



Nature Explore Classroom Portfolio:

A Sampling from Across the Nation

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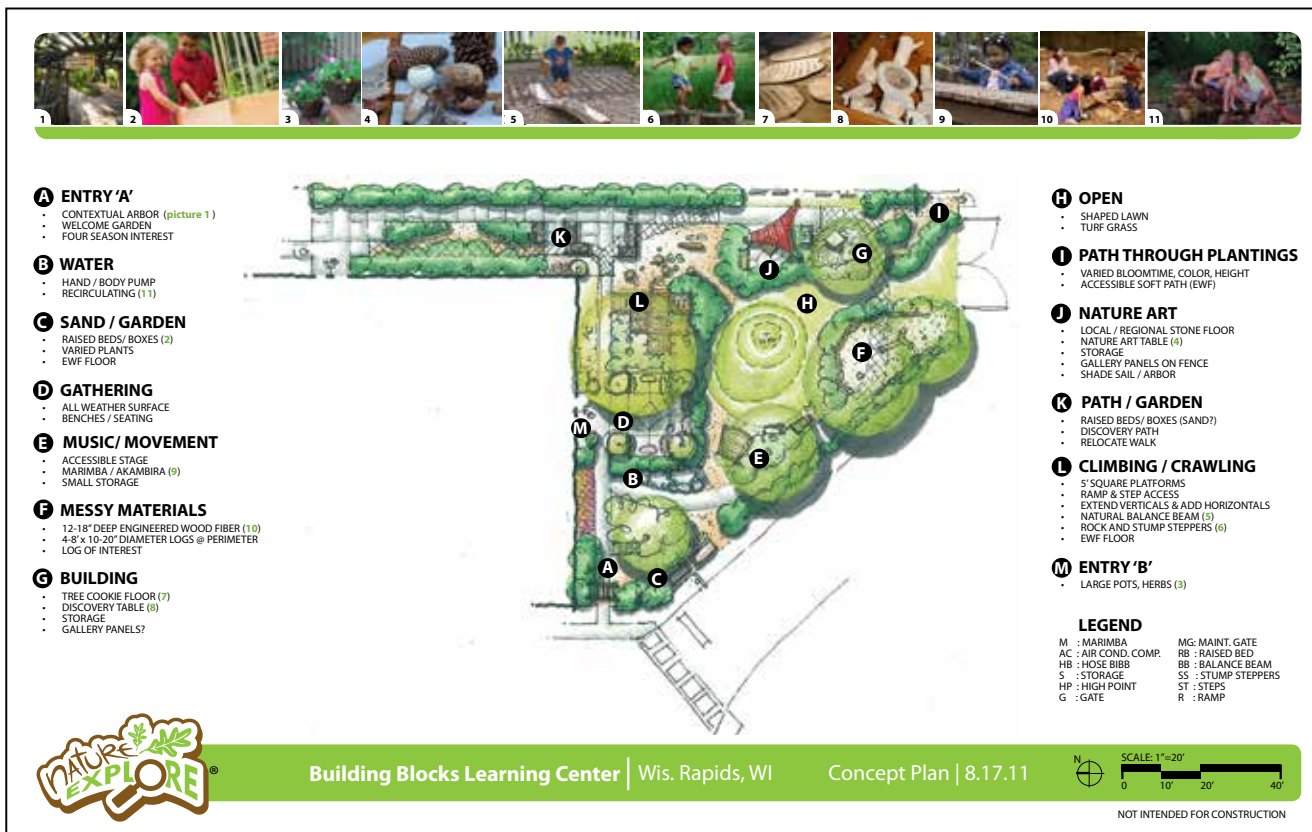
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"I am so happy to have partnered with you, it so helped our teachers to get a vision for outdoor play."

-Pat Rackliffe, Westport Weston Cooperative Nursery School



"This process worked extremely well to help a large number of people come to consensus quickly. Nature Explore gave us a solid research framework for planning, and helped us communicate our goals to parents, funders and the community."

