



CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2012

Letter from the Co-Chairs of the Children's Outdoor Environments PPN

As schoolchildren embark on summer adventures, this newsletter offers inspiring examples of design landscapes for children to discover, play, and learn. Special thanks to Lisa Horne for bringing this newsletter together as well as writing a book review of Richard Louv's *The Nature Principle*, and to those who provide an array of insights through their articles.

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It Takes a Village: A School Community in California Collaborates to Create a Vibrant Green Schoolyard at Rosa Parks Elementary School

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Growing the Imagination: Hidden Hollow at Heritage Museums and Gardens

The growing interest in creating spaces for children to marvel at the taste of a perfectly ripe tomato and learn about the industrious attributes of honeybees is helping bring children back to nature. Equally important is the ability of children to experience, explore, and play in designed spaces that are imaginative, educational, and safe

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A Post-Occupation Evaluation of the Indoor Children's Garden at Longwood Gardens

A Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is a comprehensive examination of the performance of a project or installation after it has been built and used or occupied. A POE helps to answer questions about whether design goals were met and whether the project satisfies the needs of the users, and usually recommends changes or remediation if these needs were not satisfied.

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Book Review: *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv

Seven years ago, Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He is now giving us possibilities to move beyond it in *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*. While the first book looked at nature's absence from children's daily lives, the second recognizes that the need for nature extends to all of us

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COE Staff Announcements

The importance of "natural play" has gained attention as a way to improve the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children. We are often tasked with developing natural play areas for schools, communities, institutions, and private organizations. A natural play roundtable is being organized for Fall 2012 to encourage pediatricians, insurance specialists, attorneys, educational and public administrators, and landscape architects to participate and discuss how to create healthier, more effective environments for children.

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Manassas Park Elementary School Landscape, Manassas, VA

2011 General Design
Honor Award

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Letter from the Co-Chairs of the Children's Outdoor Environments PPN

by Jena Ponti Jauchius and Julie Johnson

As schoolchildren embark on summer adventures, this newsletter offers inspiring examples of design landscapes for children to discover, play, and learn. Special thanks to Lisa Horne for bringing this newsletter together as well as writing a book review of Richard Louv's *The Nature Principle*, and to those who provide an array of insights through their articles:

- Sharon Danks wrote "It Takes a Village: A School Community in California Collaborates to Create a Vibrant Green Schoolyard at Rosa Parks Elementary School."
- Anna Karina Johansen contributed "Growing the Imagination: Hidden Hollow at Heritage Museums and Gardens."
- Carol A. Krawczyk provided "A Post-Occupation Evaluation of the Indoor Children's Garden at Longwood Gardens."

Collectively, these articles highlight the importance of examining how a design performs over time and use, and how this may shape change, whether by the designer or the users themselves. We believe such reflection is essential, to learn what makes a place meaningful and how a designed landscape may continue to evolve to nurture those meanings and values for children. We hope that you enjoy drawing new insights from these three articles, as well as the review of Richard Louv's *The Nature Principle*.

In addition, there are some exciting developments noted in the Announcements section—check out information on:

- An upcoming Natural Child Play Roundtable Discussion submitted by Aris Stalis; and
- The San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative submitted by Ilisa Goldman

And finally, we hope you'll take part in the ASLA Annual Meeting and EXPO in Phoenix this fall, including the Children's Outdoor Environments PPN meeting there!

Jena Ponti Jauchius and Julie Johnson
Co-Chairs, Children's Outdoor Environments PPN

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CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2012

It Takes a Village: A School Community in California Collaborates to Create a Vibrant Green Schoolyard at Rosa Parks Elementary School

by Sharon Danks, ASLA

Schools across the United States and around the world are using their grounds to enhance hands-on teaching and learning, enrich outdoor play, improve the ecology of their neighborhoods, and develop and celebrate their own sense of place. The green schoolyard movement is flourishing in many forms and can be seen in school gardens and wildlife habitats, rainwater systems, renewable energy projects, green building efforts, material reuse programs, nature playgrounds, outdoor classrooms, art installations, and many other creative endeavors on school property. While individual projects on each of these themes are now fairly common at both public and private schools in many parts of the country, it is still rare to see a comprehensive approach being taken on a single K-12 campus.

