



ROOTS & SHOOTS PROJECT OF THE MONTH (POTM): A PEACE OF EARTH

We all have strong reactions to words like war, hunger and destruction. We immediately produce images of tragedy – it comes easily as we have been immersed in violence either personally or through film and television for most if not all of our lives. When we think of the word peace however, it is more difficult for us to articulate what we may imagine. Moreover, what we each see or identify as peaceful could be widely different. One thing unites us as we consider peace, however – it is the freedom from distress, from violence and from harm. What would peace look like as a place? In New York, peace is on the garden path.



With so much bad presented to us, it is time for something good. Something Good in the World, a non-profit which runs “Earth Schools,” specializes in sustainable children’s education and play. It was founded by Barbara Sarbin, who has been leading a life honoring the message and purpose of her hero, Dr. Jane Goodall since she was a girl. Something Good in the World took on the challenge of making peace a place for children, and to provide a centering space where young people can create their own peace in their mind and for others. The Peaceful Garden is a representation of how nature can help us grow, and restore us.

Students are the seed of these gardens, as well as the water and the sunlight. A large open natural space is transformed into a collection of intimate sections using the principles of Permaculture. Students plant all of the life that thrives within the gardens, and learn about how each sprout and stalk affects their environment, prevents pest infestations, conserves water and are essential for pollinators. The spaces also stand as areas for conflict resolution through peaceful consultation. Peace in the garden is an awareness of the interconnection of all living things, and that peace for one will bring peace for one another.



The Peaceful Garden also received a Roots & Shoots mini-grant to build a bee sanctuary complete with a honey bee hive and a “Bee-Friendly Garden.” The group researched native, perennial plants and flowers that attract honeybees, and created a specific area to foster these specific species. Beekeepers were brought in to help decide best placement and installation of a beehive, and it continues to grow as they reproduce.

Anyone who has watched ants climbing up the striations and bark of a tree, or droplets of water create glowing orbs and flashing colors against leafy canopies knows that our time in nature is peace. With this wisdom, Something Good in the World has designated a garden for young people to feel fully alive, and able to explore themselves and their place on this earth. This past September, SGITW was able to present their peace garden at the United Nations International Day of Peace Celebrations. With students as the keepers and protectors of the garden, it will live on for many more students to find and contribute to.

“If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden.”

– Frances Hodgson Burnett

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