

Councilmember Herbold

PO Box 34025

Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Herbold:

We are writing to ask you to support our request for \$250,000 in funding to address a critical safety and accessibility issue at Concord Elementary School in the South Park Neighborhood.

The ramp project at Concord Elementary will address unsafe access to the school grounds at the southwest corner, where families use a steep, eroding dirt path leading to the school's busy parking lot, which is hazardous for pedestrians, especially small children. That path will be replaced by a safe, well-lit, tree-lined ramp that is ADA-compliant. A colorfully designed crosswalk at South Henderson Street, created in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation, will increase visibility for pedestrians heading to and from the ramp.

The ramp will ensure safe community access to the playground and offer a better route for school groups to walk to neighboring Marra Farm, an urban farm where community members grow more than 15,000 pounds of organic produce each year. Through a partnership with the nonprofit organization Solid Ground, Concord students learn to grow and harvest vegetables at the farm throughout the year. This program is vital to many families, given that South Park is a food desert—a community that has limited access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious food.

For over two years, Concord International Elementary PTA has been hard at work raising funds to improve the school ground and address the safety of the southwest entrance. They have raised \$270,000 to transform a narrow sidewalk and underused slope into a spacious entryway and community plaza lined with benches and native plants. It also added a beautiful pollinator garden

and new trees near the back playfield. These improvements have made the school grounds safer and more accessible while augmenting the neighborhood's tree cover.

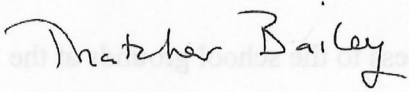
The ramp, however, has not attracted private funders, who consider it an essential infrastructure project and thus the responsibility of the public sector.

An investment of \$250,000 in this project would allow the project to stay on track for completion in the summer of 2020. With the safety and accessibility at the heart of this project—timing is of the essence.

The Concord Elementary PTA has exhibited the passion, strength, and tenacity to make a difference for their children and for the entire neighborhood. Your support will help them realize their vision of a safer, greener, and more beautiful hub for community building and learning.

Thank you so much for your help.

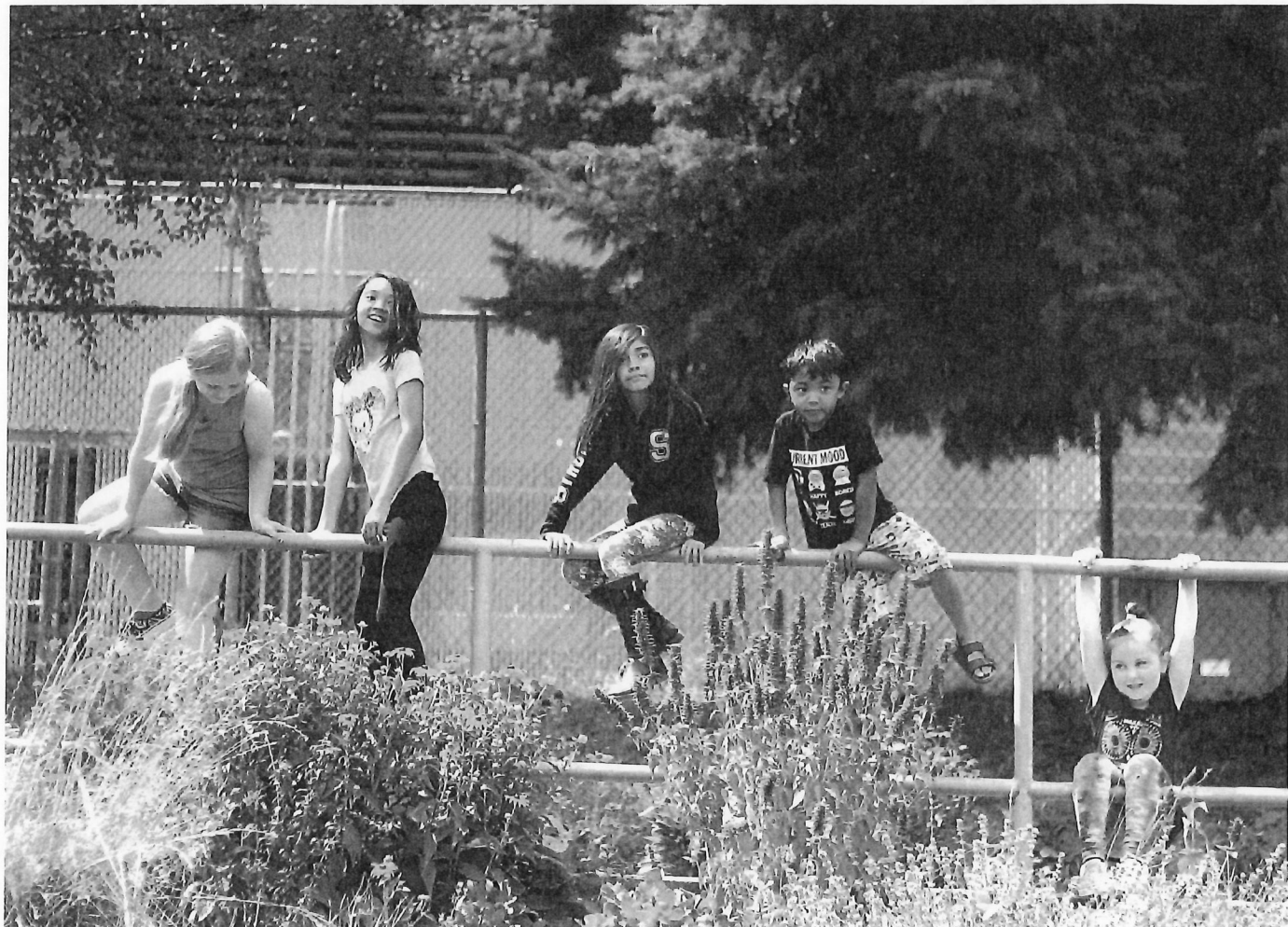
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thatcher Bailey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thatcher Bailey