Rosa Parks Elementary School in Berkeley, California, is ahead of the curve with a multi-faceted green schoolyard that contains hands-on teaching tools, a vibrant play environment, and examples of green design and local ecology. The project to retrofit an existing schoolyard is engaging students, families, teachers, and school staff in its ongoing design, implementation, and stewardship.

The green schoolyard project began in 2006 with a participatory design process led by Bay Tree Design. The resulting concept plan expressed this public school community's vision for the future of their school grounds. Designed to be implemented in manageable phases as funds are raised, the plan is being realized project by project, with work accomplished each semester by the talented school community. Since the green schoolyard has a very modest PTA-funded budget, all of the labor is done by volunteers from the school community who have a broad range of professional skills that they generously contribute. The school holds work parties each semester to build or plant new elements and to maintain the growing number of features already onsite. Parents and teachers also collaborate to write grant proposals to fund individual projects each year.

Over the last six years, the green schoolyard has become the broad, unifying "umbrella" for many school-wide efforts ranging from renewable energy education to hands-on art installations and sustainable means of transportation to school. These and other projects spring from the community's deep and diverse talent pool, and are shepherded by the individuals and groups that dream them up. Some of the themes and projects implemented onsite include:

Edible gardens. The school grounds include a wonderful teaching garden used for academic instruction by the garden educator and classroom teachers, and smaller "nibbling gardens" intended to be used by children for their own, self-guided exploration and unstructured play time at recess. Fruit trees (fig, lemon, apple, plum) and berry bushes are also used as edible landscape features around the playground.



The "nibbling garden" site before the project began. Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, inc.

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The "nibbling garden" about a year after it was installed by parents, teachers and kids. Children's artwork is displayed on the perimeter of the picket fence, which was made using locally harvested urban timber. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, inc.*

The "nibbling garden," designed to allow children free access to edible plants, sits at the edge of the playground where it is easily available at recess. Plantings include herbs, vegetables, and fruits that children can pick as they like, and incorporate into their imaginative games at recess.

Water systems. A small amount of pavement (300 square feet) was removed to create a nature play zone and increase rainwater infiltration. The school also installed a stormwater cistern to supplement landscape irrigation and teach students about water conservation.

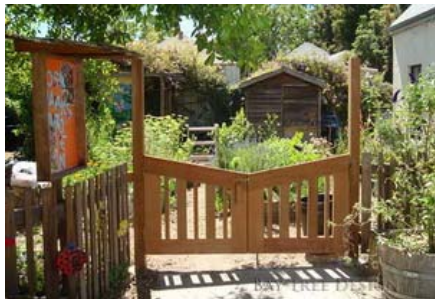
Energy systems. Rosa Parks School is currently home to two renewable energy systems, and a third is planned for later this year. The smallest is a solar-powered pond pump system that the students can operate.



A class gathers around the pond to observe how the energy produced by the small solar panel powers the fountain that bubbles out of the rock in the middle of the water. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, inc.*

Students rotate the small solar panel to watch the water pump turn on and off—creating a very effective and inexpensive renewable energy demonstration that children intuitively understand and can interact with during class time and at recess. Nearby, a 1 kW grid-tied solar array (group of panels) generates electricity that offsets the energy used by one classroom. The educational value of this larger, prominently displayed system is further enhanced by a parent-built digital interpretive display located in the science room that includes real-time energy read outs and additional data gathered by students. A substantial 20 kW grid-tied photovoltaic system will be installed on the school's roof later this year. This larger system should generate approximately 25% of the school's energy.

Waste as a resource. The green schoolyard at Rosa Parks was implemented using green building principles and practices that emphasize recycling, composting, and recycled and reclaimed materials. In addition to the citywide composting and recycling programs used by the school district, the school garden includes compost bins and composting curricula. Garden beds are maintained organically, using locally produced compost. The wood used to create decorative picket fences around the schoolyard came from urban timber that was harvested and milled locally. The solar panel installed to power the pond pump system also had a prior life on another site. The beautiful garden gate that was created by a parent, is made of reclaimed lumber.



