

Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society

Emerald Award Nomination Package

Community Group Category 2007

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Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society

Board of Directors

	Jill Kirker	President		
Nancy Dalton	Vice President		Lynn Keating	Treasurer
Polly Knowlton Cockett	Secretary		Nancy Hansen	Director
Pat Letizia	Director		Jennifer Batycky	Director
Corporate Access Number	505519280	Date of Incorporation		1993 FEB 01

Sample Director's Community Activities

Each member of the Board of Directors for Grassroots NW is active in the environmental community outside of their volunteerism with Grassroots NW. For example, Nancy Hansen, is a longtime member of Grassroots NW and was the illustrator for Jill Kirker's and Diana Kary's 'Exploring Nose Hill' field guide for teachers. As well, she was the author and illustrator of the other two books published by Grassroots NW: 'Going on a Garbage Hunt' and 'Let's Compost.' These books were distributed to ALL Public and Catholic schools within Calgary plus selected Calgary public libraries. As a Grassroots NW volunteer, Nancy also conducted book reading programs for interested schools.

Brentwood Green Garden

Nancy Hansen was the volunteer coordinator, with financial support from Grassroots NW, who spearheaded the installation of a 'Green Garden' at Brentwood Elementary School along with the operation of the 'Green Garden' program for 7 years (1994 - 2000). This was one of the first naturalization projects for the City (the other one was at Olympic Heights), and was a precursor to the 'pilot' naturalization projects undertaken through the Calgary Zoo's now active schoolground naturalization program. The Brentwood Green Garden included a 'teaching garden' (organically operated) along with a naturalization area. Grassroots sponsored a portion of the installation costs, followed by annual funds for seed money.

The garden is approximately 800 sq m in area and incorporated areas for 4 or 5 species of prairie grasses, native shrubs and trees, native wildflowers, a vegetable garden and a weather station. Some of the programs operated over the years included identification of prairie grasses (what makes prairie grasses special), identification of native trees and shrubs (and their uses), growing of other grasses such as wheat, barely, rye, oats and corn (identification of differences in the grain types and a demonstration on the making of flour (the old fashion way) and bread, along with a corn roast (albeit we could only grow mini corns in Calgary), sunflower study (included planting, watching how the full grown sunflower head moves with the sun, art work, and making bird feeders in the fall), the history of the potato (including planting, harvesting, measuring/statistics of the harvest, history of the potato and potato facts), pumpkin growing and harvesting; the zumpkin experiment (cross pollination of a zucchini with a pumpkin to create zumpkins), weather monitoring (temperature, amount of rainfall, snowfall, wind direction and speed) and finally vegetable gardening (planting, harvesting, vegetable facts and eating).

A plan was created for the garden/naturalization layout and teachers and parent volunteers supervised and minimally assisted the students in the creation of the garden. All the manpower was provided by students except for some initial bobcat landscaping and the spreading of many loads of topsoil (parent volunteers). The students from kindergarten to grade 6 were involved in the planting of everything from the grasses to the trees plus the laying of the flagstone pathways and the building of the steps.

Over the 1994 - 2000 period, Nancy ran a 'hands-on' program for each teacher interested. The programs generally included some classroom time with most of a morning or afternoon spent in the garden. During the early years, there was 100% sign up (program was run in spring and fall) with about 500 kids participating (which makes 1000 kids/year). Towards the end of Nancy's involvement as teachers left and new teachers came, interest probably fell to about 50% (the average school population during those years was about 500). During this time, Nancy went through 3 principals, "I understand one of the subsequent principals (after I left) has since sprayed the garden for weeds (AUGH!), and has hired outside help for the area maintenance." Previous to this, the Moms from the neighborhood (i.e. Nancy recruited all of her friends) kept the garden weed-free.

For more information about the programs, the Brentwood School library has a Green Garden 'manual' available. It is actually a binder which Nancy put together for the teachers with lots of ideas on how to use the garden.

Nancy found the garden program lots of fun (although a big time commitment which was okay as she was 'at home' during most of that time). The students loved getting out in the garden as they were always really well behaved (having 30 kids outside and never having a discipline problem says a lot for the interest level). Despite major changes in the school's programming in the last few years [from a community school to a 'traditional learning centre'], the garden program, though modified and simplified, is still very active and an integral facet at the school.

**Thank You Letter from Belfast Elementary School for School Field Trip
funded by Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society**

children viewed the Park in a whole new enlightened way. It was so exciting to listen to their comments and insights. As well, they visited other parts of the zoo and especially enjoyed seeing some babies - peacocks, porcupines, Dall sheep, moose - I'm sure there was another one, too!

