

The Apple Orchard at Ponaganset Middle School – A Living Campus Project

Living Campus

The goal of the *Living Campus* program is for every member of the school community to focus on the wonders of our natural environment and learn how to live sustainably. Using our beautiful 82 acres and new building we will incorporate interdisciplinary environmental studies and practices in academics, the cafeteria, administrative operations and community offerings. A team consisting of students, teachers, staff, and community members oversee the program. Donations, grants, volunteers, and the sale of products and services such as note cards and pruning workshops will sustain the program over time.

The Apple Orchard

The Apple Orchard is our first *Living Campus* project. Thirty semi-dwarf trees will be planted in front of the school, to the right as you face the main entrance. The trees are disease resistant and will provide an extended season with blossoms appearing in early May and a harvest of various colors, textures and flavors beginning in September through to November. The trees will grow 12-18 inches per year and reach 12-15 feet tall. Our first full harvest will be within four years.

Students have created scale maps they will use to mark the location of irrigation lines and to place a stake where each tree will be planted. Our agriculture and Future Farmers of America student partners from the high school have tested the soil and will be helping with planting and maintaining the trees. Within the orchard a circular area will become a gathering space for classes and shared moments with friends. At the tree planting celebration on April 5, 2008 – 1PM to 4PM students will present learning activities that support the *Living Campus* mission.

Join Us

We invite you to participate in the *Living Campus* program and help establish a foundation of knowledge that will serve our community in developing and maintaining a sustainable future. Opportunities include the construction of trails and gardens, workshops, summer maintenance and fundraisers. Financial donations as well as products and services are most welcome.

Donors

We are grateful for the following grants, donations and assistance generously provided in support of our *Living Campus* program and planting of *The Apple Orchard*.

1. Mary Ann Shallcross-Smith Ed.D. also known as “Dr. Day Care,” and Ronald Smith, RN contributed the matching grant required in order to receive a CGN grant.
2. The Children's Garden Network (CGN) grant. Their mission is to help grow gardens and garden education programs at every school and youth organization in Rhode Island by the year 2010 – in collaboration with: the Rhode Island Center for Agriculture Promotion & Education (RICAPE); the University of Rhode Island College of the Environment and Life Sciences (URI/CELS); and the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association (RINLA).
3. Original funding to RICAPE for the CGN initiative came from a federal appropriation through the office of Rep. Patrick Kennedy.
4. Gil Barden Jr. of Barden Family Orchards donates his time, expertise and supplies.
5. Dr. Kirsten Romani of Orthodontic Partners contributed funds for student curriculum, recognition and orchard development.
6. Alan Lippacher of Landscaping Unlimited provided excavation service.