

Elizabeth Miller, AICP, ASLA

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Washington, DC 20001

202-210-0662

American Society of Landscape Architects
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Trustees:

As chair of the 2010 ASLA Legacy Project, I'm pleased to nominate the ASLA Potomac Chapter for the National Community Service Award for their work and dedication to the Calvin Coolidge High School Greenhouse Garden and Outdoor Classroom, located in upper northwest Washington, DC. The ASLA Potomac Chapter partnered with the ACE Mentoring Program of the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area, Inc. (ACE DC) in the Fall of 2009 to undertake the 2010 ASLA Legacy Project in conjunction with the ASLA National Convention in Washington, DC.

The ASLA Potomac Chapter Volunteer Team and Their Work

Over the course of 15 months, the ASLA Potomac Chapter volunteers work hand in hand with Coolidge High School, the Calvin Coolidge High School Alumni Association, and the community to prepare a Campus Beautification Master Plan and to design and build the Greenhouse Garden and Outdoor Classroom (the garden).

A team of local landscape architects enthusiastically participated to various degrees to plan, design, and build the garden. A core team of 18 landscape architects made significant contributions during various phases of the project and 12 of those took critical leadership roles and tirelessly worked to ensure the garden came to fruition. This dedicated team worked together not only to build a garden, but to help nurture a community. Through the following actions, the volunteer team:

- Participated in after school mentoring sessions;
- Facilitated a community-design charrette;
- Prepared construction drawings;
- Designed interpretative garden signs;
- Solicited donations from 37 landscape product vendors (examples of donations: included: paving and retaining wall blocks, irrigation, lighting, benches, planters, plants, trees, gravel, mulch and gardening tools) and more than a dozen local agencies or companies for donated food or services;
- Attended the 2010 Conference Opening Session with the students and escorted them thorough the Vendor Expo to view and talk about landscape products and meet the vendors that donated materials to the project;
- Coordinated among school administrators and community leaders;
- Coordinated delivery and staging of plant material, hardscape, and furnishings;
- Provided in-field assistance during heavy site construction;
- Led community volunteers that participated in each of three Build-It-Days to construct and plant the garden;
- Prepared a 70-page Garden Guide to ensure long term care and maintenance of the garden.

The Garden Guide includes as-built plans; furnishing details; a general maintenance schedule for watering, weeding, irrigation, and lighting; a summary of the garden's ecological value; plant lists and photos for identification; a seasonal care schedule; learning ideas; and a list of references to help maintain and enjoy the garden.

As the garden becomes established, several volunteers continue to provide technical advisory services to the school and the community; provide assistance with community organizing; and are working with the school administrators to help to integrate the garden into the school's curriculum.

How the Garden Came to Be

The garden grew out of the students' desire to refurbish a 1938 greenhouse that had fallen into disrepair in the late 1970s. For almost 40 years the greenhouse provided a living lab for agricultural and horticultural science education.

As First Lady, Michelle Obama was raising the nation's interest in healthy foods, the ACE DC students chose to refurbish the greenhouse as their design and engineering project. Their ultimate goal was to restore this keepsake and create the first LEED certified greenhouse in the city. The school, Alumni Association, and community took note –many of the alumni had fond memories of the greenhouse as part of their educational experience –and began a campaign to fund refurbishment of the greenhouse. It soon became evident that it was going to be difficult to raise the money.

In November 2009, the ASLA Potomac Chapter and ACE teamed up to see how we could help. It quickly became evident that the school and Alumni Association needed a vision plan to use as a fund raising tool.

The ASLA volunteers planned a community charrette to develop a master plan and to choose a priority project for the ASLA Legacy Project. In preparation, the landscape architect volunteers held five after school mentoring sessions with students about the Landscape Architecture profession. The students learned about the different types of work landscape architect do, they created and shared image boards illustrating the type of activities and spaces they would like to create, they took tree measurements and performed percolation tests, and had an introductory lesson on how to read site and construction plans.

In April 2010, more than 50 students, neighbors, teachers, and alumni participated in the charrette to prepare the Master Plan and to design a garden focused on the greenhouse. The master plan identifies short- and long-term projects the school and Alumni Association can use as a fundraising tool and guide implementation of the Master Plan. The Greenhouse Garden was the school's priority project.

Between April and June, landscape architect volunteers prepared construction drawings and a materials list for the purpose of determining what could be realistically built through donations and how to help focus the school's and the community's fund raising efforts. We were hopeful, but never expected that the garden would be fully constructed in less than a year!