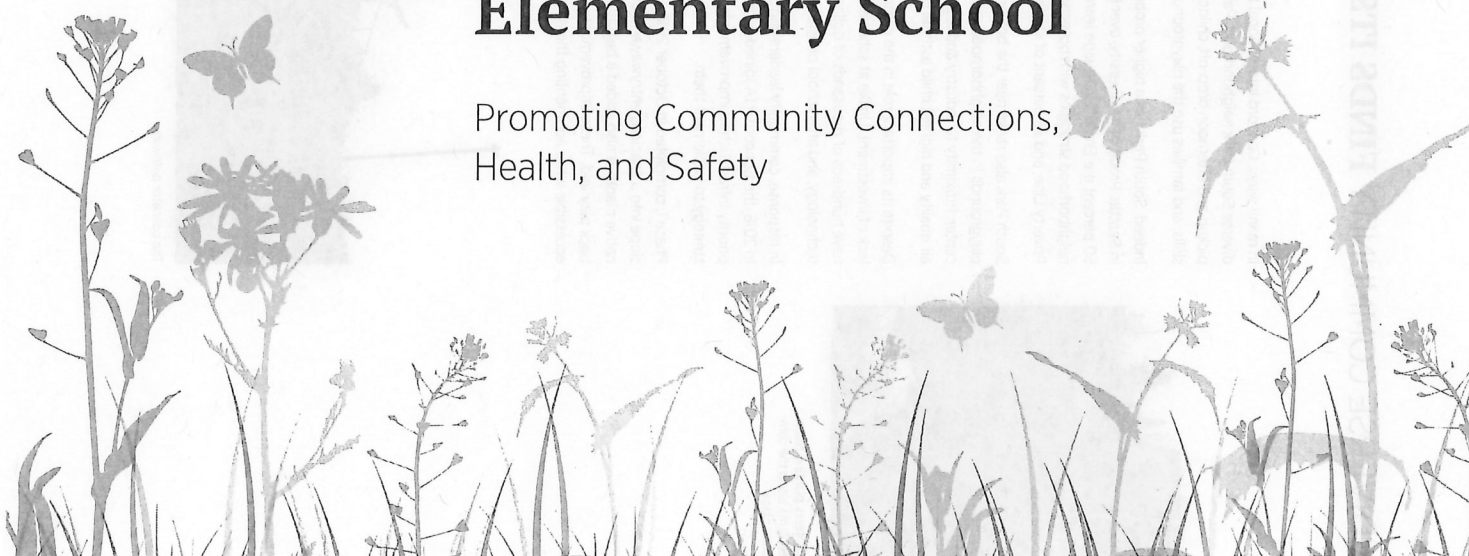
CEO & President

Seattle Parks Foundation



The Campaign for Greening Concord International Elementary School

Promoting Community Connections,
Health, and Safety



A DIVERSE COMMUNITY FINDS ITS VOICE

In many ways, Concord International Elementary School is the heart of Seattle's diverse South Park neighborhood. Parents and students connect during morning pickup and afternoon drop-off, childcare and enrichment programs teach kids life skills, and families use the playground during off-hours.