-Vicki Bohling, Parent Educator, Forest Lake, MN



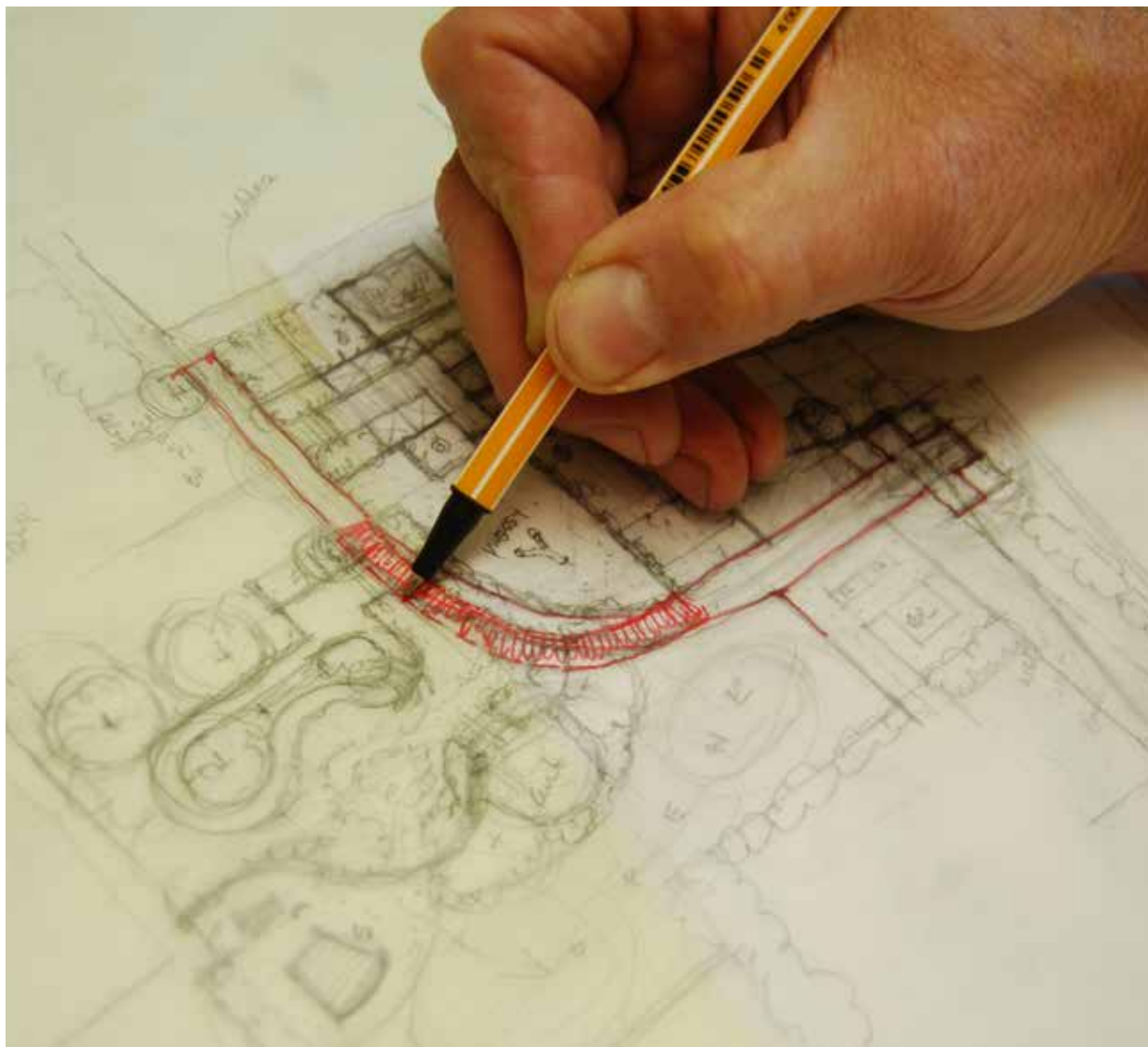
Design Process

The dynamic design process begins as a collaboration between your staff, families, your community and our landscape architect/educator team. Working with you, our team will synthesize site conditions, the needs of your program and staff, and Dimensions' research based on direct observations of children interacting in naturally designed outdoor environments.

The result: a cost effective, efficient, and attainable solution is created. Your concept plan will be drawn to scale and will incorporate outdoor activity areas, accessible pathways and surfacing, playground safety standards, and will indicate where plantings should be placed.

During your initial presentation, the designer will walk through the spatial organization and circulation of the outdoor classroom. The final concept plan is rendered in color and can help you with fund-raising for implementation.

Visit us at natureexplore.org or call (888) 908-8733 to learn more.





