

ADOPT-A-PARK

Primary Content Area: Biology/Environmental Science

Introduction

Community beautification is a vital aspect of community development. Many urban students live in residential settings that do not have the luxury of backyard space. Neighborhood parks provide space for recreation activities and add value to the community when properly maintained. This project encourages proper maintenance of community property and neighborhood parks. In order to sustain the presence and quality of human life, humans and communities must understand their dependence on earth resources and environments, realize how they influence earth systems, appreciate earth's carrying capacity, manage and conserve non-renewable resources and environments, develop alternate sources of energy and materials needed for human sustenance, and invent new technologies. This project can be part of Environmental Science or Earth Science course. Units within these courses are Environmental Cycles and Ecosystems, Earth Resources (Renewable vs. Non-Renewable (Sustainability)), and Science & Humanity.

Project Goals

- Students will identify and compare physical, ecological, and behavioral factors that influence interactions and interdependence of organisms.
- Students will contribute to the sustainability of our neighborhood parks through environment enhancement projects.
- Students will remove litter and debris from our neighborhood parks.
- Students will be able to analyze how thoughts and emotions affect decision making and responsible behavior.
- Students will analyze similarities and differences between one's own and others' perspectives.
- Students will apply decision-making skills to establish responsible social and work relationships.
- Students will reflect on their experiences.

Procedure/Project Sequence

1. Research and identify three neighborhood parks that are in need of beautification in the community around the school.
2. Discuss the types of beautification projects that would address the park needs highlighting litter removal as one opportunity for beautification.
3. Select a park to adopt and contact park officials and the volunteer coordinator at Friends of the Parks (FOTP). Submit park adoption application forms to Friends of the Parks.
4. Schedule four workdays during the year, ideally in each of the four seasons. Share dates with park officials, school administration, and FOTP staff.
5. Secure supplies needed for litter removal; request gloves, bags, rakes, shovels, from the park officials, FOTP and Mayor Daley's Department of Streets and Sanitation.
6. Remove litter on your scheduled dates; take data collection notes documenting the season & amount of trash (in bags) for future reflection activities; make sure to connect class content to outdoor experience whenever the opportunity presents itself.
7. Conduct a class discussion reflecting on the service experience and students overall disposition towards the impact of litter on their community.
8. Create a word wall of science concepts addressed during this experience.

9. Using concepts from the word wall, make a brochure/poem/artistic representation/newsletter article/public service announcement regarding the impact of litter on the school community.

Community Partners/Resources

Friends of the Parks

Adopt-a-Park

Mary Eileen Sullivan

(312) 857-2757, ext 13

<http://www.fotp.org/programs/volunteer/adopt.asp>

City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation

3-1-1

www.cityofchicago.org

This project complements Mayor Daley's Clean and Green Initiative.

Chicago Park District

Go to the website to find contact information for your local park.

www.chicagoparkdistrict.com

Center for Green Technology

www.egov.cityofchicago.org/Environment/GreenTech/

Addendum

Standards

This project addresses the following Illinois Learning Standards for Science:

- 12.B. Know and apply concepts that describe how living things interact with each other and with their environment.
- 12.E. Know and apply concepts that describe the features and processes of the Earth and its resources.

Hours Recommendation

Students who complete the entire project should be awarded between 6-10 service-learning hours depending on how many hours they spend working on their adopted park. Hours can be broken down into the following categories:

Preparation Research/Discussion/Work preparation – 1-3 hours

Action Stewardship work at local park – 4 hours minimum (each workday should feature at least one hour of work)

Reflection Discussion/Writing – 1-3 hours

Cross-Curricular Connections

Connections with Technology, Art, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and Language Arts could be made during this project.