

The Courtyard Project Lake Oswego Junior High School Greenspaces Environmental Educational Project Final Report, July 1997

1. Summary of activities for project

The Courtyard project began a year ago spring, 1996, following conversations with the Parent Club, school principal and a number of students. LOJHS had a very large grassy courtyard that was unusable most of the year and students wondered if there wasn't something we all could do to make it "their" usable space. After several lengthy conversations and brainstorming sessions, the Courtyard Project idea was born. Following is the sequence of events leading up to June 1997 and the conclusion of the first three phases of the project.

Phase 1:

- 7th grade science students and their teacher, Ms. Ebert, observed the space, measured the space, designed learning environments for the space and submitted completed scale drawings to an architectural firm for review

- The firm reviewed the plans, looked at grading issues, and selected parts of numerous plans that seemed workable, and taken together, made a user friendly space

- A parent club representative began searching for funding sources
- Several "master gardeners" (who were also 7th grade moms) took the students ideas and designed a courtyard plan that included the following sections:

- native plant space with a pond
- a grassy class or group seating space
- trees to shade the classrooms
- a brick courtyard with benches
- wildflower and butterfly garden areas
- sculpture area
- literary area

- One mom researched native plants
- Fund raising plans were laid out and grants were written
- A student group along with another parent put together and circulated information about the courtyard and fund raising efforts. They worked with the local newspaper and the district's newsletters for publicity purposes.

- Brick sales and an annual perennial plant sale were initiated.
- Grants were secured and Phased Courtyard Plans went into effect

Phase 2:

- A school-business partnership was established with Northwest Landscape,

Inc. and planning meetings between the school principal, parent club, science teacher and students with NLI began in earnest

- Professional structural work was established, segments outlined and a construction plan was designed so that the heavy equipment could lay the groundwork before volunteer work parties got involved

- Time lines were established, donations were secured, and grant meetings were attended

- Students planned, communicated and participated in a January 1997 Ground Breaking Ceremony (invitation attached)

- In March, rains finally stopped and the heavy construction phase began:

 - sod removed,

 - boulders, rock and dirt hauled in,

 - irrigation trenches dug and pipe laid

 - electrical work was done, a separate electrical circuit box was attached

 - to the outside wall, wires were pulled from the building to the irrigation system and the pond pump for later connection

Phase 3:

- Following the heavy equipment work, six weekends of student/parent/staff work parties began. During May and June, the pond was outlined and hand dug, nineteen trees and numerous bushes were planted, various native ground cover was planted, ferns were rescued from Springbrook park and transplanted. Bark dust was moved and spread, the berms were planted and seeded for grass. The work on the pond was extensive and continues today. EARly on, groups of students helped move a 650 pound liner, then by wheelbarrow they moved and laid a dump truck load of river rocks around the pond, positioned the pump, and, helped adjust the water system.

- Meanwhile, in mid May, the second annual perennial plant sale was underway, and bricks continued to be sold.

- Science students volunteered to hand or hose water all the plants and trees to keep them alive.

 - In June, the sprinkler system was activated

 - More pond work continued, repositioning rocks and the hose to create a gentler stream

 - The eighth grade class presented the school with a gift of \$ to purchase 3 large boulders inscribed with "The Courtyard Project- from the 8th grade class of 1997"

 - Most recently, a 6 foot fence was installed to protect the natural area. This was a donation from the city of Lake Oswego

 - In early July, volunteers assembled to spread the bark dust

 - Pond plants were purchased and installed

Phase 1-3 Summary:

Our project grew before our eyes. From initial brainstorming to measuring the useable land to actually digging the pond and spreading the bark, over time we came to realize how massive an undertaking this was. The amount of volunteer labor and matching donations has been tremendous. Our business partnership has been a

lifesaver. The camaraderie that came of this work together for students and teachers has been so meaningful! Students see this as *their* courtyard, *their* contribution to our school for their littler brothers and sisters. **Such pride!** While it will take another year of diligent watering, weeding and supervision for the plants to take root and mature, so many birds and a newt are already calling this home. We learned patience, we were supported by our grant contributors and encouraged every step of the way by others who had been here before with vast projects. Bringing ideas to life and having legitimate ways to connect early adolescents and the adults in their worlds has made a tremendous impression on all involved.