Indeed, South Park has a higher proportion of children than any other neighborhood in Seattle. Proud of its diversity, over 86 percent of students are people of color, 50 percent are English-language learners, and 59 percent are Latino. Yet the neighborhood struggles with poverty, 70 percent of residents are below the Federal Poverty Line, and 73 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

South Park also ranks near the bottom in green space per capita and the only playgrounds in the neighborhood are at Concord Elementary and the community center. Proximity to industry and lack of tree canopy contribute to some of the worst air quality and highest child asthma rates in the city.

Despite its important role in the community, Concord Elementary suffers from lack of investment. Unlike at schools in wealthier parts of Seattle, its PTA does not have hundreds of thousands of dollars to spend on facility improvements, staffing, technology, and afterschool programs.

In response, community leaders and parents in South Park decided to take action. In 2016, the Concord PTA joined with Seattle Parks Foundation to identify two high-priority infrastructure improvements to the school grounds and devised a two-phase strategy to implement them.

Phase 1, completed in October 2018, transformed a narrow sidewalk and underused slope into a spacious entryway and community plaza lined with benches and native plants. It also added a beautiful pollinator garden and new trees near the back playground. These improvements have made the school grounds safer and more accessible while augmenting the neighborhood's tree cover.



Volunteers planting trees and plants along the community plaza.



The pollinator pathway.

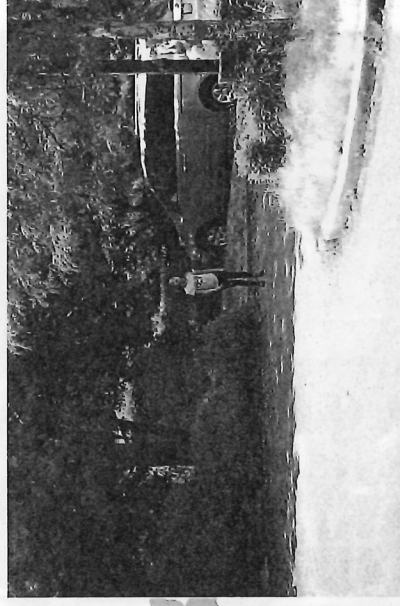
BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Phase 2 of the improvements at Concord Elementary will address unsafe access to the school grounds at the southwest corner, where families use a steep, eroding dirt path leading to the school's busy parking lot, which is hazardous for pedestrians, especially small children. That path will be replaced by a safe, well-lit, tree-lined ramp that is ADA-compliant. A colorfully designed crosswalk at South Henderson Street, created in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation, will increase visibility for pedestrians heading to and from the ramp.

A Community Link

The ramp will ensure safe community access to the playground and offer a better route for school groups to walk to neighboring Marra Farm, an urban farm where community members grow more than 15,000 pounds of organic produce each year. Through a partnership with the nonprofit organization Solid Ground, Concord students learn to grow and harvest vegetables at the farm throughout the year. This program is vital to many families, given that South Park is a food desert—a community that has limited access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious food.

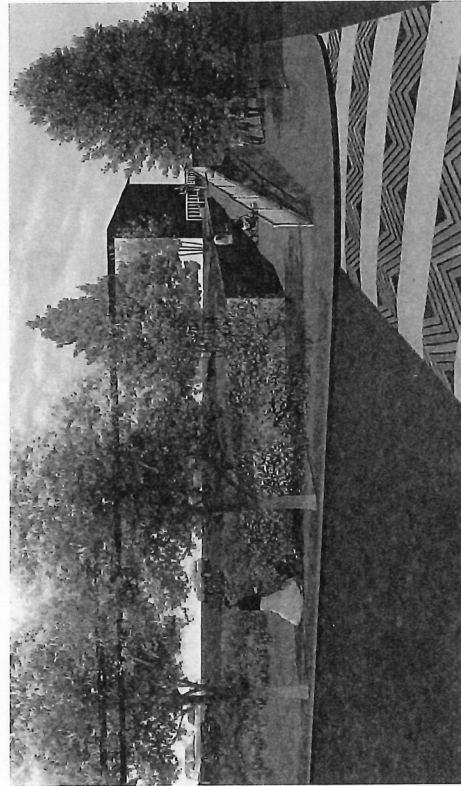
Concord Elementary student, Jasmine, in the busy parking lot she walks through every day.



