

College of Wooster, Geology Students —

In early Spring 2010, we got together with the College of Wooster Geology Students and Geology Professor Meagan Pollock to tour Zollinger's Sand and Gravel Pit and local area farms for "rock" education.

On that cold April day of field study, the students helped us find interesting rocks in the 3 different rock categories: Sedimentary, Metamorphic and Igneous. We found great samples to bring back for our very own Geo (Rock) Garden.

"Rocks are records of events that took place at the time they formed. They are books. They have a different vocabulary, a different alphabet, but you learn how to read them."

—John McPhee

Fall 2010 Entry Feature —

After receiving orders for engraved pavers, purchased by parents, teachers and community members as part of our fundraising efforts for the outdoor classroom, it was time to install them. An entry location was selected and Dan Bauman helped head this project installation with volunteers Brian Bauman, Matt Deidrick, Brian Croft, Chad Flickenger and David Vaughn. This paver feature will connect two sidewalks that will lead to the new pavilion. Thanks to Unilock, Inc., Rittman for their generous donation in materials!

Rain Barrel Contest Winners —

Thanks to the Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation Department, we were given two rain barrels to have in our garden to teach about water conservation and reusing our rain water to water our plants.

A contest was created between the third, fourth and fifth graders to design a "side" of the Rain Barrel. Looking for the best use of nature scenery, flowers/plants, insects/bugs and Ohio native land animals, two winners were chosen from each grade. The winners spent their free time in the art room, painting their design on the barrels with Elementary Art Teacher, Stacey Chapman overseeing this project.

Early Volunteer Workdays —

On the very first organized workday in May and in between raindrops, lots of volunteers came together to help install foundational stonework, form plant beds, layout pathways and establish hardscapes. Norwayne parent, Doug Rupp, helped create and install two entry benches repurposing old window stone from the old Burbank and Sterling Elementary School buildings. School Board Member, Earl Rupp, was his helper. Lots of rocks, dirt and heavy stuff were moved with the help from Norwayne parent, Rob Cutlip, who donated his excavating equipment and labor to get the job done. Our local Lowes store sent a representative to help assist volunteers building our toolshed, purchased from Lowes. The bulk of our river rock and other gravel used, were donated by John Baker of Baker Sand & Gravel and Lytle Construction. We cannot thank them enough for their large donation to our project.

Kids Planting Day —

After a break in the weather and on the last day of school, the kids had the opportunity to come into their garden and get their hands dirty. Rotating classes came out and learned about the special gardens they were assigned, the plants that went into them and the proper planting techniques. With minimal help from adults, the kids planted, mulched, and watered 90% of their garden. Some classes got to research their own plants, such as Miranda Bailey's students who researched non-invasive, native plants for an Alphabet Garden. The students had to find a plant that began with each letter of the alphabet and then designed their garden according to their plants needs.

Final Volunteer Workdays —

In the final workdays, volunteers came in to help plant donated perennials, mulch, weed, water and lay stone framework around the nearly finished gardens.

Solar Roof Installation —

A dedicated community member, Norwayne parent and locally skilled laborer, Travis Wertz of Wertz Custom Carpentry, headed this project during Phase II of the pavilion work. He donated many hours of work in the evenings along with Eric Sheppard, Doug Ingold, Mike Katanic, John Shilling and Dean Maibach to installing the seamless metal roof. The installation of the new solar panel system was guided by Keith Speirs and Barry Romich. Other great helpers involved with the pavilion roof and solar installation was Dale Glessner, Ben Gasser, Michael Sheppard, Ben Harklau and Principal, Dave Dreher.

Final Concrete Sidewalk —

Our newly poured sidewalk, connecting the entry garden to the pavilion, was the outdoor classroom's final concrete work. David Vaughn oversaw this job. If you look closely in the concrete, you may find a leaf or animal tracks for you to identify!

Final Pavilion Work 2011—

The pavilion had been purposely designed and constructed using low maintenance materials to help lessen overall maintenance in the future. As part of our final stage of construction, headed by Travis Wertz, the wood posts were wrapped and protected from weathering and the task of staining or painting. Electric was completed by Nick Gasser and Scott Maibach. The new pavilion has beautiful night time lighting for evening outings and meetings and plenty of outlet sources for community gatherings or outdoor classrooms activities.

Fall 2011 Bulb Planting with Kids —

During the cooler fall season, Kindergarten through third grades had the opportunity to come out and plant spring bulbs throughout the garden all by themselves! Jacki Leatherman instructed each class how to properly plant the bulbs. We are hopeful for a very colorful spring garden!