

Application Form

Organization Information

School Name*

Mason Community Learning Center

Grade Levels Served*

k-6

Contact Information

Team Members*

Please list the names, titles, and email addresses for each member of your core team.

Erin VanHoose, Intervention Specialist, evanhoos@apslearns.org
Mina Riazi, Speech Language Pathologist, mriazi@apslearns.org
Kelly Kreitz, School Psychologist, kkreitz@apslearns.org
Gwen Ashley, Kindergarten Teacher, gashley@apslearns.org
Denise Farmakidis, 1st Grade Teacher, dpettiti@apslearns.org
Ann Marie Rushanan, 2nd Grade Teacher, arushana@apslearns.org
Tyler Mahaffey, 3rd Grade Teacher- Language Arts, tmm44669@apslearns.org
Letezia Robinson, 4th Grade Teacher- Language Arts, lrobins2@apslearns.org
Greg Enright, 5th Grade Teacher- Math/Science, genright@apslearns.org
Denise Kern, 6th Grade Teacher, dkern@apslearns.org
Wayne Turner, PE Teacher, wturner@apslearns.org
Deanna Messer, Physical Therapist, d1m45796@apslearns.org
Sedonia Pool, Secretary, spoole@apslearns.org
Carolee Gormley, Art Teacher, cgormley@apslearns.org

Principal Name*

Please enter the name of your school's principal here.

Renee Kochis

Principal Email*

Please enter your principal's email address here.

rkochis@apslearns.org

Treasurer Contact Information*

Please provide the name and mailing address of the treasurer for your school district.

Todd Adkins
tadkins@apslearns.org
10 N. Main Akron, OH 44308

Request Information

Project Name*

Mending Monarch Minds (MMM)

Amount Requested*

This number should match the total on your EIG Budget spreadsheet.

\$10,000.00

Project Overview*

Please write a brief, two-sentence description of your project and desired outcome.

MMM allows the Mason Monarch Outdoor Classroom(EIG1) to continue its growth allowing student and community needs to be met. MMM will embrace our diverse student body, rich in language and culture, where they are, with goals of healing and growth.

Project Description*

Please write a brief description of your project. What are your needs? What do you want your students to achieve?

In our first EIG in 2022, we built the Mason Monarch Outdoor Classroom(MMOC), but our students need more. The MMM project will allow our staff to receive training to meet students SEL needs and educate them on the importance and impact of outdoor education.

This year will allow us to beautify the MMOC through edible plantings of prickly black berry and raspberry bushes, allowing for the students to experience planting and harvesting during the school year. The planting of these fruit bearing bushes will also allow for independent berry harvesting from our students and their families throughout the summer.

We will be able to surround the outdoor classroom areas in pollinator plants that will help draw a variety of new creatures to our already established milkweed plantings (EIG1).

The students will paint and decorate fabric strips to express their gratitude, wishes and release negative experiences and emotions. Showing individual expression that they will be able to share and treasure along with their community no matter where their life takes them. These messages will then be looped together and hung from student painted poles, similar to Tibetan prayer flags, allowing their biodegradable wishes to become part of the Middlebury ecosystem. We will also weave solar lights into the gratitude fabrics to

illuminate the space so the children can come back with their families in the evening, on weekends and throughout the 10 darkest weeks of the year.

This year we will also include a group reading center/picnic table allowing peers to collaborate within their learning community or enjoy a meal during a therapy session. The current bench seating (EIG1) will have optional blankets for comfort and calming. MMM will also allow our students experience beyond their neighborhood and their essential experience provided through GAR. This year every student will get to engage in a yoga practice and rock climbing in an actual yoga and rock-climbing studio in their own neighborhood to build strength, self reliance and community connection. They will learn that coming together as a community and supporting each other through breathing and movement can have a great impact on personal growth. They will learn to rely on themselves and discover their ability to always "come back to their breath" in all situations to keep calm, to learn, and to heal.

Compelling Story*

Why do you believe in this project?

I began in APS with optimistic, fresh minds thinking we could solve everything in a classroom. As we grew it became clear that it takes a village. A village of people/a village of experiences. Mason students are the most underserved in APS. We are surrounded by Akron's largest homeless shelters, leading to a 52% transient/21% homeless population. Students come with trauma on many levels, it is hard to know how to begin. MMM will allow our students to look inward to heal/outward to be supported, provide staff, often victims of secondary trauma via the stories of students with PD. It will give students a voice/a place to express it/ a physical place to return.

