

# School in the Yard





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Schmitt Elementary

## Where It All Began



### Context

**Locally:** Denver was at a turning point during the 1990s. The city's schoolyards primarily consisted of asphalt and pea gravel, with few play structures and limited green space. Most did not meet ADA requirements, provided little protection from the sun, and had limited lighting. They were underutilized, and gravel-related accidents were common. A significant investment would be necessary to replace what playground equipment existed, install irrigation systems, and develop safe, age-appropriate spaces and structures.

During this same period of time, federally mandated busing was lifted from Denver Public Schools (DPS) and children once again began attending schools in their own neighborhoods. One result was greater awareness of the degradation of the local neighborhood schoolyards. At

a national level, the quality of children's environments came into question in relation to the recent childhood obesity epidemic. The U.S. was and continues to be faced with an epidemic of child and adolescent obesity in both boys and girls across all socioeconomic strata and ethnic groups (Ogden et al, 2002; Troiano and Flegal, 1998).

It was in this context that Professor Lois A. Brink collaborated with Denver Public Schools (DPS) to launch Learning Landscapes. Inspired by the schoolyard redevelopment work occurring in Boston and Houston, every DPS elementary schoolyard (96) was transformed, over a 15-year period, into attractive and safe multi-use resources that are tailored to the needs and desires of the local community. These schoolyards encourage outdoor play and learning and provide opportunities for social and physical activity.

**Nationally:** During this 15-year period New York City, Toronto and San Francisco joined the district-wide schoolyard redevelopment movement. Denver and these five cities serve as national exemplars demonstrating the use of schoolyards as effective school and community resources and the significant financial and human resources needed to grow these small-scale efforts into system-wide change in urban cities. Such models must engage key stakeholders at a range of geographic scales, from grass roots organizations to school districts and city governments, in order to mobilize broad-based support that is needed in the form of financial resources, decision-making power, and volunteer time. These are key factors that influence large-scale organizational change (Williams, 1993).

McGlone Elementary



Before

After

### Key Outcomes

Four key elements attributed to Learning Landscapes success: 1) system-wide change; 2) significant human resources and broad public and political support; and, 3) significant new financial resources in excess of 40 million dollars.

- **Support a local champion to mobilize the community.**
- **Engage stakeholders through firsthand experience.**
- **Engage key public officials early in the process.**
- **Enlist direct beneficiaries in advocacy.**
- **Mobilize the community to inspire civic leaders.**
- **Expand access through joint-use agreements.**
- **Use private funding to catalyze public funding.**
- **Accelerate scaling through alignment of grassroots and grasstops.**

**“In the last analysis, civilization itself is measured by the way in which children will live and what chance they will have in the world.”**

**- Mary Heaton Vorse, 1935**





## Laying the Groundwork



In 1992, Lois A. Brink, a parent at Bromwell Elementary School and a landscape architecture professor, initiated and led a grassroots effort to improve the school's playground space. Lois engaged landscape architecture students to design a playground tailored to the needs of the school and members of the community. She challenged the University and her students to move beyond "superficial beautification" to find ways to promote education and learning in their designs.

Lois and her students developed a model they call a "Learning Landscape." A Learning Landscape is an outdoor area that supports physical activity, learning, and improved social interaction. The process of developing a Learning Landscape is a community undertaking as local residents provide input during the design process and then participate in the build. The intention is for these spaces to be unique, dynamic, and colorful and to provide engaging

focal points for the community, drawing together not only students but area residents across generations. Fundraising for the pilot playground at Bromwell was a multi-year process. Various tactics were used to raise the \$250,000 necessary to complete the project, including parent donations through brick sales, cold calls to local businesses with flyers, local press appeals, and significant in-kind donations for materials.

### Early Engagement and Alignment with Key Public Officials

Early in the process, Lois reached out to officials from the city and DPS, building trust and engaging them in the process. They were invited to planning meetings and

to participate in the build. Mike Langley, former executive director of DPS's facility management, described the process of bringing parent volunteer and community members to the school to assemble the playgrounds as "old-fashioned barn raising."

According to Elaine Berman, a member of the school board at the time, "too often advocates try to work outside of the system or in an adversarial way and are not successful. Lois worked closely and respectfully with Mike Langley at DPS, and this relationship was key."

