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root2RISE



We believe ...

All children deserve to feel a sense of belonging to the land, that which sustains all living things, thrives in diversity and grows the food we eat to nourish our bodies. We believe inclusive outdoor learning has a place in public education and will empower students to:

- Discover their connection to each other, their community and the world.
- Explore multi-cultural practices, traditions and history in farming and food.
- Advocate for climate health and social justice.

Our Mission ...

We seek to ensure ALL children in the West Hartford community have access to meaningful, empowering and culturally relevant outdoor learning experiences while staying true to our values around equity, anti-racism, stewardship and community.



3 Questions

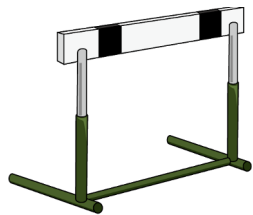
What makes the outdoor learning experience so important?



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We seek to ensure ALL children in the West Hartford community have access to meaningful, empowering and culturally relevant outdoor learning experiences while staying true to our values around equity, anti-racism, stewardship and community.

What are the barriers to accessing these outdoor spaces?



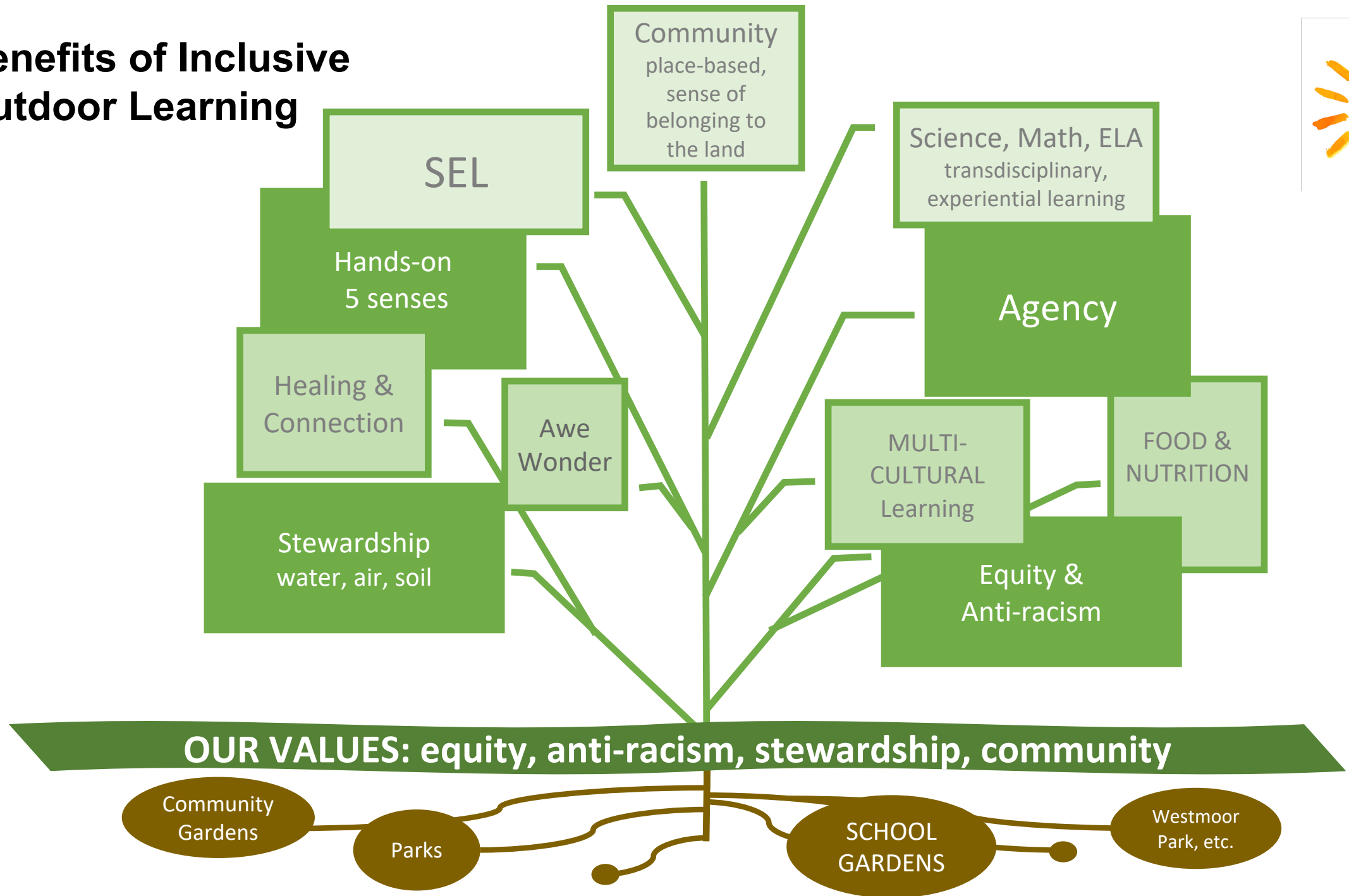
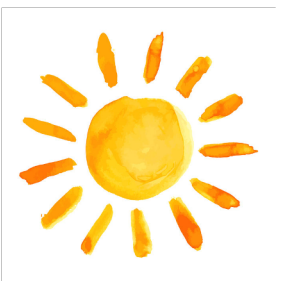
- Distractions, phones, video games
- Lack of family/caregiver resources, transportation or time
- **Marginalization or exclusion**

