



pe-ren-ni-al

(n.) a plant that produces flowers and seeds more than one time in its lifespan, and thus lasts for more than one year.

From Latin perennis meaning continual: per "through" + annus "year"

WPC School Grounds Greening Project

WPC School Grounds Greening Project brings children closer to nature by enhancing the grounds of Pittsburgh Public Schools with greenery and outdoor green spaces. A partnership of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Grable Foundation and Pittsburgh Public Schools, this project will bring low-maintenance, sustainable greenery to all Pittsburgh Public Schools by 2012.



Students explore their new natural playspace at Roosevelt Primary (PreK-1)

School Grounds Greening Project Turns 5! Sustaining our School Grounds into the Future



Then (July 2008)...



...and now (May 2012)

Schiller Academy (6 - 8)

Now in its fifth year, the School Grounds Greening Project (SGGP) is transitioning to its next phase, caretaking and sustainability. All of the work and effort put into greening schools and creating natural spaces and accents that stimulate learning, heighten environmental awareness, and foster creative play rely on the volunteers dedicated to maintaining them.

It's very important to take care of what has been planted, and many schools are stepping up to make sure their greenery grows to be healthy and strong in this critical time.

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- Morrow (PreK - 5) Receives New Greenery
- Westwood (K - 8) Fall Clean-Up Event
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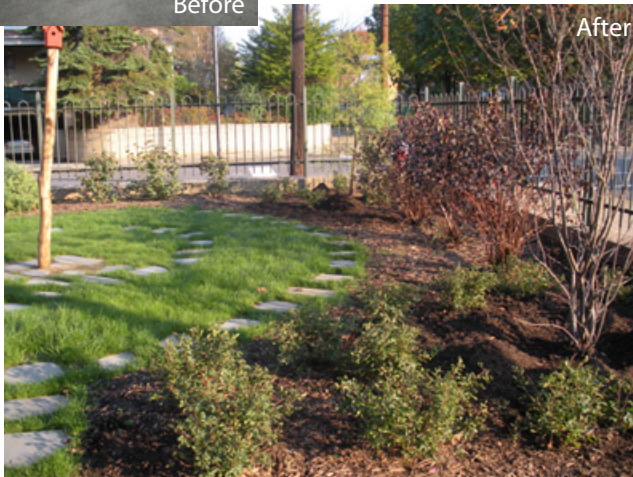
Fall Projects

With the school year now in full swing, WPC staff and groups of dedicated volunteers have been hard at work completing the last remaining school projects and tending to existing ones. Below are some of this fall's accomplishments:

Morrow Goes Green: Blacktop is Transformed into Greenspace



In September, SGGP constructed three new greenspaces at Morrow Elementary School in Brighton Heights. Funding for the project was provided by the Grable Foundation and PNC Bank. Several trees have been planted and new grass is growing! As part of the process, 4,200 square feet of asphalt were removed to unearth natural space for the plants to take root and flourish. Clearly, the Morrow school community is excited about their green transformation.



Volunteers from PNC's Grow Up Great early childhood education initiative teamed up with a group of 5th grade students at Morrow to plant over 500 shrubs and perennials. Then, 13 trees were planted at the school a few weeks later once the weather cooled. The transformed greenspace will be maintained by students, teachers, neighbors and community volunteers.



Special features include:

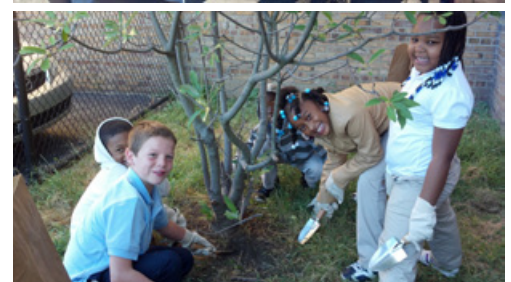
- A grass and stone "loopy maze" in front of the building to encourage physical activity and creative play;
- An outdoor classroom featuring log seating and climbing space;
- Two tree pits in the parking lot to add shade and low growing shrubs;
- A relaxing green sitting space outside the emotional support classroom.

