

# Green In The Middle

March 2011



## Background Information

Students first engaged in the project in March 2011, through the Cambridge Public School's "Diversity of Life" 7th grade science curriculum. Students observed and learned about a variety of organisms representing the Kingdoms of life and how each are interconnected in food webs.

## Green in the Middle Grant

In order to participate in the Green in the Middle Grant, the 7th grade class needed to complete a task that paralleled the grant's scope: identify an environmental issue in their community; construct a plan including discrete steps to correct that issue; and execute that plan through a service-learning task that reinforced the curriculum.

### Step 1: Identifying an Environmental Issue

The project initiated with biodiversity assessments done by the 7th grade class of nearby and discrete environments, the Kennedy Longfellow green space, Alewife reservation, and Fresh Pond reservation. Students spent a day to several days properly classifying and counting species to measure the diversity of life at each location. While this task provided many lessons, students also provided a great service by removing over 400 pounds of invasive and non-native species (Garlic Mustard and Lily of the Valley) from Fresh Pond Reservation. After all locations were assessed, students concluded that the Kennedy-Longfellow green space had the lowest measure of biodiversity. Furthermore, students identified the need to raise awareness about the lack of biodiversity at the school. Kiosks will be designed by the students and then constructed and installed in the gardens at the Kennedy Longfellow School.

### Step 2: Constructing a Plan

The 7th graders proposed a variety of solutions that focused on planting native species in the Kennedy-Longfellow green space and to increase community awareness about the importance of preserving a healthy environment. To insure that each student would be given the opportunity to contribute equally and that all student ideas were represented, the class was divided into three teams. Each team consisted of vegetation researchers, marketing/media, graphic designers, and model builders. The teams worked diligently to successfully construct plans that would accomplish their goals of increasing community awareness and native plants in their schoolyard.

**Step 3: Executing the Plan**

The entire class will work together to build and plant the new Kennedy-Longfellow Native Woodland Garden. The garden will be maintained each year and the entire 7th Grade Class of 2011 will be acknowledged as the architects.