Bromwell provided the test case for what is possible when a local champion is clear in her vision and persistent. Lois did not compromise on her vision of a full-

scale renovation of the playground. And it was precisely the scale of change and the degree of citizen engagement—as volunteers and financial donors—that inspired broader support from public officials. The 2000 launch not only generated excitement and energy among civic leaders and DPS officials but also fueled interest in seeing if this model could be replicated beyond the affluent area that is home to Bromwell School.



1993

Bromwell Elementary parents, faculty and students begin collaboration with Professor Lois Brink and UCDenver students to redesign their playground.



1998

First Learning Landscape completed at Bromwell Elementary!







**Testing the Model's Viability:  
Garden Place Elementary**

While the Bromwell model provided an example of what could be achieved, it had yet to be proved possible in a school community with fewer resources. In order to fully test this model, local leadership would have to raise seed funds for the project. Garden Place Academy, located in a heavily industrial neighborhood, became the first Learning Landscape in an underserved area of Denver. According to Lois Brink, there were prison yards in better shape than Garden Place's playground. The project was successful, in large part, because of the vision, passion, determination and resourcefulness of the school's principal at the time, Alvina Crouse. The willingness of Principal Crouse to commit \$10,000 of her personal resources to the project at its outset was critical to overcoming initial skepticism

around resource development and securing the support of DPS. She viewed building quality play space as central and essential to her job as an education administrator, rather than secondary or peripheral, saying that "our children get into trouble because they don't have anything to do on the school yard... play is children's work and where they learn interpersonal skills." Funders in the education field did not connect playgrounds with education. When Principal Crouse first approached Tom Kaesemeyer, head of the local Gates Family Foundation, he told her their foundation only supported education-related initiatives. The principal learned that School visits were a necessary tactic for developing champions. She credits a school visit with inspiring the engagement of Tom Kaesemeyer

**"People know how to give to libraries and hospitals, but they do not know how to give to playgrounds."  
- Alvina Crouse**

who became a key funder for the Garden Place playground. Noel Cunningham, a restaurant owner and local philanthropist, hosted regular dinners to convene foundation and business leaders for the project. According to Principal Crouse, her staff played a vital role in helping to organize events and mobilize the parent community.

Ultimately, Garden Place, launched in 2001, is the model that inspired political engagement and commitment, rather than mere interest. Principal Crouse and her allies raised \$283,000 to transform an asphalt surface into a colorful play space with a welcoming archway, student artwork, an irrigated grass playfield, a shade structure, trees, and gardens. The playground was designed and constructed in collaboration with members of the community, is accessible to students and neighbors, and serves as a source of community pride and a model for expansion. Garden Place proved that this model of community mobilization could be replicated beyond the more affluent and politically engaged neighborhoods in Denver.



UCDenver/DPS sign agreement for trilogy of graduate courses to support schoolyard redevelopment planning, designing and construction.



Learning Landscape Alliance - a three-year program targeting 22 elementary schools in 16 under-served neighborhoods in Denver. First wave of funding from City, DPS, Gates Family Foundation, Broncos, Greater Outdoors Colorado







## Scaling the Model: Learning Landscape Alliance

- 2001 FAIRVIEW  
KAISER  
SWANSEA
- 2002 COLFAX  
COWELL  
CROFTON  
EAGLETON  
FAIRMONT  
GREENLEE  
KNAPP  
MUNROE  
SMEDLEY  
SMITH
- 2003 CASTRO  
COLUMBIAN  
COLUMBINE  
EBERT (Polaris)  
GILPIN  
REMINGTON
- 2004 BARRETT



The mechanism for systematically expanding these play areas to underserved communities in Denver was an entrepreneurial public-private partnership called the Learning Landscape Alliance (LLA). As LLA was building grassroots support, the Denver Office of Economic Development introduced an initiative to invest in underserved communities and schools located in the old industrial crescent of Denver, beginning in southwest Denver running north along I-25, then swinging east, north of I-70 to Northeast Denver not far from Stapleton. The alignment of grassroots and grasstops initiatives accelerated the LLA's plan and provided a curbside and visual testament of these play spaces



in targeted neighborhoods. This, in turn, generated broad citizen support and political pressure for scaling these play spaces to every schoolyard in Denver.