This graceful gate at the edge of Rosa Parks School's teaching garden was built using reclaimed lumber by parent Wick Pancoast of Pancoast Construction. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, Inc.*

Curriculum ties. Teachers of several subjects bring their classes outside to enjoy the gardens and to use the setting as an outdoor teaching environment. To this end, the schoolyard now includes a variety of outdoor classroom spaces—large and small—that can accommodate an entire class or smaller clusters of students while they collaborate on their assignments. Curriculum elements, designed with input from the teachers, are also installed throughout the site. Boulders from around California and the western USA are arranged as a geology trail for science studies. A “human sundial” is painted on the asphalt so students may observe the passage of time. A wonderful annual science fair, and many other school-wide celebrations, take place outside.

Imaginative play. For play, the schoolyard provides the usual places to bounce balls, jump rope, play sports games, and climb play structures. But it also includes a “nature play” space with inviting nooks that encourage students to gather for conversation and creative, open-ended play; loose play parts (mulch, twigs, plant pods, flowers, edible plants) for children to use in the games they dream up themselves; a pond for aquatic exploration; and opportunities to create art at recess using chalk and other simple materials.



Nature play zones have been added to the perimeter of the playground to encourage children's imaginative play with loose parts such as flowers, twigs, and mulch. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, Inc.*

Beauty, comfort and support. It is essential to convey to children that they are valued members of the community, and that the quality of their environment is important. The school community has worked to nurture an inviting and supportive environment at Rosa Parks by fostering comfortable microclimates, providing a variety of seating options, installing artwork created by the children, and planting flowers and other attractive vegetation that they can explore. These elements of the landscape mesh well with the “village-like” atmosphere created by the unique design of the school's welcoming architecture and overall philosophical approach to “building community” through school-wide events.



Students worked with Rosa Parks School's art teacher, Kathleen Gadway, and a local artist to design and install a tile mosaic mural that reflects the local ecosystem and soil profile. The mural includes ceramic pieces made by the students and reuses some pottery shards gathered from broken household objects. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, inc.*

Sustainable transportation to school. Rosa Parks holds “walk and roll to school” days to encourage students to get to school under their own power by walking and by riding bikes, scooters, and skateboards. Racks are included onsite to secure the rolling means of transportation during the school day.

Community stewardship now and in the future. The Rosa Parks Green Schoolyard Committee is responsible for keeping the green schoolyard features looking their best and for adding new elements to the yard each semester. Teachers, school staff members, the principal, parents, students, and community members have all contributed to making this project what it is today, and will be the ones to carry it forward in the future. This collaborative, ongoing design and building process is dynamic, exciting, rewarding, and educational, for both the children who use this schoolyard every day, and the adults who help to shape their environment.



Parents, school staff members, and children are important schoolyard stewards and help to keep the schoolyard looking its best. *Image courtesy Sharon Danks, © Bay Tree Design, inc.*

Every school changes over time as its students grow up and graduate, families move on, and school staff members' interests and careers shift. This is a natural part of a healthy school community, and is something that we at Bay Tree Design incorporate into our school yard designs. Green schoolyards are living entities—not static environments—and should be allowed to change as time passes to respond to their community's needs. Green schoolyard master plans should be revisited and updated from time to time by the school community and/or the designers. This way, a project's ongoing development continues to reflect the school's current population and goals and remains relevant to the life of the school.

Since the project at Rosa Parks is now in its sixth year, and all of the kindergarteners who began the project have now graduated, we will be helping the school community to revisit the original master plan this year, update it, and plan next steps. Our firm has been the catalyst for this project from its inception, and has shaped the overall design of many of the projects implemented to date. However, it “takes a village” to be stewards of a green schoolyard. The success of this project is the result of the collaboration, dedication, and hard work of the whole school community and is a tribute to the power of working together.

More information about the green schoolyard at Rosa Parks School can be found in the video, “[Turning Nature Into Classrooms](#),” produced by Erika Brekke for OnEarth.org and in *[Asphalt to Ecosystems: Design Ideas for Schoolyard Transformation](#)* by Sharon Danks (New Village Press, November 2010).

Sharon Danks, ASLA, is principal of [Bay Tree Design, inc.](#) in Berkeley, California. She can be reached at: [sharon \(at\) baytreedesign.com](mailto:sharon@baytreedesign.com), 510-644-1320.

