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Learning Basket Pilot Programs Off to a Great Start!

As the summer weather dwindles down in Chicago, the excitement and energy within the [Learning Basket](#) program continues to sizzle! Through the generous support of both the [Seabury](#) and the Thorek Foundations, the program was able to implement two new pilots with families in the Uptown community.



Children participating in the Learning Basket Pilot Programs

One program, entitled "Learning Basket for Healthy Families" was put together in conjunction with the [Heartland Health Alliance](#) and served a group of 36 families. These families were made up of mainly recent refugees from Burma and Bhutan. The group participated in eight sessions throughout the spring and summer, with each session focused on how to support healthy behaviors in young children.

Parents received information about healthy child development, mental and physical, as well as hands-on practice implementing activities to support healthy growth with their children. Upon conclusion, parents shared remarks such as, "I did not know that it was so important to my baby's development that I talk to her. I thought she could not understand me but now I know that she is learning to understand more and more each day."

The second pilot program this year "Learning Basket for School Readiness", was created in conjunction with [RefugeeOne](#) and the [Bhutanese Community Association of Illinois](#). This program was designed to serve the parents of three-five year olds and to try out the expanded Learning Basket for School Readiness curriculum. The pilot served 37 families during the six sessions.

Session topics focused on how to prepare children for school mentally, emotionally, and physically. Discussions included 'How to Talk with Your Child's Teacher' to 'Fun Ways to Teach the Alphabet' and many more. Parents were provided with an item from the basket each week, as well as one of the newly designed activity cards detailing how to play with the item in ways that encourage learning for three - five year olds. During reflection on the course, one parent noted, "I did not know that I am able to go and observe in my child's class or ask questions of the teacher about how he is doing. Now I know that as a parent that is part of my job."

ICA GreenRise Bioshaft® Debuts with an Open House

This summer, ICA GreenRise hosted an open house to introduce the **Bioshaft®** and the new street scape project in the Uptown community. Friends, neighbors, and community members came out to learn more about the projects and how they will help GreenRise address storm water runoff and provide habitats for plant pollinators and migrators.



Initial outline of the new green space around ICA GreenRise

GreenRise's partner on these sustainability initiatives Domenico D'Alessandro presented his vision for creating an urban oasis that included the vertical structure of the **Bioshaft®**, the landscaping of the sidewalk on Sheridan, and a park that would be built on top of the parking lot directly across the street from the building.

[Liam Hennagan](#), a professor at DePaul University is partnering with ICA GreenRise and Domenico on the Bioshaft® project, and some of his students and have already started the research phase to understand how much **mycelium** would be optimal in the decomposition of wastewater from two toilets in the building. The building staff is excited to see the vision of new and innovative ideas leading toward a more sustainable building coming to fruition!

ICA's Fall Archives Sojourn 2013 Highlights

About 25 Sojourners gathered at ICA-USA in September for two weeks to put several new Global Archive Collections online - Imaginal Education, Global Community Forum, Fifth City, Human Development Projects, Spirit Methods, Social Process, Service Learning Program, Accelerate 77 Communities, Facilitation Methods.



Current staff and sojourners reflect together after watching a short clip about fifth city

Many great memories were recounted, and new ones created. Some memorable highlights include (but aren't limited to!) :

- Colleagues Jan Ames and Wanda Holcombe visiting the 5th City Preschool to make [video clips](#) of preschoolers singing 'Iron Man.' In return a group of Fifth city Preschool teachers visited the Archives unexpectedly and sang the "Fifth City Love Song."
- Sojourners connected with staff over brown bag lunches with historical films about the past work of the Institute
- Visiting students came to study ICA GreenRise and celebrate its new designation as a Chicago Heritage Building.
- Terry Bergdall broadcast on-air live and for later use a talk about the work of ICA-USA.
- Colleagues Elise Packard and Kaze Gadway broadcast a live collegium from the [Imaginal Education Collection](#) and caused Seva Gandhi and Terry Bergdall to start dancing.
- Colleagues Jim Weigel worked with Beret Griffith on starting up a new Facilitation Methods focusing on stories and access to results, applications, procedures and social philosophy.

Each of these moments give just a glimpse into the unforgettable two weeks. Thanks to all who were able to participate and share!

ICA Colleagues attend Chicago Climate Reality Training

Early in August, several ICA colleagues attended Al Gore's three-day [Climate Reality Leadership Training](#) in downtown Chicago. The Climate Reality Project, founded and chaired by



2013 Chicago Climate Leaders

former Vice President and Nobel Laureate Al Gore, is 'dedicated to unleashing a global cultural movement demanding action on the climate crisis.' The projects mission is to 'forge an unwavering bedrock of impassioned support necessary for urgent action' and believes that 'with that foundation, together we will ignite the moral courage in our leaders to solve the climate crisis.' Marti Roach, a ToP trainer attended the training from the San Francisco Bay area, and informed other global climate leaders about the option to stay at ICA-USA's [GreenRise](#) Uptown building. Nearly 30 people from Nepal, Pakistan, Liberia, Vietnam, Mexico and from across the USA stayed on the 8th Floor before, during and after the training.

ICA Colleague, Pamela Bergdall, remarked that the conference "required I commit to actively working on something tangible towards climate change awareness this year... It forced me get started on work that I had been thinking about doing for a long time." Other ICA colleagues in attendance included Jennifer Hirsch, Karen Snyder, and Sally Stovall.