2. Evaluation comments: refine and refocus

It was amazing to our students who came up with the idea for a courtyard in the winter of their seventh grade year to see it took us adults an entire year to get it all put together to do a ground breaking. They were dismayed that another two months went by before actual work on courtyard construction took place. The time between inception and Phase III completion has been two years. The courtyard project has been well worth the wait, but that is one piece of advice I'd have passed along, that the time lag can be lengthy and groups should use that time to lay out their communications plans, their work schedules, etc. Rainy weather had a great impact on our proceeding as first planned.

Another necessity we realized as we moved into the project is the value on one on site coordinator, who knew the big picture and could interface with the various "working" groups, teachers and students, the construction company, the haulers, the pond suppliers and experts, the parents with their various committees. One person has to add as the designated head.

The final piece of advice I would strongly urge is to have one person, one with accounting experience, act as fiscal agent. Keeping track of volunteer hours, the various donations and groups working towards this project, tracking receipts, completing the various required paperwork takes someone who is detailed and has accounting experience.

Ongoing refinements, maintenance and finally student use of our environmental study area will continue into Phase 4 of our project. We came to realize how ambitious we were originally and that we needed to consider the long term support from both the student/teacher point of view but also from the parent reference.

Having one parent from the parent club continue with this as a major responsibility, along with one science teacher, has been established. Continued funding and educational focus is the theme on the next phase.

Our school-business partners have been diligent in helping us, lending expertise, moral support and money. Without those connections, we would have had a half done job. Continually communicating with them has been crucial. We need to meet again to decide how much follow up responsibilities they will carry and how we can tie the project together for their satisfaction, too. A slide show and brochures have been gathered for them.

3. Photo documentation

Included with this report are slides detailing the space before the project began, the ground breaking ceremony, early sod and trench/irrigation work and our work groups digging, planting and constructing the pond.

4. Restoration/enhancement photos

See the documentation above.

5. Maintenance and follow up activities for The Courtyard Project

A copy of our original Courtyard Timeline is attached. Ongoing work this summer includes volunteers giving service by weeding, watering and spreading the barkdust. Moving in more rocks and slabs around the pond liner and planting the water plants is currently under way. The parent club has agreed to fund the courtyard each year with a % of all funds raised to go into that budget line item for maintaining the space and to add or replace plants. The science teachers and others on staff will divide up activities throughout the year as curriculum is developed to support study of the area. The sprinkler system is set to water the plants and has been activated. Two staff have been trained to run this watering system. Finally, a most import follow up project will be to seek additional funds to release or pay teachers to develop a curriculum of study that aligns the new state science standards and our own district's integrated science curricula in grades 7 and 8 so that our native pond area is included in each course of study each year.

6. Brochure

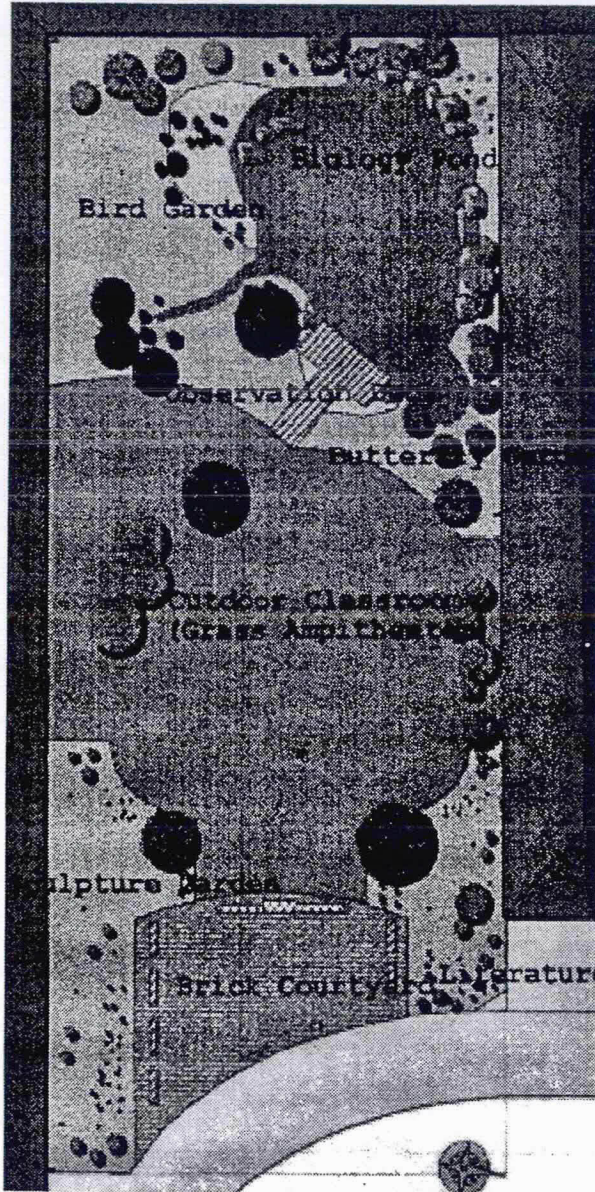
Ashley Edwards, an eighth grade student, designed the attached Courtyard Project brochure as her final project for her Publications Class spring term. She gathered information from various sources, took the pictures and used a Macintosh computer, a digital snap camera along with an H-P scanner to put this together. The ESD graciously ran 150 copies of this brochure for us. Many of these copies have been distributed to our business partner, the pond supply store, our school board and central office administrators and parents involved through the parent club. We are very proud of Ashley's work!

