

Namasté Children's House LLC was founded in 2002 to foster a love of learning and to educate children to be caring, socially responsible citizens of their community and world. The educational programs involve children from 2 years and 5 months to 9 years of age. NCH seeks to educate the whole child, applying the Montessori philosophy, in a family-oriented environment. The philosophy of NCH is based on the principles of Dr. Maria Montessori, whose holistic vision of education focuses on the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of the child.

A hallmark of Montessori education is its hands-on approach to learning. In that spirit, Namasté Children's House is applying for the Audubon Grant to build a community garden for the purposes of:

- Creating a healthy ecosystem for our area;
- Supporting bird populations necessary for controlling insect populations; and
- Providing hands-on, immersive curricula for our students.

1. How will the grant money be used in developing this project?

Grant money will be allocated to the purchase of plant life and materials necessary for the creation of a community green space (see budget, attached).

Namaste Children's Garden Budget

ITEM	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Grant		
Bird Bath Fountain	\$250.00	
Nesting Boxes	\$100.00	
Plants	\$475.00	
Suet Feeders	\$12.00	
Community Garden Sign	\$29.00	
Salt Marsh Hay	\$24.00	
Soil Test Kit	\$70.00	
Binoculars	\$50.00	
Botany Cabinet	\$107.95	
Observation Journals 20 @ 6.95	\$140.00	
Children Garden Tools	\$70.00	
Children's Garden Fort	\$69.98	
Sunflower Seeds	\$14.95	
SUBTOTAL	\$1,412.88	

Family Donation		
Homemade Suet Material	\$50.00	
Nesting Material Hangers	\$20.00	
SUBTOTAL	\$70.00	
School		
Build A Bird Feeder	\$22.00	
Compost	\$200.00	
Bark Mulch	\$250.00	
SUBTOTAL	\$472.00	
TOTAL	\$1954.88	

2. If you are requesting some assistance, please describe what type is needed — i.e. Audubon programs for students, curricula support, teacher training or other. Your request must be connected with your project.

We believe integrating Audubon programs for students, to include two in-house presentations, would greatly enhance our existing Montessori botany and zoology curricula in the context of our proposed project. We are specifically interested in hosting “Birds for Beginners” and “Avian Adventures: NH Birds”.

3. Briefly describe the project team members’ duties at school or community and their role on the team. Of these members, do any have training (formal or informal) in environmental studies (please describe briefly)?

Susan DeMont: Project Lead and Oversight - Susan will oversee the overall implementation of the garden project. She will coordinate curriculum integration and delivery in the classroom setting. Susan has Montessori botany curriculum training.

Jessica Clark: Project Liaison - Jessica will coordinate communication with the NH Audubon/US Fish and Wildlife grant coordinator and ensure necessary project documentation, including tracking and submitting grant expenditures. Jessica has Montessori botany curriculum training.

Jessica Blanchard: Parent Liaison - Jessica will support implementation and coordination amongst families involved in the project for year one. The coordination will include securing support of families for direct planting, special projects such as suet food making and nest materials activity, and ongoing maintenance of the project.

Eric Berry: Project Support- Eric is a professor of botany at our local college, as well as a parent, and has committed his expertise and support to the project.

Uncanoonuc Mountain Perennials, a local nursery specializing in perennials, has also volunteered as a community partner. It is our intention to gather the school community at the garden for a tour and a discussion about the plants we will be buying. The children will then be able to choose and purchase the plants that are best suited for our garden. The staff at Uncanoonuc Mountain Perennials has also agreed to help make recommendations on design and layout for maximum impact and be included in a press release regarding the project.

4. How will this project connect students with the school yard or nearby natural area?

Students will be involved directly in the research, planting, and maintenance of the garden space. The children will also be able to utilize the space in the context of their botany and zoology curricula for years to come.

5. Implementing a schoolyard project, is a perfect opportunity to involve students in a real-life, hands-on project. If you are planning to involve students in the implementation and maintenance of the project, please summarize how.

