



Pathways to a Healthy, Sustainable Community

Y-PLAN Elementary: Malcolm X Academy 2012



What are some of the ingredients that will make the Hunters View community a green and healthy neighborhood?

How can young people help the Hunters View HOPE SF housing developers forge stronger connections between the school, the neighborhood, and the larger community?

How can younger and older students collaborate, send positive messages, and offer hope to each other as they travel along the pathway from school through the gateway to the future?

For three years, the 3rd and 4th grade students at Malcolm X Academy have been engaged in a series of hands-on architecture and planning projects focused on these questions. In this year's Think Tank the children worked with architects Shirl Buss from the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools and Prescott Reavis, and Katherine Williams from the San Francisco Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects on a series of hands-on architecture and planning projects. The students engaged in thinking about the relationship between the school and the larger community, and have learned about how they can play a role in being a catalyst for positive change.

Our Process



Center for Cities + Schools
Y-PLAN Youth Plan Learn Act Now: Roadmap

1. Start-Up:

Introduction to architecture, planning and the project themes

For our first project this year, NOMA architect Prescott Reavis introduced the students to the multiple themes to be addressed in our Think Tank. His slide show incorporated an intro to architecture and planning focusing on the Hunters View HOPE SF community and its connection to the school. It also included examples of ecological sustainability and healthy, active living. We saw great images of and issues about public spaces featuring gateways, pathways, and rejuvenation stations. Our first hands-on building project incorporated all of these themes.



2. Making Sense of the City:

Sustaining natural resources, promoting healthy community

After viewing an inspiring slideshow that Katherine Williams shared about Sustainability and Healthy Living, the students launched into a hands on project focused on the outdoor space on the school grounds. They generated a series of ideas for Gateways, Pathways, and Regeneration Stations that could be incorporated into the school, but also into public spaces in the HOPE SF Housing Development, Phase II.



3. Into Action:

Gateways, pathways, and “regeneration stations” link school and community

The students built scale models of their ideas for the regeneration stations—places to generate physical, emotional, creative and spiritual energy. Their ideas included: performance spaces, gardens, exercise stations, energy generation stations, places to capture, clean and dispense water, fresh food booths, art and poetry workshops and people power stations. We arrayed their models around the perimeter of a "Google Earth" image of the school grounds, and started to think about how to make connections with the larger community.



4. Going Public:

Symbolic gateways and pathways

We viewed slides of inspiring gateways around the world, and discussed what might be incorporated into designs for a symbolic gateway for the school and community. We decided to focus on creating a gateway for the 5th grades students to pass through into their futures. The students generated—and built in bas relief—many fabulous concepts for gateways. Our themes included: *A History Gateway; A Friendship Gateway; Follow Your Heart; Make Your Dreams Come True, Strong Minds and Bodies, Memories of the 5th Graders*, and many more.



5. Looking Forward Looking Back:

Making it real

We decided to build a gateway for the 5th grade students to go through at graduation. To generate ideas for it, we created 3-d models of symbolic gateways. Our models reflect many of our ideas about the older students' legacies, memories, and future hopes and dreams. Using our models as inspiration, we came up with a design for building a composite gateway. Students worked in teams to build modules to be incorporated in the full-scale gateway. Each module features a diorama honoring a 5th grade student. It also features descriptive adjectives, artifacts, affirmations, memories, and good wishes for the future. The day after our culminating event, the fifth grade students passed through our beautiful gateway as they went forth in the world with affirmations and hope.





The children's Architecture Think Tank found new pathways and gateways for expression this year. We continued to make links between the school, the community, local professionals, HOPE SF, and between adults and youth who have participated in the program during the past 4 years. All of us are collaborating to promote a healthy and sustainable community and to catalyze lifelong learning and activism in young people.

Adult Allies

This project is collaboration between UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools, Hunters View Associates, SF National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), HOPE SF, Choice Neighborhoods, and San Francisco Unified School District. The dedicated teachers, **Mr. Moore** and **Ms. Rahima**, their amazing Principal **Ms. Cooley**, and teacher emeritus and volunteer **Ms. Gorman** supported the students every day.

Shirl Buss, CC&S

For more than 20 years, Ms. Buss has worked with children and adults on design and construction projects, with a specialty in consensus-based participatory design. As an educator and researcher, Buss' work focuses on children, youth and the urban built environment.

Katherine Williams, NOMA

Ms. Williams is an architect, mom, project manager, community do-gooder, and native of Virginia, who loves books, sharing time with friends and family, and listening to others' stories. A graduate of Howard University, she currently works on community development projects at the Housing Community Development Corporation. She writes online at katherinerw.com

Prescott Reavis, NOMA

Mr. Reavis has spent the majority of his career focusing on the programming, planning, managing, designing and the construction of buildings, which enable healing, learning and discovery. Mr. Reavis' latest endeavors are the design and planning of the Energy Center for the University of California's San Francisco Medical Center at Mission Bay with Stantech.



Ms. Cooley



Ms. Buss



Mr. Moore



Ms. Rahima



Ms. Williams



Mr. Reavis



Ms. Gorman



Thank You!