Early Education

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Facts

Size : Varies

Designed: 2007-2013

Established: On-going

Location: Los Angeles, CA



Concept Plan for Escalante Early Education Center



"We tell parents if their children come home clean, they didn't have a good day. Parents know this is how it is and this is how they learn. Parents tell us that when they go to kindergarten, they're better prepared." -Ranae Amezcua, LAUSD Early Education Director

"Our Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom is a piece of heaven for our stakeholders. It is so beautiful that parents have expressed that our environment provides a sense of a daily retreat."

-Josefina Navarro, Principal at 4th Street EEC



Example before image at one of the Early Education Centers

Early Education Centers | Los Angeles, CA

Brooklyn Early Education Center



4th Street Early Education Center



Early Education

Dimensions Early Education (Preschoolers) | Lincoln, NE

Facts

Size : 6,675 square feet

Designed: June 2004

Established: April 2005

Location: Lincoln, NE



Dimensions Early Education (Infant/Toddlers)



Facts

Size : 1,930 square feet

Designed: June 2004

Established: April 2005

Location: Lincoln, NE



Dimensions research consistently demonstrates that close observation skills are strengthened when children spend time in Nature Explore Classrooms. Children who are able to explore the natural world regularly and over time become comfortable seeking new information. As they ask questions, actively explore, compare what they think they know with what they are observing, then reflect on their new assumptions, they become active participants in the process of developing ever-more complex science understandings. This way of learning strengthens critical thinking skills, which is helpful in all areas of learning, not just science.