With the materials list, **the volunteers went to work to solicit donations from the Expo Vendors.** The response exceeded our wildest expectations. Some vendors went well beyond the Expo floor, providing additional materials so that the design could be realized. The challenges were two-fold. First, we couldn't be choosy about the landscape products; the landscape architects had to creatively integrate a diverse range of materials into a cohesive and well-composed design that stayed true to the concept developed by the school and the community.

Secondly, the logistics of transporting and storing the quantity of materials was daunting, particularly since we had to move the donations off the Expo floor in early September and site construction was scheduled to start in late September. Other logistical issues were as challenging; we had to secure the materials and keep the plant materials alive until they could be installed well before the first freeze. With the good work of committed landscape architect volunteers, the generosity of the landscape industry, and the will of local advocates, we were successful in accomplishing our mission!

The volunteer league between 80 – 100 people–comprised of landscape architects, students, faculty, and community members – came together over two consecutive weekends in November 2010 and once in April 2011 to construct and plant the garden. The Build-It-Days were a great success thanks to the landscape architects, who led teams assigned to each of the 9 gardens. It was an incredible sight to watch the community come together and to see the students engage, work hard, learn, and walk away so proud of their accomplishments! We knew we succeeded when the students returned to participate in successive Build-It-Days and garden maintenance events.

The Garden

The garden incorporates nine distinct landscapes, each with a unique ecological purpose and learning objective. The garden's core consists of raised seasonal annual and vegetable planting beds that are boarded by shrub and butterfly gardens for host insects and pollinators. The rain and wetland gardens are designed to collect and clean stormwater to demonstrate the benefit of natural ecological systems. The Greenhouse is flanked by a contemplative memorial garden and a perennial shade garden. A sweeping meadow forms an arc to physically separate the structured garden areas from the school's side-yard lawn.

The school's intent is to foster learning opportunities that extend well beyond the observation of seasonal cycles. They see the garden as a vehicle to address wellness, social responsibility, community-building, and land stewardship. The garden is an

outdoor classroom that provides opportunities to enhance academic curriculum in math, science, and the humanities as well as provide the students with opportunities to learn about nutrition, to connect with nature, and to enjoy its beauty.

The garden also serves as a neighborhood amenity and brings the school and the community together and provides opportunities for positive interactions between students, peers, adults, and role models. Care for the garden will instill ownership, accomplishment, and pride, along with teaching life skills, such as cooperative work and respect for self and others.

The Garden Today

As a result of the partnership between ASLA Potomac Chapter, Coolidge High School and ACE DC, the Calvin Coolidge Alumni Association, and the Office of Public Education and Facility Management, the garden was substantially completed in April of 2010. There have been a few minor establishment issues that we have had to address, but the landscape volunteers came back together to tackle and solve these issues. The biggest challenge has been to keep the grounds maintenance crew from mowing the meadow! A small core of volunteers continues to educate the appropriate folks about sustainable garden practices.

The school and alumni association continue to organize quarterly community garden-day events for the labor intensive annual maintenance activities and to spruce the garden up for special occasions.

In August 2011, the District of Columbia passed the Healthy Schools Act that establishes:

- An Environmental Programs Office to support the schools in complying with the Act;
- An Environmental Literacy Curriculum Plan for the school system;
- A School Gardens Program to support school gardens through grants, curricula, technical assistance, and data collection; and
- Authority to allow schools to sell and to allow students to consume food grown in school gardens.

As a result, Coolidge High School is ahead of the game and is now looked upon as a leader not only in the community, but at the city and regional level! Other nearby elementary and middle schools have approached the high school about how they might adopt a portion of the garden to support their desire for enhancing their school's environmental literacy. Additionally, since 2010, the school has hosted various local and regional school garden and environmental symposia and workshops, and is becoming a regular stop on community garden and school garden tours. The garden will be a key stop on the American Horticultural Society's 2012 National Children's and Youth Garden Symposium tour.

As a result of the garden and continuing efforts of the alumni association, the school has been given tentative approval to renovate the 1938 greenhouse. As the garden is becoming a feature of the school, the faculty is incorporating more learning opportunities in the garden. During school days and even on the weekends, it is not unusual to see students gathered in the garden. On the weekends, it's common to see people walking through, sitting, observing, and talking about the garden; often times it is young fathers with their children, couples or friends out for a stroll, or runners who slow down to catch their breath for a few moments.

