

SCIENCES

Supporting a Community's Informal Education Needs: Confidence and Empowerment in STEM

What happens when a zoo, a university, and a community organization work together on community STEM?

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PROJECT GOALS

- Create a STEM ecosystem in a severely under-resourced urban community
- Broaden access to and participation in environmental science learning opportunities
- Strengthen partnerships in support of sustainable capacity to support science literacy
- Research ecosystemic learning model
- Support Fuller Park Community environmental science literacy
 - » cognitive, affective, behavioral, skill-building, engagement, interest, identity



ABOUT THE FULLER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD AND EDEN PLACE NATURE CENTER

Fuller Park is a two-mile long strip of residential and industrial properties on Chicago's south side. Fuller Park has long been one of Chicago's severely under-resourced, isolated neighborhoods. Eden Place Nature Center is an urban oasis, encompassing an area of one city block. It was created through community action, with residents clearing an illegal dump site and establishing a public natural habitat.



EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS

- School student classes
- Teacher and professional development
- Early childhood educator professional development
- Nature play classes for young children and families
- King Conservation Science Scholars Program for teens
- After school and weekend family programs
- Community engagement and conservation in action

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Informal science learning
- Conservation psychology
- Civic ecology education
- Urban science education

RESEARCH

Research is led by University of Illinois at Chicago in collaboration with the Chicago Zoological Society. Using case study methodology, research explores how a large informal science learning institution works with a community-based organization to support environmental scientific literacy and agency at all levels of the community.

EVALUATION

Form-end, process, formative, and summative evaluation conducted by InspireTechSystems, LLC. Includes professional development for local community data collection.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant #1321280. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



PROJECT PARTNERS

