

## EE and 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

A detailed example and representative list

### Example: The Heritage Project

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In a rural community where 85% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, the Heritage Project provides 2,500 K-12 students with enriching and exciting after school activities, courses, and celebrations. Through a partnership between three school districts and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, an exceptional program has evolved to complement the Heritage Project's other academic and cultural offerings.

Teachers and administrators at the Heritage Project recognize Sequoia and Kings Canyon as invaluable resources for teaching and inspiring their students. Once a week, students meet with a park ranger in order to learn about topics related to the Parks, such as cycles of forest fires and the adaptations of local animals to their habitats. In order to bring these lessons to life, students frequently visit the Parks for hands-on experience.

The Heritage Project features many other environmental education classes and activities, combining recreation and exercise with learning. For example, students learn about river ecology while rafting, kayaking, and hiking around the local lake. The horseback riding program incorporates lessons on how to care for horses in their environment. Other hands-on environmental education courses have involved arts in nature, weed eradication, and zoology. In these and many other courses, students learn to understand the world around them while developing skills for environmental decision-making and citizenship.

Educators at the Heritage Project have found that hands-on experiences, such as a real wolf visiting from Montana, have inspired greater student motivation to learn. The program has yielded many successes:

- Nearly three-quarters of local students have become involved in the Heritage Project.
- Since its inception, test scores in both language and math have improved.
- The incidence of behavioral problems in the classroom has decreased, suggesting that the Heritage Project has endowed its participants with better social skills.
- Increasing numbers of parents are becoming involved in the school, and the Heritage Project plans on further encouraging this trend through a new community education center.

***ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND  
21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS***

The following programs, listed in the U.S. Department of Education Program Database at <http://www.ed.gov/21stcclc>, demonstrate how environmental education can be successfully integrated into 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers.

**Auburn 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center, Auburn ME**

This Center assists students in meeting state and local learning standards through a wide variety of programs, including environmental projects and service-learning.

**Boulevard 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center, Boulevard CA**

Environmental technology classes, community projects, and hands-on science form just a few of the hubs of this innovative CCLC.

**Charleston 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center, Charleston SC**

The Charleston CCLC offers a broad range of activities, including opportunities for service-learning and hands-on environmental studies.

**Common Ground Community Learning Center, New Haven CT**

The New Haven Ecology Project has established this CCLC at the 20-acre site of the Common Ground High School. The Common Ground CCLC provides Saturday morning programs on gardening and the natural world as well as a summer ecology camp. This CCLC offers a safe, drug-free environment for middle school students, high school students, families, and residents.

**Decatur 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center, Decatur GA**

The summer component of this CCLC includes summer day camps with environmental and reading specialists integrated into the program staff.

**Dine Family Learning Center, Rock Point AZ**

The Dine Family Learning Center offers a series of after school, weekend, and summer learning opportunities for Rock Point students and their families. The Center organizes activities around interrelated themes identified with the Native American Youth Agenda. The environment ranks high among these themes.

**Heritage Project, Woodlake CA**

The environmental component of the Heritage Project consists of several classes and activities. Students visit nearby Sequoia National Park for hands on experience and instruction from park rangers. The Project also features horseback riding programs where students learn how to ride and care for horses in their environment. This past session

featured a class that combined exercise and learning about local ecology during long educational walks around the local lake. Other classes of interest have involved arts in

nature, weed eradication, river ecology and rafting, and kayaking. One class even spurred a visit from a real Montana wolf.

**John Hopkins Middle 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center, Largo FL**

The John Hopkins Middle 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC offers classes in environmental science, health, technology, and other academic and social areas. John Hopkins Middle School houses a dual magnet program for middle school youth focusing on arts and the environment.

**La Familia Community Learning Center (LFCLC), Oakland CA**

LFCLC serves a primarily Spanish-speaking youth population from East Oakland. Training in ecological practices in community gardening practices is one of the many academic, developmental, cultural, and recreational offerings at LFCLC.

**Lake County 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Tavares FL**

These CCLCs strive to increase opportunity for rural youth in the area. One of the objectives is to create exploration stations that will focus on developing a sense of environmental citizenry as well as other social and academic skills.

**Learning Centers, Sausalito CA**

The Learning Centers provide opportunities for education such as tutoring, homework help, computer and Internet classes, and cultural and social enrichment. The Headlands Institute focuses on providing the strong environmental education component of the program.

**Lubbock CCLC, Lubbock TX**

At this CCLC, the environment forms one of the organizing themes for an integrated curriculum involving science, technology, reading, and mathematics. The interactive program involves many off-campus field trips to broaden the experience base of the students.

**Meriden Public Schools Community Learning Center, Meriden CT**

The Meriden Public Schools Community Learning Center offers ecology studies and other activities for a population of high-poverty, high-risk youth.

**Plumas 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Quincy CA**

Through the development of a comprehensive art and environmental program, the Plumas 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs provide after school and summer programs to increase opportunities for middle and high school students to become academically successful. The program utilizes visual and performing artists, cultural experts, and environmentalists to provide students with new learning and community service opportunities.

**Portland 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Portland OR**

This program enables nearly 2,000 students and community members to become involved in inquiry-based environmental learning projects connecting the curriculum with community assets and concerns.

**Project SCALE Centers, Bronx NY**

At each of three sites, Project SCALE promotes after school interdisciplinary learning through programs and services including environmental education.

**Sanford 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Sanford FL**

The Sanford CCLCs include science and environmental clubs into their wide variety of offerings.

**S.M.I.L.E.S., Bristol VA**

The S.M.I.L.E.S. (Students More Involved in Learning to Enhance Success) Program seeks to address the needs of the children in a rural, low-income community. Enrichment activities include environmental programs in addition to other academic and recreational opportunities.

**UPLINC, Bronx NY**

In a neighborhood plagued with high-poverty, low academic achievement, and above average crime rates, UPLINC helps students meet academic standards through collaborative academic programs and recreational offerings. One such program is the environmental/ plant sciences program, which provides a highly enriching after school activity.