

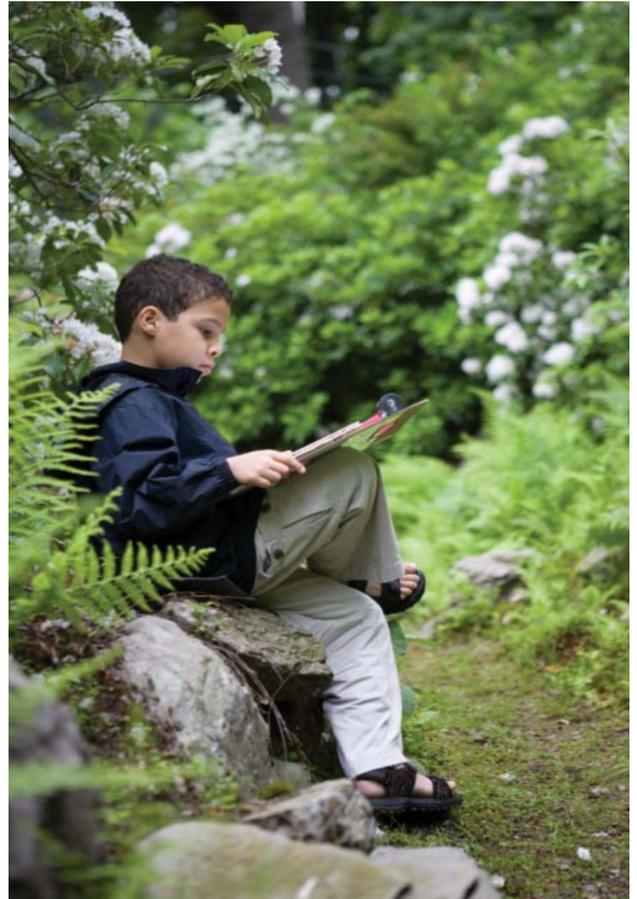
# good neighbors

landscape design  
&  
community building

Rhododendron catawbiense  
By Drew M., Heath School



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*The Good Neighbors program  
provides opportunities for  
integrating the curriculum...  
All learners can connect with  
and engage in this project in a  
meaningful, relevant way.*

Gretchen Albertini  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Public Schools of Brookline



Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site  
99 Warren Street  
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Long before the “No Child Left Inside” movement, there was Frederick Law Olmsted. The 19th-century landscape architect designed public parks to promote the physical health and spiritual well-being of individuals, and build a sense of community among the city dwellers who used his public pleasure-grounds. Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site is working to advance this legacy through *Good Neighbors: Landscape Design and Community Building*, an interdisciplinary, place-based education program that introduces third graders to the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and the value of public parks. Students learn that thoughtfully-designed landscapes strengthen communities, and that the future of public parks depends on the active involvement of the public sector *and* private citizens.



All photos by Joel Veak, courtesy National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

The *Good Neighbors* program includes three sequential learning experiences:

1. In the classroom, pre-visit activities provide students with the scaffolding needed to make the most of their Fairsted experience.
2. At Fairsted, students investigate the design office to solve an authentic c. 1890 park design problem; explore the restored landscape to learn about the art and science of design; and work in teams to design a park landscape that addresses the varied needs and interests of people in the community.
3. Back in the classroom, post-visit activities enable students to share how their understanding of the relationship between landscape and community has changed as a result of the *Good Neighbors* experience.

#### “No Child Left Inside”

Today, children spend free time indoors with computers, iPods, and an ever-expanding list of screens. *Good Neighbors* gets children out into their parks, and teaches them the steps involved in creating these verdant outdoor settings. The program fosters children’s appreciation of the physical, social, and psychological value of parks when they are forming a core set of life values.

#### 21st Century Relevance

*Good Neighbors* targets students in Boston and Brookline – communities adjacent to Olmsted-designed parks that are “at risk” due to heavy use and inadequate stewardship. Outreach to these students is a principal goal of the park as it seeks to secure Olmsted’s 21st century relevance.

#### Legacy Building

When fully implemented, *Good Neighbors* will reach 750 Brookline and Boston students annually, and provide parks nationwide with a framework for creating programming that engages urban youth in learning from, enjoying, and actively stewarding the public parks and open space in their communities.



#### Year in Review

- The park piloted and evaluated the Fairsted Landscape Exploration component of the program and associated pre-visit activity with Brookline and Boston classes in June 2007.
- In April 2008, the park piloted pre-visit #1 (Introduction to Frederick Law Olmsted) with 3rd grade classes from the Devotion and Baker Schools in Brookline.
- In April 2008, two third grade classes from Devotion and Baker Schools piloted post-visit activity #3 (Landscape Architecture Today). They learned about the contemporary practice of landscape architecture through visits to the landscape architecture firms of Stantec, Inc. and Pressley Associates, Inc.

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