Lapham Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden + Lapham Gardener-in-Residence Program
2015 Year-end Report
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Submitted to: Lapham-Marquette Parent Teacher Group

Program: Lapham Gardener-in-Residence (GiR) Program
Gardener-in-Residence: Jessica Simanek (Spring) and Erin Moriearty (Fall); erin@communitygroundworks.org
Supervisor: Ginny Hughes, Community GroundWorks; ginny@communitygroundworks.org
Lapham Green Team Lead: Stephanie Steigerwaldt; steigerwaldt@hotmail.com
Funding Dates: April 2015–November 2015

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A. Why Garden-Based Learning?
Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of school gardens, including:

★ Increased science achievement scores
★ Improved environmental attitudes
★ Increased appreciation and respect for nature
★ Improved social skills and behavior
★ Improved nutrition knowledge
★ Increased knowledge about benefits of eating fruits and vegetables
★ Increased interest in eating fruit and vegetables
★ Increased preference of vegetables
★ Increased fruit and vegetable consumption
★ Improved life skills, including working in groups and self-understanding

Source: Home Grown School Gardens in Wisconsin (Wisconsin DPI) – find this and more information at: http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/f2s/school-garden

B. Timeline: Lapham Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden + Gardener-in-Residence Program

1998-2007
Lapham School Community Garden – Madison’s first school vegetable garden – was founded in 1998 by Ken Swift, a Lapham teacher. During the following decade, teachers, parents and community members experimented with various operation and maintenance models including a community garden approach wherein community members worked their own garden plots. Some teachers utilized the garden by leading garden-based learning activities on their own. Lapham’s School Community Garden won many grants during this time including Willy Street Co-op’s Community Reinvestment Fund grant in 1998, 1999 and 2000; UW–Madison’s Evjue, Hilldale grant in 1998; Madison Area Master Gardeners Association Grant in 1999; Wisconsin Elementary and Middle Level
Science Teachers Association Grant Program in 1999; and a grant from the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association in 1999.

**2008-2009**

Jim Hansen, a Lapham parent and urban farmer, volunteered as Lapham’s first Gardener-in-Residence in a program he developed himself. While the program was popular and successful, it was not a sustainable endeavor for an individual person.

**2010-2011**

Lapham’s School Community Garden was also awarded Willy Street Co-op’s Community Reinvestment Fund grant in 2010 and 2011 and Madison Metropolitan School District honored Ken Swift with a Distinguished Service Award in 2011 for his groundbreaking, garden-based teaching in the school garden.

Then, in 2011, recognizing the benefits of garden-based, experiential learning, several Lapham parents approached the PTG with a request to fund a Gardener-in-Residence at Lapham to design and maintain the garden and facilitate teaching opportunities for classrooms at the school.

**2012**

The PTG allocated these funds and contracted with Community GroundWorks, a non-profit in Madison, to hire a Gardener-in-Residence for the 2012 growing season.

Micah Hahn served as Lapham’s Gardener-in-Residence that year.

**2013-2014**

In the spring of 2013, Lapham’s Green Team applied for and was awarded the Whole Kids Foundation School Garden Grant Program which provided $2,000 for the Gardener-in-Residence stipend in 2014.

Also during Spring 2013, Lapham’s Green Team applied for and was awarded the Growing Outdoor Classrooms Program grant through the GROW Coalition. This $8,000 grant provided support and money to expand the existing school garden and transform it into a true outdoor classroom. Planning for this project spanned fall and winter of 2013 and extended into spring 2014.

In the spring of 2014, the Lapham school community expanded the garden by doubling the actual size and adding new features including a fruit tree grove consisting of nine fruit trees; rain barrels and gutters donated by the community and Home Depot and decoratively painted by students; three interactive sound sculptures designed and built by Lapham parent Mark France in the fruit tree grove; four benches and storage boxes built by AERO students; and the installation of a new wheelchair accessible gravel path.

In the spring of 2014, Lapham’s Green Team applied for and was awarded the Art-in-the-Garden Grant funded by Madison Community Foundation and American Girl’s Fun for Children and administered by Community GroundWorks.

Leia Young served as Lapham’s Gardener-in-Residence for those two years.

**2015**

In early winter and spring of 2015, Lapham’s Art in the Garden Team lead a project that engaged every K-2 Lapham student in making a nature-themed clay tile during art class, and installed them during the summer of 2015. The tiles were installed on the side of the shed to serve as a welcoming, educational sign which also enhances garden beautification.
In spring of 2015, AERO high school students built a living stage for Lapham students to use as a performance space for outdoor theater. It’s a great addition for Red Caboose’s after school kids and summer school and summer camp kids.

