

Neighborhood Housing Services of Southeast Wisconsin, Inc.
Racine, WI
Franklin Park Outdoor Classroom
Budget: \$26,000



[Neighborhood Housing Services of Southeast Wisconsin](#) has been working with students at Racine, Wisconsin's [Walden III Green School](#) to build an outdoor classroom featuring [a garden](#) with flowers, native plants and a rain garden component.

In addition to physically planting the garden, students have been extraordinarily active in all phases of the project. They worked with a local landscape architecture student to design the garden, prepared the garden's site during their Make a Difference Day last fall and created a [tile mural](#) to make the garden more noticeable to passers-by.

Rachel Westergren, Community Builder for NHS of Southeast Wisconsin, hopes the outdoor classroom will give the students "a sense of stewardship and responsibility and will afford the school with a unique opportunity to foster parent and community participation on many levels."

Students have solicited the surrounding neighborhood's participation in the project by distributing hanging baskets with invitations to their Garden Party. The students found their neighbors to be receptive to the project, and a few community members helped plant flowers and bushes at the Garden Party on May 29, 2009.

Walden students have also experienced community support during their fundraising efforts, which have included a wine tasting and silent auction event, t-shirt sales and reusable grocery bag sales. So far, the students have raised \$6,000 for the garden.

In fall 2009, the students plan to recruit more community volunteers to help them plant bulbs during their Make a Difference Day. The garden will also be incorporated into Head Start classes taught by Walden students.

Although inclement weather prohibited using the garden last spring, Westergren says that Walden's science and art classes plan to make full use of the outdoor classroom this fall.

For more information about Walden's green efforts, see the following articles:

The Journal Times: [Walden in top ten for going green](#)

The Journal Times: [Picnic promotes environment, neighborhood](#)