



For Immediate Release

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HALEY PILOT SCHOOL RECOGNIZED FOR BRINGING OUTDOORS INTO SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Wins first Kirk Meyer Schoolyard Award

The Boston Schoolyard Initiative announced today that the Dennis C. Haley Pilot Elementary School is the 2009 recipient of the Kirk Meyer Schoolyard Award. The award recognizes the school that best integrates the schoolyard into the life and fabric of its school and community.

"On any given day, you'll find teachers and students outdoors using this schoolyard for teaching and learning – as well as for active play," said Myrna Johnson, Executive Director of the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative. "Today's children have so little opportunity to explore and learn about their natural world. Students at the Haley do, and that is exciting."

The Haley School serves around 300 students in grades K1-5 and has a theme focus on the environment and community. Its innovative schoolyard, renovated by the Boston Schoolyard Initiative in 1999, is central to pursuing these themes. Neighborhood families and children also use the schoolyard, and an active friends group helps maintain the space. According to Ross Wilson, the Haley Pilot School principal, "As the principal of the Haley Pilot School I am proud of our school's focus on our local environment and community. Our students, faculty and neighbors take great pride in the schoolyard. It serves as a learning tool, a place to gather and play as well as a connection between our school and community."

"We are proud to join the Boston Schoolyard Initiative in congratulating the Haley Elementary School on receiving this award," said Dr. Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. "The Haley community -- including students, staff, families and partners -- has emerged as a local and national

model for creative, thoughtful, ongoing use of outdoor space to promote student achievement and recreation. At the Haley, learning happens in and out of the classroom every day."

About the Kirk Meyer Award: The Kirk Meyer Award, named after the founding executive director of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative, was created to recognize a school in the Boston Public School system that has done the most to integrate its schoolyard into the life and fabric of the school and community. The Haley School is the first recipient of the award.

About the Boston Schoolyard Initiative: The Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI) transforms Boston's schoolyards into dynamic centers for recreation, learning and community life. Since 1995, BSI has completed capital projects on 75 schoolyards, including full schoolyard renovations and new outdoor classrooms. BSI's education program helps BPS teachers use the schoolyard as a resource for teaching and learning. For more information, see www.schoolyards.org.

About the Haley School: The Haley School serves about 300 students in grades K1 – 5. The award committee cited the following in choosing the Haley School for recognition:

- The Haley School has sustained and **increased** active use of the schoolyard over the 10 years since the Boston Schoolyard Initiative renovated the schoolyard in 1999. In those 10 years, use of the schoolyard has become a vital part of each school day – for both recreation and learning.
- The school is a city-wide model for using the schoolyard to support its environmental and community themes.
- The school leadership in 1999 advocated for, and achieved, a visionary plan for the schoolyard. Components of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative renovation here were important precursors to the outdoor classrooms BSI has now built at 26 other schools in the BPS system. The Haley is the only schoolyard with a built-in "wetland". The yard also includes grass ball fields; an outdoor "reading room"; gardens and more.
- The school's vision of using the schoolyard for teaching and learning has thrived through a transition in principals.
- The Haley effectively uses partnerships, like that with the Boston Nature Center, to support the school's vision.
- An active friends group helps maintain and refurbish the schoolyard.
- The schoolyard is a community resource, regularly used by neighboring children and families.