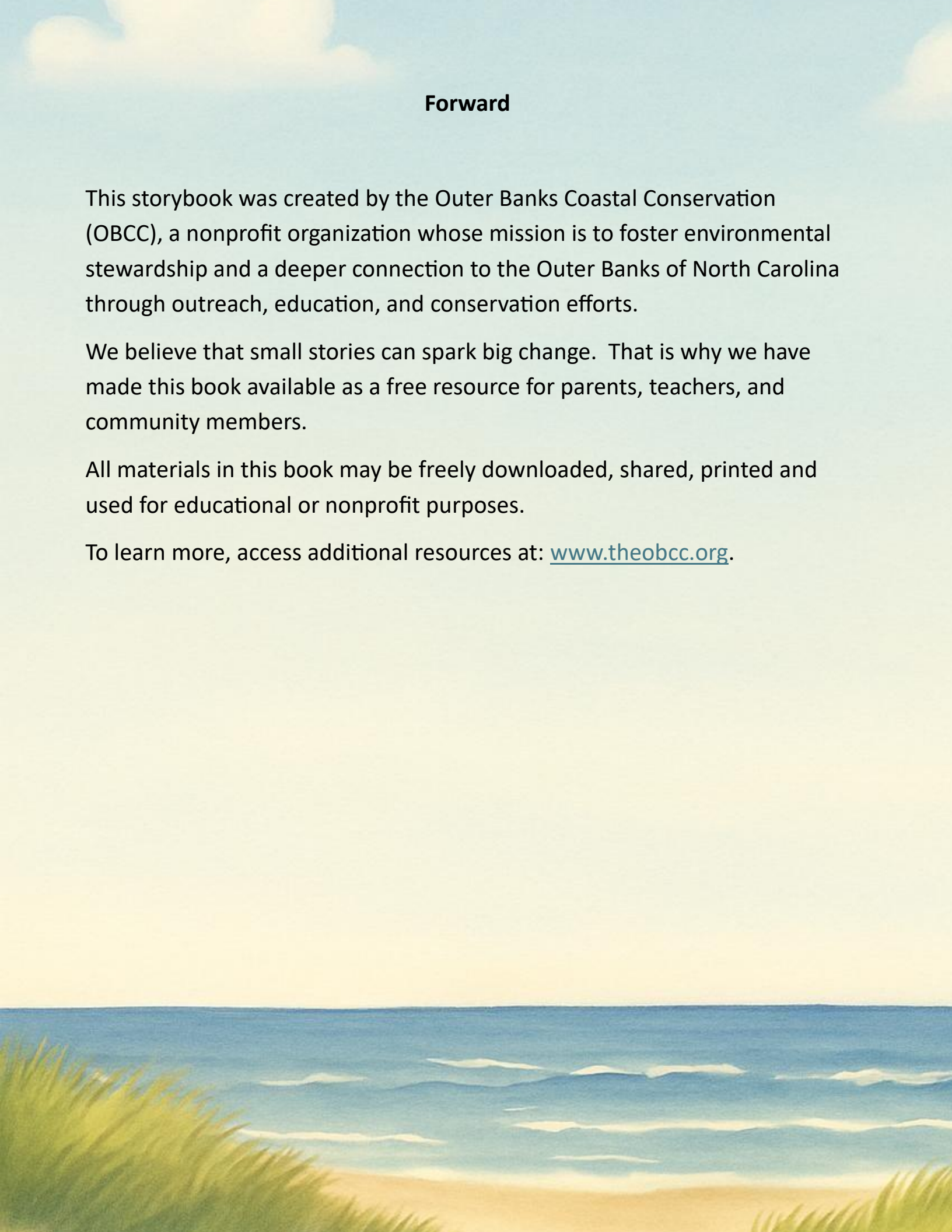
Forward

This storybook was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

We believe that small stories can spark big change. That is why we have made this book available as a free resource for parents, teachers, and community members.