LLA's mission and plan was to recreate the Garden Place process and outcome at 22 underserved schools throughout Denver. The group was spearheaded by Tom Kaesemeyer, Lois Brink, and Mike Langley. They recruited key stakeholders, including city officials, to serve on the steering and advisory committees. Allegra Haynes, then a city councilwoman,

credits Tom with being the key catalyst whose personal vision, commitment, reputation, experience, and assets accounted for the momentum and success of LLA. According to Councilwoman Hanes, Tom saw "schools as the beacon of the neighborhood and effectively painted this picture for potential stakeholders and funders." He had deep conviction regarding the project, the experience to manage a project of this scale—recognizing and avoiding pitfalls—and the credibility to engage key stakeholders, such as city council and school board members.

The City of Denver's Office of Economic Development acted as a key financial catalyst to accelerate LLA's plan. LLA was looking for seed money just as the city launched an \$80 million Focus Neighborhood Initiative. OED's charge was to identify projects that would revitalize underserved neighborhoods, and they were particularly looking for school-based initiatives. LLA was well-positioned to illustrate public-private partnership development, significant community engagement, and civic pride—crucial components in securing funding. LLA, with Garden

### Learning Landscape Alliance

**Honorary Chairs**  
Bill Owens  
Wellington Webb  
Jerry Watgow  
Ken Salazar  
Alvina Crouse

**Advisory Council**  
Wayne Allard  
Ray Baker  
Elaine berman  
Joe Blake  
Noel Cunningham  
Sam Gary  
Charles Gates, Jr.  
Sal Gomez  
Happy Haynes  
John hereford  
Christine Johnson  
Rita Kahn  
Gail Klapper  
Don Kortz  
Georgia Lesh-Laurie  
Harry Lewis  
Fred Mayer  
James Mejia  
Cec Ortiz  
Dan Ritchie  
Mike Shaw  
Gully Stanford  
Jim Sullivan  
Ruben Valdez  
Bill Volbracht

**Steering Committee**  
Lois Brink  
Allen Balczarek  
Charles Burdo  
Jerry Garcia  
Tom Kaesemeyer  
Mike Langley





Place as a case study in school and community revitalization, was able to prove its model and secure funding. OED awarded LLA an initial grant of \$1 million and then a total of \$4.1 million over three years. These resources were leveraged to secure further private sector and in-kind donations.

In three years, LLA raised a total of \$9 million, improved 22 playgrounds, and generated significant political support. No one group contributed more than 25% to the cost of any playground re-build and every school community is required to raise 1–2% of the cost of the project. LLA received in-kind support from AmeriCorps, Colorado Youth Corps, businesses, and each school community.

**Evaluation:** According to the Center of Research Strategies, an independent research firm hired to perform an initial evaluation of the Learning Landscape projects in 2003. The findings of this evaluation report confirm that the Learning Landscape playgrounds were widely recognized as providing an array of benefits by creating more attractive “green spaces” at the schools, safer playground environments and landscapes that cause community members to have pride in their schools.

Principals and teachers reported positive benefits from the



playgrounds because children were more active and creative during their recess periods. Since the playgrounds were designed to serve as outdoor classrooms, they also offer opportunities for outdoor and experiential learning, particularly as more schools adopt appropriate curricula and use the playgrounds in this manner.

Other playground benefits reported include the value of encouraging children to be more ready to learn because they have been more physically active and to feel more connected to their schools. Within this report, students expressed their pride in their new playgrounds. Teachers and principals also confirm that student behavior improved with fewer disciplinary problems being reported.

Of broader significance was the confirmation by parents that the new playgrounds increased their pride in their schools and instilled a stronger sense of community identity. Because increased parent involvement in schools has been reported in the literature as one of the most important predictors of student performance, the

value of playgrounds as a means of connecting parents to their children’s schools is particularly important. Within the short period of time during which the playgrounds were in operation, the report shows that these improved outdoor environments had clear positive benefits in a number of important areas.



2001

2001 - Formal Resolution of Appreciation, Denver City Council and Mayor Webb, Garden Place Academy Learning Landscape

2002

2002 - Fundraising - previous supporters and school raise \$82K collectively. Denver and Buell Foundation join as does Daniels Fund and Caring for Colorado.



