



A Connection To Nature Close to Home

The Montbello Open Space & ELK Education Center will protect and nurture two of our greatest assets – our children and our environment – creating a healthier and more vibrant community for all.

The Challenge

Studies show that low-income, underserved, urban neighborhoods are at substantial disadvantage when it comes to safe parks and natural open spaces. A neighborhood without inviting outdoor space that supports and encourages play and a child's innate desire to learn is an empty place. For children and families living in Montbello – one of Denver's most economically distressed communities – many kids play in the cement storm drainage canals running through the streets rather than in the few traditional parks that do exist.

When a person has to leave his or her neighborhood to experience nature, they develop the impression that nature is always something “out there,” not part of their reality.

Lack of access leaves distressed areas at an additional disadvantage by limiting exposure to potential interests and careers; to physical activity and play; to discovery of themselves and their world.

The Vision

In the heart of Montbello sits a vacant, trash-strewn lot. Rather than remain an unsafe eyesore, this site has the potential to be a true community asset.

Environmental Learning for Kids, The Trust for Public Land, and Denver Parks and Recreation are working together to transform this neglected property into a natural open space and outdoor learning laboratory.

The Trust for Public Land acquired the property for Denver to be incorporated into its park network. The Trust for Public Land will lead efforts to transform the site into natural open space.

ELK, working from their new education center being built onsite, will manage the open space utilizing its five-and-a-half-acres to provide the community with unparalleled science education and outdoor experiences.

[This project] ...means a lot to kids like me it's important to have an open land near our home. So it can bring my family and other families closer to nature and the outdoors- Priscilla, age 10

A community-driven master plan has been created for the property. Now we need to take this plan from paper to reality so that kids like Priscilla have the opportunity to learn, play, and connect to nature through physical activity and outdoor science education programs in their own neighborhood.

Experienced, pragmatic, and results-oriented, ELK and The Trust for Public Land are committed to raising \$1.4 million by 2016 to achieve this vision.



Environmental Learning for Kids – For almost two decades, ELK has been cultivating a passion in science, leadership, and service for a diverse community of learners. ELK's programs introduce, immerse, educate, and mentor youth from ages 5-25, shaping our future leaders and engaged citizens of tomorrow.

The Trust for Public Land – Since 1972, The Trust for Public Land has been changing the face of cities across America, creating parks, planting gardens, and protecting natural lands. In Colorado, we apply our national expertise to local challenges ensuring that city dwellers – in particular those living in park-poor and disadvantaged communities – have all the benefits that parks provide.

The Montbello Open Space & ELK Education Center will transform this neighborhood, providing an underserved and diverse urban community environmental, educational, and health benefits for many generations to come. Won't you be among our founding partners and join us in making this vision a reality?

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