

Bloom 360 Learning Community Summary Report

Information about the Applicant

Bloom360 Learning Community is a nonprofit, private school that provides a refreshing developmental approach to education that recaptures the joy of learning for children and young adults (ages 5 to 21) with neuro-diverse needs. Our learning community inspires each person to discover and create in a supportive, sensory-friendly environment using a project-based curriculum driven by his or her own interests. We provide a whole-person approach that develops strong roots by valuing every Learner's strengths and cultivating meaningful relationships. While any person would greatly benefit from this developmental style of learning, it is critical for neurodivergent Learners. We believe in nurturing our Learners to bloom through a personalized learning experience that both encourages and engages them to contribute to the community in which we live, grow, and thrive! For more information, please visit: www.bloom360.org.

The school's framework is Developmental, Individual Differences and Relationships, which follows the work of child psychiatrist, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, who developed the transformational Greenspan Floortime Approach® that is embraced by those at the forefront of child development. Our approach is unique and innovative, especially in Wisconsin where much attention and resources are focused on behavioral training for autistic individuals and others with learning disabilities. Developed from the ground up, Bloom360 is not limited by traditional methodologies of mainstream education but provides a blend of best-in-class programs. Learners actively learn-by-doing in the woodshop, art studio, kitchen, and learning labs. Learners in the Day School as well as the part-time Roots Program, engage in simple to complex projects customized for their developmental readiness.

Bloom360's team is unique and highly experienced across many disciplines that support the innovative and strengths-based mission of the school. Our founder has owned and managed a successful consulting business for 20 years and founded Bloom360 applying many of those same business principles to ensure long-term success and longevity. Our multi-disciplinary team includes special education teachers, the first two practitioners in Wisconsin certified in The Greenspan Floortime Approach®; a full-time music therapist; a full-time occupational therapist and two occupational therapy assistants who support ongoing sensory and movement activities that are integrated throughout the Learner's entire day and a full-time social worker. Further, Bloom360 is a field placement site for the social work and psychology depts. from George Williams College and for occupational therapy college students from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, MATC, Bryant and Stratton and Mt. Mary University.

Statement of Need

Bloom360's pioneering approach includes a neuro-science informed facility layout that we are extending outdoors with the build out of a Music and Sensory Garden. Our Learners benefit from physical movement and sensory regulation in our indoor spaces that WISPACT helped equip with the 2021 grant. With the Foundation's help, we will add unique music/recreational equipment to this outdoor space.

This is important because sensory regulation, which is aided by physical movement, is critical to being ready and able to learn. Our Learners sensory systems can be over-responsive, under-responsive and/or sensory seeking. There are 8 sensory systems in the body: 1) touch 2) smell 3) taste 4) vestibular (movement) 5) proprioceptive (force of muscles) 6) auditory 7) visual and 8) interoception (feelings from internal organs). At Bloom360 we are continuously using what we know about these systems and what our Learners are communicating to help our Learners regulate their bodies to be ready to learn.

Project Goals and Expected Benefits

Our goal for the Music and Sensory Garden project is to meet the sensory needs of our Learners, to provide an exciting and fun recreational activity and to create additional opportunities to engage with their peers so that they can grow socially, emotionally and academically. Research shows that outdoor musical parks encourage social interaction and community integration as people hear the instruments being played and want to join in. Music enhances everyone's quality of life and for those with special needs, the benefits extend to alleviating anxiety, nurturing wellbeing, and supporting powerful therapeutic responses - physiological, movement, mood, emotional, cognitive and behavioral. Further, the addition of the Orb Rocker (4-6-person teeter totter) offers a collaborative play and strength-building opportunity. This project aligns with the Wispact Foundation's priorities to provide education and recreation equipment/opportunities that promote fulfillment and edification for persons with disabilities.

Solid emotional regulation and confidence in social situations provides overall wellness and is a strong predictor of academic performance and success. It is vital to our Learners' lifelong development that we support their social/emotional regulation during their childhood years as these are optimal times for learning, both academically and about themselves.

Project Implementation Plan

We have identified several outdoor musical instruments and a unique recreational equipment piece called the Orb Rocker (4-6-person teeter totter) that will greatly enhance our options for Learners to expand their music interests, gain sensory input and play together in this new space. Our occupational therapists and our music therapist will train our team on how to use this equipment and oversee the use of this new space with our Learners. Once we receive the equipment, it can be installed quickly in the prepared spaces.

Evaluation Plan

We will provide a comprehensive follow-up report. We utilize a detailed performance metric to measure social- emotional and academic growth in Learners. Individual goals are set for each Learner based on their developmental readiness and measured on a Developmental Growth Scale, a proprietary 7-point growth measurement tool that measures sensory processing, emotional processing, postural tone, language comprehension, language expression, visual spatial thinking, praxis and how executive functioning integrates or constricts at different stages. We also track and record Learner's activities which includes notes about overall regulation. In our follow up report, we will provide an overall summary of how the equipment is used and create a video that demonstrates the equipment in use and how it supports the learners.

Budget

Item Name/Description	Cost	Website link
Orb Rocker -delivered and installed	\$8,000	https://www.leerecreation.com/gallery/photo-gallery/emodule/1608/eitem/642#.YuqiWHbMK70
Ultraplay Swirl - outdoor xylophone	7,095	https://outdoorworkoutsupply.com/products/ultraplay-swirl?_pos=l&_sid=5448259d7&_ss=r
Bongo Drums – set of two	1,648	https://outdoorworkoutsupply.com/products/playground-equipment-bongo-drums?_pos=l&_sid=cba0ab36e&_ss=r
Musical Flowers-three	3,954	https://outdoorworkoutsupply.com/products/ultraplay-flowers?variant=40963870916817
Landscape & Installation Estimate (Clearing grass, adding mulch and protective ground cover, flowers/plants with different sensory profiles, installation for musical instruments and Orb Rocker-digging and cement)	7,250	
Total Project Cost:	\$27,947	
Other Funding Commitments A private family foundation donated \$10,000 -Our Walk & Roll fundraiser in April 2022 generated \$7,718	(\$17,718)	
Total Wispact Foundation grant request	\$10,229	

Staff Recommendation

The grant application can be approved but should be capped at \$10,000.00. The proceeds would be used to purchase the various instruments and the Orb Rocker, all of which are acceptable uses of Foundation Grant proceeds. The supply of equipment will enable the organization to fulfill their mission and bring these opportunities to the individuals with disabilities that they serve.