

Garfield Elementary Schoolyard Redesign

by Urban Ecologist | Success Stories



Urban Ecology has partnered with EBAYC to redesign the schoolyard of Garfield Elementary School in Oakland, near the Fruitvale BART Station.

Urban Ecology – with the help of the staff, students, and parents of Garfield – have developed a final plan for the redesign of the schoolyard. We have held two different volunteer work days

with dozens of attending to help paint, dig, plant, and garden.



In November 2005 parent leaders, with the assistance of East Bay Asian Youth Center and Urban Ecology, set up a meeting the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities, Tim White, and Principal Maria Dehghafard to ask whether there were any plans for improving the schoolyard. A parent leader from Higher Learning and Urban Ecology staff began to plan and organize a series of workshops to get input from parents, teachers and students on how to improve the schoolyard at Garfield. Through these numerous workshops, a plan was designed to create the schoolyard of today with new asphalt, colorfully painted activity areas, play equipment, plantings and gardens. An edible garden was created to give the children a skill set to grow their own food. The painted activity areas give the students an interactive and recreational lesson in geography and spelling, with letter blocks, a world, and local maps.

Garfield Elementary

The Successful schoolyard of today is a vast improvement of the uninviting atmosphere of the past. With plenty of seating space and recreational activities, the students are pleased with their new school yard environment. Within the next few months there are still plans to install nine planter boxes to be filled with drought tolerant trees, to provide shade for a number of picnic tables.