INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PEACE GARDENS
A FEW SUCCESS STORIES

Canada
The development of the International School Peace Gardens has been like planting seeds with teachers in a school. It takes between 2-5 years for the whole school to participate in the peace garden curriculum and to gradually plan and plant it. Dedication and commitment ceremonies are an effective way to consolidate the curriculum outcomes, annually, in the peace garden. The economics involved within local communities is significant, the economics on the global commons, as peace gardens are planted around the world, are a vital part of the planet’s survival. A school with a peace garden uses the word ‘peace’ hundreds of times a week.

Building Civil Society - Reducing Bullying and Vandalism
All the gardens focus on many aspects of conflict resolution. Schools have innovated “friendship benches” which taken the form of fallen tree trunks with “Peace to all the children in the world”; or large boulders of ore, cut in half, and sealed, in Arctic environments. These benches work very well and encourage students to solve their own conflicts. As bullying begins in Grade 1 and needs to be re-directed students can do this, when given the chance.

Successes and Comments:

“As retired Assistant Deputy Minister with the Alberta Government I have frequently participated on and led Canadian delegations to UNESCO. I am particularly impressed with IHTEC’s concept of the International School Peace Gardens, which if it were widely adopted would lead a new generation of young leaders to see their relationship with the Earth and its human and non-human inhabitants in a way quite different from the current paradigm of human separation and domination of the natural world.” Des Berghofer

“As principal of an “inner city” high school in Toronto we found the ISPG program so compelling, that I became inspired by the vision and was honoured to be asked to implement the first school peace garden. .... This garden was so positioned on the school grounds, that students passed ... along the path of peace....on their way to and from the front door of the school building, a factor that gave it high visibility and profile. The resulting changes in the school were significant – grades improved, absenteeism decreased and the building became cleaner and more peaceful place - and violence, which had been a regular unwelcome companion, virtually ceased to exist.” Eric Foster

St. Agnes Catholic School, Chatham, Ontario: says that their “peace garden has had a very positive effect on the students and the community. They have been going for 10 years and reintroduce it to staff and students each year. We have discovered that problems on the play ground have actually declined, and the other remarkable thing is that incidences of vandalism have also declined. We began with a Carolinian land laboratory, which taught about local plant species and knowledge about migrating species that visited. Then developed several
class gardens focused on: History - Mediaeval spice patch; a pizza garden for food security; a Jack and the Beanstalk garden; prairie garden; solar rock out of which flows water when the sun shines; a and prairie grass garden. We made and erected bird feeders and bird houses, then monitored who visited. The Peace Garden team were democratically picked from each of the upper classes and created the website and power point show which they took on the road when applying for grants for improving their existing gardens. They used a digital camera, and recorded their progress in their “Peace Garden News” which was distributed regularly to all parent and the community. They celebrated many cultural festivals and used it for the performing arts. Grandparents and friends were often seen after school visiting the garden. A special group of students who find it difficult to participate in large group play have found it very beneficial. It is a place to meet friends, to resolve conflicts and as a place of prayer. It is a place where students can make positive changes to their environment and learn to become good global citizens.

Huron District Schools:
Has 56 Earth Friendly Gardens, are part of the peace gardens program. These school have all focused on growing food from seed to table. The students have been successful in preparing the soil, picking, storing, cooking and eating the food. What is left over has been sent to supplement food banks in the area, which are constantly looking for food. They have focused on removing toxic substances such as pesticide and chemical use in the soil.

OISE/University of Toronto Greening Committee:
Their Peace Garden is next door to their building. Main focus was plants that grow well nearby each other; food as help for street people.

Stop 108 Community Centre, Toronto, Ontario.: 
A Community of 20,000 focused on a low income area, planting a small food security garden with benches for conflict resolution.

An Elementary Peace Garden
has native shrubs and plants from the local ecosystem as a living symbol of community peace and a healthy environment. There is also an Inukshuk (pronounced “Eee-nuk-shook”). This is a rock sculpture that symbolizes peace and friendship, reminding us that today, as in yesteryear, we all depend on one another. In addition there are a path, an arbor, and benches so that all students can use the garden as a place for reading or studying. Students are involved in the designing and planning.

St. Cyril Catholic School, Toronto, Ontario. French Immersion:
The teacher here focused on arts and crafts for the initial stages of producing the whole school involvement. The students traced their hands onto green construction paper, and discussed how they could use their hands to build a better and peaceful world. They talked about starting at home, at school, and then in the neighborhood. The students come up with great ideas such as planting flowers, consoling a friend, helping a elderly person, shaking hands in friendship, and joining their hands to pray.
They created a mural in the gym, by mounting the hands on a paper tree to form a garden. With red poppies they included white poppies to remember the innocent people who also die in wars. Our children were so inventive, they colored blue and pink poppies, to remember the little boys and girls who are also war victims.

