



# OVERTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Dawn Seright, Program Manager, Overton ES

# Project

**The Why:** Provide a space for an outdoor classroom that fosters academic skills, SEL learning, and community building. All Overton scholars will have access to the garden and teachers will be encouraged to provide academic lessons using the outdoor classroom. The garden will be sustainable so that it can be continually cared for and a long-term part of the community. CIS students will use the outdoor classroom for SEL activities. These activities include creating the personalized stones, mindfulness activities, and nature based therapeutic activities. The stones will be placed throughout the garden to represent our connection with each other and the natural world. Overton students will take part in caring for the garden plants.

**The Project Description:** Due to Covid and school closures the community garden at Overton has suffered. This project is to bring the garden back to life in a sustainable way that provides an outdoor classroom for academic and social emotional learning (SEL) while centering on community. The garden provides an understanding of interdependent relationships, composting, and the food chain. It develops a connection to healthy eating and healthy snacks. It also provides a space for building many social emotional skills. The garden helps students practice building relationships through cooperation, listening, and problem solving.

# Project Details

About 20 Volunteers participated in helping to create the garden.

About 10 classrooms participated in creating stones and tending to the garden.



About 50 students created kindness stones for the garden.



# Project Outcomes

## Pre and Post Survey Results

10 Students participated in  
pre and post surveys



4 students reports feelings more  
calm after gardening.

40%

2 students reported feeling  
more hopeful or ready to  
be at school.





# Project Summary

As the garden was being built, students were very excited to participate. Students seemed eager to plant and help with activities. Several classrooms used the outdoor classroom for science related activities. Students shared that they enjoyed being in the garden and often volunteered to help with planting and watering. One goal of the project was to have students feel engaged in learning in an outdoor classroom. This was successful for several classes and the hope is to sustain this for the upcoming school years.



# Success

A success of the project was the school and community coming together to create the landscape of the garden and the Overton students eagerness to help out. Before the end of the school year, we were able to grow radishes and have students try them! We have also planted many flowers that continue to bloom! Another success is the many Kindness stones that promote SEL skills and provide a unique landscape representing our community!



# Challenge

A challenge of the project was the actual labor of creating the garden as well as getting teachers excited to have students learning outside. Much of this challenge has come from it being a Covid school year where many are worn out and motivation is a difficult.

A way that we overcame the challenge was to work as a team on campus to promote support and activities. The teachers and students had a variety of ways to interact with the garden like painting kindness stones, planting radishes or flowers. Giving choices helped to develop a joint effort and motivation to sustain the outdoor classroom.



# How did your Grant Funds Support the Project?

The funds awarded made it possible to have kindness stones for all our students, gather some of the foundations for making the garden, and having seeds for the garden. It could not have been done without these funds!





# I am hopeful I have after this grant-funded project

I hope that the campus continues to utilize the green space for all types of learning and coming together as a community. I hope that noticing the care, connection, time, and patience our natural environment needs to grow provides space for students and teachers to reflect on their place in the ecosystem. I hope that it continues to help demonstrate the deep reliance we have on each other and the natural world encouraging the self-awareness of each student's own values.

