

2008–ELAINE’S PROJECT

Accomplishments 2008

Teutonia Urban Garden objectives for 2008 were focused on the design and installation of the garden with an underground cistern for storm water management and eventual irrigation source. A majority of classes at Academy of Learning and Leadership benefited from Project-Based Learning modules with expeditionary cross-discipline fieldwork by Stacy Cushenbery, TUG-ALL Garden Coordinator. Garden and curriculum were designed to facilitate Elaine's Project in addressing its academic, health and fitness goals for students, including a diverse experience integrating hands-on participation in 'mirrored learning fieldwork' with classroom learning activities. A solid groundwork has been laid to meet Elaine's Project garden-based objectives to facilitate its purpose of evaluating whether inner city school children participating in an experiential education school will improve their health through participation in gardening activities, increased programming in physical and nutrition education.

Teutonia Urban Garden Installation/Grand Opening

Teutonia Urban Garden was installed with two weeks notice of the Teutonia Urban Housing Grand Opening. Janet Gamble, Project Director, managed to finalize designs, secure local residents for installation crew and determine a fence was best suited for the area. Mother Scott provided great encouragement and enthusiasm for the project and introduced Janet and her crew to local residents smoothing the path for installation and inspiring Janet to the needs and interests of the community surrounding the garden.

Environmental Management

A 5,000 gallon underground cistern for storm water management was installed to the amazement of city officials, contractors and gardeners. Mayor Tom Barrett expressed great interest for future city projects with the cistern concept while viewing it during TUG-ALL's Grand Opening. This water catchment system will provide a valuable source of irrigation for the garden in conjunction with natural power sources in the Energy Playground to be installed in 2009 providing a renewable energy system for students to study in action. It is expected that the cistern will divert 120,000 gallons of water throughout the year onto the gardens, instead of its normal course through the sewer system.

Additionally, the installation of the cistern required months of a complicated permit process. Due to the presentation by Ron Doetch of the cistern installed a city ordinance was changed enabling the permit process to reflect a much simpler requirement for future cistern installations for storm water management for non-building use.

Garden Club established

The purpose of the Garden Club is to begin sharing the design, purposes, and plans for the urban garden as a way to connect our kids and families with strengthening their health and readiness for learning. We also want to explore ways to enhance expedition learning for classes that are working in related areas. To expand our knowledge of local gardens, farmers markets, and food sources in our school's community and in our own communities.

A Yoga in the Garden program was initiated by Stacy for teachers twice weekly and an average of 5 teacher participated. A Slow Food Meal is scheduled to present to

teachers the concepts and delicious outcomes of fresh, local meals to educate and inspire teachers in the integration of Garden-based Project Learning.

Develop and Implement Project Based Learning modules in the classroom and garden

Integration of the garden across the teaching curricula over multiple grade levels is essential for success. The school garden is a natural forum for cross-disciplinary connections, enabling fluid learning across the curriculum. Plant-based activities based on a school garden or outdoor habitat support a variety of learning styles and abilities and are always hands-on and engaging, real-life learning endeavors that help kids gain lifelong skills in a natural environment.

One of the key premises of contemporary school gardening advocates is that garden-based lessons help students meet performance standards across disciplines -

- appeal to different learning styles
- apply concepts through the contexts of real-world experiences
- provide rich activities and experiences for students of all learning abilities
- are student-centered
- foster positive engagement and responses from students
- provide evidence for educators and administrators that shows a garden supporting the attainment of educational goals

Curriculum Development

New health curriculum and garden curriculum are being developed and implemented at ALL. This curriculum is being collected and integrated into a curriculum portfolio. In addition photos and videos of kids working on health projects and in the garden began this year. There is a full effort to document the work being done.

ALL Teacher Field Day and Retreat

Academy of Learning and Leadership teachers attended an overnight retreat at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute to engage in much the same processes as the students. Teachers formed groups and undertook activities in the garden and kitchen to familiarize themselves with processes involved in planting, harvesting, preparing, cooking and serving a meal. The teachers camped out in Stella Gardens At MFAI with Dr. Camille Mortimore for 2 days of immersion into nature and its offerings. The evening activities were capped by a bonfire amidst the rows of produce which they had eaten for dinner that evening.

ALL Student Field Work at Michael Fields and other urban and rural sites

Stacy, Garden Coordinator, works with the teachers, students, residents, the day to day demands of the gardens and class work. By busing the classes to our campus in East Troy, we have successfully developed a method of dividing classes in small groups, harvesting food, then preparing and recombining as a single group to enjoy lunch. This process has a distinct calming effect on the children, improvement in food choices and learning ability. Researchers Andrea Faber Taylor and Frances E. Kuo of the University of Illinois have just completed an extensive study that concludes 20 minutes per day of exposure to natural areas has the same calming effect of a full dose of prescribed medication for children with ADHD. The study also concluded that the rest of the class should go along as well.

