

# Our Vision for John M. King School Grounds



## Background Information:

John M. King School is an inner city school. We are a community school of 400 students aged 3-13. We share our school and school grounds with various community groups all year long. The school grounds are used at all hours of the day, all days of the week, all months of the year and by all ages for a variety of purposes. If you look at an aerial map of our community, you will see we are the only large green space within blocks. But ours is a highly underdeveloped green space. We see a potential oasis in the midst of an desolate inner city concrete jungle.

## Goal:

Our goal is to return the site to a more natural setting by introducing native trees, shrubs, plants and places for group and individual use. In doing so, we expect to entice more wildlife to the area for the study, enjoyment and encouragement of natural stewardship within our community. We are aiming for a safer, peaceful, user friendly environment where children can choose among a variety of environments for activity, pleasure and learning. We wish to bring nature back into the lives of the residents of the neighbourhood by encouraging active participation of children and adults in the planting and maintenance of the grounds.

- Accessible play structure for children 1-16 years
- Shrubs to promote natural habitats
- Shade trees for health
- Berm for play and seating
- Soccer pitch
- Running track
- Softball diamond
- Raised planting beds
- Benches (gathering areas)
- Paths
- Outdoor classroom
- Aesthetic enhancement of school grounds

Another goal of this project is to gather and mobilize our parent community to stand up for themselves. There is little leadership within the community, but much potential. Instead of doing for them, by nurturing their strengths, building skills and demonstrating the difference they can make, they will learn to do for themselves. Enlisting them to work toward this one goal will give them the confidence and skills needed to tackle other community issues. Slowly, a core of community members will grow all the while, bringing new leaders into the fold.

## Why?

Kids, parents and community members were surveyed last year and we discovered there is a real desire for this oasis. Parents want their children to have a safe and exciting place to play while at school. They see the value of outdoor education within our school grounds. They want a place where children can increase their physical and mental health through imaginative play, sports activities and interaction with nature. They also want a place for family and community use. We deserve a safe, community built area where people can enjoy nature without leaving their community. We deserve a place to run, chase and play. We deserve a place to relax and enjoy.



## How:

We have created both a community committee and school/parent committees to work to achieve our goal. *Since September 2006, without active soliciting, already we have had 35% of our families support this project with monetary donations!* We expect this number to increase to almost 100% during this school year alone. Through grants, donations and fundraising, we will realize our dream.