Early Education

Lincoln Park Cooperative Nursery School | Chicago, IL



Lincoln Park Cooperative Nursery School



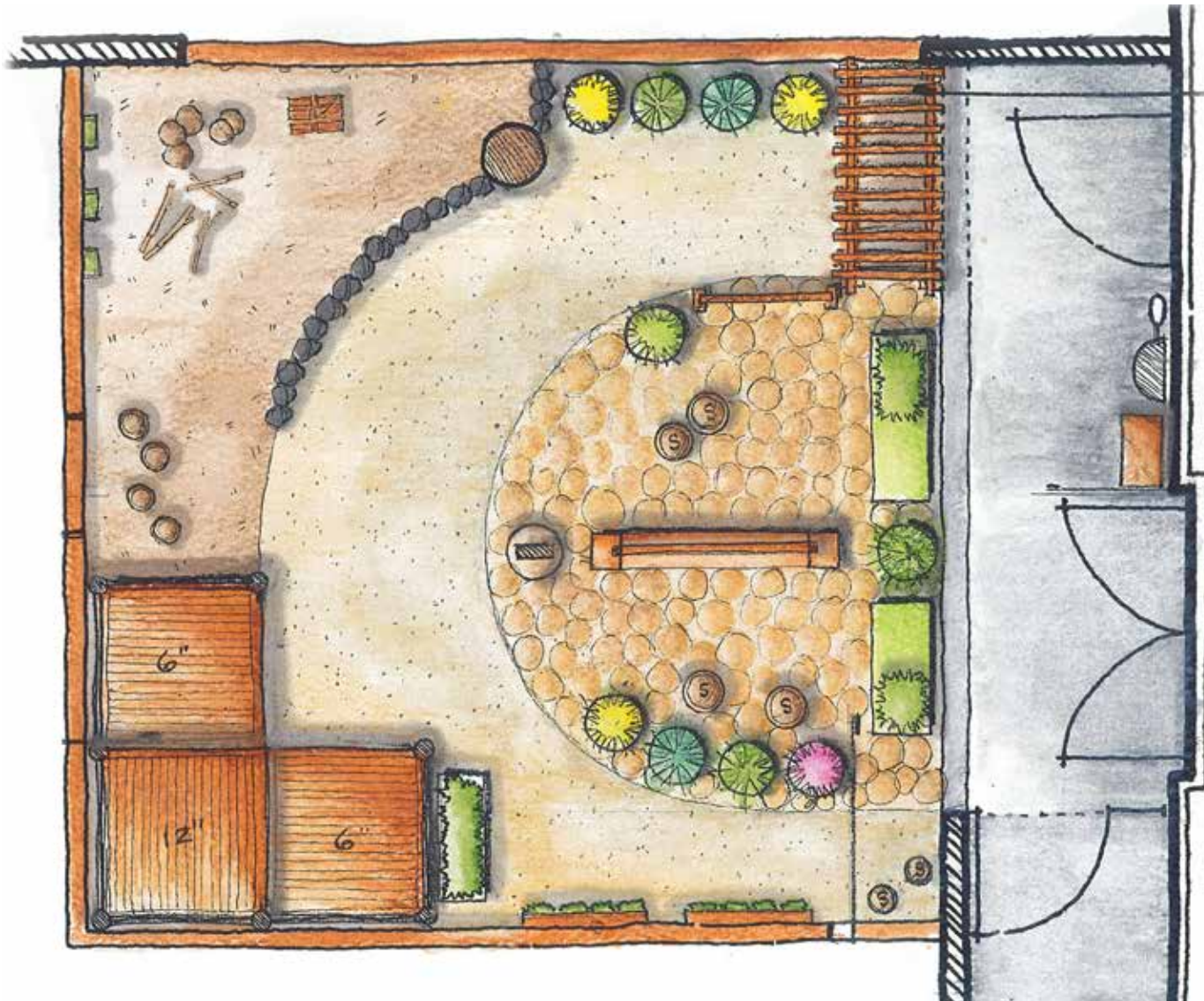
Facts

Size : 585 square feet

Designed: June 2011

Established: October 2011

Location: Chicago, IL



Early Education

Children's Treehouse Child Development Center | Shepherdstown, WV

Located at the US Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center

Facts

Size : 24,600 square feet

Designed: March 2012

Established: June 2012

Location: Shepherdstown, WV



D.A. Quarles Early Child Center | Englewood, NJ



Facts

Size : 10,705 square feet

Designed: June 2014

Established: October 2014

Location: Englewood, NJ



Early Education

Abington Friends Preschool | Jenkintown, PA



Abington Friends Preschool



Facts

Size : 28,030 square feet

Designed: August 2011

Established: November 2012

Location: Jenkintown, PA



Early Education

Warren Village Learning Center (Infant/Toddler space) | Denver, CO



Warren Village is an apartment supporting single parents transitioning from homelessness. Supported by the U.S. Forest Service, the space has been developed as a model for an under-served population in Forest Service Region 2.

Warren Village Learning Center (Preschool space)



Before



Facts

Size : 3,830 square feet

Designed: March 2014

Established: May 2014

Location: Denver, CO



After



Early Education

Kid Grace Learning Center | Temple, TX

Facts

Size : 7,260 square feet

Designed: July 2013

Established: June 2015

Location: Temple, TX



Sherry Treubus, Child Care Policy and Quality Care Manager for Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, has made a goal of improving the quality of childcare centers for at-risk children by assisting them in getting Nature Explore Classrooms. Workforce Solutions is a government agency that delivers programs and services to enhance employment in the area. Its Child Care Services assists low-income families and works directly with childcare programs. Thanks to Sherry and Workforce Solutions, Central Texas now has a number of beautiful outdoor classrooms such as Kid Grace Learning Center.



Christots Montessori | Shawnee, KS



Facts

Size : 25,090 square feet
Designed: February 2014
Established: June 2015
Location: Shawnee, KS



Elementary Schools

Gomez Heritage Elementary School | Omaha, NE



Gomez Heritage Elementary School



Facts

Size : 15,695 square feet

Designed: October 2008

Established: September 2013

Location: Omaha, NE



"Every time I take my students to our outdoor classroom it is a rich experience unlike any other during the school day."

-Stephanie Carlson-Pruch, Elementary Art Specialist at Gomez Heritage Elementary School



Elementary Schools

Alexander Elementary School | Alexander, NY



Before



After



Alexander Elementary School



Facts

Size : 26,980 square feet
Designed: November 2011
Established: July 2013
Location: Alexander, NY