Student "Westwood Weeders" Lead Caretaking Efforts at Cleanup Event

Early on a Monday morning in September, Ms. Moeller and her fourth-grade math class started their day with a mighty task: a big clean-up of their school greenery. The long, dry summer brought forth many varieties of weeds, but fortunately, the group was up to the challenge.

The day began with a review of what weeds are, and the best methods of removing them without disturbing the surrounding trees and greenery. Then, the gloves went on as the students, their teacher and two WPC staff members got to work.

While weeding, students posed questions such as, "What would happen if we let the weeds grow?" and "Why is thistle prickly?" Such inquiries lie at the heart of the School Grounds Greening Project—heightened curiosity, natural learning, a hands-on approach, and lots of opportunities to observe and positively interact with nature. The Westwood fourth graders were back outside again in October to finish the job with a fresh layer of mulch for their trees.



Award-Winning School Projects!

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) recently announced that four Pittsburgh Public Schools were chosen to receive the 2012 Community Greening Award! Congratulations to the following schools:

- Carmalt Academy of Science and Technology (PreK - 8)
- Fulton (PreK - 5)
- Roosevelt Primary (PreK - 1)
- Weil (PreK - 5)



PHS award-winning natural playspaces at Weil (left) and Carmalt (right)

The PHS Community Greening Award is an annual recognition that acknowledges greening and beautification projects that benefit communities throughout the mid-Atlantic region. PHS judges rated each green space on plant variety, design, use of space and horticultural practices. Each winning school received a certificate and an honorary sign to place in the green space.

SCHOOL TENDER SPOTLIGHT

School Tender (n): a volunteer who helps care for new plants provided by WPC at Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Rich Heller, Minadeo (PreK - 5)

About two years ago, Rich watched with interest as trees were being planted at Minadeo. The following summer, noticing damage to the trees by mowers and planting beds overrun by weeds, he wanted to get involved. After learning that the trees were planted by the School Grounds Greening Project, Rich contacted WPC and found that no one had volunteered at Minadeo. So he signed on.



Rich was glad to see the grounds being utilized, and he hopes to help expand the beds. He has been adding more native Pennsylvanian plants in an attempt to "make a difference...to the future of biodiversity, to the native plants and animals of North America and the ecosystems that sustain them," as Doug Tallamy says in one of Rich's favorite books, *Bringing Nature Home*.

Rich says it has been a pleasure to work with the school maintenance and WPC staffs, who provide the necessary tools, materials, and knowledge. He and his wife, Gail, enjoy being among the insects, birds—and people—drawn in by the new plants.

Rich's thoughtfulness and dedication have made an indelible impact on the greenery at Minadeo.

Everyone featured in our "School Tender Spotlight" will receive a small token of our appreciation in the mail. There will be more to come! Thanks, Rich. We appreciate you!

Now Presenting: The New and Improved SGGP Webpage!

The School Grounds Greening Project page on the WPC website has been updated! You can find out more about each one of the PPS projects through our Green Profiles; fact sheets containing fun plant facts and statistics highlighting the environmental impact of each school greening project.



Be sure to check us out online at: **WaterLandLife.org/237**

GREENSOURCES for your school

Online resources abound for green volunteers, especially instructors. Here are a few:

Green Education Foundation

www.greeneducationfoundation.org

For instructors, the Green Education Foundation has fun, grade-appropriate projects with a focus on environmental awareness and sustainability. Geared towards students in kindergarten through 12th grade, the activities are listed by subject and easily searchable.

Evergreen Canada

www.evergreen.ca/en/resources/schools/maintenance.sn

Evergreen Canada has some great information on maintaining school greenery, including tree do's and don'ts, tips on weeding, and watering guidelines for newly planted trees.

School Garden Wizard

www.schoolgardenwizard.org/wizard/learn

The School Garden Wizard website is chock full of resources for plant-based learning. It provides support at all stages of the development of a school garden, and has great activities that are based on the seasons.



The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Mission

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

Become a School Tender TODAY!



"School Tenders" are volunteers who help care for the new plants provided by WPC at Pittsburgh Public Schools. A School Tender's duties consist of three simple steps:

- 1) Watering
- 2) Weeding
- 3) Continued monitoring

WPC needs new School Tenders throughout the year! Interested?

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For more information please visit:

WaterLandLife.org

