

Application for WLS Mini-Grant
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Larchmont Public Library
121 Larchmont Avenue
Larchmont, NY 10538

March 30, 2015

Larchmont Public Library seeks a WSL Mini-Grant in the amount of \$1210.06 for three programs; **Blossoms, Bees and Butterflies, Amazing Bugs Around Us and If Trees Could Talk**. The purpose of these programs is to educate children to see the connection of their place in the world around them, and the community of systems and cycles of natural life- specifically the plants, trees and insects and other organisms that grow and live on the grounds of the Larchmont Public Library. We are seeking funds to bring environmental educators to the library from Sheldrake Nature Center, a local nature center to lead these three programs. The environmental educators will conduct three 1 ½ hour programs with activities, and then I will meet with the children as a group to talk about our experiences and make notes in our Nature Journals. Each child will bring their journal to the next program, so it will be a progressive process which reflects on what we learned and observed. We will also purchase books needed to enforce the concepts introduced, and we are including funding for purchasing materials needed to plant native flowers that support insect life here at the library, as well as some plants for the children to plant and care for in their living places. The goal of these three programs is to help children understand that our community houses wildlife as well as people, and to see the interdependence of all living things. They will also understand that diversity is important

in the cycles of life, and that we as community have a sense of place in the interdependent cycles of life .

These programs will each reach twenty 6-8 year olds. The first program, **Blossoms, Bees and Butterflies**, will be scheduled August 4, 2015. Children will learn about the mutual symbiotic relationship between plants and insects; how plants need insects to pollinate their flowers and ensure the creation of seeds for future plants, and how insects need plants to provide them with food in the form of pollen and nectar. Plant leaves also provide nesting sites and food for baby insects, which in turn provide food for birds and other wildlife. Flowers use special shapes and colors to attract insects so they can find their way and be most useful to the plants. Children will have the chance to examine up close with hand lenses different kinds of flowers and their many parts: petals, stamens, pistils, etc. Outside in the library garden we will go on an insect hunt to discover how many and what kinds of insects are visiting which flowers. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of native plants in ensuring the biodiversity of insects. The children will have a chance to plant their own flowers that are native to the area and beneficial to insects here in Larchmont. The library will have 6 containers of different flowers that the children can visit and watch, and the children will each take home plants to plant at their homes to nurture and watch. This will directly demonstrate to the children their ability to make a difference, and the interdependence of life all around us, two big ideas of sustainability. The plants will be planted in the garden at the end of fall , and identified so that children can continue to watch their growth and insects interactions throughout the years.

The second program, **Amazing Bugs Around Us**, will follow up in August 11, and is an extension of **Blossoms, Bees and Butterflies**. This program will expand beyond the plant-insect relationship to explore other insects and arthropods, from dragonflies zooming around in the air, to worms, millipedes and sowbugs who live in leaf litter and under logs. Children will examine specimens (living and non-living) of these amazing animals and learn about their important jobs in nature, from keeping down the mosquito population (dragonflies) to breaking down dead plant material into soil (decomposers like worms). The difference between insects and other arthropods will be briefly explained. We will go on a bug hunt outside the library, looking under shrubs and leaves to see what creatures we can find. We will also revisit the garden to see what new flowers and insects have appeared since our previous visit and plantings.

The third program, which will be scheduled on November 5, will also involve twenty 6-8 years olds and is titled **If Trees Could Talk**. This program will take place in the fall, and we will discuss how everyone enjoys the colors of tree leaves changing and falling to the ground. But what else is going on with those trees? Changes in the fall are only one part of the life cycle of these amazing giants, which provide shelter, food, and nesting sites for many animals, while providing cooling shade and moisture for people. Children will learn how every kind of tree makes its own food and has its own special leaf, flower, and seed. They will examine specimens of common local trees such as oak, maple, and hickory up close with hand lenses. Outside on the library grounds, we will look at different kinds of trees to determine what kind they are. We will also talk about what to look for in trees during the winter – their branching, shape, and also what they've

been hiding, such as bird and squirrel nests. We will them come back inside the library and look at some wonderful books about trees, and talk about the interdependence of humans on trees. The children will then work as partners to paint a picture and write about why we love trees. The paintings and journals produced from these programs will be an ongoing display in the children's room as part of our 175 celebration of the establishment of our community of Larchmont. The plantings will be marked so the public can observe changes in our garden through the end of the Summer and into the Fall as well.

The children will be impacting the community by sharing their knowledge of the connection and dependence we have on helpful plants and trees. Beside the plants, journals and paintings displayed for patrons to see, there will be beneficial native plants around the community that the children have planted. Our partners in this project is the Sheldrake Environmental Center which is located here in Larchmont at 685 Weaver Street, Larchmont, NY 10538. Jenny Geer, Community Programs Director, worked with me in designing these programs. The children and their parents will also benefit from knowing the other services and programs the Sheldrake Environmental Center offers in our community. The total project budget amount is \$1613.42 and we are asking for \$1210.06, or 75% of that to be funded by this grant, and the library will fund the other 25%, \$403.35.

Budget details

Environmental Educators, fees 3 programs @ 125.00 each	\$375.00
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60 peat pots	10 @ 1.99	\$ 19.90
40 medium flowers	40 @ 3.49	\$ 139.60
40 medium mountain mint plants	40 @ 3.49	\$ 139.60
6 bags potting soil	6 @ 3.99	\$ 23.94
6 large containers to place around library property	6 @ 40.00	\$ 240.00
poster board for Tree paintings	2 @ 35.59	\$ 71.18
10 sets of paint	10 @ 28.86	
\$288.60		
10 brush sets	10 @ 8.96	\$ 89.60
30 small journals (extra for new children)	30 @ 2.36	\$71.00
Books about soil and trees	11 at various prices	\$155.00
total		\$1613.42
75% Mini-Grant		\$1210.06
25% library		\$ 403.35