Nature Centers, Parks & Preserves

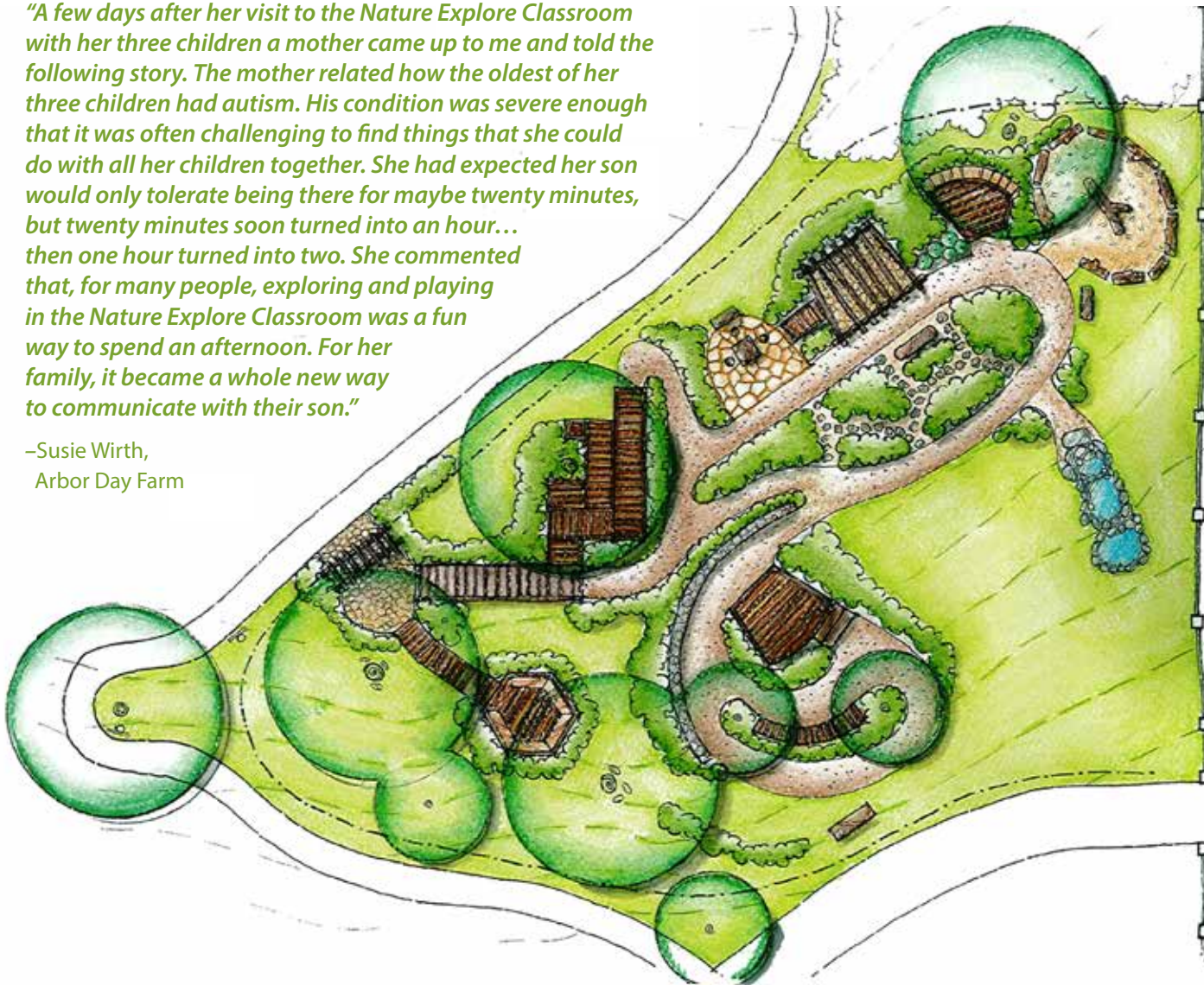
Arbor Day Farm | Nebraska City, NE



Arbor Day Farm

"A few days after her visit to the Nature Explore Classroom with her three children a mother came up to me and told the following story. The mother related how the oldest of her three children had autism. His condition was severe enough that it was often challenging to find things that she could do with all her children together. She had expected her son would only tolerate being there for maybe twenty minutes, but twenty minutes soon turned into an hour... then one hour turned into two. She commented that, for many people, exploring and playing in the Nature Explore Classroom was a fun way to spend an afternoon. For her family, it became a whole new way to communicate with their son."

—Susie Wirth,
Arbor Day Farm



Facts

Size : 16,500 square feet

Designed: June 2005

Established: April 2006

Location: Nebraska City, NE



Nature Centers, Parks & Preserves

The United States National Arboretum | Washington, D.C.

Facts

Size : 10,300 square feet

Designed: April 2008

Established: November 2011

Location: Washington, D.C.