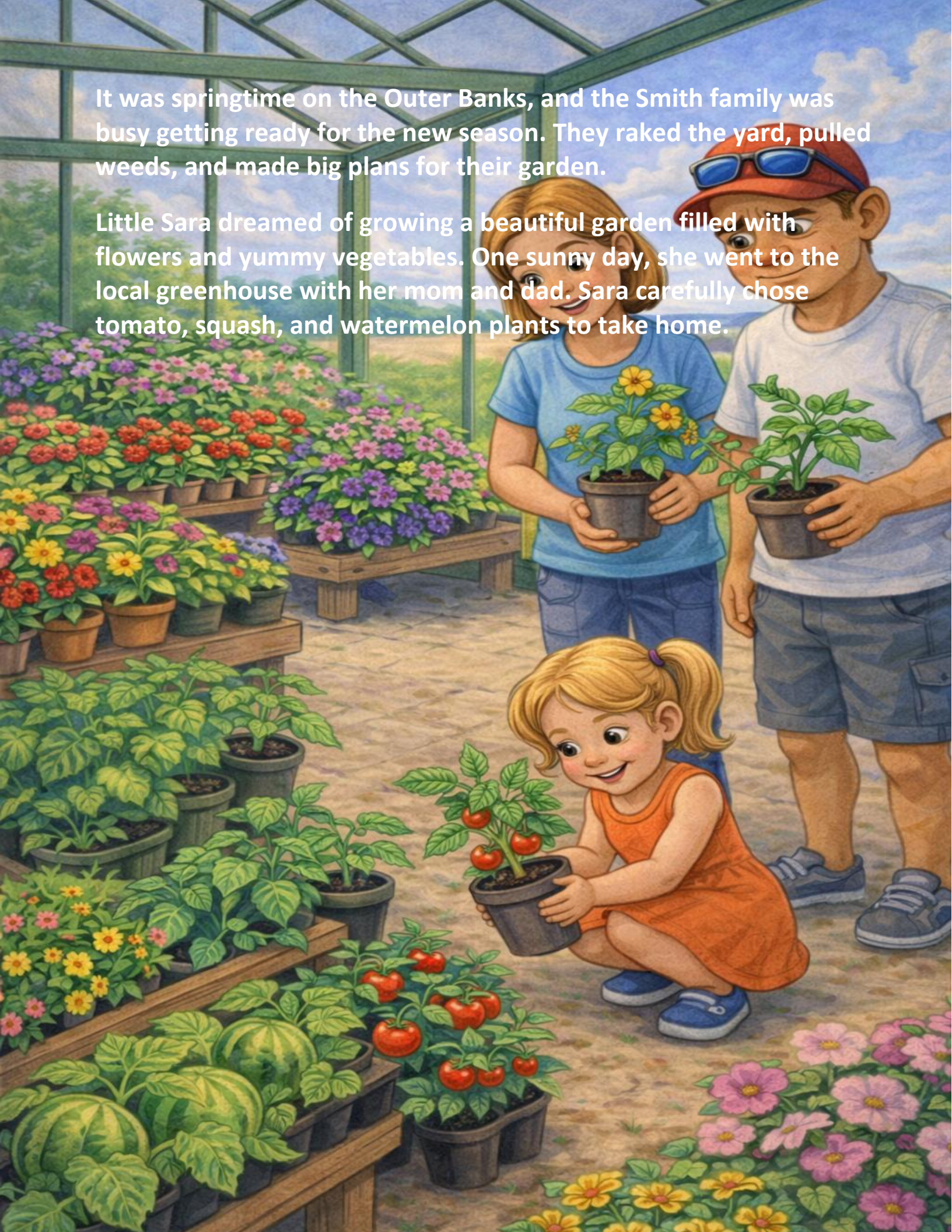
All materials in this book may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

To learn more, access additional resources at: www.theobcc.org.



It was springtime on the Outer Banks, and the Smith family was busy getting ready for the new season. They raked the yard, pulled weeds, and made big plans for their garden.

Little Sara dreamed of growing a beautiful garden filled with flowers and yummy vegetables. One sunny day, she went to the local greenhouse with her mom and dad. Sara carefully chose tomato, squash, and watermelon plants to take home.



