Environmental Education at the Lemberg Children’s Center at Brandeis University

Firefly Scientists’ Community Garden & Playground

Become a sponsor. Help bring our programs to more families with young children.
Why Environmental Education?

At the Lemberg Children’s Center, we believe that there is a need for our children, their families and our neighbors to develop an understanding of the interdependence of all life and to have access to healthy food.

In our densely packed urban setting and our technology-crowded lives, many people have insufficient opportunity to connect to their natural environments. Spending time in the garden reduces stress, builds empathy, connection, self-reflection, self-reliance and reverence for life.

At Lemberg, leaders in environmental education and organic gardening guide our community of children, educators, parents and college interns. Together, we study our local ecosystem as we build new habits for sustaining life. Children tend plants, observe wildlife, taste fresh-picked produce, and participate in building their own environment.

They examine seeds, plant parts, insects and worms. They know that living soil grows healthy food. Children who garden become adventurous eaters who love the taste of kale, radishes and basil. They use our produce to make smoothies, kale chips, pesto and other delicious dishes. We share the bounty within our community through family restaurant days and food donations.

Our Mission

Our goal is to raise children with environmental awareness, who develop habits for sustainable living. Through interdisciplinary environmental education, including hands-on science, reading and the arts, children recognize the value of the life around them, healthy eating, conservation and recycling.

The Firefly Scientists’ Community Garden and Playground is a creative laboratory for children and our collaborating partners to experience nature, food production and community engagement. Our educational programs include local schools, camps, parents, international visitors and Brandeis student clubs. These multi-age, cross-cultural interactions encourage social, emotional, and intellectual connections and build leadership skills, community service values, and meaningful friendships.

Our integrated garden/playground is made possible by donors who share our passion for environmental education. We’re seeking funding to maintain and expand our programs to include community groups and corporate sponsors from Waltham and surrounding towns. The budget to accomplish our 5-year expansion plan is $250K ($50K per year for 5 years). Please help us provide these vital experiences for children, families and the planet.
Our History

The Lemberg Children’s Center, founded in 1970, moved to its new location in 2014. We provide exceptional early education and care. Through collaborations with Brandeis University faculty, we support the development of leaders in education and psychology. We have over an acre of land available for cultivation. With the guidance of expert environmental educators and gardeners, we’ve transformed a barren hillside into a food forest with 20 fruit trees, kiwi and grape vines, berries, vegetables and herb gardens. We now have 11 raised beds, 5 of which are wheelchair accessible, a 1,000 sf in-ground vegetable garden, a greenhouse installed by a Brandeis University volunteer student group, and a wooded area for creative play, observation and contemplation. Each year, we expand our food production and improve the soil with organic, regenerative methods.

Donations

Your donation will help support:

- expansion of our food cultivation area and edible plantings in the playground
- community gardening and food education programs for local families and special needs adults
- environmental education training for college student interns
- collaboration with urban farmers and local organizations to increase food production and distribution
- salary for environmental educators and gardeners who manage operations and create vibrant education programs
- an outdoor sink to wash hands and produce
- permanent fencing essential to our children’s safety

Your generosity will inspire others to care about healthy living, the wisdom of nature and a sustainable future.

Contact Us to Schedule a Tour!

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Janet Fuchs
Director of Environmental Education

Elizabeth Lowe
Landscape Manager
Become a sponsor:
brandeis.edu/lemberg/support/environmental-education.html

Learn more on our website and watch our video:
brandeis.edu/lemberg/environmental-education/index.html