Jessica Simanek served as Lapham’s Gardener-in-Residence during spring and Erin Moriearty served during fall.

**C. Objectives of Gardener-in-Residence Position**

1) Ensure student access (classes visit garden on regular basis)
2) Garden maintenance planning
3) Financial tracking and communication
4) Volunteer coordination

**Evidence that objectives of the Gardener-in-Residence Position were met:**

**Ensure student access (classes visit garden on regular basis):**

The GJR and Principal communicated effectively throughout the 2015 growing season. An established and simple scheduling method was used for every teacher to sign up for their class to come out to the garden for programming at least three times in the spring and three times in the fall. Teachers signed up faster than ever before, quickly filling the schedule except for the earliest morning timeslot. Communication was essential and successful especially in the case of a make-up garden day, as one day was rained out in the garden in fall.

In fall of 2015, classroom visits were extended to 40 minutes (instead of 30 minutes) to provide a more meaningful, less rushed, garden-based learning experience. The additional 10 minutes during each class period provided the opportunity for deeper student engagement with more time in between transitions. Teachers and volunteers noted the improvement.

The new gravel pathway and the entire expansion of the garden in general proved extremely beneficial for multiple students who use wheelchairs and who have other mobility challenges, greatly aiding in their transportation and ability to participate in outdoor classroom activities.

Additionally, the garden expansion and its new features have benefitted student instruction and engagement greatly. There is plenty of room for groups of students to be easily led throughout the garden and more space to sit comfortably and take advantage of shade. Rain barrels have brought ease of watering garden beds. The living stage surrounded by the stump circle has brought a central point of focus and instruction in the garden. Finally, the sound garden has proven to be an innovative way to engage students, especially students who can be challenging to engage in other ways.

**Garden maintenance planning:**

Much of the garden maintenance is quite established. Between the Adopt-a-Garden program in the summer and routine seasonal activities like wood-chipping with students, there seems to be minimal maintenance concerns.

One problem this fall was the obstruction of the new gravel pathways by drooping sunchoke and cup plants, which was addressed by using twine to tie these plants to the fences to keep them vertical, and chopping some down. While these plants are beautiful, it would be beneficial to thin them out earlier in the season to prevent some of this maintenance.

One last concern is the spread of cup plant, a beautiful prairie plant. Sprouts of this plant have popped up all over the garden and maintenance will be required to remove these sprouts so that their extremely deep root systems do not take over. It is a neat plant to have in the garden, but may require some control.
Financial tracking and communication:
The GIR maintains close communication with Lapham’s Green Team on garden needs and budgeting materials. The garden finances, usage data, and volunteer hours are tracked by the GIR and Community GroundWorks. Many program materials used by the GIR the last growing season came from the Growing Outdoor Classrooms Grant, which was overseen by the Lapham Green Team. The PTG also continuously funds Lapham Community Garden and Outdoor Classroom which has been crucial for its function. Going forward, other sources of funding should be sought out for further development of the garden. See Suggestions & Goals for 2016 for more information.

The GIR and Lapham’s Green Team communicate externally and internally through the following means:

Lapham Garden & Green Team’s Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/Lapham-Garden-Green-Team-517518851624771/?fref=ts

PTG Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/lapham.marquette/

Lapham Green Team’s Garden-Based Learning web page, which is accessible from PTG’s homepage: lapham-marquette-ptg.org

PTG Listserv: http://mail.lapham-marquette-ptg.org/mailman/listinfo/ptg_lapham-marquette-ptg.org

Email List: green_team@lapham-marquette-ptg.org

Volunteer coordination:
Lapham Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden had approximately 152 volunteers this year! Volunteers participated in Lapham’s Green Team, community work days, the Art-in-the-Garden project, weekly classroom visits, and the Adopt-the-Garden summer maintenance program. The GIR is responsible for coordinating the latter two on this list.

The Adopt-the-Garden program ran in the summer months and was completely maintained by volunteers. Stephanie Steigerwaldt led the program and other volunteers signed up for specific weeks in the summer to help maintain the garden. 13 families from the school and the neighborhood chose two hour per week time slots dedicated to garden maintenance. The GIR facilitated communication with volunteers via a summer maintenance task list located inside the garden shed. This program has worked very well for the last two years and will continue in 2016. Please see the section Greater Community Impact for more information about volunteers.