Back at their cozy cottage by the shore, Sara happily dug in the soil and planted her garden. She felt proud watching her tiny plants stand tall in the warm sunshine.



About a week later, Sara noticed something was wrong. Little bugs were nibbling on the leaves of her plants! “Dad,” she asked, “how can we keep the bugs away?”

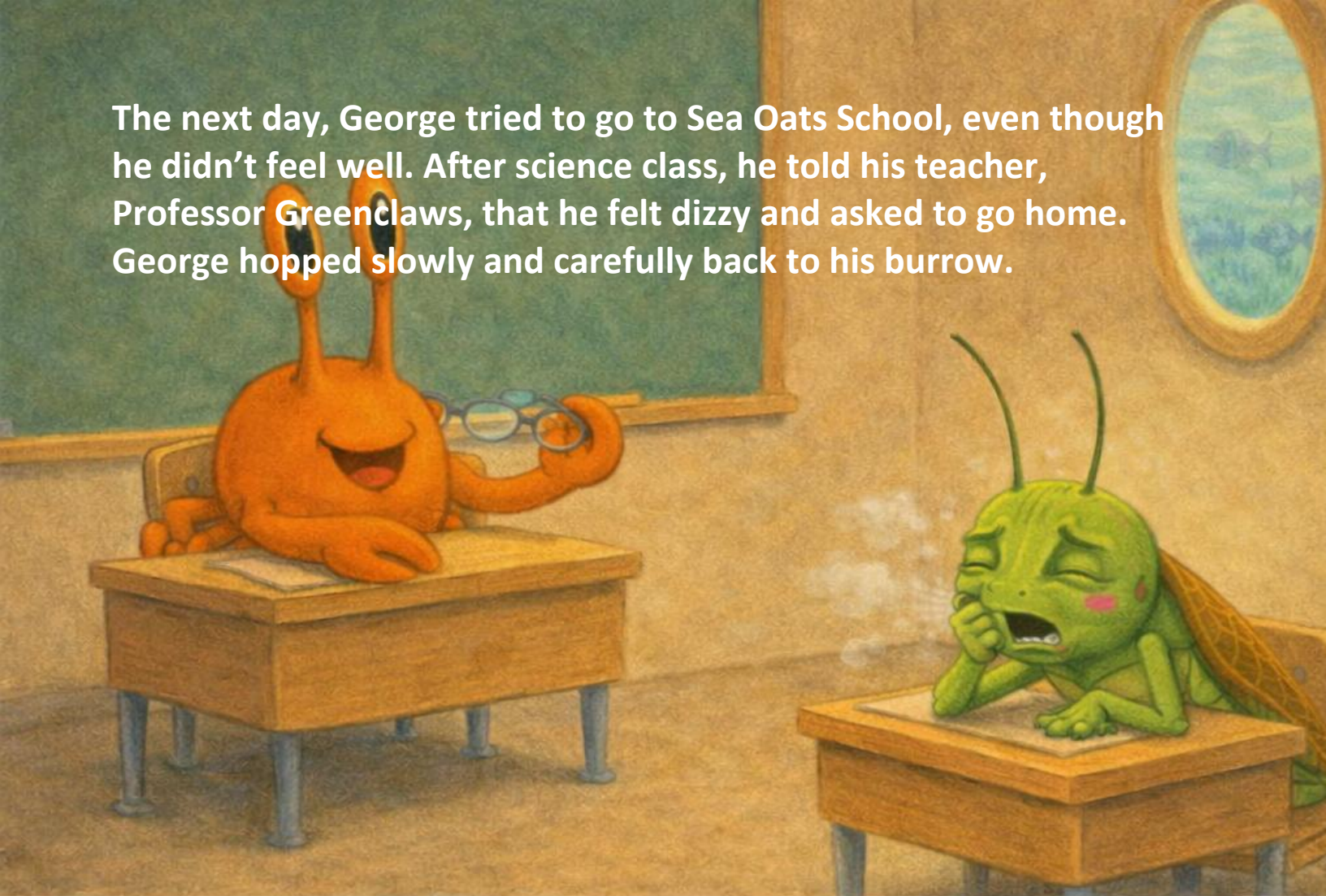
“Don’t worry,” her dad said kindly. “I’ll take care of it with a spray that gets rid of pests.” So Mr. Smith sprayed the garden—and the lawn too.



