



LIVING-CLASSROOM

Inspiring children to learn and
value our natural world through
garden-based education.



The **Living Classroom** collaborates with schools and communities to provide engaging, hands-on lessons that stimulate curiosity and to create beautiful and educational school gardens. We offer a full range of start-up and on-going support services, including K-8 lesson plans and kits, garden design and development, docent and staff training, fundraising guidance, and a technology platform for scheduling and communications.





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Living Classroom programs — based at a particular school site or across a school district — combine lesson plans and materials with trained volunteer docents to

offer quality instruction using the school gardens and the outdoors as the main classroom. Through Living Classroom lessons, students explore and experience concepts in science, as well as social studies and math. All lessons are aligned with State standards and correlate directly with curriculum.



OUR SERVICES

Living Classroom provides all-inclusive start-up services to new district- or site-based programs and ongoing services to established programs. We pride ourselves in helping schools create flexible and customized programs that fit their needs. Our services include:

Operations Staff Training

Training of all operations staff on every aspect of job duties. Established program support primarily consists of website, software and fundraising support.

Volunteer Training

Training of docents from the local community and modeling lessons in the classroom.

Curriculum

Living Classroom lesson plans and collateral materials are all provided. Lessons are revised as recommended by input from teachers and members of the Living Classroom curriculum committee.

Administration, Publicity and Communications

Detailed overview of all elements of program operation, file organization, job descriptions, communications, outreach and administrative templates, are provided.



Website

The Living Classroom website provides an excellent and comprehensive description of the Program, updated events of interest and for teacher and docent sign ups for lessons. The website has direct links for all school districts to access information only for that school district.

Garden Design and Installation

School garden design services and installation oversight can be provided to assure that gardens provide the best fit for Living Classroom lessons. Specific recommendations for plant species, garden features and specifications, maintenance and irrigation are also provided.

Scheduling Software and Support

Provide scheduling software customized for Living Classroom lesson sign ups by teachers and software to send electronic lesson evaluations to teachers.

Fundraising Support

Support for grant writing and outreach to funders to successfully solicit operating funds.



OUR LESSONS

Our 50 lessons focus on life sciences, including plant life cycles, adaptations, biodiversity, etc., but several lessons also foster a greater understanding of social studies and math concepts. All are aligned with California State and Common Core standards. Some lessons are seasonal, others are successive, and still others can be conducted in the classroom to allow for year-round instruction. All involve direct observation and hands-on learning. Our lessons include full documentation and a detailed list of lesson kit supplies.

Our Gardens

Living Classroom gardens provide beautiful and stimulating outdoor learning environments and are wonderful assets to a school campus. We help schools develop both edible and native habitat gardens to attract pollinators and provide the basis for learning ecology and ethnobotany. Besides the garden-based lessons, the gardens are also used for creative play during recess and after school hours.

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED:

- Delivered more than 2,000 lessons to hundreds of classrooms, serving over 120 teachers and reaching more than 5,000 students.
- Secured more than \$360,000 in private funding from local foundations, PTAs, corporations and individuals providing 100% the Living Classroom program budgets.
- Volunteers provided more than 7,500 hours of service to Living Classroom as of April, 2013.
- Trained and supported more than 70 docents to teach Living Classroom lessons.



- Received two awards including the Acterra Business Environmental Award and the Clorox Green Heroes Award which was awarded to 10 exemplary community-based environmental programs around the United States.

INFORMATION AS OF: 1/14/2013



WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

“Using living things as a basis of study is much more interesting and stimulating than the textbook where much of the learning is abstract. Students can see changes before their very eyes, they can measure, predict, organize and interpret data, form hypotheses and identify variables. Lessons on life cycles, plant anatomy, adaptations, food webs, decomposition, ecology, diversity of life, soil....are all perfect for learning in a school garden setting.”

“Living Classroom lessons are designed to awaken students’ innate curiosity regarding the world around them. The very nature of the content is enough to keep young learners engaged throughout our time together, and the level of student participation, in my experience, is unparalleled. Curious and engaged children who actively participate in their learning is a recipe for success!”

“The Living Classroom is a great way to support teachers by providing high quality, challenging lessons which tie in to our curriculum. My students look forward to learning from the volunteer docents and I enjoy the change of pace.”

FROM THE DOCENTS

“As a volunteer docent, I look forward to teaching Living Classroom lessons. The children are always excited to see us and enjoy the various educational experiences we bring to them. When we visit a classroom, the students know that they are going to enjoy learning with us!”

“As a parent of two students, I believe that we need to make a concerted effort to educate our children about nature and the environment and am thrilled to make a contribution to our schools by volunteering to work with the Living Classroom.”

A PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

“We’ve enjoyed the benefits of science and other lessons given in our educational gardens. The kids love it, learn effectively, and as a side benefit, have a creative, beautiful, and unstructured play area to enjoy during recess as an alternative to the blacktop or playground.”

““ The future will belong to the nature-smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of the natural world and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need. ””

**Richard Louv, Recipient of the Audubon Medal and
Author of Last Child in the Woods**



Our Community Partners

Living Classroom Programs would not be possible without the generous contributions of local foundations, organizations, businesses, and individuals. Our donors over the past five years include:

The Los Altos Educational Foundation • David and Lucile Packard Foundation • Morgan Family Foundation • Los Altos Community Foundation Community Grants Program and Youth Philanthropy Program • Michael Lee Foundation • Clorox "Green Heroes" Grant • Los Altos Kiwanis Club • Los Altos Rotary Club • Whole Foods Market, Los Altos • Mountain View Kiwanis Club • Symantec Corporation • Applied Materials Foundation • Swagelok Northern California • Local PTAs • Individuals

In kind Donors

Coyote Valley Nursery • Suncrest Nurseries • Valley Crest Tree • Capitol Wholesale Nursery • Peninsula Building Materials • Summerwinds Nursery • Sacred Ground Enterprises • Lyngso Garden Materials • Boy Scouts of America (Eagle Scout Projects)



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Living Classroom is a fiduciary program of the Los Altos Community Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, and has filed for independent tax-exempt status. All contributions to Living Classroom are tax-deductible.

For more information about Living Classroom, including lesson descriptions, services provided, photos and videos, news and updates and volunteer opportunities, please visit: **www.Living-Classroom.org** or contact us at: **info@Living-Classroom.org**