Unexpected outcomes:
Student access and teacher eagerness to get their classes to the garden was greater than expected. Some classes signed up four or five times during a season; the minimum is 3. There were a couple cases of miscommunication when teachers brought their classes out at unexpected times and it was always made to work, because the more the kids are out there, the better!

In addition to teachers using the garden with their classes more than anticipated, Red Caboose, the summer and after school program, used the garden quite often this year. Laurel Leggiere, Red Caboose After-School Program Director explained:

“Over the summer, we had our summer program at Lapham full-time and many kids spent time in the garden from 30 minutes to an hour each day, 5 days a week from June 15-August 15. We collected ripe fruit, vegetables, and herbs to do cooking projects, we explored and built things with objects we found, we used the outdoor theatre space and played on the mulch mound while mulching a couple times. We also used it as a meditative space for kids to calm down in. Our program had about 60 students a day."
During the fall we used the garden space for walks, and to do short plays and circles in the theatre. We also used it as the orientation space for our badger volunteer cohorts. Our program has about 70 students during the school year and many students spent time in the garden from September-October for 15-30 minutes every other day.”

D. Suggestions & Goals for 2016
The objectives for the Gardener-in-Residence position were met in 2015. However, the GIR would not have been able to improve garden programming quality without the help of the Green Team or the PTG’s support.

**GiR’s Suggestions for 2016**

★ It would be beneficial to receive even more communication with teachers. Greater feedback would help to strengthen the program and its impact on students by supporting teachers in meeting curriculum goals. This could be achieved through the development of a better teacher survey system.

★ A professional development event for teachers, facilitated by Community GroundWorks’ Wisconsin School Garden Initiative would also be beneficial to teacher involvement, comfort, and engagement in the garden.

★ Finally, Community GroundWorks’ Troy Kids’ Garden and Goodman Youth Farm are local field trip destinations that would complement Lapham’s students’ garden experience wonderfully. These field trips could be discounted with Lapham’s partnership with Community GroundWorks.

**Lapham Green Team Goals for 2016**
In spring of 2016, the Art in the Garden Team will finish surrounding the Living Stage with the remaining student tiles. The tiles will thank sponsors and community partners including Madison Community Foundation, PTG, Community GroundWorks and Sustain Dane.

Additional goals include identifying more opportunities to teach social/emotional growth; hosting a Master Gardener Work Day; building a loom to weave with natural and human-made materials; building an additional table to be used as a workspace in a shady area of the garden, and building a weather station for students to study and measure different aspects of the weather. AERO students will build the weather tracking station.

On the fundraising side of things, Lapham’s Green Team will pursue innovative fundraising approaches which will possibly include selling “shares” of the GiR program, as well as renting out the space for birthday parties and holding a Summer Soirée open to families and community members. Green Team will also pursue grants again.

And, in June 2016, Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden and GiR program will participate in the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference held here in Madison as a model of innovative garden-based learning!

E. Student & Teacher Quotes

“It’s a free place.”

“I ate a whole tomato and I liked it.”

“I love the plants and flowers and the earth because, well, you can’t live on Mars!”

“There’s a lot of fresh air in the garden.”

“When I am feeling sad I like to go in the garden and find a fairy.”
“I like it when we get to pick and eat stuff.”  “The garden is beautiful! It’s like a jungle!”

“I took care of the garden with my family last summer and it made me feel happy.”

Teacher: “What’s it like to see your ceramic tile on display in the garden?”
1st grade boy: “Before I was sad I couldn’t take my tile home but now it’s in something bigger and it makes me happy to see them all together.”

GIR: This flower is called a nasturtium. You can eat it, but it might be a little spicy.
Student: Nasturtium?! It even has a spicy name! *eats nasturtium*

“We were sitting in the garden and leaves were falling and everyone was so excited. I think each school should have a small garden.”

Student: Can I put a tomato on my tape bracelet?
GIR: You can try. I don’t know how well it will stick.
Student: I’ll make it stick. *smashes tomato on bracelet*

“WHERE’S THE SUGAR PLANT? CAN WE EAT THE SUGAR PLANT?” (Meaning the naturally sweet stevia plant)

Early Childhood Teacher: Their personalities really come out out here.

