

Pershing East Magnet School Learning Garden

By Lou Storino, IWEA President | Photos by Tim Moran

As a kick-off to WEFTEC, IWEA students and young professionals joined 110 volunteers in the construction of a rain garden at Pershing East Magnet School in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood on Sat., Sept. 26. This service project, "The Pershing Cultivation Project: Growing Green Gardens and Young Minds," was sponsored by the WEF Students and Young Professionals Committee. IWEA young professionals participated not only in the construction of the rain garden, but in the yearlong effort to plan, design and organize it as well. IWEA was a co-sponsor of the event.



Volunteers pose for a group photo.

The learning garden was designed for a 25-year storm, with 18.5 inches of open-graded aggregate. It can retain more than 7,000 gallons of stormwater. In addition to installing landscaping and native plants, volunteers helped construct a 700-foot square outdoor classroom with permeable pavers, stormwater storage, and two learning stations.

The Pershing East Magnet School Learning Garden incorporates a learning classroom within a rain garden. Students will gain a first-hand experience in native prairie planting, the inner-workings of a rain garden, and the necessity of the water cycle to sustain life.



The completed learning garden illustrating the native plantings, permeable pavement and seating area for the learning garden.



Volunteers installing plantings.