



***The Breezeway  
Gardens  
and  
Habitat  
Project***

***An Application for the  
Upper Freehold Regional Education Foundation's  
Fall 2007 Grant Cycle***

***Submitted by:***

***Lauren Olsen***

***Teacher, Seventh Grade  
Upper Freehold Regional Middle School***



Upper Freehold Regional Education Foundation

# Upper Freehold Regional Education Foundation

P.O. Box 109 • Allentown, NJ 08501

[www.ufref.org](http://www.ufref.org) - Tax ID #22-3032059

## MINI GRANT APPLICATION

(To be returned by November 3, 2007 to the BOE offices)

### COVER SHEET

### *Applicant Information*

Project Title **Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project**

School Building **Elementary Middle School**

Grant Amount Requested \$915.00

Applicant's Name(s) Lauren Olsen

Applicant's email Address(es) **olsenl@ufrsd.net, o.lauren.o@gmail.com**

### *Terms*

If you were to receive a grant from the URFEF you will need to submit a follow-up 1-2 page report and include pictures. We may use one or more pictures on our website or in our promotional materials within one month of the project's completion.

You must also notify UFREF if you are unable to complete the project for any reason.

I agree to the above terms: \_\_\_\_\_ 11/03/07  
Signature Date

Principal's Approval: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

---

For committee only

Approved Proposal #

Conditional Approval, Revisions Needed Approval #

Denied

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## *Grant Summary*

### Project Overview (summary statement)

The Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project is a student and community-based initiative to beautify the school grounds by providing a unique alternative to the middle school's fifth period/club choices offered to seventh and eighth graders. Focusing on the elementary-middle school's enclosed outdoor courtyard and undeveloped exterior area facing High Street just outside the new main office wing, the project will expose more Allentown students to gardening while learning about native plant species, teach students to identify and create the elements of a local wildlife habitat, and connect student gardeners from the Gardening Club with members of the Allentown Garden Club and other community volunteers and donors. An additional project aim is to earn official "Schoolyard Habitat" certification for the abovementioned outdoor areas through the National Wildlife Federation.

**Target Audience** Although all elementary and middle school students will benefit from this initiative, the target audience is definitely middle school students.

**How many students/staff will benefit** All middle schoolers, 8<sup>th</sup> grade science, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies and language arts teachers; however, all UFREMS community members will have the opportunity to explore and integrate the gardens into a variety of learning opportunities.

**Grade Level** 7 and 8, primarily

### Needs Statement (What problem are you addressing with your project.)

The Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project addresses several needs. In the middle school, students have limited club choices for their mid-day break from classes. Typically, club choices have included board games and movies, and other activities generally conducted indoors. I established a gardening club for middle schoolers this fall, and it has quickly become a favorite because it allows students to have non-competitive time outside during a school day that is designed without recess. Many studies have shown that many children lack adequate physical activity and time outdoors; this project is tailored specifically to get more middle schoolers outside and moving around during the school day, and involve them in bettering the local environment while giving back to the school community. As well, this project will use native species (such as Columbine, Dutchman's Breeches, Purple Flag Iris, Christmas Fern, Cardinal Flower, Butterfly Weed, and Mayapple, to name a few) to landscape and improve an area that contains grass and a few unsightly drainage grates.

Is this a one-time project, a new project, or a continuation of an existing program?

The UFREMS PTA's "Project Shine" committee revamped much of the courtyard early last year, so the gardening club will continue to maintain their work, adding minor touches and improvements at the request of the students, school administrators and groundskeepers, such as painting garden benches, planting bulbs and annuals, and weeding. On the other side of the breezeway between the new office and the main building, the open grounds are nothing more than a gently sloped area of grass- essentially, a blank canvas. The proposed Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project, though new to UFREMS, will build and expand upon earlier efforts to enhance the school's aesthetic appearance and increase the number of student-friendly outdoor learning spaces.

