

LINDBERGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Madison, Wisconsin

Draft

TO: Dan Nerad, Superintendent; Daniel Mallin, General Legal Counsel
FROM: Mary Hyde, Principal; Rebecca Kemble, Co-President PTA
DATE: February 19, 2010
SUBJECT: Lindbergh School Community Garden

Lindbergh School is proposing the expansion of the current school garden plot to include Community Garden plots on its campus, and requests approval since there is currently no Board policy addressing this type of community use of school grounds. Lindbergh currently has an active school garden on the southern end of the playing fields that measures 40' x 80'. This proposal would roughly double the area of this plot and extend the total dimensions to 60' x 120'.

Creating community gardening plots around the existing school garden will vastly increase the organizational, time, labor and material resources available to teachers for structuring learning opportunities for their students. It will also ensure long-term sustainability and a stable management structure for the garden itself. In a time of diminishing financial resources for our school, this proposal will draw on the neighboring community to provide support for Lindbergh that may well go beyond gardening activities.

Goal

To create a Community Garden at Lindbergh School that will engage families and neighbors of Lindbergh students, and that will enhance and sustain the ongoing curricular activities at the existing school garden.

Objectives

- 1) Enhanced student learning.
 - a. Direct connections to K-5 science standards and topics of study.
 - b. Service learning opportunities through student participation in service activities of the Community Garden such as growing food for the Kennedy Heights Food Pantry garden plot.
 - c. Increased hands-on opportunities for students to appreciate direct connections with food sources.
- 2) Building and strengthening relationships between Lindbergh and students' families and neighbors.
 - a. Community gardeners maintain the garden, ensuring its sustainability.
 - b. Families who have found it difficult to participate in the life of their children's school due to cultural, language or economic barriers are specifically recruited as gardeners.

- c. Gardeners support the school by volunteering with outdoor classroom activities.
 - d. Management and governance of garden is shared between School and Community.
- 3) Improved children's health in line with MMSD Wellness Policy which states, "Children and adolescents need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive."
- a. Increased physical activity and exercise through gardening activities.
 - b. Growing, harvesting and eating healthy organic food.
- 4) Help green and beautify the school.
- a. Develop lunchroom composting program with garden volunteers
 - b. Harvest rain water for the garden
 - c. Plant native perennials

Financial Impact

The Community Garden will be fully self-supporting through plot fees, grants, participation in the Dane County TimeBank, and donations from local businesses. The Lindbergh PTA has been the fiscal agent for the current school garden and will continue to collaborate with the Community Garden in this capacity.

Community Support

In addition to the support from Lindbergh PTA, Community Groundworks at Troy Gardens, Community Action Coalition, Kennedy Heights Neighborhood Association, Northside Farmers' Market and local Alderperson Michael Schumacher, a group of Lindbergh students and their teachers canvassed the neighborhood speaking with homeowners of properties adjacent to the school grounds. All of the feedback has been positive, and some of the neighbors have already volunteered to participate in the garden, should this proposal be approved.

MMSD Resources

We are requesting two resources from the District: land for the garden plots and the use of water from the building. Until such time as we are able to harvest enough rainwater to support gardening activities, we would like permission to use water from the building.

Welcome to Community Gardening

Adapted from *Growing a Stronger Community with Community Gardens: An Action Plan for Madison (1999)*
www.wisc.edu/urpl/mfsp/pubs/tskfrpt.htm

You've probably heard the term *community gardening*, but what exactly is it? Many people come into community gardening thinking that it's simply a way to grow food... the same as back yard gardening, only not in their back yard. It's actually a whole lot more; there are more responsibilities, but there are also more benefits and rewards.

Responsibilities

A community garden takes a lot of work to run well, and everyone is expected to participate (many hands make light work). Some examples of group responsibilities are maintaining paths, fixing hoses, handling registration, managing the budget, organizing educational workshops, enforcing garden rules, communicating to all gardeners, and organizing social events. Gardens are run by committees of gardeners, and most gardens have at least six committees. From the work of many volunteers, each according to their ability, Madison's community gardens survive and thrive.

Other responsibilities are related to your plot, for example, most community gardens require that you keep your plot fairly well weeded.

Despite these extra responsibilities, community gardening is immensely popular in Madison! The demand for plots generally exceeds the supply, and every time a new garden is started somewhere, it fills quickly.

Benefits and rewards

If you've never gardened in a community garden before, you can look forward to more than fresh fruits and veggies. Cultural exchanges sprout and new friendships grow among diverse groups of people.

Community gardens are common ground for growing plants that feed, heal and give aesthetic pleasure. They are civic spaces where people work and recreate to nourish themselves, their families and friends; the gardeners' shared labor also builds a stronger sense of belonging to their physical environment and connection to other gardeners. Community gardens are the collective effort of people with the patience and determination to make things grow.

