# The Learning Garden

Kelly: We developed our partnership with Green Up Ecology Park and Trent University School of Education. It’s been running now for three years and its part of alternative placement, we call it a certificate program and our students spend 75 hours coming out here and they spend time really doing leadership in environmental education. They learn about food sustainability, working with plants, and pollinators and understanding these things and bringing them into the classroom setting for kids, K-12 settings.

Marcy: All of our programs are Ontario curriculum based and teachers have told us they love the program, they come back every single year and we have new teachers that join us every year and I think the number one goal is just to inspire children to learn outdoors and not everything happens in the classroom. There’s a lot of wondrous things you can learn just through your backyard or through your school grounds.

Lindsey: Its been a really great experience so far. We’ve done a lot of curriculum development, working with kids outside, we’ve done a lot of planting, helping kids understand how they’re connected to their natural plants and habitats. The park is also a great place for kids to explore and get their hands dirty both literally and figuratively.

Reiner: I love it because I want to spend most of my time outside. I’m a former outdoor educator, so I want to spend as much time outside as I can, that’s a tough thing to do when you are a teacher and you got a classroom. So things like this, this naturalized playscape that they’ve created here, this kind of stuff can be implemented right back in the schoolyard which is cool and we actually offer that kind of consultation to local schools as well which is neat.

Phillip: I guess this sort of simulates a real-life working environment where, you know you can’t choose who you work with, you know you have to learn to get along with people and what better environment to do that than outside and getting your hands dirty and sharing a new experience.

Lauren: Because you’re working with a group you kind of feel more connected and I don’t know, all the nature here is really calming.

Kelly: We give them an opportunity to play with landscapes, place, place-based learning and coming out to Ecology Park is part of that. We work with the Landscape Manager who designs curriculum so there’s a definite connection to our curriculum, Ontario curriculum, and they are able to really embed some of the pieces that their learning here into the work that their doing with kids in the schools.