We intend to involve students in the full life-cycle of the project, to include planning, implementation, maintenance, and exploration and observation. Working within our established Montessori botany and zoology curricula, student involvement will include the following:

- Planning
 - Measuring available garden space
 - Researching plant species' needs including necessary light, water, space requirements, and the type of insects they may attract
 - Researching habitat and dietary preferences of birds we choose to attract
 - Conducting soil testing
- Implementation
 - Planting
 - Installing garden features (e.g.: suet feeders, nesting boxes)
- Maintenance
 - Weeding, mulching, seasonal clean-up
 - Nesting materials creation
 - Year-round food cultivation for bird populations to include sunflower seed planting and harvesting
- Exploration and Observation
 - Experiments to demonstrate the importance and function of water, light, and nutrients for plants
 - Classifying different plant and bird species
 - Exploring the external parts of a plant and their functions
 - Exploring the external parts and body functions of birds

6. What is the connection between the project and the curriculum? How will it be integrated? Please include targeted grade(s) and the standards that apply. Are the teachers in the targeted grade(s) committed to using the project area?

The project will be a central component of our spring and fall curriculum. Children will be able to directly utilize the space to complete related coursework. With our multi-age classroom setting, children ages 3-6 years old and children 6-9 years old will be caretakers of the garden, and in turn, the garden will function as their classroom. All of the teachers are committed and excited about the prospect of the proposal and utilizing the garden for lessons.

7. How will the community be involved in the planning, implementation, and/or maintenance of this project? (Beneficial but not required).

It is the intention of the school to invite the local community to come and utilize the space for bird watching or additional plant study. Throughout the months of May and June the school intends to offer community garden hours on the second and fourth Saturday of the month where the garden will be available for exploration. We will make the community aware of these events through social media postings, a press release, and online community calendars.

8. How will this project be maintained or sustained in the future? Is the schoolyard maintenance staff aware of this project and agreeable about cooperating in its management? (The intent of this question is to ensure that the project management communications are clear so the area is protected from actions such as unplanned mowing or tree removal.)

The project will be maintained in the future by the entire Namasté school community and this maintenance will be included in future school budgets. The benefit of our proposal is the full involvement and investment of the Namasté community, from owner to parents. All maintenance of the exterior is currently done in-house, and Jessica Clark and Susan DeMont are committed to caring for the space through the summer months including incorporating use of the space during our summer session offerings with the children.

9. What is your timeline for completing this project?

Pending grant award, we will begin our preparations immediately with integration of research and planning with the children in the classroom. We would like to complete planting in May 2016 to allow us to utilize the garden space through the conclusion of the school year and during our summer session. We will continue curriculum integration into the 2016-2017 school year and the future.

10. How will you evaluate the project's success? Specifically, how will you know how students have benefited? Please connect this with your project objectives.

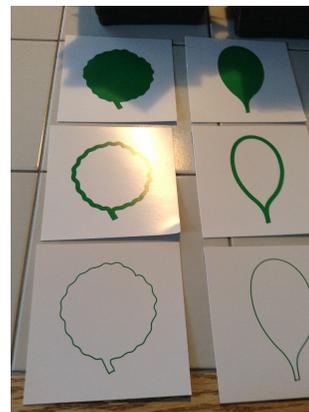
We will evaluate the project's success and its benefit to our students in the following ways:

- The amount of time the children spend directly in the garden
- Age appropriate curriculum integration, including the following objectives:
 - Identifying and classifying plant species and leaf shapes within the garden
 - Identifying and tracking migratory bird species within the garden
 - Identifying and tracking insects within the garden
 - Identifying external parts of a plant and their functions
 - Identifying the external parts and body functions of birds

Ultimately, the best measure of the project's success will be our students' and community's enthusiasm for the garden space and the learning opportunities it affords.



Example of external parts of a bird material



Example of botany material