

By 2050, 68% of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas—lack of exposure or connection to nature





Nurturing Nature to Nurture Yourself

Daze Jones & Elle Mihiem

Mental health suffers indoors

- Social isolation
- Lack of social awareness
- Delayed social-emotional development



Lack of Empathy in Teens and Children

- People may grow disengaged from their life, often dissociating
- Ignoring peers when they're visibly in distress or people in general need of assistance
- As social beings, human interactions are critical for growth; without it future generations will lack needed skills

“Nature's relationship to physical health”

- Limited time outdoors leads to a lack of exercise
- Improper Hormone levels
- Strengthens your immune system



How Can Nature Help You?



- Improves mental and physical health
- Builds strong relationships
- Maintains curiosity about our environment.

Data

mental health
conditions

Outdoor
activity



Screen
Exposure

Traditional
Schools

Possible Solutions

Fun outdoor activities

- Sports/cycling
 - Gardening
 - Meditation
- Reading outside
- games/free play
- Picnic/Camping
- Family events

Outdoor education

- Different environments suit different learning styles
- Better self-expression and calms the mind.
- Allows maximum blood and air flow to the brain

On-Campus and volunteer Possibilities

Service learning

- End-of-the-year trip
- Helping with social events
- Selling snacks after school
- Fundraising projects
 - Campus improvement
- Gain service hours

Volunteering (off-campus)

- Blandford Nature Center
- GVSU Sustainable Agriculture Project
- Land Conservancy of West Michigan
- Plainsong Farm & Ministry
- New City Neighbors
 - The Highlands

Student advocacy

- Ask your teachers to go outside
- Join student council
 - Go to student-accessible meetings
- Email our school board

Interview—Jamie Shultz

serves as a Great Start Readiness Program representative and works with pre-K in outdoor classrooms. Uncontrolled screen time has worsened behavior and postponed the development of empathy. Notices that she had a better outcome than expected. Children have found it easier to comprehend subjects. They have more behavioral difficulties indoors. Places emphasis on the lack of parent involvement in the school environment.

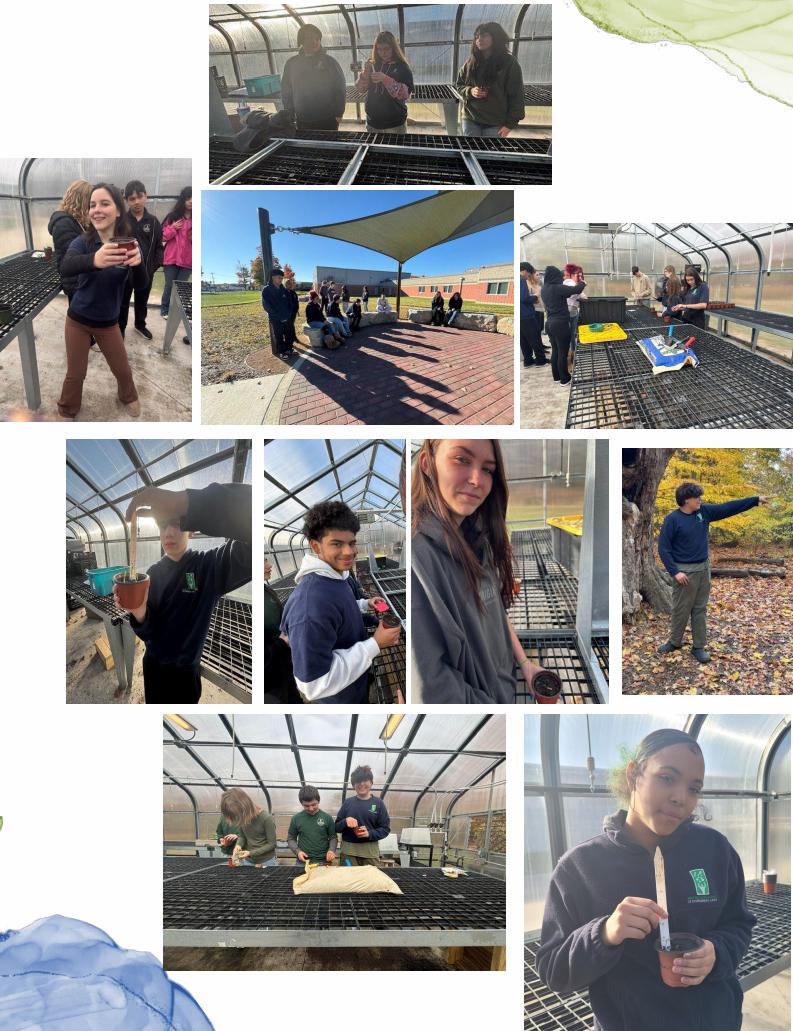
“Outside everything can be a wonder for them”
(Mrs. Shultz 2025).



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Action Description

We started a gardening project allowing teens to nurture plants and learn to express empathy. Along with participating in activities and completing reflection sheets at the end of each class. Our goal is to get our students engaged with their environment and peers.



Action activities

Planting

Seeing that something as simple as nature needs care, and they do too. Growth is not linear.



Reflection

Set a goal and think about behavior in class. One positive and one thing needing improvement.