Field Trips this year focused on Food and Culture, Fruit Tree Health and Maintenance, Habitat/Community, Land Stewardship and Food and Culture. Classes visiting urban sites in Milwaukee and rural farms for a broad vision of environments dedicated to nature, land and food.

Garden Coordinator Hired

Stacy Cushenbery was hired to manage the garden as well as to develop garden-related curriculum tying together fieldwork to health, environment, nature, fitness, and nutrition, plant-life for integration into Academy of Learning and Leadership class lessons.

TUG-ALL Documentation

Curriculum development, garden installation, student participation, learning processes is being documented. Michael Fields Agricultural Institute hosts information about Elaine's Project on its website and will continue to post documentation of the project's development for public access.

Stacy produced the first TUG-ALL Newsletter November 2008 in order to communicate with teachers and parents the activities and progress of Elaine's Project and Teutonia Urban Garden. Teutonia Urban Garden and Academy of Learning and Leadership hosted the Milwaukee Urban Agriculture Network at one of its monthly meetings in October, 2008. People engaged in urban agriculture projects throughout Milwaukee meet monthly to share information and view area projects. Attendees toured the garden and Mary Lou Lamonda and Stacy Cushenbery presented information about Elaine's Project.

Expansion of project partners and community supporters

Teutonia Urban Garden has generated a great deal of interest in Milwaukee bringing attention to the benefits of a garden serving as an education tool for youth and adults leading to heightened interest and awareness of health, nutrition, fitness, environmental and social needs. TUG-ALL is being pointed to as an example of the comprehensive support system that a garden can provide a community. The city of Milwaukee is in ongoing conversations with Ron Doetch regarding a wider spread application.

Harvest Meal

This fall the three sixth grade classes at the Academy of Learning and Leadership came to Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI) to conduct their Field Work exercises. Each class was given the task of preparing food for a Harvest Meal that the entire sixth grade, a total of 60 students, would participate in. Preparations included harvesting, cooking, setting and beautifying the table, serving, eating, clean-up, and setting aside enough food to contribute to the Harvest Meal.

The Harvest Meal was the celebration of a process begun at MFAI which hosted these and several other grades from Academy of Learning and Leadership throughout the school year. The Michael Fields' site is located in East Troy, Wisconsin where farmers are trained to farm sustainably providing livelihood and locally produced foods to farmer and community.

These 11 year old students live in an area of Milwaukee that is home to concentrated poverty rates significantly exceeding national standards. Many of the ALL students are challenged by short attention spans, hyper-activity, and are easily disengaged from their environment.

We discovered that when the students went from harvesting, preparing, cooking and clean-up a transformation in behavior occurred. The most notable behavior change was that at mealtime. The students sat quietly until it was their turn to get their food and were eager to help and be useful, especially in the kitchen. As the students

2008 JM KOHLER FOUNDATION – ELAINE’S PROJECT REPORT

came up one table at a time to get their food we casually asked students what they helped make. Slowly, they opened up and began to talk about the Field Work experiences they personally were involved in.

When students participate in every step of the process they experience a continuity and connection with everything they do and they, themselves, are integral to that process and their efforts become meaningful. Once they experienced and understood their activity within an entire process they fully cooperated. There was calm consistent in all three classes which visited Michael Fields on several occasions. It was evident that participation in the entire process from field to kitchen to table enabled an atmosphere of quiet with children whose life circumstances can bring challenging behavioral responses.

Teutonia Urban Garden Budget 2008

The \$198,113 budget reflecting June 2007 – December 2008 for Teutonia Urban Garden and related activities secured tremendous evidence of progress for the garden and environmental education component of Elaine’s Project objectives and goals.

With a generous commitment from JM Kohler Foundation we were able to leverage additional funding from Ceres Foundation, Hunt Foundation and MMSD in the past year to not only complete the first phase of Elaine’s Project and Teutonia Urban Garden, but to enhance the project to include teacher training activities, community involvement and an important discovery about the environmental education process with the students of Academy of Learning and Leadership. Funds from the JM Kohler foundation allowed us to bring classes to Michael Fields in East Troy for additional relationships with food and fitness. Our new “discovery” includes curriculum development, implementation methodology and the “calming” effect of the exposure to natural space and an experiential field to meal approach engaging the 'whole child' that translates into a better learning trajectory.

Michael Fields’ staff returned from the Harvest Meal to begin planning for next year’s activities, knowing that the possibility they witnessed that day was an encouraging beginning in learning how to facilitate these students with educational environments in garden, school, kitchen and meal. With the continued development of Teutonia Urban Garden, Field Work on-site at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Train the Teacher courses, an Educational Kitchen (ALL KIDS in the Kitchen) adjacent to TUG-ALL , increased staffing support and garden wear for the students, Elaine’s Project will continue to receive the level of support it requires to meet its aggressive goals.

IRB Research Proposal

ALL with the collaboration of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin submitted a research protocol to the Research Department of Children's Hospital. Seven staff completed their human research ethics training and participated in creating the research protocol. The protocol was approved in Feb of 2009 and will begin intake at the end of March 2009.