As a symbol of the first plant for our Peace garden, I selected a Peace Lily. It was centre "peace" during the ceremony, and is now in the front foyer of the school.

Each class has nominated a delegate for the first 'peace garden club' meeting. We discussed the objectives, and how we could integrate art, science, environmental studies, social studies, inter-cultural understanding, design, religion and monthly celebrations in the garden. Each student will present these ideas to their class, and ask their friends to volunteer. The response has been overwhelming and very encouraging.

They meet once a week for activities and discussions about preventing bullying. We encouraged every student to create and design their own peace garden, as a preparatory class discussion. Grade 1, French immersion children have helped our caretaker gathered leaves and litter. We planted almost 100 bulbs, including tulips, daffodils, crocus, hyacinths and alliums. The bench and the picnic tables which are already there, will become a meeting place for friends of the peace garden; a place to pray, and discuss how to water and take care of the garden. The peace garden will be a place where we can solve our conflicts peacefully, a place of recollection, and for prayers of peace in our families, in our school and around the world.

We hope to prepare a dedication ceremony by the end of the year, so that we can integrate our project in the Peace Project of our board. Also we hope to register it with the International School Peace Garden (ISPG) program.

Public School. The peace garden club has 10-15 senior students (grades 7 & 8) who volunteer their time. The garden is large, about 50’ X 50’. There are five sections containing bushes, wild flowers, perennials, herbs, and annuals. It is hard to get water too, so the plants that survive are ones that are “hardy”! There is a peace pathways around the garden. Many plants have been donated by families which helps with community building. The rest of the school uses the garden mainly for recreation and play at recess, small children love looking at bugs under rocks. There are rocks to sit on, a rail fence, and teachers take classes out when things are blooming. Some teachers donate much of the supplies and time.

Cadaraque Primary School, Ajax, Ontario
Manuela Godinho and Laure Abou-Jaoudé created the first Peace Garden up and running about 5 years ago (1995). Pat Cameron took responsibility on the project about three years ago and is still involved. Recently, the garden itself was lost to construction at the school. It had benches and was being used regularly by the children. The school is now reconsidering where to put in a new garden after construction ends next Spring 2006. Presently Pat is running a garden club with about 70 very interested and enthusiastic children, including those with special needs. Pat and the club are busy with environmental activities, raking, and applying for grants to improve the existing gardens. Each year they enter "Ajax Blooms" -3rd year. Even in the summer children
come and help Pat with the gardens. Together they have researched plants and increased their awareness. She commented that this work has resulted in an increased appreciation for what is in their school environment, and greater efforts to keep it clean, plus this has rippled out into the community. They are hopeful that next spring a new garden can go into a spot where the community will also see it and hopeful that the city council will provide them with funding.

Cardinal Newman High School, Scarborough, Ontario
Initial design and funding ’95-2000, worked a lot with Julia, intense process. First few years, many Monarch butterflies, recently not many at all, milkweed, ferns doing well, massive dogwood provides canopy, fountain, Manitoba Maple seeded itself, bittersweet vine doing well covering wall, wild strawberries and other berries used by Family Studies classes to make jam every year. Last four years a duck has laid eggs and walks her ducklings out. "A garden just takes a really long time to grow, I've been here 20 years [and this has helped greatly to keep the project going]". We have "The Green Team"(students) who do gardening. Used individually (eg. meditation), open during lunch, playing cards, not so much used by classes unfortunately. Noticed that there is limited time to use it- Sept. Oct. classes are getting settled, then it's too cold. May June, exams and preparing to leave. So the main growing time, when things are really happening in the garden, the students are not there. This is something that we didn't think about when we were planning it. Maybe a greenhouse would be more accessible to classrooms.

Dr. George Hall Public School, Little Britain, Ontario
Catrin leads a Spring and Fall garden club consisting of 10-15 senior students (grades 7 & 8) who volunteer their time. The garden is large, about 50’ X 50’. There are five sections containing bushes, wildflowers, perennials, herbs, and annuals. It is hard to get water too, so the plants that survive are ones that are “hardy”! There are pathways and recently the group has been working on maintaining these. There are many weeds, the children don’t like weeding! They brought in mulch. Favorite things to do in the garden are planting, digging, and raking. Some plants have been donations and some Catrin has bought. This year a family donated a bush for the garden because they will no longer be at the school next year. The rest of the school uses the garden mainly for recreation – play at recess, small children love looking at bugs under rocks. There are rocks to sit on, a rail fence, teachers take classes out when things are blooming. Catrin brings all the equipment needed as this is not in the school’s budget.