Will this project continue beyond the grant period? Yes! The Allentown Garden Club is considering sponsorship/mentorship of the middle school Garden Club, and the middle school garden club will continue to work toward the goal of beautifying and greening the school grounds through maintenance of the outdoor space and refocusing on additional complementary projects. The National Garden Club runs a school gardening program called "Ecotot" and is currently offering a matching grant through generous donations from the Principal Financial Group to schools and community groups interested in beautifying their local communities with local native plantings. With support from the UFREF, the school would be eligible for the NGC's matching grant program. As well, the National Wildlife Federation offers ample resources to schools so that certified Schoolyard Habitats may enrich instruction in a way that meets rigorous state and national learning standards.

## *Project Design*

Describe the overall project concept.

The Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project will create a (mostly) native plant garden outside the new main office wing/breezeway area and add to the existing garden within the elementary-middle school courtyard. Additionally, the project will include application for certification of our "Schoolyard Habitat" through the National Wildlife Federation.

A. Objectives: Specify the objectives to be achieved.

Academic objective: To meet state and national standards of learning using various aspects of the Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project area; also, to create hands-on experiential learning for middle school science, social studies, and language arts students

Standards met through this grant project include:

*National Science Education Standards:*

NS.5-8.3.C: Life Science (structure and function in living systems; populations and ecosystems; diversity and adaptations of organisms)

NS.5-8.6: Personal and Social Perspectives (populations, resources and environments)

*U.S. National Geography Standards:*

NSS-G.K-12.1: The World in Spatial Terms (Element 2: How to Use Mental Maps to Organize Information About People, Places, and Environments in a Spatial Context)

NSS-G.K-12.3: Physical Systems (Element 8: The Characteristics and Spatial Distribution of Ecosystems on Earth's Surface)

NSS-G.K-12.5: Environment and Society (Element 14: How Human Actions Modify the Physical Environment; Element 15: How Physical Systems Affect Human Systems; Element 16: The Changes That Occur in the Meaning, Use, Distribution and Importance of Resources)

*New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards:*

3. Language Arts Literacy:

Standard 3.2.8.B. Writing as a Product

Standard 3.2.8.D. Writing Forms, Audiences, and Purposes (exploring a variety of forms)

5. Science:

Standard 5.5.8.A. Matter, Energy, and Organization in Living Systems

Standard 5.5.8.B. Diversity and Biological Evolution

Standard 5.10.8.A. Natural Systems and Interactions

Standard 5.10.8.B. Human Interactions and Impact

6. Social Studies:

Standard 6.6.8.B. Places and Regions

Standard 6.6.8.C. Physical Systems

Standard 6.6.8.E. Environment and Society

9. Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills

Standard 9.2.8.A. (1-3, 5) Critical Thinking

Standard 9.2.8.B. (1-3) Self-Management

Standard 9.2.8.C. (1, 3-6) Interpersonal Communication

Standard 9.2.8.D. (1-3) Character Development and Ethics

Club Objectives: To teach middle schoolers about native species, botany, volunteerism and gardening; also, to offer middle schoolers an alternative to the usual (mostly indoor or competitive ) club selections

Community Objective: To work with students, the Allentown Garden Club, and local nurseries and related organizations to create a lower-maintenance garden that will benefit the elementary-middle school and beautify its grounds

Environmental Objective: To get "Schoolyard Habitat" certification through the National Wildlife Federation

B. Activities: Please provide details on the project activities.

1. Get plans approved: Present landscaping plan that is tailored to fit the grant budget to Jim Van Horn, Mark Guterl, and Jill Dobrowansky prior to purchasing/planting/furthering the goals of the project
2. Club/cycle period, afterschool, and weekend (Saturday) work sessions: soil preparation, digging, planting, irrigation and weeding
3. Habitat building for birds, butterflies and amphibians: installation of birdhouses, butterfly houses, a toad house, and maintenance of the fish pond in the courtyard; planting of native and local bird and butterfly-friendly flowers and shrubs
4. Community outreach: drum up additional volunteers (parents, Allentown Garden Club members, friends of UFREMS, and possibly local landscapers to help middle school Garden Club members with more challenging physical elements of gardening work)
5. Plant acquisition: purchase native and low-maintenance, butterfly and bird-friendly plants; write thank-you letters and collect donations from community groups (such as the Allentown Garden Club and Westhaven Farms) that have already provided plants and materials for this project.
6. Support learning: make information available to UFREMS faculty, staff, students and families about natural habitats, ecological restoration, schoolyard habitats, and native plants
7. Bring classes outdoors: classes who would use this space in the middle school include 8<sup>th</sup> grade science (habitat studies), 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts (poetry and descriptive writing/setting in a story studies), and 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies (the Lewis and Clark expedition's botanical journals)