I attended inner city(IC) and private schools (PS). It became clear that opportunities available to students in IC compared to PS were minimal. The students at my PC much like Mason, rarely had a chance to leave their neighborhood unless they moved. Field trips were treasured. The students at PS were regularly receiving enriching experiences with their families on the weekends/summer. They took vacations and had an array of experiences outside school walls. Students at PS had a safe outdoor sanctuary where they could rest mind/body when they needed feel a sense of belonging because they came from similar backgrounds. Unfortunately, my IC school peers lacked a sense of belonging/place to could feel at peace. I always knew I wanted to teach an underserved population after seeing the difference in environmental factors. Fast forward this year-my students and I frequently use MMOC and find much joy being outside/learning/practicing mindfulness. A student told me "I love it out here. It's so calm. I don't go outside at home unless I take out the trash." MMM allows students to find even more comfort and belonging in our outdoor space that they can benefit from while at school and also bring their families to outside of school. It is an essential experience these students are able to access on a daily basis.

Cradle to Career Continuum*

At which transition point/indicator on the Cradle to Career Continuum does your project fall?

K- ready for success & 3rd- reading on grade level

Student Impact*

How will this project impact your students? Describe any secondary audiences that will be affected, including other classrooms or teachers. What will you do to ensure your project supports equity and inclusion in a diverse and inequitable society/world? Please include any practices or impact that focus on social emotional learning, and any outcomes that affect diverse populations (racially, LGBTQ, immigrant, other-abled, etc).

ThatGreen spaces in urban areas provide a place for mental health as well as physical wellbeing. Studies have shown that access to green spaces can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. We saw through EIG1 students use the classroom for reading/relaxation. They used it for learning/fun. They brought their parents back to see what they discovered and the community held meetings in our new outdoor space. Green spaces in Middlebury, and especially green spaces that feel safe and have a sense of community are greatly lacking. Our outdoor classroom has been used by all of our students. It has been used to host evening community meetings. We have seen a great impact and a growing interest for the space. This MMM project will allow the most underserved students in APS access to a beautified space and to continue their work as citizen scientists, as our grant focused on.

The Mason ELL population is growing. When we spoke with those students about their language on the peace pole in MMOC(EIG1), one said "That makes me so happy, my mom will be so happy. It feels like my family will stay here. Its feels so special". This years MMM allows every student's words to be present and feel special.

This year we had 65 new entries and 75 withdrawals. Our goal is to make an impact with each student as long as we have them. With MMM they will have a sense of belonging no matter where they go.

Students will expand their tool box with strategies to use in academic activities and relationships with peers and family. They will connect with breath and have to tools to depend on. They will be brought out of the "lizard brain"-fight, flight, freeze- learning they have control in an uncontrollable world.

MMM is place for you regardless of language, gender, SES, LBGTQIA+ status-all are welcome.

Gaining skills in confidence, regulation, and choices will take students from kids to learner all the way to community members who have learned to find the clam they are seeking.

Sustainability/Replicability*

How will other teachers in your building learn about the project and its outcomes? How will your project empower, inspire and/or support your colleagues?

MMM is an expansion of the Mason Monarch Outdoor Classroom (EIG1). All students K-6 have already interacted with and have daily access to the existing outdoor space. The staff has attended professional development around social emotional learning, mindfulness and outdoor instruction. The Mason teachers will continue with more professional development around outdoor benefits and neutrality of outdoor spaces. The Mason staff has collaborated on wants and experience needs for their curriculum and their students to formulate the MMM budget. A majority of them have already planted milkweed at their own homes, showing their interest and dedication to or original EIG project and their interactions this year have indicated a desire for more.

Mason will host a staff 6-hour option to focus on relationship building and outdoor learning through the purchase of literature for them to explore. We will offer this 6-hour option district wide or present and attend at local or statewide conferences.

Mason CLC has many community partners supporting our students and the Middlebury neighborhood. At the center of this project are the Mason students, their families, and the long standing dedicated staff. The community partners for example, Akron Hope and the Vincent House, will continue to utilize and provide input in the space. The beatification and expansion of the outdoor classroom space will provide an attractive neighborhood location, allowing the community to gather and the students to share with their families safely. Through community, district and business support we will be able to maintain replanting and harvesting. We have partnered with Keep Akron Beautiful to allow us to have water access for the site by becoming a city beatification site and have started our own seed saving program.

Technology*

What technology (if any) is necessary for the success of this project? Explain how it will be used and why it is critical to the project. If technology is not needed as part of this project, then please describe why and how objectives will be achieved without added technology.

APS has provided chromebooks for every student. The district has also provided a hotspot for classes to utilize outdoors if needed. A community partner has provided a Bluetooth speaker to allow amplification of mindfulness activities for teachers who choose participate alongside their students or are not comfortable in leading. Besides this, the goal of the outdoor space is to unplug. To experience learning in a novel way. To open your senses, all of them, while learning.