PARENT ADVOCATES LEAD THE WAY



Concord Elementary student, Javier, sits on the eroded dirt pathway used frequently by students to enter the school.



The ramp would solve serious safety issues and provide a beautiful access point to learning and community.

"As parents, our kids' safety is the most important thing. Right now, you've got little itty-bitty kids walking through the parking lot, and for drivers in the lot, it's so hard to see them. It's insane to me there's only one entrance into the school."

—Joe Eckness, Concord Elementary parent, PTA member

"This is an important connection between Concord Elementary and the greater community. South Park has been doing so much work around community space in the last few years, and this pathway will provide a bridge to other community spaces and resources that children, parents, and the greater community all use every day."

—Gladis Clemente, Concord Elementary parent, PTA member

"Before my kids started here, I assumed all public schools were supported financially at pretty much the same level. I have found that it is not true. Our community has a lot of challenges, from low-income levels to food security to public health and safety, plus concerns about citizenship and legal documentation and affordable housing. With that all said, this is a loving community and this school is filled with bright and beautiful kids who spend every day learning and growing. They deserve an attractive and safe environment, and it's a gift to work towards that goal."

—Robin Schwartz, Concord Elementary Parent, PTA President

"We are becoming closer as neighbors and parents by doing this work together. That process will leave a lasting impact well beyond the scope of this project. I'm so thankful for the work everyone has put in and all the learning along the way. It really has made the fabric of our community stronger."

—Tara Migliore Potter, Concord Elementary parent, PTA member



Left to right: Concord PTA members Joe Eckness, Erin Murphy, Robin Schwartz, Maria Campos, and Gladis Clemente.

A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY, CONNECTIONS, AND PLAY

The Campaign for Greening Concord International Elementary School is advancing health equity, promoting access to physical activity, supporting mental health, and strengthening economic and educational opportunities for the South Park community.

Thanks to this campaign, the school grounds now feature a new entry plaza, pollinator garden, and outdoor learning space. Soon, a safe and ADA-accessible ramp will replace an unsafe path leading to the school. We are also working with the Seattle Sounders' RAVE Foundation and the Seattle School District to explore adding a soccer pitch on the school grounds for use by Concord students and the community at large.

PHASE 1: COMPLETE

Entry Plaza: What is currently the only official entryway to the school grounds has been enhanced with benches and stadium seating. Families can gather and chat at pickup and drop-off, and teachers can use the space as an outdoor classroom. The native saplings planted as part of the site improvements will grow and add shade to the plaza, further facilitating community building.

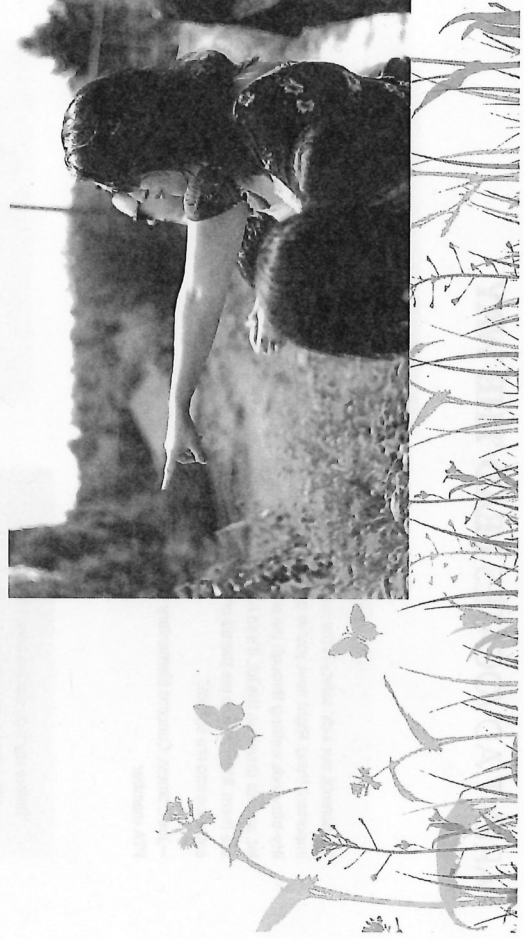
Pollinator Garden: An underutilized outdoor area has been transformed into a beautiful pollinator garden with new trees alongside a grass field.