Holy Family Catholic, Wallaceburg, Ontario
The Tim Sharpe Memorial Garden was a dream planned over a two year period. Letters were written to rally staff, students, parents and community members under the leadership of Christine deNijs and Christine Zimoch to create the garden we have today. Policies were reviewed, the ground was prepped, materials and resources were donated, and on October 8, 2004 the cement was poured, the bridge and arbour and large trees and bushes were planted. On October 12, the students and parents under the direction of Mrs. Christine deNijs, wove all the donated plants, trees, bushes, vines and bulbs together to create the beautiful garden dedicated to a very special custodian, Mr. Tim Sharpe. Our grade one class when they planted their flowers and bulbs prayed over
them the first day they visited the garden. The School Advisory Council's dream was to reach out to the students in need, emotionally, spiritually, physically and mentally. Planning and progress continues. It is a place we visit to share thoughts and celebrate the lives of the many members of our school, past and present. It is a landscape to have pictures, celebrate mass, and enjoy quiet reflection. Various fundraisers have and continue to be organized to maintain the garden and add improvements annually. Poinsettia sales at Christmas supported families in need and continued fundraising to create a learning pavilion near the prayer garden. Footprint painting as a family happened during education week. These footprints will create a walking path from the asphalt to the garden. We will continue to walk humbly with our God.

**Westboro Elementary, Sherwood Park, Alberta**

Their peace garden is called a “Court Garden”. It has been taken care of by parents and students. The garden is filled with daffodils and other flowers. The parents teach the children to care for their plants and teaches them to care for the environment. Every year the students hold an "Open House" to show case what they grown.

**AROUND THE WORLD**

**Berlin, Germany**: Eric Schneider, founder of the “Postive News Youth Views” an official project in Europe for the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. IHTEC has been involved with the development.

**Partnership Organizations** have joined in with IHTEC to help develop the International School Peace Gardens. This has been the case in all international countries. The Children's International Summer Villages (CISV) have focused on a peace wall and a mural depicting messages of community and peace for our children to read, enjoy and reflect upon and the effect of such an endeavor on children of a multi cultural background in a large and diverse school. They are also promoting “Peace Foyers’ inside the front door of schools. These amazing people come together throughout the world to promote anti-bullying, anti-hate and community spirit. It has exemplify ideals of community, social responsibility and problem solving in our school and beyond. See the website under ‘Partners’ and ‘Links’ for more information.

**Middle East:**

**Lebanon, Tripoli: Antonine International Schools - by Laure Abou-Jaoudé:**

As Principal of an Elementary Catholic school in Tripoli Mina, in the North of the Lebanon, I started the change process from students going to the mosque and burning the US flag to planting their first International School Peace Garden. This school run by the Catholic Antonine Order and hosted both Christian and Muslim students. It was a real challenge for me to create an atmosphere of cooperation and harmony in the school community, were most of our youth were subject to a very radical ideas. It took diligent work throughout the year with the teachers and students and their families introducing the peace garden philosophy. The level of conflict was high, so I invited the grade Nine and Eight to help mediate among the youngest students in the yard , using positive
communication. With the help of a local environmental group, we started to plant trees with great care, and culminated by creating a garden with grass and plants, from all locals flowers. We used Jasmine, Hibiscus and roses. The official inauguration of the garden officially was integrated with the end of the school year celebration. We had invited officials such as the minister of the transportation, and the mayor of the city and the head of the order for our school. They created a special flag for this occasion, which contained messages of Peace and harmony. The children’s visual art exhibit was very significant, along with the performance of dances from all over the world. This created a big feeling of belonging to and caring for the world, while forgetting for a while our small differences, while focusing on the greatness of all people. This event was reported in the local news and generated many positive comments from the community. That same year, I had also the opportunity to introduced the idea to a Private civic school in Beirut Al Ahlia and to the International school. We documented and published all our efforts, in the school year book in Arabic, French and English. It is now four years since we began, and the community still keep this garden green and cared for.

USA

Parsons Elementary School, Suwanee, GA
The students in this school have become “ambassadors for peace” by joining children around the world who are creating Peace Gardens in their schoolyards. They began their Peace Garden the first year that Parsons Elementary opened, in the fall of 2003. Parsons Elementary’s Peace Garden has native shrubs and plants from the local ecosystem as a living symbol of community peace and a healthy environment. There is also an Inukshuk (pronounced “Eee-nuk-shook”). This is a rock sculpture that symbolizes peace and friendship, reminding us that today, as in yesteryear, we all depend on one another. In addition there are a path, an arbor, and benches so that all students can use the garden as a place for reading or studying. Theresa Schrum, of Eco-Terra Landscape Consultants, designed the garden’s plan, and she continues to share her knowledge of plants and their habitats as she teaches our students how to plant, mulch, and care for the garden.