Attachments

There are two required attachments to complete your application. **No other attachments will be accepted.**

Endorsement Form*

This form must be completed by the Superintendent (or Head of School) and Principal. [Click here to download the Endorsement Form.](#)

[Mason GAR Endorsement Form 22-23.pdf](#)

Project Budget Form*

Use this form to provide an itemized list of all expenses that you expect to incur in connection with the project. Please use actual cost quotes that reflect the best available prices on materials. [Click here to download the Project Budget Form as an Excel spreadsheet.](#)

[Click here to access the Project Budget Form in Google Sheets.](#) Please note that if you complete the budget in Google Sheets, you must upload it here as an xlsx or pdf. Google Sheets files (.gsheets) will NOT be accepted.

[2023 EIG Budget-Mending Monarch Minds - Sheet1.pdf](#)

Please round all amounts to the nearest dollar. This spreadsheet will automatically round up your TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSE to the nearest \$10. The AMOUNT REQUESTED in your application should match the rounded TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSE amount. Please include an Explanation for all of your line items. Please upload this file to your application as an Excel spreadsheet or PDF. Google Sheets file formats will NOT be accepted.				
School & Project Title:				
PROGRAM EXPENSES	Cost Per Unit	Units Needed	Total Cost	Explanation <i>This column is mandatory for all of your line items.</i>
Technology				<i>Up to 40% of budget</i>
bluetooth portable speaker	\$ 100.00	0	\$ -	In Kind- community partners allowing teachers to present amplified lessons
<i>Technology Subtotal</i>			\$ -	
Professional Development				<i>Projects with technology are expected to allocate at least 10% of their total project budget to PD</i>
yoga class and rock climbing	\$ 13.00	250	\$ 3,250.00	Rock Mill description- general PD for our students and staff. Students will participate in a rotation between a meditation class, a yoga class and a rock climbing experience in the middle of their very own neighborhood. The owners are thrilled to build a community connection that we hope will continue to partner with the Mason students and their families in the future.
Sherry Sanfilippo, founder of The Footpaths Foundation	\$ 600.00	2	\$ 1,200.00	Initial and ongoing staff PD provided by Sherry Sanfilippo a retired Cleveland Public Schools teacher. To introduce the success of the outdoor learning they have seen through Footprints curriculum- an outdoor learning curriculum for science and social studies.
The Nature Fix	\$ 15.00	20	\$ 300.00	This book will be used by staff for their 6-hour option to increase nature learning understanding usage
<i>Professional Development Subtotal</i>			\$ 4,750.00	
Materials/Supplies				
Gard&Rock Aluminum Anchoring Base for umbrellas	\$ 60.00	2	\$ 120.00	to anchor umrellas to ground for shade so these will remain moveable
ground umbrellas	\$ 50.00	2	\$ 100.00	to provide shade allowing students to learn outdoors with greater comfort
meditation blankets	\$ 105.00	3	\$ 315.00	for students to sit on or cover up with 10 per pack
fabric	\$ 6.00	5	\$ 30.00	yard of fabric cut into strips to make gratefulness/release chains to hang from wood posts (painted by students) made of 100% cotton fabric to dec
Footpath Foundation learning Kits	\$ 350.00	1	\$ -	in kind- donation by Sherry Sanfilippo from Footpath Foundadtions
16 ft. wood posts (4x4 pressure treated)	\$ 64.00	6	\$ 384.00	to hang string lights on and to hang gratefulness chains from
solar string lights	\$ 20.00	4	\$ 80.00	to provide light to those who utilize the outdoor classroom outside of school hours
12 ft. ladder	\$ 300.00	1	\$ 300.00	to be able to hang string lights/gratfulness chains
concrete reading table	\$ 1,800.00	1	\$ 1,800.00	movable concrete table to allow students additional seating when using the outdoc
hose	\$ 30.00	1	\$ 30.00	to water the plants in the outdoor classroom/garden utilizing the opened fire hydrant (Keep Akron Beautiful)
Breathe Like a Bear book k-3	\$ 16.00	5	\$ 80.00	to allow students to pair up and use books of their own to practice mindfulness at school
Just Breathe:Meditation, Mindfulness, Movement, and More book 4-6	\$ 13.00	5	\$ 65.00	to allow students to pair up and use books of their own to practice mindfulness at school
raspberry bushes	\$ 40.00	5	\$ 200.00	to allow students to learn connections between nature, food supply, and their school garden ecosystem
blackberry bushes	\$ 40.00	5	\$ 200.00	to allow students to learn connections between nature, food supply, and their school garden ecosystem
<i>Materials/Supplies Subtotal</i>			\$ 3,704.00	
Refreshments				<i>Up to \$500 per project can be used for refreshments and snacks.</i>
refreshments	\$ 500.00	1	\$ 500.00	
	\$ -		\$ -	
<i>Refreshments Subtotal</i>			\$ 500.00	
Miscellaneous				
Substitutes	\$ -		\$ -	<i>Up to 10% of budget</i>
Other:buses	\$ 40.00	26	\$ 1,040.00	APS busses will transport to and from Rock Mill
Other:	\$ -		\$ -	
Other:	\$ -		\$ -	