That afternoon, George the grasshopper hopped along, looking for a tasty snack. He landed in Sara's garden and wrinkled his nose. "Phew! What is that awful smell?" George said. He began to sneeze and cough. By evening, George felt very sick and weak when he hopped home to his burrow.



The next day, George tried to go to Sea Oats School, even though he didn't feel well. After science class, he told his teacher, Professor Greenclaws, that he felt dizzy and asked to go home. George hopped slowly and carefully back to his burrow.



Soon, George stopped coming to school. Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby Dunehopper grew worried. They later learned that George was very sick and had been taken to the hospital.

The three siblings visited George and held his hand. "The spray from the garden made me really sick," George said softly. "And I don't have money to pay for the care I need."



The very next day, Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby decided to help. They started a fundraiser for George. They made signs and hung them on the pier and in local shops. The Dunehopper family even organized a big community potluck supper.

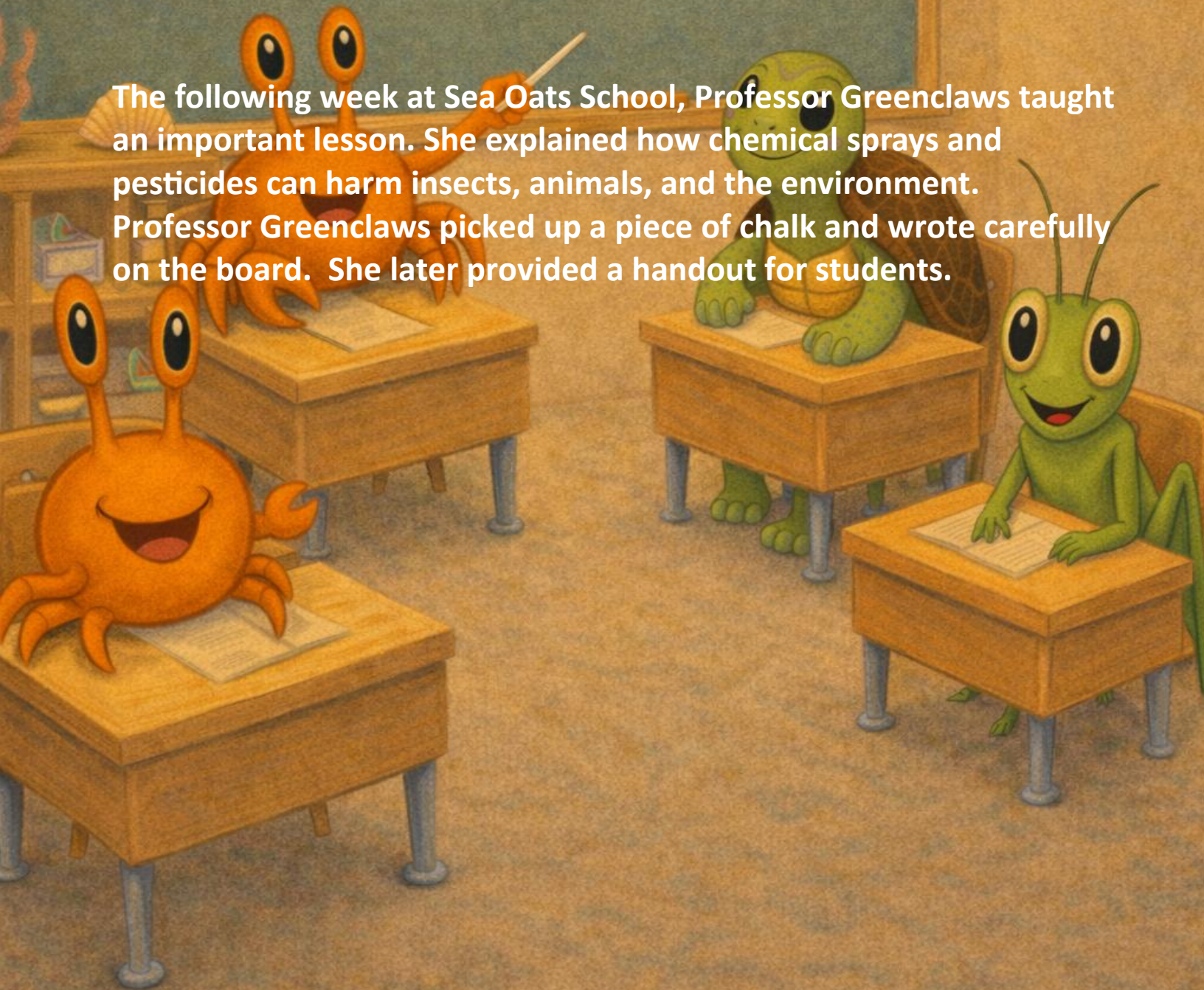
Before long, the whole community pitched in. Together, they raised enough money to help George get the medical care he needed. Thanks to their kindness, George soon felt better and made a full recovery.