Courtyard Timelines

- Phase I: Background work: raise money, design the space, write grants, meet federal, state and local environmental and educational guidelines
- Phase II: Professional structural work done with hired experts:
Winter '97 grade ground, deliver and move gravel, dig irrigation ditch and bring in fill dirt, use backhoes to move dirt
begin plumbing and electrical work for pond pump
- Phase III: Parent/Student Volunteers form work groups to do:
After school or weekend work:
Spring '97 Amend soil
Help finish building the pond
Plant plants
Plant trees
Weed a nursery in return for native plant donations
Put in drip irrigation
Form pathways
- Phase IV: Teacher, parents, students, classes and clubs take on areas to design and build:
Spring, Summer & Fall '97 Butterfly garden/Bird area
Sculpture area
Brick "Courtyard"/bench area around flag pole
Mark areas with educational placards
Maintain newly planted area
- Phase V: Use the growing courtyard area for classes, scientific study, research, gardening and informal, leisure time!!

Project Objectives

- To involve the community in the excellence of our schools.
- To create a natural learning environment which adds value to the education of the students.
- To enhance the appearance of the school giving the students a sense of pride and ownership.



It has been a great year. The courtyard is scheduled to be finished by the end of June. However, the bricks and the growth of all of the plants will be enjoyed by all for years to come

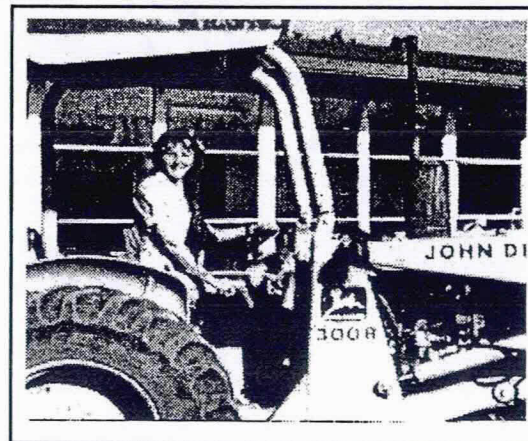
Thanks to everyone who participated in our new courtyard. Everyone worked hard, and the courtyard is looking great. Thanks especially to Kris White, Carolyn Mays, Mr. Ebert and firm, and a big thanks to Mrs. Metcalf and Mrs. Rodway.

LO friends, we appreciate your financial help, and we will always be grateful.

Ms. Burgess, thank you for helping out with everything as well.

We couldn't have done it without all of you.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!



