

May 6, 1998

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To: Ms. Lynn Wilson, Grants Coordinator  
From: Carole Connell, School Volunteer  
Re: **Ainsworth Elementary School Greenspace Project Summary**

The mission of the Ainsworth Elementary School Greenspace Project is to restore the school's only greenspace to its natural state and create an outdoor classroom for students, teachers and area residents. It is a collaborative project headed by parent volunteers and teachers with private and public funding support from Willamette Industries, PGE, Fred Meyer and Metro. In addition to restoring the site, the overall aim is to improve and facilitate links between hands-on elementary school learning and regular class curricula by having access to an outdoor classroom environment. The site based environmental classroom will provide for the scientific study of watersheds, habitats, and life cycles of native flora and fauna. The newly constructed amphitheater is designed to provide a space where a teacher can bring the whole class outdoors and conduct activities such as observation, classification, experimentation, communication, measuring, predicting, interpreting and defining studies of water, earth, weather, seeds, insects, animals, life cycles, changes and interrelationships. For the first time in the school's long history, teachers on this fully-paved campus have an on-site natural environment to study the elements of an urban ecosystem.

The scope of the Metro grant includes the purchase of 532 plants and hundreds of seeds to form the core of dominant native species on the site. Funds will be used to outline the planting areas prior to planting and to prepare instructional materials for classroom use, giving teachers site specific plant characteristics and maintenance provisions.

To date, many elements of the project are underway. On April 18 over 900 hundred plants were planted by students of all ages, teachers, and parent volunteers in accordance with donated blueprint designs from the Seven Dees Nursery and the Berry Botanical Garden. Volunteers are scheduled for regular watering of the plants through mid-October. David Brady, a kindergarten teacher, is working on a greenspace plant guidebook, and science curricula is being written. Nature drawing is occurring in the art class, and plant labeling is a classroom science project. There is on-going planting of rescued and donated plants, as well as removal of ivy, holly and laurel. For instance, over 60 plants from a Willamette Industries forest property have been rescued and planted by Ainsworth students. The local Brownie Troop planted 20 plants. The Ainsworth after-school care students will be involved in greenspace maintenance. Project Green Thumb and Parr Lumber are planning for the construction of four propagation beds. Seven Dees Nursery is donating plans for proper care of the meadow area. The Friends of Portland Gardens and the Berry Botanical Gardens are continually involved as volunteer advisors. There is a Naturescaping Workshop planned at school on May 17. The Ainsworth Greenspace Project is off to a fantastic start!