Chemical Sprays: What We Need to Know

- Chemical sprays can hurt helpful insects
- Sprays can travel where we don't expect
- Chemicals can make animals and people feel very sick
- Once chemicals are in nature, they can be hard to remove
- Once chemicals are in nature, they can be hard to remove

The following week at Sea Oats School, Professor Greenclaws taught an important lesson. She explained how chemical sprays and pesticides can harm insects, animals, and the environment. Professor Greenclaws picked up a piece of chalk and wrote carefully on the board. She later provided a handout for students.



Professor Greenclaws' Lesson at Sea Oats School

Chemical Sprays: What We Need to Know

Sometimes people use chemical sprays to get rid of bugs in gardens and lawns. But these sprays don't always know the difference between *bad* bugs and *good* bugs.

Chemical sprays can hurt helpful insects

Many insects, like bees, butterflies, and grasshoppers, help plants grow by pollinating flowers or keeping nature balanced. Chemical sprays can make them sick or even kill them.

Sprays can travel where we don't expect

When sprays are used, the wind can blow them into the air. Rain can wash them into the sand, ponds, and ocean. This means animals far away can be harmed, even if they never touched the garden.

Chemicals can make animals and people feel very sick

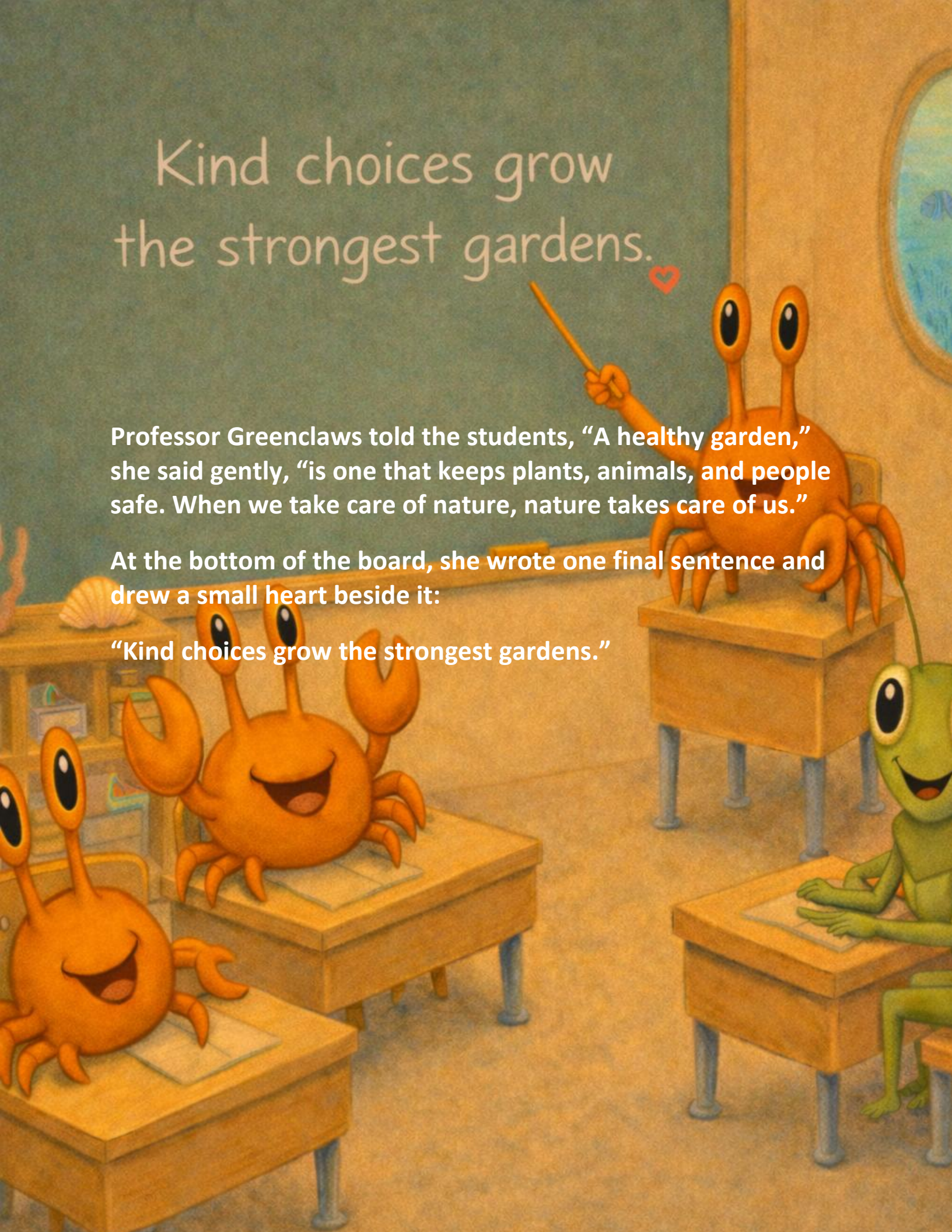
Breathing in sprays or touching sprayed plants can cause coughing, headaches, tummy aches, or worse—especially for small animals and children.


• Once chemicals are in nature, they can be hard to remove

Some sprays stay in the soil and water for a long time. They can build up and cause problems again and again.

Safer Ways to Care for Gardens

- Pull pests by hand when possible
- Use natural helpers like ladybugs and birds
- Plant flowers that protect vegetables
- Choose natural or earth-friendly solutions