2002 - Americorp Teams begin building play equipment Formal Resolution of Appreciation, Denver Public School Board, Learning Landscape Projects



# Public Buy In: 2003 General Obligation Bond

- 2004 CARSON  
CENTENNIAL  
EDISON  
GOLDRICK  
LINCOLN  
MITCHELL  
SOUTHMOOR  
WHITEMAN  
WHITTIER
- 2005 BROWN  
CHELTENHAM  
COLLEGE VIEW  
ELLIS  
FALLIS  
GUST  
HALLETT  
MCMEEN  
PHILIPS  
SCHENCK  
TRAYLOR  
WYMAN
- 2006 BRYANT-  
WEBSTER  
HOLM  
STEELE
- 2007 BRADLEY  
STEDMAN



With the successful completion of the LLA mission and 22 schoolyards pressure started to build as “every school wanted learning landscapes. Elaine Berman, a school board member at the time, said that “there was initial skepticism about these projects—they almost sounded too good to be true. But when they actually delivered on them, everyone wanted one. These learning landscapes were the ‘spark plug’ that ignited citywide political support for these play spaces.” In response to this demand, the Denver Public School Board proposed a bond measure to include sufficient funding to complete a Learning Landscape



at every DPS elementary school across the city. The bond measure was eventually modified to provide only funding for 50% of the remaining schools. It proved successful, reflecting the political momentum that LLA had developed in Denver. With the 2003 bond and funding to scale learning landscapes, the Learning Landscape Alliance dissolved. Under Lois’s management, “Learning Landscapes” became a program under the UCD’s Department of Landscape Architecture in partnership with the Denver Public School District. Community engagement continued with bond-funded projects with each Learning Landscape including a volunteer project.

A year-round hands-on, service-learning curriculum at UCD enlisted graduate students in the fall and design documents in the spring. Landscape architects were selected to finalize the student’s drawings in the form

of construction documents. In the summer students gain invaluable experience in independent design-build classes at DPS schools under construction. The originality and forward thinking aspects of each learning landscape is directly attributable to the graduate students. Their ideas and inventions have been a source of inspiration for the professionals

executing these designs. And last, AmeriCorps provided tuition grants to UCD students through the Campus Compact Initiative focused on collegiate level service-learning, community-based programs.



2003

BOND PASSES!  
Denver votes to continue funding Learning Landscape \$10 million allocated for construction

Learning Landscape Alliance completes 22 schools and then dissolves

2004

AmeriCorps Tuition Award support for graduate students \$25k/yr for five years

Caring for Colorado grant \$50k to study school yard use in DPS physical education

Denver Public Schools \$160k for technical assistance and volunteer project support

El Pomar Foundation Award of Excellence Finalist





“When we play, we learn about anticipation, surprise, pleasure, understanding, strength and poise.”

### A Mix of Ingredients

Since different communities choose different components in their learning landscape, no two are exactly the same but they do share similar goals. LL's support play and exercise in both structure and unstructured settings. Wherever possible, elements that support the curriculum are integrated into the landscape as well. Recognizing the importance of creating environments for teachers, parents and surrounding residents, multigenerational spaces serve multiple functions in the schoolyard.



**Play equipment** is designed to address age appropriate use and is integrated into the over all schoolyard design in close proximity to planting, gathering spaces and hard surface play.

**Boulders** have become a staple of the LLs. Larger boulders are placed with play equipment and are used for outdoor classrooms. Boulders can also provide a learning opportunity when a variety of different stones are used including igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks.



**Custom Play Elements** Other non-traditional play elements may reflect the history of the community.

**Sports fields and hard surface play area** Nationally, lawn playing fields at most elementary schools are a standard feature, but most of the fields at DPS were pea gravel prior to LL. Some schools which are too small to maintain grass have been designed with artificial turf. Hard surface areas have been upgraded to contain a mix of hard surface games.



**Learning Opportunities** Instead of just leaving hard surface game areas blank they become a canvas for fields of colors, fractions, names of cities and continents, cities or mountains. These creative qualities support creative play. Maps, compasses, words, quotes are often painted in the asphalt or stamped in the concrete are intended as catalysts for life long learning and to reinforce the notion that we learn through play.

**Natural Areas** Restored natural areas provide one of the greatest opportunities for science education and journal writing. Children love to explore these wild areas and look for bugs, collect twigs and other sorts of imaginative play. They are also wonderful places to sit and read.