**F. Summary of Lapham Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden Usage Statistics**

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<tr>
<th>Usage Statistics for 2015</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| # of Classrooms who visited | 22 | 6 Early Childhood/4K  
12 K–2 Grade  
2nd Grade Art Classes |
| Classroom visits | 121 | No summer school at Lapham in 2015  
Red Caboose visited often:  
– Summer Camp: 45 Class visits  
– After School (Fall): 24 Class visits |
| Student visits | 1773 | Does not include informal visits during recess or lunch |
| Pounds of food donated to Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center Food Pantry | 82.43 lbs | Less food was donated this year because of increased participation by Red Caboose (student consumption has a higher priority than community food donation) |
| Volunteers/contributors | 152 | Lapham Green Team: 9 volunteers  
(2) Community Work Days @ 25: 50 volunteers  
Parent classroom visits: 4 volunteers  
Art-in-Garden Volunteers: 39 |
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G. School Community Impact

Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden, which is an official part of Lapham’s School Improvement Plan (SIP), hosted many of Lapham’s most exciting school and PTG-sponsored school events in Spring and Fall of 2015. Just like people gather in the kitchen at a house party, so it is with school gardens because food brings people together in community!

★ Lapham Field Day, Spring 2015
★ Lapham-Marquette PTG Ice Cream Social, Fall 2015
★ Lapham Open House, Fall 2015 (note that bike blender salsa making station was relocated to the carport on Ingersoll because of rain)

Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden is grateful for the tremendous support from Lapham’s Principal, Tammy Thompson Kapp, and from Ms. Beery and Mrs. Belz, Lapham teachers, for participating on Lapham’s Green Team this past year. Big thanks also go out to Brian Counselman, AERO Alternative High School teacher for collaborating on garden-related projects with AERO's high school students.

H. Greater Community Impact

Wil-Mar Neighborhood Community Center Food Pantry Donations
Last summer, Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden donated 82.43lbs. of food, harvested largely by community volunteer Karen Klekamp, to the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Community Center’s food bank. This food has a big impact on our neighbors who struggle with food security, as explained in this thoughtful thank you note from Wil-Mar’s staff: “Thank you for growing delicious, fresh veggies for the Wil-Mar food pantry throughout this summer and fall. Every week your donation made its way to the families and individuals who would otherwise have very limited ability to access fresh produce. For many, they must choose between food and diapers, gas, medicine, or other essentials. You have made this summer and fall brighter and healthier for these folks! As the staff of Wil-Mar, we deeply appreciate the planning, endless weeding and care that went into the Lapham Garden’s harvest!”

Adopt-the-Garden Summer Maintenance Program
Our summer maintenance program offers community members the opportunity to harvest food to take home in exchange for performing basic gardening tasks in Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden. Participants choose a one-week period during the summer months in which they commit to volunteering 2-4 hours of their time watering and weeding Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden. Participants may also help with planting garden beds and harvesting food for the Wil-Mar Community Center. Participants must commit to visiting the garden at least two times during their chosen week and may harvest some food to take home with them each time they volunteer. We also offer a flexible orientation and training session to first-time participants.

A Popular Garden Tour Destination
Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden was a featured destination on three occasions this year! Community GroundWorks brought teachers to the garden to learn about our innovative approach to garden-based learning during their Growing Minds tour and their Youth Intern tour. Sustain Dane also included Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden on their fall bike tour of sustainability destination spots on Madison’s Eastside.

Art-in-the Garden Grant
During Spring 2015, Lapham K-2 students created a nature-based composition on a clay tile using an array of ceramic stamps that they also created during art class. Each grade had a theme: Kinders had roots and seeds; 1st graders had leaves and stems and 2nd graders had fruits and blossoms.
These tiles were then incorporated into a permanent ceramic tile art installation in Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden in the form of a welcome sign. Thank you Lapham Artist-in-Residence, Lynn Lee, for bringing this final stage to fruition! The final ceramic mural around the Living Stage will be completed in Spring 2016. The theme of this project is "It All Begins with a Seed". These designs are intended to welcome people to the garden in a beautiful, informative way, and the Living Stage mural will also recognize our funders and partners: Lapham-Marquette PTG, Madison Community Foundation, Community GroundWorks and Sustain Dane. All in all we had more than 39 wonderful volunteers from throughout the community participate on this project which culminated in a 6-week art installation in the Overture Center during fall 2015.

Special thanks to Marquette parents and owners of Midwest Clay Project, Jennifer Lapham and Paul Sacaridiz, for their leadership on this project, and to Stephanie Steigerwaldt, Lapham parent and Lapham Green Team Lead and Lynn Lee, Lapham parent and Lapham Artist-in-Residence for their leadership on this project.