The Experience

The garden is truly functioning as a School Garden and a Community Garden, which I believe can be credited to the partnership that conceived it. While it took each entity of the partnership to realize the garden and all deserve due credit, it's the landscape architects that are my heroes. I often tear up when I think about how my colleagues devoted their time, talent, expertise, creativity, energy, and perseverance to bring the garden to fruition and provide the support for it to be successful.

Based on the size of the garden, the team originally thought a phasing plan to build the garden would be necessary. However, midway through the project, we were energized and motivated when we realized that- through a community effort- it may be possible to build the entire garden at once. It was daunting to know the number of elements and critical tasks that needed to fall into place. However, through the dedication, enthusiasm, and sheer will, the landscape architect team pulled it off. Working closely with our community partners, we took one step at a time, always planning ahead, and keeping our eye on the school's ultimate vision.

The Potomac Chapter Board and its leadership were very supportive throughout the duration of the project. The firms where the volunteers work also deserve acknowledgment; they were supportive or at least tolerant of lending their employees time during the workday when situations called for it. However, the volunteers need to be commended for carrying out their work responsibilities while juggling the tasks associated with the garden. These tasks took an incredible amount of coordination, production time, adherence to deadlines, and sometimes field work.

While planning, designing, and building the garden were rewarding, many of the volunteers expressed that their personal reward were the friendships and the professional relationships that were formed along the way. This was a result of the synchronicity, integrity, and cooperation among a group of dedicated individuals.

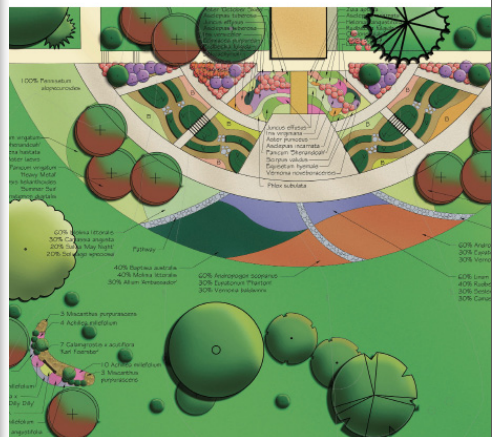
I've managed many projects and teams in a successful 28+ year career; it is this team that rises to the top. Over the course of the project, never once did I hear a harsh word, unconstructive criticism, a complaint, or expression of doubt; there were no egos to manage or territorial struggles. A random group of landscape architects came together as a team; everyone had a role and without their individual commitments, we would not have been successful in helping the school and community to build the Greenhouse Garden.

It is my pleasure that I nominate the ASLA Potomac Chapter for a National Community Service Honor Award for their contribution to building the Coolidge High School Greenhouse Garden to help foster the growth of a community.

Thank you for your consideration of the nomination.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Miller, ASLA
Chair, 2010 ASLA Legacy Project
Coolidge High School Greenhouse Garden





ACE MENTOR PROGRAM
ARCHITECTURE • CONSTRUCTION • ENGINEERING

American Society of Landscape Architects
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

On behalf of the ACE Mentor Program of the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area, Inc. (ACE DC), I would like to extend my recommendation for the 2010 ASLA Legacy Project at the Coolidge High School Greenhouse Gardens. Not only did our students learn a great deal about landscape architecture and civil engineering, but they gained an invaluable amount of experience – taking a project from the early planning stages through to implementation. The amount of engagement the students had in real-world tasks have set them on the path to pursuing design and construction careers, an experience ACE DC works hard to provide for its students.

In the early planning + design stages, students were directly engaged with ASLA volunteers and the community to develop both a campus master plan for Coolidge and a site design for the greenhouse gardens. This part of the project was an eye opener for the students, who learned how to articulate their ideas and cooperatively integrate them within those of the greater community. It's hard to do as a professional, let alone as a student. But they were up to the task, and with the help of ASLA, the plans took shape.

The excitement grew among the students as the construction phase was underway. Students worked side-by-side with community members and ASLA volunteers to get it all in the ground. It was incredibly rewarding to see all of the students gain a sense of pride, accomplishment and ownership over the new gardens. They have continued to be good stewards by helping the community with ongoing maintenance responsibilities, and hope to use this project as a way to gain interest in renovating the school's original 1938 greenhouse. Through the hard work of ASLA and ACE, I believe the community is well-positioned to make this happen.