**Gateways** Artistic gateways are constructed to welcome the community into the space after school hours. Many of these gateways become neighborhood landmarks and instill pride and self esteem in the children at those schools. The gateways signifies that this is a special place and your are a special person.

**Artwork** Public art in the schoolyard, whether the artist is 10 or 50, is a key element in defining the uniqueness of place and helps reduce vandalism on the schoolyard. Banners created by the children are hung from poles around many of the sites. Local artists contribute pieces such as kinetic sculpture, ceramic tile, murals or engraved stone.



**Seating/Shade** In Colorado with 320 days of sunshine per year shade is an important element for schoolyards. Shaded seating with views of the playground provides teachers and parents a place to keep an eye on children. It also provides a place for older students to seat and read or younger children to be read to. A rigorous tree planting program in combination with shade structures occur on every site. Many sites also use these as stages for performances or graduation.

**Vegetable Gardens** During the initial LLA phase vegetable gardens were only included in the schoolyard design if a school had the desire and the capacity to maintain a vegetable garden but have grown in popularity over the years.



2005

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds research to evaluate “Effects of Elementary School Playground Renovations on Children’s Physical Activity Levels”

COPAN grant to study healthy outdoor schoolyard initiatives \$15k

2006

LL Community Outreach Coordinator funded through City of Denver Community Block Grant \$50k/yr for 3 years

Denver Public Schools increases for technical assistance and volunteer project support to \$350k

Colorado Chapter of ASLA design award for 6 schoolyards





“During recess students have the option to get a book and read in the shade or play games at the tables if they don’t want to participate in sports that day.”  
- Third grade teacher Beth Vinson

# Towards a Sustainable Future: General Obligation Bonds

- 2009 AMESSE  
JOHNSON  
PALMER  
SAMUELS
- 2010 ASHLEY  
BARNUM  
BEACH COURT  
DORA MOOR  
DOULL  
FORCE  
FORD  
HARRINGTON  
MARRAMA  
MCGLONE  
MONTCLAIR  
PIONEER  
STECK  
TELLER
- 2011 ASBURY  
CORY  
DENISON  
GODSMAN  
KNIGHT

“There are things that you can do outside that really go with our core curriculum, because we have the Learning Landscape we’re able to extend that outside.”  
-Carson Principal Acevedo



In 2008, Denver voters approved a second bond measure of \$29 million to finance Learning Landscapes in the remaining 37 schoolyards. In the view of former Councilwoman Haynes, the strength of the learning landscapes model is the extent of citizen engagement, motivation, and pride. She contends that to say “no” to the 2008 bond measure to complete learning landscapes across the city would have been to say “no” to citizen engagement. With the end in sight for new Learning Landscapes, there was a growing focus on sustainability and evaluation. The positive benefits of the Learning Landscapes model serve as a catalytic platform for long term sustainability by advancing teaching and learning for success in the 21st Century.

## Outdoor Learning: A PTA builds a platform for 21st century education

Carson Elementary received their learning landscape in 2004. Since that time the Carson PTA has diligently raised money and built additional creative schoolyard elements for outdoor learning. Thanks to the PTA Carson has an outdoor amphitheater-style classroom and teachers can check out materials for science and other subjects to use there. The importance of literacy is expressed through an artfully repurposed mailbox serving as an outdoor lending library for students during recess.

The PTA’s commitment to education and maintaining its Learning Landscapes has expanded to include the entire campus. They raised funds and hired local artist Sean Doherty to make the front of the school a bright and inviting area. Principal Acevedo is thrilled about the positive feedback she is receiving from the community about the Carson campus and how welcoming the school has become.



**BOND PASSES!**  
Denver votes to fund Learning Landscapes for all remaining DPS schoolyards. \$29 million allocated for construction



Landscape Architecture Magazine features Learning Landscapes in article and editorial “Too Cool (Just) For School” (August Issue)



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dissemination grant \$40k to create Learning Landscape website: [learninglandscapes.org](http://learninglandscapes.org)







**Green Means Grow: Proactive strategy to improve health, education and reduce LL maintenance**

"I got picked today, me, me, me!" Second graders at McGlone Elementary vie for a unique privilege during recess, to assist Chris, the garden leader, with working in their school that day. McGlone's greenhouse serves as a classroom and food production space.