Phrase in article title is derived from an African proverb.

Additional resources:

[Bay Tree Design](#)

[Ecoschools](#)

[International School Grounds Alliance's resource page](#)

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Growing the Imagination: Hidden Hollow at Heritage Museums and Gardens

by Anna Karina Johansen

"Hidden Hollow™ is the best early childhood exhibit I have ever seen out of doors or indoors." – Jan Crocker, President of Jan Crocker Museum Associates

"When it comes to measuring educationally effective spaces, Hidden Hollow is off the charts." – Susie Wilkening, Senior Consultant and Curator of Museum Audiences at Reach Advisors

"Hidden Hollow is a magical place that has allowed our family to spend more quality time together exploring, laughing, sharing, learning and playing in a safe, nurturing environment. From the first moments we ventured down the winding brick path we realized how lucky we were to have this amazing educational space in our own backyard." – Sharon Sherman, Mom, Sandwich, MA

The growing interest in creating spaces for children to marvel at the taste of a perfectly ripe tomato and learn about the industrious attributes of honeybees is helping bring children back to nature. Equally important is the ability of children to experience, explore, and play in designed spaces that are imaginative, educational, and safe. **Julie Moir Messervy Design Studio (JMMDS)** is proud to share one of several children's gardens the firm has designed that does just that.

Hidden Hollow at Heritage Museums & Gardens in Sandwich, Massachusetts, opened in August 2010. When our design team first visited the site in the spring of 2010—a mere 12 weeks before the space was scheduled to open—we knew immediately that we wanted to be part of this exciting design project. The dream of Hidden Hollow had been three years in the making. It is a result of the collaborative efforts and vision of Heritage's former Executive Director Scott Swank and Director of Programming Heather Mead, and its dedicated Board of Trustees. The team researched and established the need for children's horticultural exploration, selected the site, and expanded their children's programming under the management of Environmental Education Specialist Tobey Eugenio.



Hidden Hollow map. Image courtesy JMMDS.

Hidden Hollow, which has been certified as a Nature Explore Classroom by the **Arbor Day Foundation** and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, is located in a two-acre dry kettle hole, a site that presented both unique challenges and design opportunities. JMMDS was charged with creating twelve distinct areas for specific programmatic requirements, such as a "nature art area" and a "building area." The firm drew inspiration from the natural history of the site and from the idea of "Hidden Pictures®," as featured in the time-honored publication **Highlights for Children**. These images are expressed in plain view and three dimensions. For instance, the "nature art area" became "CREATE," a pinecone-shaped space with bluestone floor and hand-carved pinecone tables with pine slab tops. Mushroom stools, hand-carved by chainsaw artist Barre Pinske, are set in a fairy-ring pattern around the teacher's central stump to form "GATHER" in the midst of native lowbush blueberries. Black locust stump steps lead to a network of paths and balancing logs through a twisted

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canopy of some of Heritage's famous Dexter Rhododendrons for the "CLIMB" area.



Hidden Hollow from treehouse. *Image courtesy JMMDS.*



SPLASH. *Image courtesy JMMDS.*



BUILD. *Image courtesy JMMDS.*



CREATE. *Image courtesy JMMDS.*



GATHER. *Image courtesy JMMDS.*



LISTEN. Image courtesy JMMDS.

Other features include handicap-accessible boardwalks, that branch like a tree and guide visitors to the main play areas. Following a non-traditional design process to adhere to a stringent timeline, it was necessary to work out many details on-site, using local resources and volunteers.



CLIMB. Image courtesy JMMDS.

The response to Hidden Hollow has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Heritage administrators, working with a nationally-recognized research and strategy firm to evaluate Hidden Hollow's effectiveness, reported exceptionally high rates of positive comments on visitor questionnaires. Hidden Hollow has had a measureable impact on attendance, sales of family memberships, and repeat visitation. Parents and educators praised the hands-on activities for children, the low-tech natural materials, and the respect for nature fostered in this imaginative space. Best of all, tens of thousands of children have enjoyed a magical and unforgettable experience in the out-of-doors. When one little boy looked down on the garden from the Overlook, he exclaimed, "This is what heaven must look like!"