Red Top Mountain, GA State Parks | Acworth, GA



Facts

Size : 15,050 square feet

Designed: February 2015

Established: April 2016

Location: Ackworth, GA



Photo Credit : John Creek Photography

Nature Centers, Parks & Preserves

Kansas Children's Discovery Center | Topeka, KS



Kansas Children's Discovery Center



Facts

Size : 22,300 square feet

Designed: August 2010

Established: June 2012

Location: Topeka, KS



Nature Centers, Parks & Preserves

Lost River Cave & Valley | Bowling Green, KY

Facts

Size : 19,375 square feet

Designed: June 2011

Established: June 2013

Location: Bowling Green, KY



Smith Memorial Playground | Philadelphia, PA



Facts

Size : 12,860 square feet
Designed: October 2015
Established: December 2015
Location: Philadelphia, PA



Smith Memorial Playground & Playhouse has been a treasured destination in PA for more than 100 years, serving over 200,000 children and families annually. Free to the public, visitors come from the entire city, although they have a special commitment to under-resourced families, particularly those in their immediate neighborhood of Strawberry Mansion. The U.S. Forest Service is partnering with Nature Explore to bring outstanding Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom models, such as this project, to under-served communities throughout the country.



Nature Centers, Parks & Preserves

Creston National Fish Hatchery | Kalispell, MT



Creston National Fish Hatchery



Facts

Size : 16,200 square feet

Designed: May 2012

Established: September 2012

Location: Kalispell, MT



"We want to encourage children to put the electronics aside, get outside, and enjoy the natural world around them. With the help of a nature-based classroom they can build anything and be anything. Adults will also experience the rich learning that takes place in a Nature Explore Classroom as we encourage creativity in a natural setting." –Evie Bradley, Outdoor Education Coordinator



Health Centers

Lone Star Family Health Center | Conroe, TX

Facts

Size : 5,750 square feet

Designed: January 2016

Established: April 2016

Location: Conroe, TX



Before



In partnership with the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and the U.S. Forest Service, Lone Star Family Health Center was awarded a grant to construct a Nature Explore Classroom at the clinic. The center serves 50,000 highly underprivileged patients a year, which made it a perfect model—reaching a large demographic and a vulnerable population. The main goal of the grant was to allow Lone Star physicians to write prescriptions to get children and families outside into the outdoor classroom and to the nearby parks and forests.

Lone Star Family Health Center



After



Lone Star Family Health Center will use the constructed space to document the many health benefits of spending time in nature—such as improved blood glucose levels for diabetics, improved concentration, improved social relationships, lower anxiety and negative thoughts, mitigation of dementia, improved vision, lowered blood pressure, improved coordination and reduced mental fatigue. The clinic will also provide other outreach events such as a program on healthy eating, using produce grown in the garden area for community cooking classes.

Health Centers

The SPARK Center | Mattapan, MA

Facts

Size : 22,400 square feet

Designed: March 2010

Established: September 2010

Location: Mattapan, MA



Child saving Institute | Omaha, NE



Facts

Size : 18,175 square feet

Designed: January 2007

Established: January 2010

Location: Omaha, NE



"As we were planning a major expansion of the Child Saving Institute, we knew we wanted to provide enhanced opportunities for our children to play and learn outside. The Director of the Child Development Center introduced the concept of the Nature Explore outdoor classroom during our planning process. At first I was skeptical but as we learned more about the research and evidence of the Nature Explore classrooms, I became convinced it was the best option for the children. From the first day that we opened the classroom, it was clear that this was one of the best decisions we made—the children love the outdoor classroom and the teachers have embraced the concept as a core part of the curriculum."

—Todd Landry, Former President and CEO of CSI

Botanical Gardens & Arboretums

Bailey Arboretum | Locust Valley, NY



Bailey Arboretum



Facts

Size : 3,730 square feet

Designed: March 2008

Established: June 2009

Location: Locust Valley, NY



The "Friends of Bailey Arboretum" group reports that they are amazed how the design process helped them all come to consensus and find ways to keep the naturalness of the area in tact while addressing safety, maintenance and sustainability concerns. Most of all, they credit the new space with revitalizing the whole Arboretum, as well as helping their community's youngest members connect with nature on a regular basis. Clubs, Inc., Society of American Florists, and Woman's National Farm & Garden Association, U.S. Forest Service and Keep America Beautiful. Children from all over America are now visiting the nature-filled space.



Botanical Gardens & Arboretums

Missouri Botanical Garden | St. Louis, MO



Missouri Botanical Garden



Facts

Size : 9,130 square feet

Designed: January 2007

Established: April 2007

Location: St. Louis, MO



Military Child Development Centers

Hurlburt Air Force Base | Hurlburt Field, FL



Hurlburt Air Force Base



Facts

Size : 6,865 square feet

Designed: May 2009

Established: November 2009

Location: Hurlburt Field, FL



"As I watch children play in the outdoor classroom, I witness children's reintroduction to long-term exploratory play, empowering them with a new understanding of cooperation amongst themselves and their peers, and a true satisfaction from the outside world. This reintroduction has proven to improve key concepts in children's basic understanding of the world around them, reflecting positive impacts on their physical and mental health, and their enjoyment of life in general. Outdoor boundaries are now put aside, returning children to a sense of normalcy in freedom of play."