During the 2008 bond period over half of DPS elementary schools received gardens. Their presence has multiple benefits. Not only do they create educational and nutritional opportunities for students but DPS Learning Landscapes schools that include gardens have less vandalism and generate greater school/community involvement in using, maintaining

and managing schoolyards.

The catalytic power of these gardens has resulted in the collaboration of school and community garden programs, and most recently the Garden to Cafeteria (GTC) program where DPS student grown fresh fruits and vegetables are harvested and sold to the school cafeterias for lunch.

In 2009, Learning Landscapes took the vegetable garden to a new level in two ways. First, recognizing that water consumptive solutions such as sod should be limited to an acre at each site, DPS facility management approved a pilot urban farm program at McGlone and Bradley Learning Landscapes.



Such an approach supports the Denver Plan and the needs of the whole child by engaging in experiential education and access and connection to healthy locally grown foods.

Last year the McGlone students ate spinach and mixed greens harvested from the farm at their school. A preliminary study suggests that DPS can produce 44% of its seasonally fresh produce needs at no additional cost. Second was the introduction of a new prototype for school classroom gardens called Learning Gardens. In June of 2011, thanks to a partnership between The Kitchen Community and the University of Colorado Denver, Schmitt was selected for the pilot Learning Garden. Designed by Jen Lewin Studio, Learning Gardens are an extension of the classroom and an enhancement to the school playground. DPS grounds and maintenance likes the raised modular planters, which when not filled with soil can be easily moved with the garden or to another school if need be.

**"The Urban Farm program is a perfect concept to support the District's sustainability goals. The program provides a fun way to educate our children, reduce water usage through a viable alternative to sod, and facilitates less maintenance expense; all which lowers operating cost."**  
- Trena A. Deane, DPS Executive Director of Facility Management



National Institute of Health funds I.P.L.A.Y., a research study to measure the effects of Learning Landscapes' built environment on activity levels



Included in Kaboom! "Play Matters" publication on Nationwide Best Practices

Awarded Entrepreneurial American Community Award from Partners for Livable Communities



DPS awards university \$500k for four years to assist with community efforts and design oversight for bond funded LL's

- 2011 CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION
- MCKINLEY
- THATCHER
- PARK HILL
- SABIN
- SCHMITT
- VALDEZ
- 2012 VALVERDE
- NEWLON
- OAKLAND
- UNIVERSITY PARK







**“We have always tried to promote peace in the community. The Learning Landscape has brought a sense of pride and is bringing the school together to feel like one large family.”**  
 - Principal Sally Edwards.

**“The kids take care of the schoolyard and are quick to report if anything is wrong or damaged. Now there is very little graffiti.”**  
 -Principal Sally Edwards

**A Path to Peace: Improved student attitudes towards themselves, each other, and their school**

Harrington Elementary’s Learning Landscape was designed around a central theme of peace, creating an environment that reinforces positive social interaction. Since the Learning Landscape was built, very positive effects have been seen throughout the community. Today, Harrington students are very proud of their school and view their schoolyard as a safe, positive, and prominent focal point of their community.

As part of a qualitative research methods course conducted at the University of Colorado, graduate

students examined behavior on the playground where games, norms, and rules are socially defined and learned. In order to understand how schoolyards can positively influence play behavior graduate students compared the use of power on playgrounds with and without a Learning Landscape. LL schoolyards saw an increase in social norms and oral rules based on responsibility, equality, and a superior use of knowledge. Correspondingly the need for direct supervision from teachers decreased.



**A Plea for Play: Improved physical activity opportunities**

Over the last decade, the amount of time students spend in physical education curriculum has dropped dramatically. According to Eric Larson, Denver Public Schools Physical Education Coordinator, “Today, the average Denver Public Schools elementary student spends only 50-60 minutes per week in PE.” Learning Landscapes, where the built environment is designed to maximize active play opportunities allow schools like Colfax Elementary to incorporate play into physical activity. Physical education teacher Tom Barela reinforces his physical education lessons in the halls, on the playground, and helps the kids take the message of total body health home.



In 2005, Learning Landscapes received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to examine potential increases in children’s physical activity levels and what aspects of playground

design most impact children’s physical activity. The study suggests that schools with a renovated playground have significantly higher levels of physical activity. The increase in quantity and variety of elements may account for the rise in activity. In 2009, IPLAY, funded by the National Institutes of Health, builds upon this research. Although the official results of the IPLAY Study are not yet available, according to teachers surveyed at Colfax, 80% agreed that students were more physically active during recess as a result of the Learning Landscapes. According to Tom Barela, Colfax’s physical education teacher, the Learning Landscape has changed the environment of the school. “Our old playground was so bad. It was a gravel pit!” Barela explains. Now students come early for class so they can play, they are more active, they can be active in hot weather, and they play better together.