A great deal of time, energy and expertise went into preparing the tiles for the kids to work with – and for that we thank Paul and Zeke Sacaridiz for making plaster tile molds and UW Ceramics students Dean Leeper, Juliette Walker and Ben Skiba who put their weight behind pressing 250 red clay tiles! Additional thanks to Shandra Bjiyrd, Isaac Scott and Brett Albin who helped prep tile boards and making the tiles.

We are also grateful for the support of the wonderful teachers and staff at Lapham because a project of this scale is impossible without their enthusiasm and support: Kimberly Wilson, Brett Albion, Tammy Thompson Kapp, Cara Walker, Carrie Weinburger, Dave Gill and Brooke Smith.

A project of this scale also requires parent/caregiver volunteers – big thanks to Christine Costanzo, Helen Sarakinos, Kathy Nissley, JoAnn Skloot, Michelle Meyer, Kate Cullen, Susan Lehman, Shawn Brommer, Wendy Cruz, Jackie Suska, Zhang Qiulan, Jon Janaka, Helene Macaulay and Becky Parmentier.

We even had some children volunteers! Thank you Oona Sacaridiz, Isabel Somor and Genevieve Somor!

Zhang Qiulan, Jon Janaka, Helene Macaulay and Becky Parmentier also lent a hand shooting video and taking photos for the exhibition of our project.

Red Caboose After School staff, particularly Shannon and Laurel, were more than gracious about us overlapping in the space for a few of those days.

And last but not least, we were touched deeply by all the Midwest Clay Project volunteers: Jennifer Lapham, Paul Sacaridiz, Vicky Talbert, Juliette Walker, Bud Skupniewitz, Mary Pulliam, Sally Behr, and Isacc and Brian.

Art in the Garden Exhibition at The Overture Center for the Arts, September-October 2015

Lapham's Art in the Garden ceramic tiles, stamps and photos were on display in the Overture Center for the Arts Playhouse Gallery during September and October 2015 – enjoy these photos from this special event.

Lapham Green Team

Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden receives critical support from community members mostly through participation in Lapham’s Green Team. In particular we thank the following community members for their outstanding continued support and active participation: Ken Swift, Jim Hansen, Karen Klekamp and Brad Vowels.

Big thanks to Lapham and Marquette parents for their continued support, particularly Christine Costanze, Emily Sonnemann, Pat Smith and Stephanie Steigerwaldt.

And big thanks also to AERO and Lapham Teachers Brian Counselman, Margee Beery and Terri Belz, as well as Principal Tammy Thompson Kapp for their enthusiastic support and continuing participation.
I. Thank You Lapham-Marquette Parent Teacher Group!
Thank you for understanding how important experiential, outdoor learning opportunities are for our students and recognizing how Lapham's Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden uniquely supports PTG's core values and goals, as well as enriches and serves our greater community. While we continue to explore outside funding, your funding and support are essential to our continued success!

J. Photos from Classroom Visits and School & Community Events

Gardener-in-Residence, Erin Moriearty, offering second graders a taste of fresh veggies during their classroom visit

Collaborating to make fairy houses and fortresses out of plant parts is a favorite annual activity, and a great way to learn first hand about plant parts – roots, stems, leaves, seeds and flowers!
Students work together to fill their buckets with woodchips to mulch the garden pathways, learning the value of land stewardship, cooperation and collaboration, and having fun while getting some exercise!

350+ Lapham-Marquette students and family members gathered in Lapham’s Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden for the PTG’s annual Ice Cream Social
The Gardener-in-Residence lead a salsa-making activity using a bike blender during Lapham’s fall Open House.

A family in the Adopt-the-Garden program helps plant and care for the garden during summertime.
A close-up look at the ceramic tile art installation made by Lapham K-2 students and supported by 39 community volunteers! Special thanks to Madison Community Foundation and American Girl’s Fun for Children for funding this wonderful grant and to Community GroundWorks, Midwest Clay Project and Lynn Lee, Lapham Artist-in-Residence, for their support with implementation.

Lapham Outdoor Classroom & Community Garden’s educational welcome sign! The remaining tiles will be worked into a ceramic mural around the Living Stage in Spring 2016 and will recognize our funders and partners: Lapham-Marquette PTG, Madison Community Foundation, Community GroundWorks and Sustain Dane.