The gardeners in Madison are a remarkable mix of people from many backgrounds, so the gardens function as some of the most multicultural places in the city. Community gardens not only nurture green spaces but foster the development of a community identity and spirit. Community gardens often set aside space for community get-togethers, serving as the modern-day equivalent of the ancient plazas in urban areas where people would gather to meet and spend time together. Community garden spaces also allow for interaction with nature and the productive use of land. Because community gardens are beautiful and visually unique in an urban setting, they function as traffic calming devices.

Community gardening brings together people and encourages interaction. Interest in urban gardening has often led to community-based efforts to deal with other social concerns. Many people have developed leadership skills as a result of being involved with their community garden.

Community gardens should be inclusive and welcoming to all people. Regardless of age, education, language barrier, or disability, all gardeners should participate both in the upkeep of the garden -- with tasks like caring for the water system and common areas -- and in garden decision-making including setting policies and choosing leaders. CAC Community Gardens provides translation so that all can share the work.

By choosing to be in a community garden, you'll be gardening in close proximity to others. You can learn from these folks either actively (by asking questions) or passively (by observation). People of different cultural backgrounds garden differently; if your community garden is culturally diverse, you may be surprised at what you'll learn even if you've been gardening many years.

Welcome to your community garden; we hope you enjoy this new way of gardening! Please call your garden's leaders or CAC Community Gardens if you have questions or suggestions.

Lindbergh School Community Garden Rules

Below are some of the rules created for Lindbergh School Community Garden, which should be fine-tuned to suit your garden. Clear rules help because it is better to have people mad at the rules than mad at the coordinators!

- The garden should be a safe place for the community, children, and other gardeners. Do not bring anything that will compromise the safety of the garden.
- Ensuring enjoyable gardening experience for all of the garden community is the primary goal of these rules and responsibilities. For this reason, observe the rules of the garden, and be a good neighbor.
- The garden's steering committee has the duty of enforcing rules and making decisions for the garden between annual meetings of all gardeners. They have authority to resolve conflicts, including refusing a plot to a gardener or dismissing a current gardener.
- Please check the bulletin board for a map showing where your plot is, as well as information concerning the garden - problems, classes, information, notices. Feel free to post information you have and leave messages for other gardeners there.
- Teach your children to respect others' plots and not to waste water.
- Unresolved issues or disputes between gardeners will be referred to the coordinators.
- Each person must apply each year for a plot but returning gardeners will be given first preference and permitted to keep the same plot if they wish. The number of plots per gardener may be limited according to demand.
- You are responsible for your own plot and 4 hours of volunteer work (contributing to the upkeep of the whole garden.)
- If you are unable to care for your plot for a time because of illness or vacation, ask a fellow gardener or the coordinator for help with weeding and harvesting.
- Generally visit your plot at least once each week.
- If you decide not to use your plot, please contact the registrar so it may be reassigned to someone on the waiting list. If there is no evidence of activity at your plot by June 1st, it will be reassigned. There are no refunds on plot fees paid.
- If your plot is overgrown with weeds, you will receive a warning. After one week of no action, your plot may be mowed and reassigned.
- Biodegradable mulch such as compost, leaves, straw, and hay are encouraged. Carpet mulch is not allowed. Remove any non organic mulch by closing day. No wood chips as mulch. They do not biodegrade quickly. Black plastic is allowed, but must be removed at the end of the season.
- Please do not plant mint, catnip, Jerusalem artichokes, comfrey or raspberries.
- Keep tall plants such as corn or sunflowers at the center of your plot so they do not shade your neighbors, plants.
- Keep vines and visitors out of neighboring plots.

- If you have a surplus of vegetables or fruits, please harvest and leave them in the bin for the Kennedy Heights food pantry.
- Do not pick from your neighbor's garden even if you think they have neglected their plot.
- The garden is not available for commercial use; don't sell your produce.
- Keep plot boundaries weeded and trash-free. If you are on a pathway, you are responsible to care for 1/2 of the pathway between you and your neighbor. Keep plot edges and fencing free of weeds that will go to seed. Don't put rocks and sticks in paths. Take them to the rock-and-stick area.
- Compost made from leaves should be available at your garden. You can also go and pick up the same excellent compost, free in small quantities and \$10 for a pickup truck load. Get all the details on the Dane County compost hotline at 267-1502. Weeds and diseased plants should be put in plant refuse piles – not on the compost pile.
- If you use the garden's tools, please return them to the storage area when done.
- Plant refuse piles are set up for weeds and diseased plants. Please use these designated areas. No trash in the piles, please. Please do not add kitchen scraps to the plant refuse piles because they are likely to draw animals.
- Pack your trash back home to dispose of properly.
- Stakes that mark your plot's corners and have your plot number and name must be left in place all season.
- Never use any herbicides (weedkillers) or pesticides since they are prohibited on school grounds. Keep pest-control products and containers away from children. Dane County Extension at 224-3700 can give safe organic pest-control advice.
- No pets in the garden.
- Do not drive into the garden area.

