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KlingStubbins partner in the "greening" of neighboring elementary school

Urban site breaks ground on eco-friendly playground

(l. to r.) Officials and students at the groundbreaking ceremony

(l. to r.) KlingStubbins' volunteers Christina Guerrero, Jonathan Weiss, Fred Kaulbach, Jill Lavine, and Community Design Collaborative volunteer Lisa Armstrong

PHILADELPHIA, PA – June 30, 2009 – Greenfield Elementary School, located at 22nd and Chestnut Streets, started construction today on the first installment of a multi-phase project that will demonstrate how school buildings can be environmentally responsible, provide healthy places to learn and play, and take an active role in community improvement.

Greening Greenfield was initiated by the Greenfield Home and School Association through a service grant from the Community Design Collaborative Project three years ago. KlingStubbins was the Collaborative's volunteer firm, providing a team of architects, engineers, and landscape architects. The pro bono pre-design services resulted in the publication of The Greening of Greenfield School: Campus Parks Initiative Conceptual Master Plan for Sustainable Outdoor Space, which identifies five phases of construction. Focusing on the transformation of this urban site into an outdoor laboratory that teaches children about microclimates, indigenous plants, rain water absorption, energy conservation and harvesting, and their symbiotic relationship to the environment, the report offers flexible suggestions on how to coordinate, prioritize, and execute the phases. This adaptability will enable Greening Greenfield to become a pilot project that can inspire similar projects at other schools.

The proposed phases of Greening Greenfield call for improving the environmental sustainability of the south play yard, installing a green roof on the school building, and installing photovoltaic panels on the roof. Key objectives of the Greening Greenfield project include:

- Reducing storm water runoff and its impact on municipal storm sewer systems,
- Providing shading (trees) and a green roof to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect,

- Providing local and drought-resistant plantings that can improve air quality without the need for potable water irrigation,
- Providing energy through on-site renewable energy sources with photovoltaic panels, and
- Using recycled content materials where possible.

The first phase of construction will include installation of a rain garden and pervious play area on the west side of the south play yard. Existing asphalt and catch basins will be removed and replaced with a landscaped swale and play surface that will capture and divert rainwater from 15,000 SF of existing asphalt to charge the rain garden instead of overflowing into the municipal storm sewer. Twenty-six trees will be planted to shade the remaining paved playground, significantly improving the thermal comfort of microclimate. Recycled cut and natural stone salvaged from nearby construction projects at the Philadelphia Art Museum and the Philadelphia Zoo will be landscape features in the rain garden. This first phase of construction, not including the plantings, will be completed between the last day of school and Labor Day.

The next phase, an undulating play area and rain garden in the east side of the south play yard, will capture the remaining 7,500 SF of rainwater runoff from the existing asphalt playground is scheduled to take place next summer. The final phases, the green roof and photovoltaics, will be funded in following years.

Ultimately, the plan is for these improvements to be the grounds for Greenfield to demonstrate to students the concepts of environmental stewardship and energy conservation. The integration of these physical demonstrations into the landscape will serve as a model for building sustainability into the curriculum of an elementary school education.

A groundbreaking ceremony for this project took place on June 11. The community celebration included Pennsylvania State Representative Babette Josephs and representatives from the Albert M. Greenfield Foundation, the Philadelphia Water Department, GreenPlan Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Tree Tenders, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources TreeVitalize, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Delaware Valley Earth Force, SMP Architects, Bittenbender Construction, the Greenfield Home and School Association, the School District of Philadelphia, the Community Design Collaborative, and the volunteer team from KlingStubbins.

You can learn more at www.greeninggreenfield.net.

KlingStubbins provides professional services in all major disciplines within the realm of architecture, engineering, interiors, planning, and landscape architecture. The firm consists of more than 450 professionals in its Philadelphia, PA; Cambridge, MA; Raleigh, NC; San Francisco, CA; Washington, DC; and Beijing, China offices. Its areas of market focus and specialization include Corporate/Commercial, Government, Science + Technology, Higher Education, Hospitality/Entertainment, Institutional/Civic, Mission Critical, and Health Care. The company is a nationally recognized leader in sustainable design and an innovator in project delivery. KlingStubbins can be found online at www.klingstubbins.com.

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