Again, your generosity is so appreciated by us all! The attached book was the product of the children's memories and I scubed it with a word!

Yours very thankfully
Suzanne (Belfast Elem)

To the members of the Board of
the Grassroots Northland Farmers' Market

On behalf of my students and their families I want to thank you so very much for the wonderful donation which allowed my classes, some of the parents and me to visit the zoo on June 16th. Not only was it the only not-rainy day in a two-week period, we even had a few minutes of sunshine ☺

Because of our study of

Sample Community Project Sponsored by Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society

The Brentwood Mural: A Creation of Community Connections

Imagine you're drifting lazily up the Bow River Valley in a hot air balloon late on a hot midsummer's afternoon, just west of downtown Calgary. An air current eddies you northward over the University campus, and then over Northland Mall in Brentwood. It must be a Tuesday, judging by the bustling crowds below, and the scent of freshly baked goods wafting up from the Grassroots Northland Farmers' Market. Facing east, you can see Whispering Woods on your left, the only Natural Area Park wholly within Brentwood, and a tiny prairie remnant of nearby Nose Hill, the largest urban park in Canada. The trembling aspen groves, and the rough fescue and wild rose [our provincial grass and flower], are quaking, waving, and blooming gloriously. The curled fingertips of the prairie crocus leaves, its blossoms the treasured harbinger of a prairie spring, are snuggled deep below in the grassland cover.

Nose Hill, crowned by the brilliant blue sky, sweeps to the southeast across the horizon, dropping in the distance to our city skyline. Cyclists, runners, dog walkers, and kite fliers avail themselves of the local regional parks and pathway system for which Calgary is renowned. The much anticipated pedestrian overpass over John Laurie Boulevard finally allows safe passage between Nose Hill and the Triwood communities. Children are playing soccer on every available schoolground, and swapping notes on sightings of the Brentwood Bunny, also sighted by a resident bird of prey...

This pastoral scene, right in our urban midst, is just what you'll see on the NE corner of Brisebois and Northland Drives in NW Calgary. Dismayed by the recurrent graffiti and inspired by the possibility of mural instead, local resident, Lee Hunt, contacted the Mayor. He directed her to the City's anti-graffiti program. Lee then tapped me for environmental support while we were both at the open house for the new pedestrian overpass. We met, we schemed, we asked questions, we fundraised, and we brainstormed.

We discovered amazing people and amazing energy and enthusiasm right here in Brentwood, and the project then seemed to lift off of its own accord. Kim Morrison and Urban Youth Worx provided the artistic passion, know how and expertise. Local artist, Cheri Macaulay took the community input to heart, researched local flora and fauna, took field trips and photographs, and created a delightful design incorporating these elements in such a way that local youth could successfully paint it with some guidance, whether or not they had artistic experience.

Dozens of local youth turned out of the summer woodwork to help with the painting, and local businesses and residents provided funds and food. Our city councillor's office provided outstanding support, not only with the eradication of other nearby graffiti, but by connecting us with the Roads department. Designs for the new overpass were provided to Cheri by their senior engineer! It will be a sleek line, seamlessly contouring from the bike path above Charleswood Heights directly into Nose Hill Park near Many Owls Valley. We eagerly await the real thing, previewed in the mural.

Extra special thanks are in order to Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society, not only for providing us space to host open houses at their Grassroots Northland Farmers' Market, but by becoming our major community sponsor. We are all stewards of all aspects of our environment, whether it be an urban crossroads, or the intersection of suburban pathways and our precious wild spaces.

You can still treat yourself to the bounty of the season at this local Farmers' Market every Truly Fresh Tuesday, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., on the east side of Brentwood's Northland Mall in the NW. All proceeds from this unique market are returned to the community in support of environmental awareness and education programs. Do more with your money, and head to Northland.

And while you're in the area, do come to our Opening Celebration for the Brentwood Community Mural: Sunday, 19th September 2004, 2-4 p.m., on Brisebois at Northmount.

Environmentally yours,
Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett, plknowlton.cockett@shaw.ca
Brentwood *Bugle* community newsletter, September 2004

Community-Building Brentwood Mural Projects 2004-2005, funded by Grassroots NW Environmental Awareness Society

Brentwood Community Murals



Some say it
takes a
village to
raise a child...



...in Brentwood
we say it took
some kids to
raise a village!



Teens' mural
transforms
unsightly wall
Calgary Herald - July 2005



Brentwood
Community
Murals

