

Celebrons l'Esprit des Prairies / Cultivating Prairie Spirit



Ecole Viscount Alexander School Grounds Transformation Project

**The Ecole Viscount Alexander School Ground Transformation Committee
Inviting our Students and our Community
Outdoors**

The idea of an outdoor classroom is hardly a new one. With books like *The Last Child in the Woods* and *Asphalt to Ecosystems* it is clear that there is an ever increasing desire, in our technological era, to get back to nature, to get active and to get outdoors.

Our committee at present is a group of enthusiastic staff and parents who are listening to what our kids want and dreaming even larger for our community. Prairie grasses, colourful landscaping, seating areas and a fitness circuit of hills, logs, rocks and tires. There is plenty of room on our school grounds for all this while still maintaining a full sized soccer/football/rugby or ultimate field to support organized sports.

Shade has been another element that was highlighted in our surveys and our planned Willow Island and The Orchard are will provide just that.

We have gathered ideas from people who move through this space, and designed an outdoor space that works for our kids and our community.

East Ft Garry is a beautiful neighbourhood and we want to keep our kids outdoors and enjoying it.

Thank you for your help and support with this project
The EVA School Grounds Transformation Committee
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Mandate of the EVA SGTC

The Ecole Viscount Alexander School Grounds Transformation Committee (EVA SGTC) will lead the transformation of the Ecole Viscount Alexander school grounds.

Vision of the EVA SGTC

We aim to improve the recreational education and residential experience for the EVA student body and local community stakeholders by creating a multi-use green space, which promotes activity, wellness, education and provides community-wide access to a high quality and safe outdoor activity area

EVA SGTC PROGRESS REPORT

❖ February 2011

- Soon to be Co-Chair Signy Kuch is approached by the chair of the EVA PAC to look into the transformation of our school grounds.
- The resources of a future Viscount parent (Janice Lukes) are used to gain information of what a project like this would take

❖ April 2011

- EVA SCTC becomes an official sub-committee of the ACSL
- Our initial fundraiser dedicated to this project nets \$3000.

❖ May 2011

- Initial meeting with Wendy Simonson (PTSD landscape architect and Evergreen consultant). Brainstorming sessions begin

❖ June 2011

- EVA SGTC executive is selected. Signy Kuch & Carol Steel as Co-chairs, Sharon Simon as secretary, Chris Lepa as treasurer. 6 other parents and 3 staff round out the committee.
- More resources are gathered and a game plan is developed

❖ September 2011

- Carol, Signy, Sharon & Dan visit 10 school grounds in Winnipeg taking pictures and discussing use of space and choice of elements
- Carol produces a PowerPoint presentation for the committee and the students.
- EVA SGTC bank account is set up at Bank of Montreal with Chris, Signy, Carol & Sharon can sign (2 signatures/transaction)

❖ October 2011

- Fundraiser (Farm to School) run by Leslie Adrian raises \$2000
 - Signy, Carol and principal Karine Rioux meet with Gord Howe (PTSD facilities director) to discuss installation of a few portable elements.
 - Top student fundraiser picks out boulders with Signy.
 - Parent (and contractor) Dan Bickerton gets boulders placed out of the way of exterior construction crews creating a sitting and play area by the entrance doors for our youngest students (Gr. 5 & 6)
- Survey committee is formed (Sharon Simon & Sheila Mitchell Dueck)
 - Signy delivers surveys to 150 houses immediately surrounding the school grounds
 - Survey is put up on the website and parents are encouraged to fill it out as part of the schools open house
 - Sharon meets with the condo committee that shares the same lot as the school.

❖ November 2011

- Carol & Signy are interviewed about gathering community and stakeholder input in the Sou'Wester weekly magazine. An article accompanies a photo of our boulders.

❖ December 2011

- Carol speaks to the students at an assembly to ask them to work with the art teacher and draw ideal school grounds with no restrictions so student driven concepts can be taken to the architect.
- Fundraisers continue
 - Christmas Trees and Wreaths net \$350
 - Winter Auction (set up by EA Dianne Goltz) nets \$1600
- The Staff Greening Committee (Joanne Girouard, Kim Pepler & Eric Bissonnette) is consulted by the EVA SGTC to coordinate efforts
- Carol, Signy & Karine attend the Toyota Evergreen Grant workshop
- ❖ **January 2012**
 - Meeting with Wendy Simonson to share survey results and common themes from student designs.
 - Estimated it will take 6-8 weeks to develop a design
- ❖ **February 2012**
 - Fundraiser of Sobey's gift cards nets \$2500
 - EVA SGTC increases its school exposure through a display developed by Signy and attended by Carol & Sharon during the schools open house for incoming students (Gr 5 & 7)
- ❖ **March 2012**
 - Water on the Land bilingual government initiative hosts its national launch at our school. The transformation project is introduced by Rachael Donner
 - Rachael also begins monthly updates in the school newsletter of the activities of the committee
 - More meetings with Wendy and staff for desired elements to meet school curriculum needs (Phys Ed, Science Humaine etc)
- ❖ **April 2012**
 - Staff Greening Committee (Joanne Girouard) submits a WWF Green Community school grant application (that eventually earns the project \$5000)
 - More design meetings. Condo Stakeholders are invited, but unable to attend. All updates continue to be forwarded to condo committee
 - Vincent Massey Collegiate Phy Ed department and football club are communicated with to confirm the space remaining meets their needs.
- ❖ **May 2012**
 - Fundraiser of LaCoste garden centre gift certificates nets \$1500
 - Our project is officially named
 - *Cultivating Prairie Spirit*
 - *Celebrons l'Esprit des Prairies*
 - Design delays due to unforeseen circumstances don't stop the committee from pricing out play elements and continuing planning efforts
- ❖ **June 2012**
 - Inclement weather and design delays create a time crunch for spending the WWF grant, but Phase 1 concludes before the time runs out at the end of June
 - We have 2/3 of our perimeter path and the start of our large berm

- SGTC Communications board is installed with a beautiful piece of artwork thanks to parent artist Natasha Lowenthal
- Artwork is used to communicate with community regarding the minor work being done of the project
- ❖ **September 2012**
 - The committee re-sets with renewed commitment from membership though some parents have had to step down, more are ready to step in.
 - Feedback from the community regarding the path has been positive, there is much interest in our project
 - Grants are discussed with respect to phases and elements of the project
 - Breakdown of details is communicated for quotes for specific sections of the project
- ❖ **October 2012**
 - Fundraiser Farm to School has raised another \$1400 this year
 - Hydro Grant application has been drafted by parent (arborist) Chris Lepa
 - The success of evolving the existing asphalt work being done to fit our future designs is celebrated.
 - Local politicians are invited in to learn about our project
- ❖ **November/December 2012**
 - Winter Auction nets over \$2000 towards the project – items donated by parents and put together in baskets by students under the direction of EA Diane Goltz
- ❖ **January 2013**
- ❖ **February 2013**