## ***Project Timeline***

*Please attach a timeline, which lists dates for planning, conducting, and completing project activities.*

## *Budget*

Category	UFREF	OTHER*
Staff:		
Student and community volunteers	Free	Free
Materials/Equipment:		
Plants, soil and soil amendments	\$650	\$300
1 toad house and 2 birdhouses	\$25	
Materials for pathway	\$150	
Mulch	\$75	
Other:		
Schoolyard Habitat certification fee	\$15	

List other sources of funding, if any:

The Allentown Garden Club has generously donated \$300 and offered mentorship to the middle school garden club's projects and initiatives. Additionally, Westhaven Farms, a locally-owned business, has donated an assortment of impatiens, begonias, and marigolds for next spring's garden club. Christine Perkins, a gardener and teacher in Ewing, has offered to donate colorful koi for the courtyard pond.

## *Evaluation*

How will your project benefit the students?

The Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project would provide an immediate solution that could include as many as 50 middle schoolers per week during club time alone, and sometimes more! The administration prioritized beautifying the interior of our school grounds this year, and it has been such a boost to faculty, staff, parents, and most importantly, students. I can only imagine how excited students would be about cultivating an official schoolyard habitat that they created, plant by plant! So many of my seventh grade students worry about global warming, recycling, pollution, and endangered species. This project would be a tangible way for adolescents to get involved in environmental stewardship by understanding and creating a beautiful natural space to be enjoyed by Allentown students for many years to come.

What criteria will be used to determine how successfully the objectives have been met?

One tangible way to measure the project's goals is through National Wildlife Federation "Schoolyard Habitat" certification. Additionally, since the project is based outdoors in a public space, its completion and continuation will be observable to all who visit or work in the elementary-middle school. Lastly, samples of students' work and photodocumentation of the work-in-progress will show the project as it unfolds.

*Please attach any supplemental information to support your proposal.  
(photographs, brochures, letters of support)*



## ***The Breezeway Gardens and Habitat Project***

### Proposed Timeline:

#### November 2007 – February 2008:

- Continue to request plant and soil donations from local nurseries and garden centers in the Allentown/Upper Freehold Area
- Continue to solicit community volunteers and helpers for planting and digging days in the spring
- Continue to draft a layout of garden area outside new main office wing, working within the parameters of allocated funds and donations and with professional input from:
  - Christine Perkins, grant recipient, teacher, and planning committee member for the courtyard garden at William Antheil Elementary School in Ewing, New Jersey
  - Jennifer Elder Brady of the Allentown Garden Club
  - The Native Plant Society of New Jersey
  - Toadshade Wildflower Farm (Frenchtown, New Jersey)
  - Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve (Pennsylvania)
  - The National Wildlife Federation (they have a hotline for Schoolyard Habitats!)
  - Jane Nagaki of the New Jersey Environmental Federation
  - Pinelands Nursery (New Jersey)
- Get administrative approval on final draft of garden layout
- Continue to winterize and maintain courtyard garden area

#### March 2008 – April 2008:

- Schedule soil and soil amendment drop off @ school grounds
- Confirm volunteers and planting/digging days (afterschool and Saturdays)
- Begin marking plant beds and pathway on grass
- Do winter cleanup in courtyard garden
- Begin preparing soil and plant beds
- Begin planting hardier perennials and native specimens

#### April 2008 – June 2008:

- Continue planting and watering
- Maintain, mulch, and prepare beds for summer weather
- Complete and mail application for certification to the National Wildlife Federation