

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
November 7, 2017**



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## **DONATION FROM LOCAL FAMILY ESTABLISHES INDIAN TRAIL GARDEN LEARNING CENTER**



Workers installing steel reinforcing rods for concrete foundation walls at the site of the Indian Trail Garden Learning Center.

Highland Park, Highwood and Fort Sheridan, IL – On November 7, 2017, the North Shore School District 112 (NSSD112) Board of Education approved a donation from a local family, who have asked to remain anonymous, to build a greenhouse and organic garden learning center that will be located on property adjacent to Indian Trail Elementary School (2045 St Johns Avenue). In addition to the property, the donation will provide NSSD112 with the resources needed to construct, maintain, and develop programming for the garden. The garden will be called the Indian Trail Garden Learning Center.

“We are tremendously grateful to the donor for recognizing the value nature can play in education, as well as for giving our students a unique opportunity to discover not only the science of plant life but a variety of important academic and life lessons.” said Co-interim Superintendents Ed Rafferty and Dr. Jane Westerhold in a joint statement.

NSSD112's Teaching and Learning department along with leadership at Indian Trail School will work closely with [The Organic Gardener Ltd.](#) (TOG) and its founder [Jeanne Nolan](#), on integrating the Garden Learning Center into curricular and extracurricular activities first at Indian Trail School and then potentially district-wide in the coming years.

The programming will be designed to connect the classroom to horticulture focusing on core academic areas as well as other important lessons such as environmental stewardship, teamwork, and healthy eating habits. Both the donor and NSSD112 intend to establish the garden as a community resource in the near future once community programming is developed.

"This Board extends its sincerest thanks to the donor for this extremely generous gift that will make a lasting impact for years to come," said Board of Education President, Eric Ephraim. "It is truly an example of the great things that can happen when community members take it upon themselves to enrich the educational experiences of our students."

Working on the project with the District and TOG are landscape company [Scott Byron & Co.](#) and architect firm [Thomas Shafer Architects](#). For months, both companies have been working on the project on a pro bono basis conducting site research, garden design, project planning, managing trade work, and supervising the preparation and construction of the site. Much like the donor, both companies are very vested in the community and feel a deep connection to NSSD112. Both Thomas Shafer and Scott Byron have had students graduate through NSSD112 schools.

NSSD112 will not have any financial responsibility for the funding of the garden. The donor will provide for all costs associated with the real estate and the use of the Garden including but not limited to: staffing costs, real estate taxes and assessments, demolition and construction costs, maintenance and repair costs, utilities, cost of supplies to use and maintain the Garden, and any reasonably necessary supervision and security measures.

The construction of the garden is currently underway with excavation, landscaping, plumbing, and electrical work being done over the fall and winter months. Once the infrastructure is in place, the greenhouse structure will be installed and the vegetation will be planted. Weather permitting, construction of the greenhouse and garden is slated for completion in spring of 2018.

### **About North Shore School District 112**

The mission of North Shore School District 112, a community partnership committed to a world-class education, is to nurture every child to become an inspired learner, a well-rounded individual and contributing member of a global community by striving for excellence within an environment that fosters innovation, respect, engagement and intellectual inquiry.