What does an outdoor learning experience look like?

- Municipal Parks
- Westmoor Park, Spice Bush - field Trips through school
- School, community gardens



Benefits of Inclusive Outdoor Learning



Advocate through existing programs

Farm stands/markets

Schoolyard habitats

*Leisure Services
Parks, Westmoor*

Elementary School Learning Gardens

WHPS, EDC

Expand Community Gardens

Middle and High School connections

Develop programs for others (Elmwood CC)

Indoor gardening

GOAL

Connect all children to accessible, inclusive, outdoor learning experiences.



STRATEGY

Observation
data collection
Education
through programs & advocacy
Collaboration
partners



SPRING 2021

Outdoor learning has a place in public school education – let's start there.





School Learning Garden Initiative - Spring 2021

Learning from Experience:

- School gardens are awesome!
- Lack resources, funding and leadership (most are 100% volunteer)
- Welcoming to all people?
- Must address all barriers
- Multi-cultural, cross-cultural
- No two gardens alike!
- A resource for the entire community



Spring 2021



school
learning
garden
support
organization

1
community
soil
seeds
plants
tools
fundraising
maintenance

2
schoolyard design
raised bed
(re)construction
coordinate volunteers &
lesson planning

3
engage school community, understand
culture & needs, farming & food
coordinate with teachers to make
curricular connections
45 min, 1x per week, 6 weeks
1 grade, 3 classes
Deep connections to each other and
community

Lesson snapshot:

Introduction to the Garden Community. The garden is a habitat filled with living and non-living things that exist in a community, just like us! We will tour the garden, record interesting flora and fauna in Nature Journals along with observations about environmental factors like date, time, season and location of sun. We will take this opportunity to learn more about our community by asking important questions. Who has lived here? Who tended this land before us? What is the history of this specific neighborhood? Interview school alumni to understand school history. Did they have a school garden? What used to grow here? Who lives here and what grows here now? What do you grow at home or any place you've called home? How have you adapted? Just like the soil beneath our feet, our community is beautifully diverse and stronger because of it.

Garden companions. As we plant seeds and seedlings in our edible and flower garden spaces, we can study the concepts of competition and cooperation. What growing conditions do plants prefer? Do all plants have the same needs? Plants are just like us, they need nutrients, water and sunlight and space. Experiment by setting aside a small section of the garden where we let weeds – what is a weed? - grow and monitor how this affects growth. Some plants we intentionally grow together because they are companions. We will grow a three-sisters garden and study the indigenous cultures that shared this knowledge. How else can we offer our gratitude to the indigenous peoples to whom this land once belonged? Begin the process of creating a land acknowledgement. Can anyone offer examples of companion planting from their culture(s)?

