

The History of the “Eagle’s Nest”



Interest in creating a public art sculpture emerged from an instructional unit about public art in the Ellettsville/Bloomington community. When students and teachers visited Bloomington and saw the new B-Line Trail, the idea took hold. A small grant received in the fall of 2010, provided support for planning. The intention was to visualize the mission of our school community.

Groups of students, teachers, and parent/community members participated in brainstorming sessions. Afterward, students made drawings in art classes, then discussed and selected their favorites to be uploaded to the website for further consideration. The goal was both to learn about public art, and to experience the process. Through the course of action the school community was to come to a design decision, while fostering the development of a positive sense of self-worth and an understanding of the value of multiple viewpoints. To assist with the process, a core committee helped to synthesize ideas and drawings and to render plans for further consideration by stakeholders. The refined plan was shared for review in art classes and through bulletin boards, newspapers, email, and the school website, during the spring of 2011.

By the end of the 2010-11 school year, the committee identified parent engineers who would support the collaborative project. In July of 2011, Gerry Masse, director of Sculpture Trails Outdoor Museum, submitted a bid to construct the sculpture. Grant writing and fundraising began immediately. A CAD drawing interpreting the design was created by Sculpture Trails in “the students’ voice”. The school community participated in two Art Nights in May 2012 to create symbols of learning on clay-covered panels that would be molded, cast, and attached to the sculptural tree. All were invited to watch the casting process and to see the sculpture develop at Sculpture Trails Outdoor Museum, near Solsberry, in July 2012. Fundraising continued through the time of site preparation and the initial November 2012 installation, as the arrival of new grant funds was awaited. Students named the sculpture “Eagle’s Nest”.

Site preparation for installation required community involvement. Equipment operators from Ellettsville’s Street and Utilities Departments excavated the area and brought donations of stone aggregate ready for concrete contributed by imi. Concrete finisher, Trevor Powell, wrote off his labor. (We paid for some concrete and the materials used in texture stamping.) Bybee Stone Co. contributed the milled and carved limestone features for the site, set in place by the RBB Maintenance Dept. Electricians from Cassidy Electric arrived, donating their work to trench the line for wiring; and returned in the spring to wire in the fixtures we purchased. The RBB Maintenance Department prepared the site for planting and seeding. The Girl Scout troops of Debbie Robbins assisted in planting our purchase of 143 variegated liriopie at the site, and adult volunteers planted the 24 roses. These donations of individuals and businesses were important to the collaborative project; and association with the project was meaningful to many individuals.

Students had an opportunity to respond to the sculpture in “looking at and talking about” sessions with their classroom teachers in the spring of 2013. Students may learn more about the work of our collaborators and community partners, as they explore concerns and problem-solving decisions faced during the process. More than creating a beautiful and symbolic work of art, there are now memories and stories to tell about the process...many of them, like the leaves on the tree. These form new ways the sculpture can become an educational tool. See the ebook.