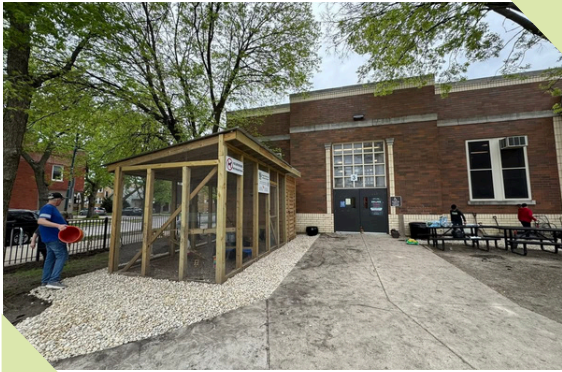


Haugan Elementary School

2026 Project Report



The Project:

Haugan Elementary's Green Team led a multi-phase garden improvement project to address flooding, excess mud, and accessibility issues in a heavily-used outdoor learning space. By installing drainage features, hardscaping, and cultivating native plants around the school garden and chicken coop, students and staff transformed the area into a safer, more functional space while learning how landscape design can manage stormwater and support environmental health.

Project Focus: Garden Improvements

Students involved: 20

Staff Involved: 10

Location: Chicago, IL

Students impacted: 1000



We wanted to plant native plants in our garden that would not need much watering, while also planting rain garden plants to improve drainage and overall conditions.



The Process:

After an on-site walkthrough revealing persistent drainage and mud problems limiting the use of the garden and chicken coop, mentors helped the team develop designs for paths, borders, and drainage improvements. The team utilized the IGSP Mini Grant and community fundraising to host a hands-on community workday, bringing together students, staff, mentors, and volunteers to install new river rock borders and hardscaping that addressed flooding and mud issues. During a second planned community workday in May, the team will install even more hardscaping and flood-mitigating plants.

The Outcomes:

The first completed phase of this rain garden project has already significantly improved drainage and accessibility in the garden, allowing students and staff to safely access garden beds, water sources, and the chicken coop without navigating flooding or mud. The improvements enhanced the space's usability for outdoor learning and community engagement while demonstrating how nature-based solutions can manage stormwater. Looking ahead, the Green Team aims to develop the space into an outdoor classroom and continue fundraising to support long-term garden maintenance, environmental education, and habitat restoration.

