Work for Play

Volunteers spruce up school playgrounds

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For years, playgrounds at many of Denver's public schools were depressing patches of asphalt with hardly a tree or shrub in sight. That was the case until recently at Columbian Elementary school in northwest Denver, where the schoolyard is being transformed by a group of University of Colorado at Denver landscape architecture students and Columbian supporters. New play equipment is being installed, a mural painted by Columbian students is going up, gravel is being replaced by a lawn with trees and picnic tables, and a xeriscape garden with a kinetic sculpture will give the playground the feel of a neighborhood park.

Bambi Yost, project manager for the Learning Landscape Alliance, says the group is planning more than half a dozen such transformations in the next six weeks, and volunteers are needed. From about 8 a.m. this morning until 4 p.m. this afternoon, workers will be at Castro Elementary, 845 South Lowell Boulevard. On deck: Gilpin (September 6), Barrett (September 13), Ebert (September 20) and Mitchell (September 27). For more information, contact Yost at 303-556-6655. -- Stuart Steers

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