Anna Karina Johansen is a landscape architect, project manager, and designer at Julie Moir Messervy Design Studio in Saxtons River, Vermont. She can be reached at: anna@jmmnds.com.

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A Post-Occupation Evaluation of the Indoor Children's Garden at Longwood Gardens

by Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA

Post Occupancy Evaluation

A Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is a comprehensive examination of the performance of a project or installation after it has been built and used or occupied. A POE helps to answer questions about whether design goals were met and whether the project satisfies the needs of the users, and usually recommends changes or remediation if these needs were not satisfied (Zimring and Reizenstein, 430 – 431). A POE, if it goes beyond mere compliance standards, will also reveal the beneficial contributions that the project makes, which can be used to build a greater foundation of knowledge in design (Zimring and Reizenstein, 447 – 448). This article describes the Indoor Children's Garden at Longwood Garden following a POE of its strengths and opportunities.

A New Type of Garden

Longwood Gardens, in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, is a public garden with one of the oldest indoor children's gardens in the United States. The original Indoor Children's Garden was started as a trial garden in 1988 based upon research conducted by a Longwood Graduate Student, Catherine Eberbach. This garden quickly became a lively destination in the **Conservatory Building**. Ten years later, the demand for the garden far exceeded its capacity. So, a team of Longwood staff members created a new garden that would not only engage children, but would be considered as fine a garden as the others that comprise Longwood Gardens. Horticulturist Mary Allinson, who had been involved in the construction of the previous two children's gardens, and in-house landscape architect Tres Fromme, visited many children's gardens to collect ideas.



Model of Indoor Children's Garden, showing the Central Cove (close) and the Bamboo Maze (distant). Model by Longwood Gardens staff. Image courtesy Longwood Gardens.

Fromme and Sharon Loving, the Staff Project Manager, both recognized the importance of learning about the interests of children from the children themselves. So, they conducted focus groups during which children were asked to draw or make models of the places they most enjoyed. The children's results were mazes, water, places to hide, journeys, and places designed at child scale. Children were taking the lead in exploring the possibilities, and the parents must have felt that they were peripheral to the experience (Krawczyk, 2008).

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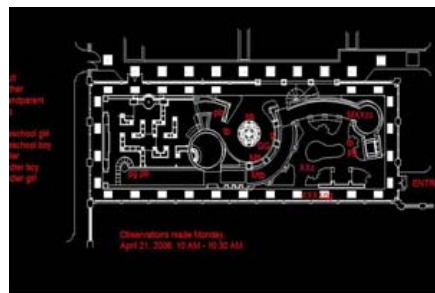
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Sketch of the Drooling Dragon by Tres Fromme.
Image courtesy Longwood Gardens.

Encompassing an area of 3,700 square feet, the **new garden** opened in October 2007. It contained 17 handcrafted bronze and stone fountains, together with other works of art such as murals, tiles, sculptures, and stained glass. It has three types of circulation systems. They include the heart of the garden—the Secret Room, as well as the Grotto, and the Tunnel. These spaces are designed for children, almost to the exclusion of adults. There are additional gathering places, such as the Central Cove, Bamboo Maze, Square Maz, and Ramp that allow for adults as well as children. And the periphery walkways are designed for adults (Krawczyk, 2008). From interviews, and my analysis of the behavioral maps, and measurements I made in the garden, I found that one's experience of the garden depends upon one's size. Children are exposed to short, intimate views in these child-scaled locations, and everything is within the reach of small children. This encourages activity and engagement. Interior child pathways undulate adjacent to a spine of walls and vegetation, which block views from one garden to another. This creates niche-like areas where children can focus on specific activities. Among these are manipulating the velocity and direction of water in a fountain, or watching for sudden, unexpected arcs of water coming from a wall, a hole in a basin, or from a mouth of an animal. Adults, by contrast, are exposed to long views, which enable them to understand the overall context of the garden and help them to see and, to some degree, supervise children. These long vistas, however, are meant for rapid movement rather than interaction with water, sculptures, or plants. Parents spend a lot of time chasing and finding their exuberant children in this garden.



Behavioral Map of the Indoor Children's Garden. Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.

