

GARDEN GAZETTE

June 2017

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The Murray Meadow will be the face of the future of our school.



Photo by: Justine Knight

Welcome to the Meadow!

By Sebastian Gold

There was once a vacant spot in front of the 1st and 2nd grade playground at Murray Avenue School. You might remember it as the sight of the gazebo, a rusty and hornet-infested hut that was torn down in early 2015.

Principal Jennifer Monaco, who will sadly be departing Murray for the 2017-2018 school year, came up with a wonderful idea to beautify that piece of land. Following the success of Murray Farms, she envisioned that beat up spot as an interactive outdoor classroom, garden, stage, and eventually a greenhouse.

From the moment on that Saturday morning in November 2015 when she came up with that idea, to the grand opening of Murray Meadow in May 2017, Principal Monaco never lost her confidence. She never once thought that this wouldn't happen. And boy, she was correct.

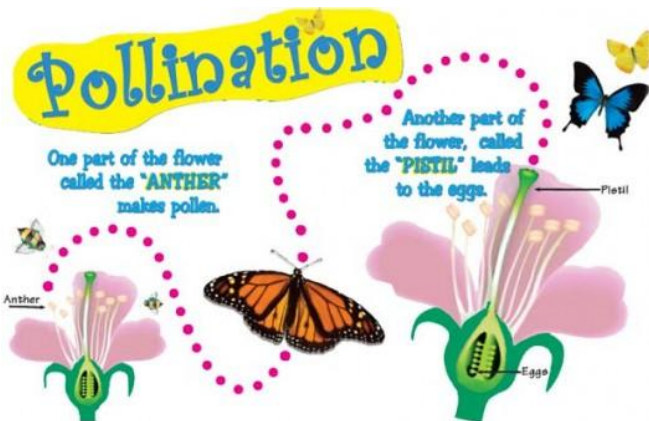
She loves the daffodils, her favorite flower in the Meadow. She also admires the permanent copper sunflower sculptures created by Larchmont artist Laura Lavan. But by far, her favorite part is the peace the meadow offers to visitors. She loves how she can go there

when she is stressed out; it gives her a feeling that she wouldn't get elsewhere.

The Murray Meadow will be the face of the future for our school, creating an all-purpose outdoor classroom for all of our upcoming students to enjoy.



Principal Jennifer Monaco with Murray Meadow landscape builder Annie Gaillard



Plants and Animals Work Together to Pollinate!

1st Grade Pollinators

By *Valentin Le Blanc*

Butterflies and bees are in danger. Pesticides, diseases, loss of habitat, and nectar rarity is leading to the decline of these useful pollinators. If these animals disappear, world famine could follow because they pollinate a majority of the world's crops. It could even cause a massive extinction for fruits and flowers, since these need to be pollinated to reproduce. For example, the monarch butterfly is decreasing because it can only lay its eggs on one plant; milkweed. This plant is being eliminated from gardens because of its disorderly growth and its taking of some farm space when it grows. As a result, monarch butterfly numbers are getting smaller at every migration. This is why we should save these useful pollinators.

Murray's first graders raise butterflies. But once they release them, there is a big problem...the butterflies need food to live! There is a solution, and that is the Pollinator Garden. The Pollinator Garden, which begins at the school's front entrance curves around to the Meadow, provides nectar-rich flowers for adult butterflies and host plants for caterpillars.



2nd Grade Sunflowers

By: *Madi Brown, Bella La Porta, and Keira White*

What is a habitat? A habitat is a place that is natural for an organism and supplies its needs, such as food, water and shelter. This is exactly what the second graders are learning in their habitat unit, according to second-grade teacher Tira Cirolia. Mrs. Cirolia is a member of the Garden Steering Committee and helped develop a sunflower planting project with garden volunteers that would teach students about habitat and help make the Meadow an attractive place for birds to visit. Now, how exactly can a tiny thing like a sunflower help a bird like, you might say, a blue jay? Well, our first interview with Murray garden expert Perri McKinney has an answer. "Sunflowers are packed with hundreds of delicious seeds that attract and nourish birds," Mrs. McKinney said. "Just like humans love to eat sunflower seeds, birds love them too. In fact, birds love them so much they often eat the seeds we plant before they have a chance to grow!"

Raspberries and blueberries growing in the Meadow also provide food, while trees and bushes provide shelter and safety. "I hope we'll have a lot of bird sightings in the Fall!" Mrs. McKinney said.

Another addition to the Meadow bird habitat will be a purple martin house, given by the Murray school community in memory of teacher Elizabeth Dillon.



