

Monday, November 26, 2007

'Nature Nest' to nurture all learning Newburg Middle will expand outdoor class **By Sara Cunningham**

Students and teachers at Newburg Middle School have been using a small greenhouse and fish pond they built last year for several classes and activities.

Now a \$4,000 grant from Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation will allow them to expand the outdoor classroom, which will be called "Newburg's Nature Nest." The students get to make suggestions and help plan the project.

I think it will be very exciting to be able to say that we were a part of this when it was first made," said seventh-grader Ryan Gabehart, 12. "There will be lots of students who use this after us, and we'll know we started it."

The additions include raised beds, butterfly gardens, a weather station and an arboretum. The greenhouse and pond also will be refurbished.

A contest was held to get ideas on how to incorporate school themes into the plantings. The design definitely will include paw prints in honor of the school's tiger mascot.

The students submitted their ideas on graph paper, said Sam Allen, 12, another seventh-grader.

About 90 students offered ideas, and many of them will be incorporated, said Cynthia Herbig, who teaches social studies and practical living skills at the school at 4901 Exeter Ave.

Students and teachers will be working with Lowe's employees throughout the year. Three of those employees, Jimmy Kinney, Brandy Rogers and Brent Baker, chatted with a group of students last week about some of the plans.

"It's going to be much more than a garden," Kinney said. "When they go out there, they will be using math and science."

Seventh-grader Jacob Vittitow, 12, also pointed out that classes have completed writing projects based on the outside area they have now and the one that is to be created. English classes will use the space as much as math and science classes, he said.

"Once it's done, it'll be easier to write about being outside than trying to imagine what it'll be like," Jacob said.

Whether it's [podcasting](#) outside during technology class or drawing sketches during art class, the outdoors classroom will help all the students, said Katie Williams, 12, also a seventh-grader. "It's going to be a lot better," she said. "It's nice for everyone to get outside once in a while." Reporter Sara Cunningham can be reached at (502) 582-4335.



Jimmy Kinney, a commercial sales specialist for Lowe's, discussed some preliminary project plans with some of the Newburg Middle School students who will use \$4,000 in grant money from Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation to expand their school's outdoor classroom. They plan to call it "Newburg's Nature Nest." (Photos by Sara Cunningham, The Courier-Journal)

### MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about how to apply for a grant from Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, go to [www.toolboxforeducation.com](http://www.toolboxforeducation.com).



The area for the outdoor classroom, shown here, will include raised beds, butterfly gardens, a weather station and an arboretum.