POE Methodology

A variety of methods are used in Post-Occupancy Evaluations to take a holistic view of how a place functions ((Zimring and Reizenstein, 440-443). So, to evaluate the Indoor Children's Garden, I began by reviewing the archives of meeting minutes, sketches, public presentations, and design documents as well as interviewing past and present staff to understand how the garden grew from concept to reality. I also observed where visitors spent most of their time in the garden and their activities, and then created behavioral maps with this information to share with the staff at Longwood Gardens.



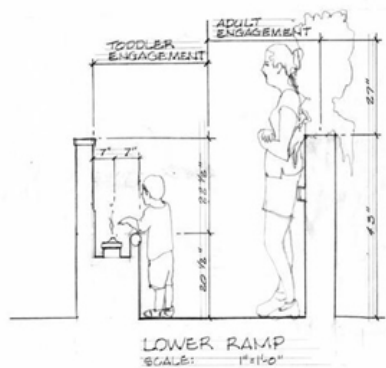
Photograph of family on the Lower Ramp.
Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.

Over a three-day period, I interviewed 87 visitors, from age four through adulthood, to learn about their experiences in the garden—especially regarding their favorite and least favorite places (Zeisel, 290). I measured different elements within the garden, including coping walls, fountains, niches, as well as the arm lengths of visitors. The purpose was to see whether the sizes of things made a difference as to who used them, how they were used, and how important it was for people to touch aspects of the garden. Finally, I analyzed the results of my observations, interviews, and measurements to determine the most and least used aspects of the garden and reasons for these designations (Cooper Marcus and Francis, 353).

Findings

Where did people spend the most time in this garden? I compared my observations of where people tended to gather most in the garden with the measurements I recorded of the features in the garden to show who the primary users were. The result was that the top five places in the Indoor Garden were the Central Cove (135 visitors); Lower Ramp (125); Upper Ramp (52); Bamboo Maze (32); and Grotto (28).

What did visitors do in these places? I quickly learned that the Indoor Children's Garden is a place for water play. The Central Cove contains the greatest number and types of fountains in the Indoor Children's Garden. And when the niche fountains in the Central Cove are turned off, the niches provide seating for families. Then, the circular fountain in the Cove affords the ideal place for contained, focused water play.



Section through Lower Ramp, showing the spatial configurations for engagement. Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.

Young children tended to congregate on the Lower Ramp, spending at least 15 minutes manipulating the sprays of water there.



Photograph of the Drooling Dragon, taken from the Central Cove. *Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.*

From my observations and interviews of parents, I learned that many of these children came with their parents or caregivers during quieter mornings and spent over an hour in the Indoor Garden. I observed them returning to the Ramp many times, spending upwards of 30 minutes playing in the fountains.



Photograph of children painting on slate walls of the Secret Room. *Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.*

In measuring the Ramp, I learned that the back wall of the fountain was taller than most of the children who played there. Also, the distance of the water nozzles were within their reach. This spatial structure helped reduce outside distractions, enabling children to focus on their water play. The same spatial arrangements were also found in the other four "hot spots."

As previously noted, the Secret Room is the heart of the garden and is also designed to be in scale with children, not adults.



Photograph of toddler playing with fountain on Lower Ramp. *Image courtesy Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA.*

The door openings are five feet high, permitting children to enter with ease. Unfortunately, my interviews with staff revealed that most of the injuries in the

garden occurred in these doorways. Parents who were chasing their children in this area tended to not notice the height of the doors and would hit the threshold. Suggestions to address this situation following the POE, include raising the doorways to a standard size opening and using vines to create a lower visual threshold, or have Longwood staff monitor the doorways (Cooper Marcus and Francis, 347).

In conclusion, the POE of the Indoor Children's Garden reveals that this garden engages people, especially children, for a number of reasons: 1) Water is a powerful element that engages people of all ages. 2) While people are attracted to things through sight, they tend to engage with the environment when they can touch it. 3) The configuration of space considers both activities and the "scale" of the users. 4) The climate of the indoor children's garden provides a stable environment regardless of weather. These characteristics provide opportunities that are not always found in traditional children's gardens – but should be!

Carol A. Krawczyk, ASLA, is the principal of Research-Based Design. She specializes in the design of children's environments and performance of evaluative and research methods. She may be reached at ckrawczyk@verizon.net.