Play-centered learning

Students are allowed to decompress. We learn to better interact with peers.

Lesson plans

The lesson plans combine the school's curriculum with social-emotional learning to foster empathy for our peers and a positive association with being outside. Promoting different learning methods and increasing interaction with classwork



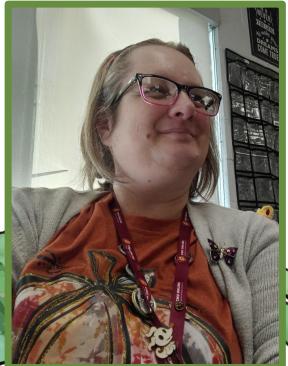
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Things we learned



Special thanks to...

Mrs. April



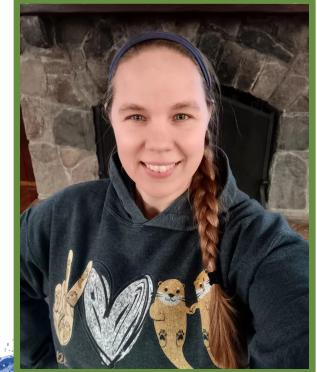
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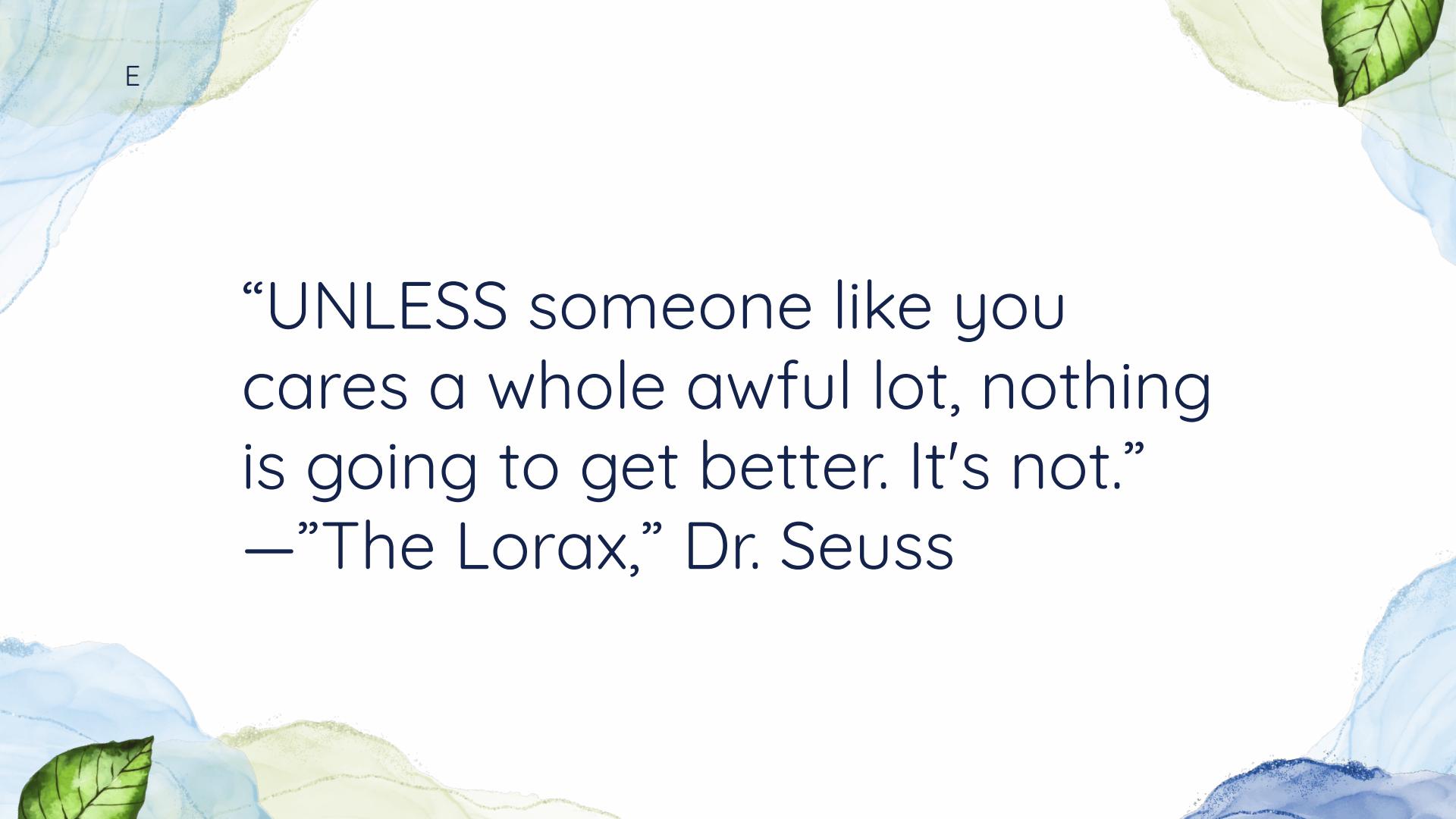


Mrs. Holly & Mr. Shawn



Mrs. McCrumb





“UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot, nothing
is going to get better. It's not.”

— ”The Lorax,” Dr. Seuss



Thank you!