Kitayama Elementary, California
From kindergarten to grade five every class has a garden box for them to plant anything they desire. Students were trained to help students solve their problems and conflicts with their peers, thus helping to maintain peace in the school. This is in conjunction with the Soul Shop program Kitayama is involved with. Supervising this group of students are Mrs. Aeden and Mrs. Mendoza.

Vermont: Between 1994-2000 a school built and raced a ‘solar car’ solving the problems for the need for oil. They also understood the necessity for keeping oil for future humans. Now planting a solar garden with useful solar items. The sixth year of racing, the students came third after facing many difficulties, they have learnt so much.

The USA National Gardening Association have invited 22,000 schools in the US to plant an ISPG with a focus on sustainability. No known results yet.
The University of Hawaii and Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) are promoting IHTEC’s programs, to 700,000 schools in the US and 4 other countries, plus all the International Schools. PDK is promoting IHTEC to 70,000 members (Professors) around the world. No known results.

IHTEC continues to work with three yahoogroups in Tourism, Recreation and Leisure, where over 2000 Professors and International Tourism Organizations receive information on a regular basis.

**Mexico:**
1992: October Puerto Morelos, QR, Mexico planted first peace garden in the village to celebrate their Millennium Statement on developing an ecological village. Sandra Dayton organized the village and Veronica Long dedicated the garden. Julia sent Kits and Display Boards with Veronica. The village had to dynamite holes in the sandstone and bring soil in from the jungle. They planted the Ceiba Tree, the tree of life.

1997: November 14 - 16, Julia Morton-Marr was invited by Sandra Dayton of Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo, who held a 3 day conference to promote ISPG to 30 schools (1000 students each) A total of 30,000 students who wrote poems, songs, and created posters, for the opening of the first Mexican home for the International School Peace Gardens in the Alfredo Borano’s Botanical Gardens. At this time Xcaret nourishes global Peace through Education and Tourism with Lu’um Ka’ Naab and all the schools have planted their peace gardens.

IHTEC has connected with the National Botanical Gardens in Quintana Roo; UNESCO Parks in Cuernavaca, Moreles; Secretary of Education in Cuiliacan, Senola; and several schools in Mexico City. They are all working on their peace gardens with their environmental programs in schools. Some actions that have occurred: students are protecting local orchids as trees are cut down along roads that are being built; some are growing large mushrooms for food; building eco-latrines in villages on sandstone environments. Schools have been given plants from their eco-system for their peace gardens from the Secretary of the Environment in Quintana Roo. Some are schools are collecting garbage from beaches, and learning how to protect their coastal areas.

**Mexican Professionals Group of Canada,**
1998: July 26 -August 8, IHTEC held a 2 ½ day Seminar with 17 speakers for the National Federation of Women Economist, with Teresa Prieto R., President of the Mexican Professionals Group of Canada. They brought 20 young men and women to IHTEC’s 17 workshops, for their study of environmental, economic, cultural and women’s concerns..

In 1998, December 21; MPGC held the first “Children’s Connection” where a total of 15,000 hand made Christmas Cards were exchanged. They came from Morelos State to the ISPG schools as an inter-cultural exchange. This was organized by Teresa Prieto R. and the IHTEC team.

1999: February 23, IHTEC President Julia Morton-Marr, delivered greeting cards from students in Mexico to an assembly of 80 students at the Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario. Julia also...
spoke about Peace and Environmental issues and how the react together. The ‘State of the World Lesson Plan’ was developed for these secondary school students, who produced a report as a result.

1999: March 10-18, The Mexico-Canada Chamber of Commerce, Teresa Prieto and Dennis Rankin arrange for Lynn Holden and Julia to travel and meet the Secretaries of Education, Turismo, Culture, Environment, and the University President in Cuanavaca, Morelos, Mexico. This was to return with Canadian Children’s Connection Christmas cards. Two schools planted and dedicated ISPG’s while we were there.

2000: 23 March, A child’s peace song was recorded as a CD, to be promoted across Quintana Roo.

2000: March 26, “Marine Peace Parks” launched with Sandra Dayton and Lu’um Kaanab, to the Mayor Marcelino Chuc Matos, Puerto Morelos, Mexico.

2001: November - December, Victor Sanchez Concerts promotes an inter-cultural classical guitar events between Mexico and Canada focused on the ISPG.

2005: December; Teresa Prieto invites four States of Mexico to send Christmas Cards to children in Toronto. This to promote the International School Peace Gardens in Mexico and Canada. As a result six schools in Culiacan, Senola, have dedicated peace gardens on February 14 - 15, 2006.