The greenhouse gardens project opened the students' eyes to a world of challenges and opportunities in the fields of architecture, construction and engineering. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing future design professions get that first spark of creativity and realize it in a design that benefits the greater community. ACE DC is proud to have been a part of the project, and thank the Potomac ASLA chapter for all of their hard work.

Sincerely,

Trisha Grant
Executive Director



American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Letter of Support for the ASLA Potomac Chapter, Coolidge Legacy Project

Dear Board of Trustees:

On behalf of the CapitalSpace partner agencies I offer our support for the nomination of the ASLA Potomac Chapter for a National Community Service Honor Award in recognition of their leadership and commitment to create an exemplary schoolyard greening and outdoor classroom at Calvin Coolidge High School in Washington, DC. The CapitalSpace partners believe the Coolidge Legacy Project is an exemplary demonstration of how to improve community green spaces and build lasting agency and community involvement.

CapitalSpace is a partnership initiative of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPD), the National Park Service, the District of Columbia Office of Planning and District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation to develop shared strategies for working together on parks and open space throughout Washington, DC, particularly in the city's neighborhoods. Other District of Columbia agencies that helped develop the CapitalSpace Plan include the Public Schools, Department of the Environment, Office of Public Education and Facility Management, and Department of Transportation. For more information on CapitalSpace, please visit www.ncpc.gov/capitalspace/.

One of CapitalSpace's priorities is improving schoolyards, green spaces that are often ignored and underdeveloped in the heart of DC's neighborhoods. The Coolidge Legacy Project spearheaded by the Potomac Chapter was supported by the CapitalSpace partner agencies, and is recognized by the partners as a successful example of how to transform schoolyards and build lasting partnerships.


Effective partnerships are necessary to achieve the CapitalSpace vision for a park and open space system in the nation's capital that contributes to a healthy, sustainable city. The public-private partnerships galvanized by the Potomac Chapter around the Coolidge Legacy Project were exemplary. We saw this work first hand, as the Potomac Chapter engaged CapitalSpace partner agencies early in the project. Through the efforts of the Potomac Chapter, various agency staff provided technical expertise during the planning phase, construction equipment, garden tools and manpower during the construction phase, and volunteered at garden work days.

The CapitalSpace partners commend the Potomac Chapter for their leadership and commitment to realizing the Coolidge schoolyard greening project from plan to reality. Starting with a

Community Design Charrette, the ambitious concept design was implemented through the Potomac Chapter's work to coordinate time and resources from many public and private entities, as well as members of the local community. In particular, the Potomac Chapter involved numerous community stakeholders throughout the process, including Coolidge High School students and faculty, the Coolidge High School Alumni Association, local officials, and neighbors. This public engagement process also created a strong commitment from participants to maintain the garden in the future. Importantly, all of the participants truly realized their own ability to positively change their community.

Again, on behalf of the CapitalSpace partners, I strongly recommend the ASLA Potomac Chapter for the National Community Service Honor Award for the Coolidge Legacy Project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcel Acosta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marcel" being the most prominent.

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director
National Capital Planning Commission

cc:

Jesus Aguirre, Director, DC Department of Parks and Recreation
Peter May, Associate Regional Director for Lands, Resources and Planning, National Park Service
Harriet Tregoning, Director, DC Office of Planning



CALVIN COOLIDGE ALUMNI
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Coolidge High School Alumni Association
Friends of Coolidge High School
6315 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011

American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Board of Trustees:

The Calvin Coolidge High School Alumni Association, Inc. is pleased to support the nomination of the ASLA Potomac Chapter for the ASLA's Community Service Honor Award.

In addition to mentoring the student about the profession and helping to prepare a Campus Master Plan and Greenhouse Garden design, the volunteer landscape architects were extremely instrumental in placing CCAA and CCSHS on the map of DCPS School Gardens. The development of the Greenhouse Garden and Outdoor Classroom is the model of what a campus green space could ultimately be.

School:

For Calvin Coolidge SHS the Greenhouse Garden (and extended plans) represents how the vision and work of dedicated volunteers can truly make a difference. The existence of the garden has been a huge success and has been received by the school administration, faculty and staff as a great addition to the campus. The garden / outdoor classroom allow all to have a space to not only learn in, but to also have moments of serenity and needed reflection. For the school the garden represents educational opportunities for not only students, but for the staff and parents as well. The garden has changed and affected many lives. It will continue to affect many more, especially those students whom will be attending Calvin Coolidge SHS in the future.

