



Schoolyard Greening

Brent Elementary School

Washington DC

Goals: The Schoolyard Greening Project at Brent Elementary has four main goals:

1. Safety - improve the safety of the schoolyard while still allowing areas for students to expand their physical potential.
2. Learning opportunities – provide an environment conducive to meeting curriculum standards through out-of-classroom experiences to address the different learning styles of students
3. Student health – encourage physical fitness to address the growing obesity epidemic, provide shade from sun exposure
4. Environmental performance – stormwater management, improve green cover, habitat for insects and birds

Who's Involved:

- 250 students ranging from 3 to 12 years old at Brent Elementary School, a public school in Southeast Washington DC, and their parents
- community members
- teachers and staff at the school



How the Project Works:

The Schoolyard Greening Project is an effort by a group of parents, teachers, neighbors, and community members from far and wide who support schoolyard improvement projects. The project seek to take make the most of the very limited space available to students at an urban school. Past schoolyard projects since 2004 include:

- building butterfly, vegetable and flower gardens
- planting bulbs and shade trees
- installing bike racks
- painting graphics, maps and games on the asphalt
- adding related books and curriculum materials for teachers and students to the library

Our current projects include constructing an outdoor classroom in an unused corner of the front lawn and raising funds to bring our schoolyard greening efforts to the asphalt and chain link playground where the students spend the majority of their time outdoors.

Results



Before: grass over old construction fill



During: Garden workday volunteers dig up fill and sod for a butterfly garden



After: Butterfly and vegetable garden and main entrance flower bed one year later



Our challenge: The majority of our efforts aren't accessible to students...they're confined to the asphalt playground behind the chain link fence unless a teacher specifically escorts them to the rest of the schoolyard.