Lindbergh School Community Garden

Service Opportunities

Gardens run smoothly because of the work of many people, coordinated by several key volunteers who each have a small but important role to play in organizing efforts. Listed below, please find service positions that may be available at Lindbergh School Community Garden. If you are interested in one or more of these positions, please let us know by contacting Rebecca Kemble rebecca_kemble@unioncab.com or by phone at 347-8097.

Registrar

The registrar assigns plots, holds the waiting list for people who want a plot, and organizes spring registration.

Monitor

The monitor is responsible for ensuring that all garden plots are being used and maintained as per the garden rules.

Coordinator

The coordinator gathers the gardeners together for events, Work Days and meetings, encouraging all to share in the work and decision-making of the garden.

Communications Coordinator

The communications coordinator makes sure that gardeners are in touch through meetings, phone calls, main and email, and arranges the services of interpreters when needed.

Translator

Translators interpret during events and act as liaisons throughout the gardening season. They also assist with translating signs and communications.

Outreach

The outreach person makes sure that people in the neighborhood and school know about the garden and feel welcome to participate and spend time there.

Treasurer

The treasurer collects garden fees and deposits them in the garden bank account, pays bills, authorizes spending in consultation with other gardeners, and manages grants that the garden receives. They collaborate with the TimeBank Coordinator to account for garden fees paid in time dollars.

TimeBank Coordinator

The TimeBank coordinator records all Dane County TimeBank exchanges made between individuals and Lindbergh School Community Garden. They update and maintain offers and respond to all requests. They collaborate with the treasurer to account for garden fees paid in time dollars.

Grounds Leader

The grounds leader organizes Work Days to make sure that paths, common areas, hoses, fences, compost, etc. are in order.

Security

The security leader works on strategies to prevent theft and vandalism.

Social/Education Leader

The social/education leader organizes and publicizes potlucks and other social events at the Garden. They also set up educational workshops and connect new and experienced gardeners through a buddy program.

Lindbergh School Liaison

The school liaison works with the School Garden Committee to facilitate collaboration between school gardening and community gardening activities.

In addition to leadership opportunities with the Lindbergh School Community Garden, you can be involved in other ways, including:

- Attending Garden Committee meetings and making sure neighbors feel welcome at the Garden and understand how it works. This is a chance to explain that individuals care for plots and then harvest the produce they grow, since some people assume that a community garden is a free resource for anyone to harvest from.
- Help organize a social or educational event for the Garden.
- Make durable signs to place around the Garden. Consider using easy-to-understand pictures or images to communicate. If possible, put words into English, Hmong and Spanish.
- Put out free bins near the entrance to the Garden in the shade so that when gardeners have too much produce they can put it there for fellow gardeners or people in the community to use.

Lindbergh School Community Garden Contact List

At Lindbergh School Community Garden in 2010, these people are volunteers leading the garden. Please contact them with ideas or to get involved.

Registrar

Chad Gendreau 230-6159 chadnliz@gmail.com

Monitor

Adam Chern 347-2326 adam@accipiterproperties.com

Coordinator

Rebecca Kemble 347-8097 rebecca_kemble@unioncab.com

Communications Leader

Elizabeth Mehlberg 204-6523 emehlberg@madison.k12.wi.us

Translators

Kelly Wright 204-6519 kawright@madison.k12.wi.us

Outreach

Clare Norelle 249-2858 clarenorelle@mac.com

Treasurer

Chad Gendreau 230-6159 chadnliz@gmail.com

TimeBank Coordinator

Rebecca Kemble 347-8097 rebecca_kemble@unioncab.com

Grounds Leader

Clare Norelle 249-2858 clarenorelle@mac.com

Security

Adam Chern 347-2326 adam@accipiterproperties.com

Social / Education Leader

Amy Edge 204-6527 aedge@madison.k12.wi.us

Lindbergh School Liaison

Chris Nadjowski 577-5281 chrisn5@charter.net

Lindbergh School Community Garden Calendar 2010

Applications Available: March 15

Registration and Opening Day: Sunday, April 25

Location: Lindbergh School Community Garden

Time: 10 am to 2 pm

Events:

- Pick up information and application
- Complete application
- Sign up for your plot
- Sign up for your Volunteer Team
- Pay plot fees and deposit
- Pick out free seed packets

Plots will be ready for planting.

Last day to till plot: June 1

If your plot is not tilled by this date, it will be reassigned and your plot fee will not be refunded to you.

Garden Workdays: Second Sunday of each month: May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12.

This is your chance to fulfill some of your volunteer hours commitment. A coordinator will be on-site from 4pm – 8pm to direct volunteer activities.

Community Garden Meetings (open to all gardeners): Third Monday of each month: May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20

Location: Lindbergh School Gym

Time: 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Closing Day: Sunday, October 24

Plots to be tilled should be cleaned off by this date.

Workshops: TBA

Social Events: TBA

Bike Tour of Gardens: TBA