Community:

The transformation of a large grassy area of no special concern on the campus to a meaningful and useful green space has helped raise the profile of the neighborhood as being environmentally conscious. The project gives the Takoma Park DC neighborhood a boost as an

area which is recognized as being green friendly, active and engaged. Along with the good feelings, the 16 raised vegetable beds allow the community to garden right on campus. A bonus is the ½ acre of combined ornamentals which allow the community to practice their gardening skills through out the year. The garden continuously helps strengthen the interaction, relationships and connections between the school, the neighborhood, and the broader community.

Alumni Association:

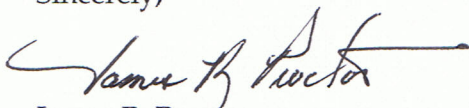
When we formed this partnership, we had an idea of the impact of this space could have on the school and the community. We have now been pleasantly and extremely surprised that it has been so tremendous. Today, looking back on all of our hard work – hauling mulch, digging out garden beds, laying pavers and planting trees – I am so proud of the partnership that was forged between CCAA and ASLA. We are pleased how it has lived up to our anticipation of strengthening the connection between the school and the community.

This work has been a catalyst to realize a longer term goal to renovate the 1938 greenhouse. The Calvin Coolidge Alumni Assoc., Inc. would like very much for today's students to have the same opportunity as we had to learn about the agricultural and horticultural sciences.

Building this garden has given the alumni and neighbors the opportunity to interact with Coolidge's students in meaningful ways. It's given us all something to be proud of, and will serve as a catalyst for even greater things to come. Building the garden has helped us to grow our community. We could not have made this happen without the hard work of the ASLA volunteers.

With big accomplishments behind us and big achievements yet to come, the Calvin Coolidge Alumni Association., Inc would like to express on behalf of Calvin Coolidge SHS, and the surrounding neighborhoods of Manor Park, Brightwood and Takoma Park DC, that we are so grateful to ASLA for all of their efforts in making this happen. We had a vision, but needed the expertise of landscape architects to get it in the ground. I couldn't have asked for a better group of professionals and good solid people to work with, AND I could not have asked or a better garden to bring our community together.

Sincerely,



James R. Proctor
Vice President / CCAA
www.cchs-aa.com

Calvin Coolidge High School
6315 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011

American Society of Landscape Architects
C/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Board of Trustees:

Calvin Coolidge Senior High School is delighted to support the nomination of ASLA Potomac Chapter of the ALSA National Community Service Award. Through a partnership with the ACE Mentoring Program, the volunteer land architects of the ALSA were influential in providing the Coolidge family with a Master Plan for the construction of our beautiful Greenhouse and Garden.

The result of this brilliant partnership was an experience unlike any other. The volunteer land architects mentored students and exposed them to the architecture profession. During mentoring and planning sessions, students were able to provide input, design, and later construct the Coolidge Greenhouse and Garden. The community was also invited to attend a Community Charrette to develop the Campus Master Plan, where the Greenhouse was the central focus.

The Campus Master Plan provides us with a vision on ways we can beautify and green our campus and a beautiful Greenhouse Garden and Outdoor Classroom that we can teach in and walk through and enjoy every day. It allows us to extend our curriculum beyond the school walls and enhance our environmental and health science education, which is important for students today.

The garden has become a staple for Coolidge and in the Takoma community. It provides a place for students and neighbors to come together to have positive dialogues and other motivational interactions. The garden has been used as one of the main focuses of the Calvin Coolidge Alumni Association's summer job program. The summer youth-workers toiled in the garden and received daily lessons on Environmental Science and Agriculture thanks to the newly constructed garden. It instills leadership, hard work, a sense of empowerment, and fosters a learning environment unique to Coolidge, but should be shared with schools throughout the District.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the ASLA volunteers who helped make this project a reality. Their know-how on the project helped the staff, students and community recognize the value of their profession. They may not know it, but the work they've done has made a significant, permanent impact on the way we interact with the world around us. My hope for our students is that the work done on garden becomes the center block on their way to success.

It is our pleasure that we nominate the ASLA Potomac Chapter for the National Community Service Award. There is no group more deserving. We thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,

Shalonda Henry
The Calvin Coolidge Family