

Manzanita Community / SEED Schoolyard Redesign

by Urban Ecologist | Success Stories



Summary

Urban Ecology set out to provide the students of the Manzanita Community School/SEED a safe and attractive playground. Using outreach workshops with students, parents, and teachers a community implemented plan was designed to meet the needs of the students. Currently, the school yard is in

a transformational process of becoming a colorful attractive and inviting space from the current barren asphalt yard.

Description

The need for more safe and creative play spaces became apparent through Urban Ecology's community outreach process with the users of the Manzanita schoolyard. We held several workshops with the teachers, parents, and students of Manzanita. To do outreach and design with the students, we set up tables in the auditorium and readied our supplies. Every 15 minutes another two classrooms of elementary students would enter and give us their professional analysis of the spaces where they play everyday. Wave after wave of junior designers were trained and each was able to tell us what they wanted their schoolyard to be like.



The school yard was separated into four separate sections for the kindergarten, courtyards, large yard, and amphitheater and wave garden.

The kindergarten area was designed to create a more stimulating and imaginative experience for the children. It will include a planter box full of plant species which encourage insect habitats, a painted tricycle course, and repainted lines for four square, tether ball, and hopscotch.

The courtyard area is set to distinguish a clear transitional space for the children between outdoor and indoor activities. New concrete is set to be poured which will provide ample seating space. By providing trees, tables, chairs for outdoor classrooms, drought tolerant plants, and by adding color a much more communal atmosphere will be provided for the students.

The large yard area will replace the current asphalt by providing much needed play and sports areas. Areas included will be a large artificial turf field, an edible garden with compost bins, a running track, repainted basketball courts, paint lines for student line ups, hopscotch, tether ball, and four square, as well as a sundial and world map will be painted.

The final areas of the amphitheater and wave garden are designed to create an atmosphere which will encourage outdoor education. These structures will provide learning examples for music and science. These areas will have colorful seating spaces and will be shaded by drought tolerant trees in order to accommodate up to 100 children.

This past Martin Luther King Jr. day, over 100 volunteers came out to the school yard to help paint the game areas and to landscape the school yard with drought tolerant plants and trees. Urban Ecology is currently actively fundraising in order to raise the necessary funds to complete the rest of the areas.