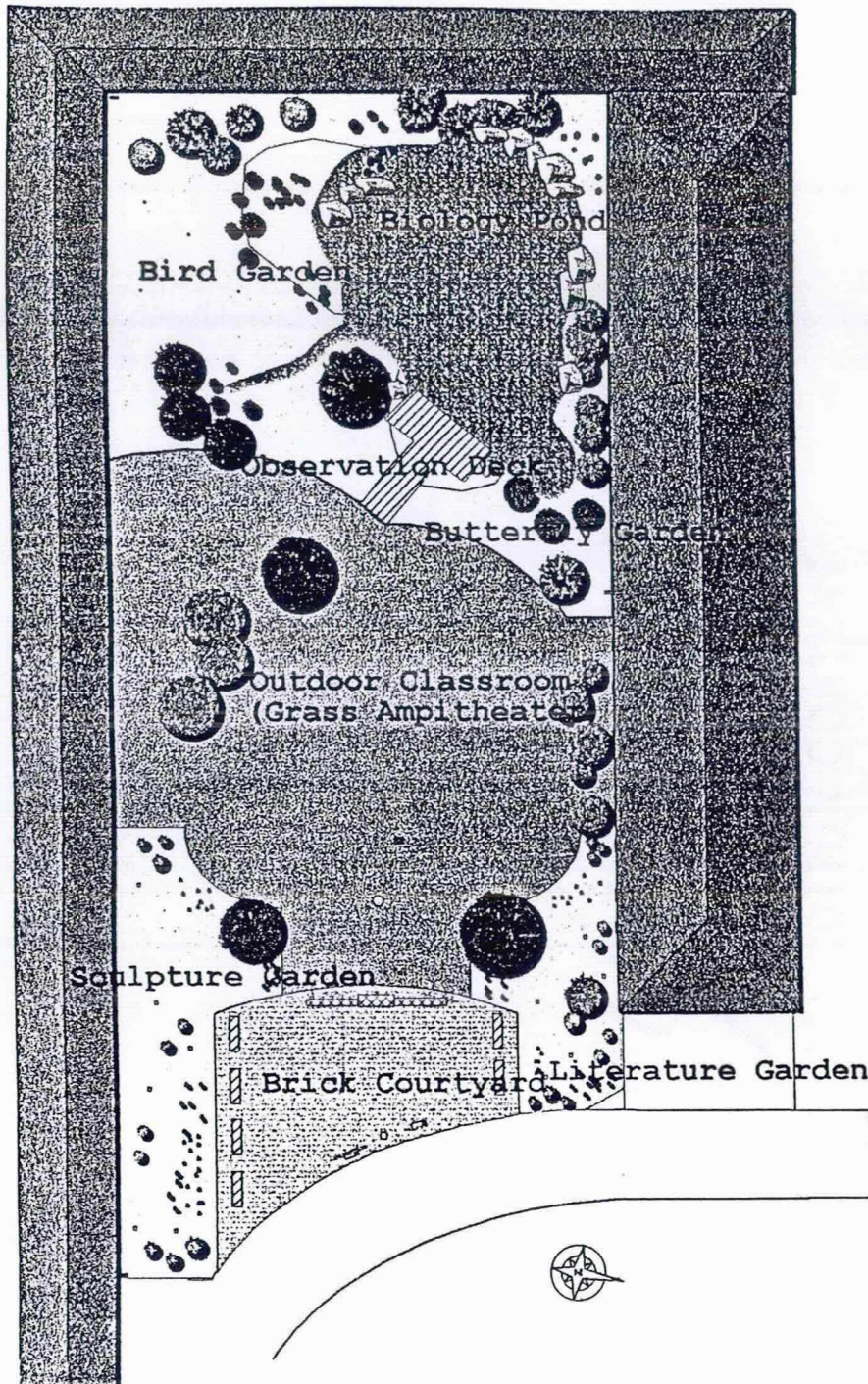
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LOJHS

Ashley Edwards
June 1997



THE COURTYARD PROJECT

AT
LAKE OSWEGO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL



Project Description -

Our goal is to design and build a courtyard at Lake Oswego Junior High School that becomes an integral part of a student's daily activities. The following areas will be developed in phases as funds become available:

- ◆ Building a small natural pond which would be used to develop an understanding and sensitivity towards ecosystems by the science classes.
- ◆ Building wildlife gardens designed to attract birds, butterflies, and bats, in part using student-cultivated native vegetation.
- ◆ Using evergreen trees to protect overheated class rooms from direct sun.
- ◆ Creating a sculpture garden to display student's art work on an annual basis.
- ◆ Designing a grass amphitheater for use as an outdoor classroom.
- ◆ Members of the community may support The Courtyard Project by purchasing an inscribed brick to be permanently placed in the courtyard. This area will result in a more sociable place for students to wait for the bus.
- ◆ Constructing a literature garden with students' writing and poetry on display.