Endnote

Tres Fromme has since left Longwood Gardens and established his own firm, 3.fromme DESIGN.

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CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2012

Book Review: The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv

by Lisa Horne, ASLA Associate

Seven years ago, Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He is now giving us possibilities to move beyond it in *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*. While the first book looked at nature's absence from children's daily lives, the second recognizes that the need for nature extends to all of us. The Nature Principle, as articulated by Louv, provides that nature is crucial for humans to be healthy—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

A strong thread of hope and optimism runs through these pages. Louv notes that arguments for environmental change have run from a first generation warning of catastrophe to a second generation argument of economic benefits to a third generation assertion that the environment impacts our well-being. Another unique concept he identifies is the value of human energy. Designers often think in terms of energy efficiency, but the human spirit renewed and refreshed by nature brings energy into a system as well.

While the book could be organized better, its succession of overlapping concepts that are supported by studies, interviews, and the occasional anecdote, keeps the reader's interest. But its greatest features are clarity and an obvious reflection of Louv's enthusiasm. His background as a journalist serves him well. He is able to transform studies filled with jargon and subtle nuances into lucid concepts and brief conclusions. As needed, he cites study limitations and peer objections and leaves readers to draw their own conclusions. He is also able to bring to life interviews with leaders in the forefront of this field with perceptive details and insights.

Another benefit is the breadth of support documents. He includes four pages of Suggested Reading, an extensive set of Notes, and references to familiar concepts such as biophilic design, the urban park movement, native plants, suburban sprawl, inner city redevelopment, and concerns about light pollution.

For all of its comprehensiveness, the book's most noteworthy exception is any reference to landscape architects. He mentions architects and urban planners frequently in the chapters on suburban sprawl and urban renewal, and cites Frederick Law Olmsted's work. But only in the last chapter does he include our profession in the laundry list of career options with nature. This omission is critical. We can only hope that after Louv spoke at the ASLA's Annual Meeting in San Diego last year, he has a better understanding of our work, and that we, in turn, can gain insight into a movement that should become more important to us.

Lisa Horne, Associate ASLA, is an associate at Terra Design Group in San Antonio, Texas, and the newsletter editor for the ASLA Children's Outdoor Environment PPN. She may be reached at: lisahorne09 (at) gmail.com.

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Manassas Park Elementary School Landscape, Manassas, VA

2011 General Design
Honor Award

CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2012

COE Staff Announcements

by Lisa Horne, Associate ASLA

Natural Child Play Roundtable Discussion Planned for Fall 2012

The importance of "natural play" has gained attention as a way to improve the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children. We are often tasked with developing natural play areas for schools, communities, institutions, and private organizations. A natural play roundtable is being organized for Fall 2012 to encourage pediatricians, insurance specialists, attorneys, educational and public administrators, and landscape architects to participate and discuss how to create healthier, more effective environments for children. The program will be hosted by the Landscape Architecture Department of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry, New York State University, and will provide for web-based attendance to permit national interaction. For more information or to volunteer with coordination, contact Aris Stalis at aris@arisls.com.

San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative

In 2009, group of about 60 local organizations formed the **San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative** to develop opportunities for children to experience nature. The Collaborative is building on a national **Children & Nature Network** movement, inspired by Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Among its activities, the group has explored how children can spend more time in nature within their regular activities (family time, after-school programs, camps, classroom lessons); produced local curriculum and a Pocket Field Guide for chaparral; started six Family Nature Clubs and Healthy by Nature prescriptions; sponsored lectures; and established an Advisory Board.

The Collaborative is currently developing three countywide initiatives using local resources. They are called: Healthier by Nature, Happier by Nature, and Smarter by Nature. Programs will focus on the importance of designing for children's outdoor-nature play, encouraging local pediatric health providers to prescribe outdoor nature play, and establishing more family nature clubs throughout San Diego County. Contact Ilisa Goldman for more information at: igoldman12@gmail.com.

Communication

Please continue to share your comments and questions on the Children's Outdoor Environments PPN LinkedIn Group.

If you have an announcement to share with the PPN, please contact Lisa Horne at: lisahorne09@gmail.com.

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