—Catherine Goss, Teacher at Hurlburt Field Air Force Base



Faith-Based Centers

St. Francis Episcopal Day School | Houston, TX



St. Francis Episcopal Day School



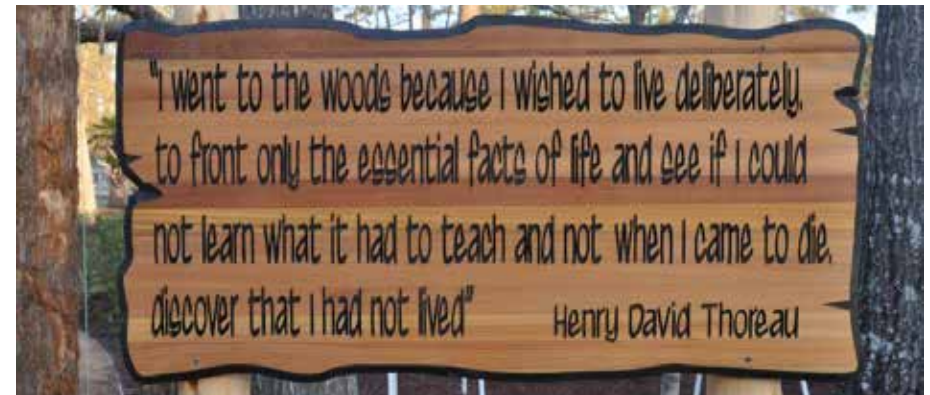
Facts

Size : 14,270 square feet

Designed: January 2010

Established: June 2011

Location: Houston, TX



Faith-Based Centers

Beth El Congregational Preschool | Phoenix, AZ



Beth El Congregational Preschool



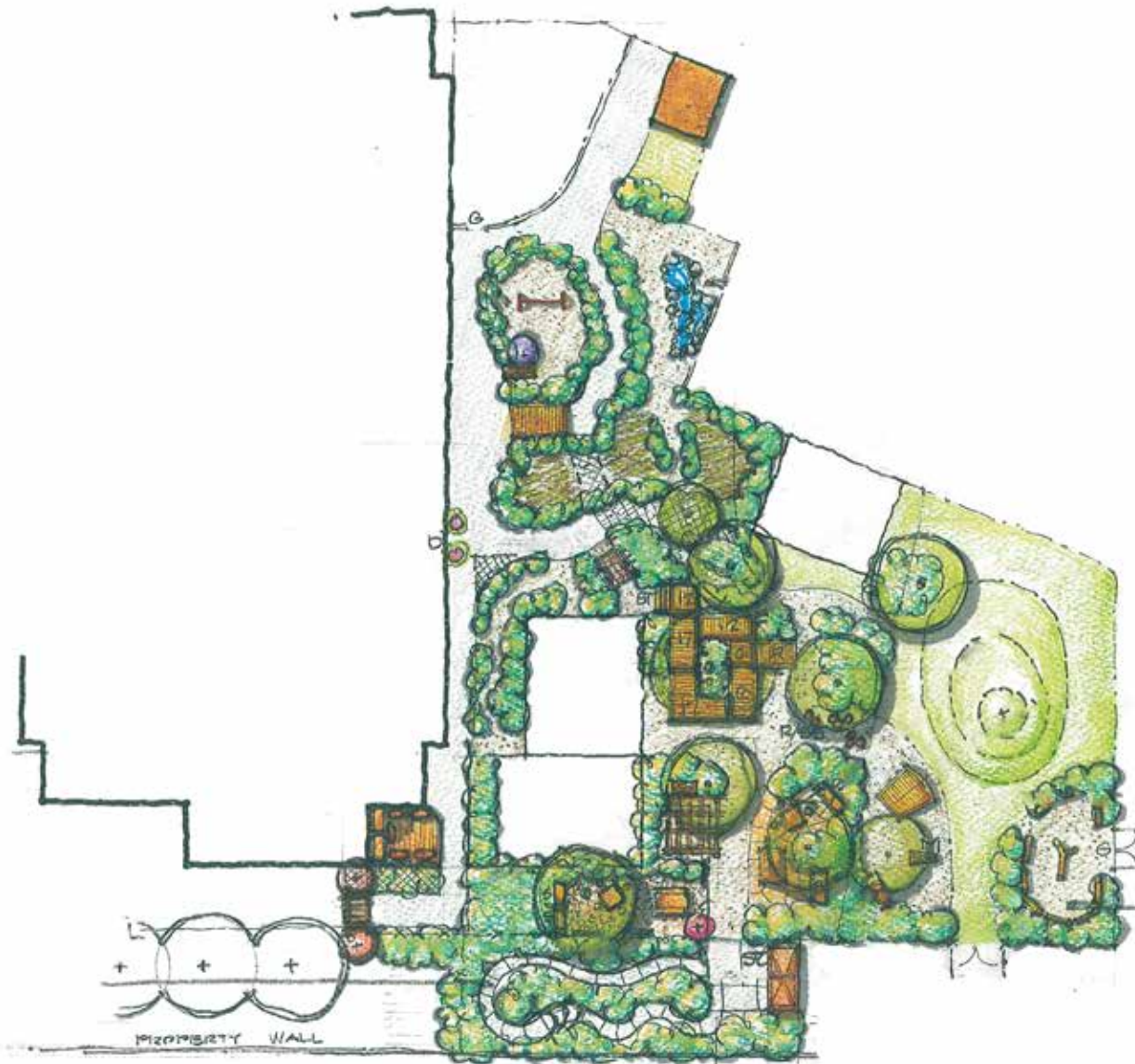
Facts

Size: 14,905 square feet

Designed: September 2011

Established: July 2013

Location: Phoenix, AZ



Faith-Based Centers

Noah's Ark Christian Preschool and Kindergarten | Barrington, IL



A young girl with brown hair, wearing a light blue hooded jacket with grey accents on the shoulders and black leggings, stands on a large, light-colored log. The log is balanced on two small wooden blocks. She has her arms outstretched to the sides for balance. She is wearing grey sneakers with pink accents. The ground is covered in brown wood chips. In the background, there is a black metal fence and some greenery.



Size: 13,550 square feet
Designed: June 2010
Established: December 2011
Location: Barrington, IL



Libraries & Museums

Anythink Libraries - Wright Farm | Thornton, CO



Anythink Libraries - Wright Farm



Facts

Size : 20,530 square feet

Designed: December 2010

Established: February 2013

Location: Thornton, CO



Libraries & Museums

Middle Country Public Library | Centereach, NY



Middle Country Public Library



Facts

Size : 7,765 square feet

Designed: May 2008

Established: July 2010

Location: Centereach, NY



"The Nature Explorium provides a new and exciting dimension to the library landscape of services. It connects library staff with nature literacy and environmental concerns and engages children in exploration, discovery and multi-sensory learning."

