

HAND MIDDLE SCHOOL: COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROJECT

Short Summary

Hand is situated to take advantage of its surrounding neighborhood and community. Since Hand has expanded as far as it can go on its current site, school administrators are looking for unique ways to benefit Hand and the community. To this end, Hand and its non-profit foundation have partnered with the City of Columbia to redevelop and improve Emily Douglas Park, which sits adjacent to Hand's property. Hand and the City also are building an amphitheater in the park. Hand students and programs get first use of the property during school hours, but the neighborhood and community are encouraged to use the amphitheater after hours. Hand students have also contributed to the green space of the community by building a "Columbia Fence Garden" with benches, paths, and colorful plants for their neighbors to use and enjoy. The goal of these projects is to increase student learning, maximize scarce resources, get students involved in extra-curricular activities, and get parents and the community involved in education activities. In addition to these large projects, Hand partners with the Shandon Neighborhood Association, local churches, the county library, and the University of South Carolina to enhance the education of its students and the surrounding community.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Shandon community in Columbia, SC
- *Target Groups Served:* Hand Middle School students, families, and community members
- *School/Districts Served:* Hand Middle School, Richland School District 1

Research and Evaluation

The development of program/initiative is based on/grounded in what research? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works. Description of data collection and analysis should be included.

As the institutional anchor for the Shandon neighborhood, Hand's facilities and resources are widely used outside of its students and staff. Local organizations hold events in the Hand Auditorium. Neighbors participate in fundraising efforts for Hand and exercise on the outside track. Hand Middle School is a state- and nationally-acclaimed community school, a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, a South Carolina Flagship School of Promise, and a Middle School of Excellence for Parent and Community Involvement. The principal, Marisa Vickers, was named the South Carolina Middle School Principal of the Year in 2006.

Program Resources

- *Annual Cost:* Varies
- *Funding Sources:* Fundraising with neighborhood association
- *Staffing Needs:* Existing
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* Varies but outside funds are raised according to project needs
- *Partner Organizations:* City of Columbia, Shandon Neighborhood Association, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control; local churches; the county library; and the University of South Carolina

Contact Information: Marisa Vickers, Principal; 803-343-2947; mickers@richlandone.org