The background of the page is a colorful illustration of a classroom. A large orange crab with two large eyes is standing on a desk, pointing a stick at a chalkboard. On the chalkboard, the text 'Kind choices grow the strongest gardens.' is written in a light, sans-serif font, with a small red heart at the end. In the foreground, two other orange crabs are sitting on desks, looking up at the teacher. To the right, a green alien with large eyes is sitting on a desk, looking towards the teacher. The room has a green chalkboard, a wooden desk, and a window showing a blue sky and a small blue object. The overall style is whimsical and cartoonish.

Kind choices grow
the strongest gardens. 

Professor Greenclaws told the students, “A healthy garden,” she said gently, “is one that keeps plants, animals, and people safe. When we take care of nature, nature takes care of us.”

At the bottom of the board, she wrote one final sentence and drew a small heart beside it:

“Kind choices grow the strongest gardens.”

That evening, Papa and Mama Dunehopper hugged Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby.

“We are so proud of you,” they said. “Helping others and caring for your community is always the right thing to do.”

And the Dunehoppers smiled, knowing that kindness—just like a garden—grows best when everyone helps.



Did You Know?

- Crabs and many other animals live in families and communities, just like people do. They help keep one another safe and healthy.
- Kindness helps communities grow strong. When we help others—whether they are friends, neighbors, or animals—we make our whole community better.
- Healthy gardens protect everyone. Gardens that use gentle, nature-friendly care keep insects, animals, soil, and water safe.
- Small actions can make a big difference. Helping one friend, choosing safer garden practices, or working together as a community can change lives.
- When everyone helps, everyone grows. Just like a garden needs many hands, a caring community grows best when kindness is shared.