Above: Second-grade students use rulers to check the spacing of sunflower seeds they planted in May. Left: Students study butterflies and other pollinators in the Meadow during garden club.

Interview with Annie Gaillard

By: Ciara Doogue, Eva Bransfield, Maddie Robinson, Anna Donahue, Bella Maniscalco

Have you noticed the wonderful Murray Meadow? Well, this couldn't have come to life without the help of Annie Gaillard, owner of landscape design company Breath of Spring. We would like to thank her for her time, effort, and resources!



Landscape builder Annie Gaillard and Murray garden educator Perri McKinney at the family planting day for the Meadow last fall.

Q- What inspired you to start gardening?

A- My mom inspired me to start gardening, I was forced to garden as a child and now I do it for a living.

Q - How has gardening affected your life?

A- Well, gardening has given me a huge amount of freedom. It is also very straightforward.

Q - Why did you give us your time, energy, and business to help our garden?

A- Since I am a fourth grade teacher, it makes sense that I like kids more than I like adults. I help schools because I think kids from your generation can make a difference. Some other schools I have helped are Sacred Heart, Holy Child, Pelham Public School, Rye, and so many more.

Q - How do you think Murray Meadow benefits kids?

A - I think that Murray Meadow allows kids to see the world differently. They get the chance to see the flowers bloom, and the beautiful butterflies. It makes them feel free.

Q - Do you have any good gardening tips that could help the environment?

A - I think it's all in the dirt- if you put all the right ingredients then the bees will come and the plant will be healthier.

Birds of the Meadow

By Vivian Parrish, Sebastian Gold, and Henley Evans

There are many different species of birds that will visit the Murray Meadow. Here are insights on some of the species you might see:

1. Ruby Throated Hummingbird

The Ruby Throated Hummingbird is an important bird because they are pollinators. Pollinators help keep our flowers and plants alive. Some fun facts about this bird are, they can beat their wings 53 times a second. Sometimes they can even eat tree sap. Let's hope to find some this and next year.



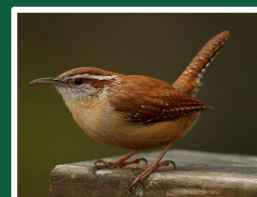
2. Purple Martin:

A declining species that is very important to the meadow is the Purple Martin. They are about 7-8 inches long and as their name suggests, an iridescent purple. They love to nest in Purple Martin Houses, which are different from standard bird houses. They like to eat food from while flying; they are aerial foragers. We hope that purple martins nest in boxes that we will provide for them.



3. Carolina Wren

This wren is hard to see but it can carry a lot of food and insects. This bird also has a very loud noise for its size that sounds like *Teakettle-teakettle-teakettle-TEA!* You can identify it because its tail sticks up like an angry cat. It is about 5 inches, so they are very small. Carolina Wrens will a fun species to spot in the Murray Meadow.





"Mozie Down to the Meadow"

Reporting By Ellie Konvisser & Jake Rosen

The Song

The song Mozie Down to the Meadow was written by Joe Brady, music teacher at Murray Avenue School. He wrote this song for his 8 a.m. singing group, the Murray Minstrels. After conferring with Perri McKinney, a garden expert who helped design and build the Murray Meadow, he wrote this song. At the end of the song is a poem called the Meadow promise written by Mrs. McKinney.

Interviewing Mr. Brady

Q: Where were the lyrics originated?

A: I wrote the song with the help of the Murray Minstrels.

Q: Where did you get the idea for a rap song?

A: The Minstrels were doing Hamiltonian which is a story through rap with lots of characters and the Meadow has lots of characters, too.

Q: What was the process of writing this song?

A: Title, Chorus, Verses/Raps, Meadow promise

Q: How long did it take?

A: Two months



Joe Brady with the Murray Minstrels

The Lyrics

Mosey down to the Meadow,
beneath the shade of the willow,
A place where we can go,
to get away from the flow.
Mosey down to the Meadow,
it's at the end of the rainbow,
Take a walk with me,
we'll watch the birds and the bees.

This story takes place at Murray Avenue
A lovely little street with a lovely little school.
We had this little spot but it wasn't so nice
We knew we had to fix it, no matter the price
Then an idea from Ms. Monaco
She said, time to get busy, let's make some rocks roll.

She called up Mrs. McKinney, a garden expert.
A lovely woman, who likes to dig in the dirt.
They worked it all out and they made up a plan,
The Murray Meadow, now isn't that grand!
First lots of paper, and lots forms to fill out
They needed more help, but they would get it no doubt.