Project Objectives -

- ◆ To involve the community in the excellence of our schools.
- ◆ To create a natural learning environment which adds value to the education of our children.
- ◆ To enhance the appearance of the school giving the students a sense of pride and ownership.

Donation Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Pledge: sample only

Needed: Building Materials, Heavy Equipment, Brick Purchases, Labor, Landscape Architect, Cash Donations. Questions? Call Holly Rodway 699-966

The Captain's Log

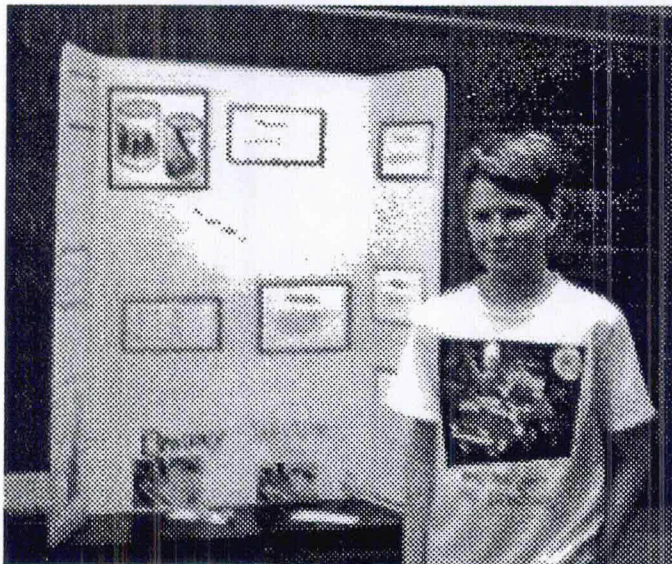
Lake Oswego Junior High School

Lake Oswego, Oregon

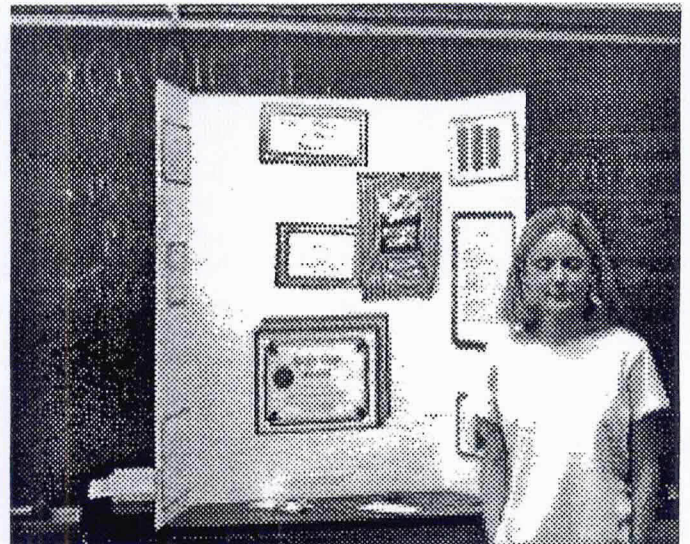
Science Fair Projects Make LOJHS Proud

By Adam Freed

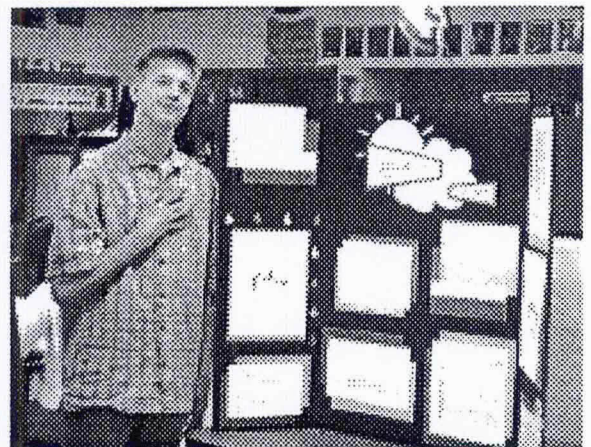
After weeks of tiring work, the students of LOJHS show off their studies on massive poster boards. These studies not only helped solve the mysteries of science, but made the learning of science fun.



Joe Kappler stands tall in front of his science masterpiece.



Somebody forgot to tell Kate Dobie not to blink as she stands proud next to her project.



John Pearson knows that he has a top-quality project.