

NATURE'S SUPERPOWER

Never underestimate the power of a natural view.

Turns out that regular exposure to the wild is vital to our physical and mental well-being. For all our technological and philosophical advances, humans are card-carrying members of Kingdom Animalia. Nature is our biological heritage, and our physiology is bound to it.

Sound outlandish? Science says otherwise.



Numerous studies across an array of environments have linked exposure to nature with powerful physical and mental health benefits — reduction in inflammation, reduced stress, and strengthened immunity. It's linked to academic success among students. In corporate settings, benefits include increased productivity and fewer employee sick days. One study at a hospital revealed that even a mere bedside view of leafy trees significantly reduced the need for pain medication, expedited healing and reduced the incidents of complications.

Laurie Broccolo, owner of Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care in Rochester, New York, delights in converting bland, outdoor spaces into engaging and healthy environments inspired by nature.

"Diverse natural environments are filled with smells, sounds, and activity. This disengages your brain into a meditative state. The prescription for anxiety is, 'Go outside!'" Broccolo exclaims.

Taking her cues from the wild, Broccolo has brought diversity and beauty to the outdoor spaces of numerous organizations across Rochester, New York.



OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

The Norman Howard School campus had an eyesore space whose microclimate was hostile to plants and grasses. Broccolo's solution? A stonescape garden filled with textures and natural forms including a dry riverbed. On rainy days, it blooms into a water feature, directing rainwater into a hidden storm drain.

The World of Inquiry School faced an even bigger challenge: a prominently viewed institutional slab of concrete. Working with Sue Steele Landscape Architecture, Broccolo installed a flagstone patio with sitting rocks and wood planters. A canoe filled with benches and native plants serves as another fun social spot. Additional beauty and temperature regulation comes from a living wall.

CONTEMPLATION SPACES

At St. John Meadows Senior Community, Broccolo enhanced the retention pond with a peninsula and a sitting area made of an enormous log. The serene spot connects to the pond's perimeter path. Residents enjoy peaceful promenades and a gentle space experience to wildlife.

PLAYTIME

Across schools and parks, Broccolo has reimagined and redesigned conventional spaces. An amphitheater is made of three tiers of large square stones set in an arc around the stage with trees overhead. Natural playgrounds designed with balancing logs, climbing logs, and stumps for jumping are adventurous and challenging.

It's time to invite the wild back into our everyday outdoor environments. It's only natural.

DESIGNNY