They called on the parents from the PTA
They loved the idea and they said, yeah way!!
The big money came from the Schools Foundation
They make a better world for the next generation
So they rolled up their sleeves and went to work
Make our school better, the greatest perk

They dug, they lifted, weeded and hoed
They planted, and watered, and it started to grow.
The wind beneath our wings ---Annie Breath of Spring
She made this come to life just by doing her thing!
Now that we're here some special lines
The Meadow Promise, please recite

Ladies and gentlemen..The Meadow Promise

Butterfly wings ...birds sing
Baby bees...mighty trees
Leaves rustle...insects bustle
Flowers bright...warm sunlight
Rocks and soil, earthworms toil,
let them be, you and me

THANKS TO:

Joe Brady Pam Brandman Jesse Dancy
Tina Dolan Annie Gaillard Lori Lefevre
Perri McKinney Jennifer Monaco

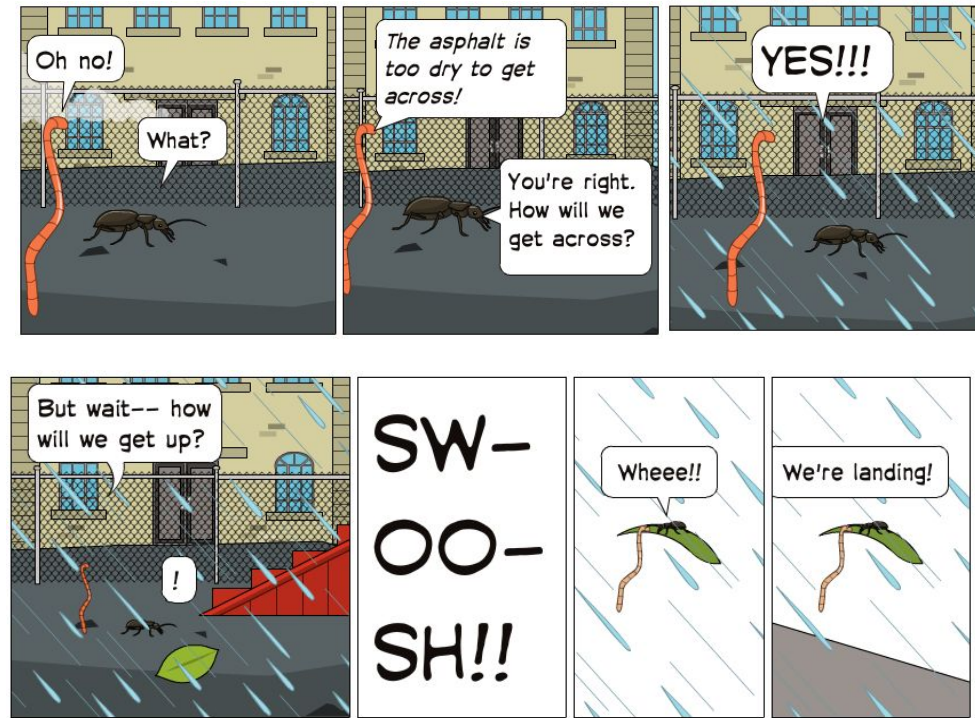
The ADVENTURES of

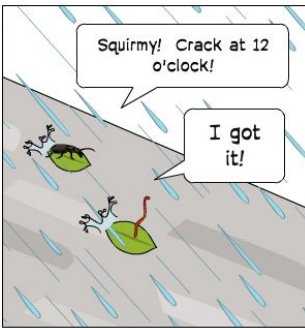
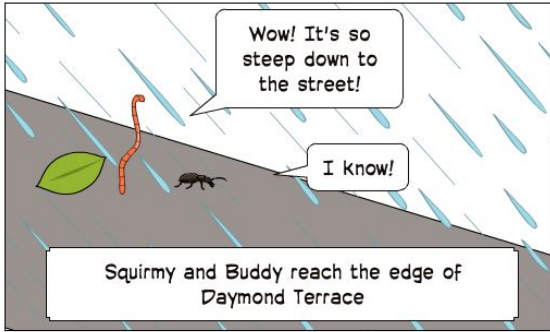
Squirmy the worm

By: Bowman Edebohls, Corey Sherman, Dylan Jaffee, Ethan Ivler, Jem Klancnik and Katie Raso



SQUIRMY AND BUDDY SET OUT ACROSS THE BLACKTOP FOR THE MURRAY MEADOW.





SQUIRMY AND BUDDY HAVE MADE IT TO DAYMON TERRACE AND SEE THE MURRAY MEADOW...



MIRACULOUSLY SQUIRMY AND BUDDY FIND THEMSELVES AT THE MURRAY MEADOW!

