

Contact: Shilin Hora, Botanical Artist
Phone: 312-772-0800
shi@shilinhora.com
2901 Kenilworth Ave,
Berwyn Illinois 60402

Contact: Ms. Jean Suchy, Principle of Emerson Elementary
Phone: 708.469.9753
jsuchy@bsd100.org
3105 Clinton Ave,
Berwyn, IL 60402

Press Release

School in Berwyn collaborates with botanical artist on innovative Earth and Arbor Day project sparking curiosity and hope in youth.

Berwyn, Illinois, April 12th, 2019: The Emerson Elementary Students of Berwyn are having an extraordinary time this month celebrating Earth Day and Arbor Day. Principle Jean Suchy has joined forces with botanical artist Shilin Hora on an innovative school-wide, K-5th grade, project that takes each child outdoors to bring nature indoors with the goal of exposing youth to local tree seeds at the same time stimulating creativity and teamwork.

This project aims to foster appreciation for nature within an urban context by allowing children to observe their local surroundings, harvest seeds and create a personal seed collection. Following, students create seed artwork to add to a collaborative piece called The Seed Quilt which will later be planted.

For the month of April, The Emerson Elementary Students of Berwyn will collaborate on this project in three parts. First, in coordination with the gym teacher Mr. Stube, each P.E. class, a total of 355 students, will go outdoors to the neighboring Proksa Park or the school yard to search and collect seeds.

In the second part, Shilin worked with the Art teacher Ms. Daily to create “seed drawings” using their seed collection during art class. Currently, the student’s seed drawings are being mended together to create one large community art piece, a Seed Quilt. For two weeks (April 15-26th) the Quilt will be exhibited in the school library for students to find their specific piece and show off to friends and family. Arborist Chris Mest has been invited as a guest speaker to share experience in working with trees while the Quilt is on exhibit in the school Library.

During the third part, April 27th 8am-10am, the Seed Quilt will be planted on the school grounds as part of an Earth Day and Arbor Day celebration. Parents, families and community members are welcome to participate in this event. The School Garden Club has donated a raised bed area for the planting and students will have an opportunity to watch their art grow during recess, before school and after school!

Shilin is a professional botanical artist who creates fine artwork with seeds and botanical litterfall. As an environmentally conscious artist, committed to sustainability, she believes in instilling the love and protection of nature in youth. For the last 10 years she has been providing nature emersion workshops that get youth outdoors exploring local landscape. Her artwork can be seen at www.ShilinHora.com and her community engagement workshops may be seen at www.GrowStudio.org.

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