—Tracy LaStella, Youth Services

Domestic Violence Shelters

Mary Kay Funded Classroom | Los Angeles, CA

Facts

Size : 2,830 square feet

Designed: July 2013

Established: December 2013

Location: Los Angeles, CA



Mary Kay Funded Classroom | Denver, CO



Facts

Size : 6,408 square feet

Designed: April 2011

Established: July 2011

Location: Denver, CO



Before



After

Domestic Violence Shelters

Mary Kay Funded Classrooms | New York, NY

Facts

Size : 2,280-2,650 square feet

Designed: November 2011

Established: March 2012

Location: New York, NY



Before



Before



After



After



Mary Kay Funded Classroom | Las Vegas, NV



Facts

Size : 5,565 square feet

Designed: September 2013

Established: February 2014

Location: Las Vegas, NV





"It was great having an educator and a landscape architect working in tandem to better understand both our concerns and hopes. The process was inclusive, thoughtful and inspiring. The initial plan was spot on and highly reflective of our collective conversations about how to make our current outdoor space work better for our children. Not only was the plan reflective, but it also **pushed our thinking in such good ways."**

-Carlye Nelson-Major, The Philadelphia School

"The work that your Designer/Educator team did was incredible. I could say that you saved us mountains of work, but really, we never could have come up with the whole package of research, rationales, and an absolutely beautiful classroom."

*-Zibby Andrews,
Garrison Forest School*



"This consult far exceeded our expectations. Your team is **professional and inspiring.** I am excited to work with you as this project moves forward."

-Jen Ferguson, City of Coppell

Connecting Children With Nature



natureexplore.org
1-888-908-8733