2011

Colorado Health Foundation funds Healthy Kids Healthy Scores Site-Based Urban Farm/Food Processing Feasibility study \$90K

Presidential Physical Fitness Community Award

Urban Farm Pilot begins at Bradley & McGlone a partnership with Learning Landscapes, Denver Public Schools & Agriburbia



2012

96 Learning Landscapes are completed, reaching all neighborhoods in Denver.



# Thank You

## Foundations

Gates Family Foundation  
Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Donnell-Kay Foundation  
Daniels Fund  
The Denver Foundation  
Salazar Family Foundation  
Piton Foundation  
Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Stapleton Foundation  
EIPomar Foundation  
Caring for Colorado Foundation  
Colorado Health Foundation  
McCormick Foundation  
Cherry Creek Foundation

## Individuals & Businesses

Alvina Lujan Crouse  
Mrs. Freehling  
Steve Farber  
Noel Cunningham  
Rita Kahn  
Terry Kaiser  
Rick Dutton  
Adam Smith  
Jim White  
John Modig  
Craig Cook  
Mike Langley  
Scott Grumley  
Jordon Perlmutter  
Margaret and Roger Reisher  
John Icard  
Jim "Daddio" Walker  
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Essie Garrett  
Lois Brink  
Volbracht Family  
Cherry /creek Historical Society

## Public Support

Colfax Business District  
Denver Broncos  
Colorado Rockies Baseball Club  
Kronke Sports (Avalanche & Rockies)  
Colorado Division of Wildlife  
Public Service  
DECCA  
First Bank  
Land Title  
Dominion Capital Group, Inc.  
Bobcat of the Rockies  
Rio Grande Construction  
Cordillera Asset Management  
Roche  
BDI  
Designscapes  
Dahl Tile  
Capco Tile and Stone  
Guiry's  
Broncos Charity Fund  
First Bank  
Guarantee Bank  
Bank of Cherry Creek  
Norwest Bank  
GPD Land, Inc.  
Shine Investment  
HNTB Architects  
Graff's Turf Farm  
Green Acres Nursery  
Top Quality Turf  
Arbor Valley Nursery  
Little Valley Nursery  
Alameda Wholesale

Creekside Nursery  
Swingle  
Sundog, Inc.  
M.A. Mortenson Co.  
GE Enterprises  
Colorado Marble  
Kobey Development  
Gerald Phipps  
PR Fletcher, civil engineering  
Colorado Pacific Industries  
BMC West  
Stone Craft, Inc.  
Gary Stricklin – mason  
Palmer Enterprises  
High Plains Stone  
RMT Sports Turf Contractors  
Urban Farmers  
Sam's Club  
Phil Long Ford  
PCL Construction  
Strings Restaurant  
Centric Elevator  
ASARCO  
WSA Fraternal Life  
Burlington Northern Santa Fe  
Globeville Community Center  
National Adult Baseball Association  
Colfax Elementary Alumni  
Willow Creek Elementary School

## Public Agencies

Denver Sheriff's Department  
Great Outdoors Colorado  
Governor's Council on Physical Fitness  
University of Colorado at Denver  
City & County of Denver  
Denver Office of Economic Development  
Mile High Tree Initiative  
Colorado Health  
Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition  
Cooking Matters  
Denver Parks and Recreation  
Denver Safe Routes to School Coalition  
Denver Urban Gardens  
Development: National Institutes of Health  
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human  
Front Range Earth Force  
Grounds For Learning  
GroundWork Denver  
The Kitchen Community  
LiveWell Colorado  
Mile Hi Youth Corps  
Slow Food Denver

## Volunteer Organizations

Direct TV  
Kaiser Permanente  
Denver Fire Department; Station 15  
Denver Fire Department; Station 21  
Madd Dads  
Victory Outreach  
Americorps/NCCC  
Boys and Girls Club  
King Baptist Church  
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado  
Peer One  
The Parent Teacher Associations of DPS Elementary Schools



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