PHASE 2: IN PROGRESS

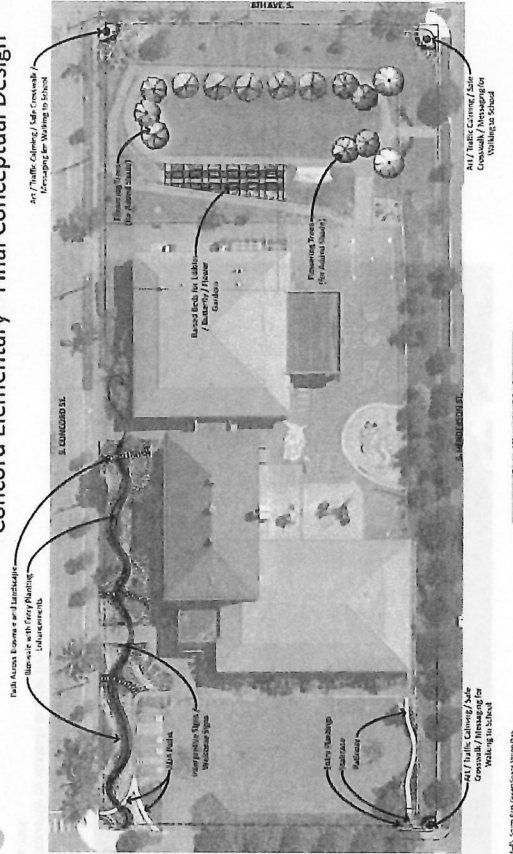
Puma Pathway: A new ramp named for the school's mascot will provide safe and welcoming access to the school at the corner of Henderson Street and 7th Avenue. It will serve not only Concord students and parents but also all neighborhood users of the play area.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Sports Field Improvements: The RAVE Foundation is working with Seattle Public Schools to transform a lawn area that is muddy most of the year into a mini-pitch soccer field for community use. Other improvements in that area may include site furnishings and play equipment.



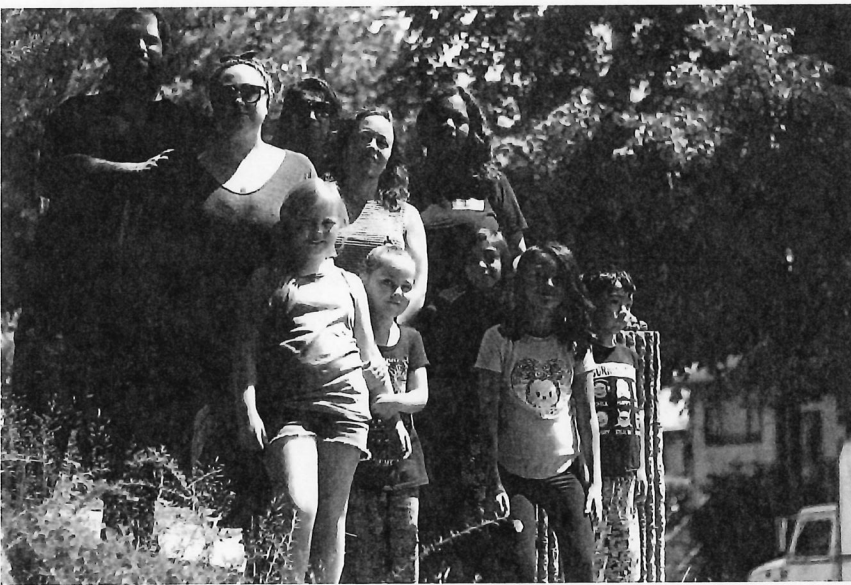
Concord Elementary - Final Conceptual Design



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR GREENING CONCORD ELEMENTARY

The South Park community has exhibited the passion, strength, and tenacity to make a difference for their children and for the entire neighborhood. Your support will help them realize their vision of a safer, greener, and more beautiful hub for community building and learning.

The effort to raise funds for this project is a community endeavor and involves many individuals, community groups, foundations, and businesses. Help us provide much-needed upgrades to improve access, instill community pride, and improve livability for generations to come.



Thanks to the following students and PTA members: Joe Eckness and Erin Murphy, Abigail Fields and Thora Eckness; Maria Campos and Esmeralda, Jasmine and Javier Campos; Gladis Clemente; Robin Schwartz

To learn more and donate, visit
[www.seattleparksfoundation.org/
project/greening-concord/](http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org/project/greening-concord/)

For more information about giving or volunteering, please contact:

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ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

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