



Corrales Institute for New Education Instituto Corrales para una Nueva Educación

March 2023 ~ NEW ED NEWS ~ No. 12 ~ neweducation.org

SPRING GENERAL MEETING

Queridos amigos:

The Corrales Institute for New Education/Instituto Corrales para una Nueva Educación **invites you to our upcoming General Meeting on Zoom, Saturday, April 1st from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon US Mountain Daylight Time.** A Zoom invitation will be sent to everyone several days before the meeting.

On Saturday, April 1st, at 10:00 am US Mountain Daylight Time, we'll spend our first hour conversing with invited guest **Chip Lindsey**, Education Director at the Discovery Lab in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

On Saturday, at 11:00 am US Mountain Daylight Time, **Shan Glandon**, Board Member at the Discovery Lab will join us from Tulsa.

Short introductions to Chip and Shan can be found on the following pages.

For the past two years we have been studying cities around the country with regard to their potential for creating and sustaining a Learning Park. We will continue to do this, but we now have studied a sufficient number of cities to be able to prioritize them and begin to visit the most promising. With this in mind, **the board voted to send board members Randy Chalakee and Paul Tatter to visit Tulsa**, Oklahoma in order to **talk with our contacts** and their friends and colleagues, and to **investigate locations** that might accommodate and welcome a Learning Park.



Two of these contacts were Chip Lindsey and Shan Glandon, and both of them have personal knowledge of the two most recommended neighborhoods in Tulsa: Owen Park and Kendall-Williams. Chip lives in the Owen Park neighborhood. **So we have invited them to join us for a conversation about the potential of creating a Learning Park in Tulsa.** We will ask them questions about the educational climate in Tulsa, the Kendall-Whittier and Owen Park neighborhoods, suggestions for other Tulsans and organizations we should talk with, considerations and complications that we haven't thought of, and how we might go about helping to organize a local group in Tulsa to make it happen.

We also have appended an edited but still large version of Randy's and Paul's notes to the board from their visit to Tulsa. This is to keep all of you up to date with details of our activities and our progress toward helping a community create a prototype Learning Park.

Chip Lindsey – Director of Education, Discovery Lab at the Gathering Place, Tulsa; formerly Senior Education Director, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh; Executive Director, Scienceworks Hands-on Museum, Ashland, Oregon; Associate Director, Don Harrington Discovery Center, Amarillo, Texas; Vice President of Creative Development, Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.



Through his long career, Chip has become adept with inquiry-based teaching and learning, creating extraordinary exhibit experiences and programs, staff development, cultural competency, and community relations. He is interested in strategies for museums and other non-formal learning institutions to best understand and leverage their role in regional learning ecosystems. "Because children's museums inspire visitors at an early age to love and build a relationship with innovation, media and tools, we act as engines of change in a world that begs passive consumption" Mr. Lindsey said. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 16, 2016*

Chip does science experiments on a Tulsa TV morning show.



"Chip's background is in biology and education; he takes an organic view of learning. "The phrase, 'a man never steps into the same river twice' applies to how children learn." We cannot know, in advance how a given child will respond to a particular opportunity. Scienceworks' objective is to provide opportunities unlike those found in traditional classrooms. 'All learning is free choice. Here, we are masters of free choice learning.'" <https://howwillwelivetomorrow.com> November 20, 2015

To create an electromagnetic field, Chip cut 235 coat hangers and bound them together.

"I passionately believe children's museums, science museums and science centers serve as critical catalysts for life- long learning. These informal learning organizations must be highly responsive to their communities; bring authentic, relevant experiences to them; and act as important centers for innovation, collective impact, and positive societal change."



Shan Glandon – Retired Educator; Board Member, Discovery Lab at the Gathering Place; formerly Executive Director of Teaching and Learning at Jenks Public Schools; Chair, Oklahoma Alliance for Arts Education Tulsa. Shan was selected as the Junior Achievement of Oklahoma's 2013-2014 Educator of the Year.

Shan oversaw an initiative that coordinated young students and elders reading together in a senior living center. An article in the *Tulsa World, May 21, 2019* said, "If the daily reading sessions aren't your thing, there are plenty of other options...A group exercise period is offered daily. And four

days a week, residents and the kids meet for “shared study time,” during which they work together on STEM, writing or other activities. At a couple of weekly events, the focus is on fun and fraternizing: They include an ice cream social every Wednesday and, on Fridays, a group singalong. Shan Glandon, the district’s executive director for teaching and learning, said each activity contributes to the “ongoing connectivity that we are building between the children and the residents.” Glandon has been involved from the program’s beginning 20 years ago and has watched it evolve.



The May 5, 2022 Jenks Board of Education meeting minutes contain: "Ms. Shan Glandon shared a new initiative highlighting unique fine arts experiences at every grade. The District plans to capitalize on partnerships with Discovery Lab at The Gathering Place, Tulsa Ballet, AHHA, Philbrook and Crystal Bridges to name a few. This is designed to offer a unique fine arts experience for every student."

Feel free to share this with like-minded people who may be interested in participating, or ask them to leave their address at "Contact Us" on our website:

www.neweducation.org

CORRALES INSTITUTE FOR NEW EDUCATION

CINE requests your financial support to take its next steps toward realizing a new education in a new place of learning. CINE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax-exempt and will be welcome. We will return a letter that you may use for tax purposes. You may donate via PayPal from our website. You may request wiring instructions to CINE's bank account, or address checks to:

**Corrales Institute for New Education
P.O. Box 1148, Corrales, NM 87048.**



Learning Park Site Visit to Tulsa and Fayetteville

Randy's and Paul's notes combined as a travel journal

Tuesday, December 6 –

Paul arrives Tulsa at 2:58 pm. Scouted downtown Tulsa, Unitarian Church, and Discovery Lab at the Gathering Place, School District offices, neighborhoods between downtown and 31st Street. Checked into hotel.

Wednesday, December 7 –

10:00 - On advice of a board member to talk with the Unitarians, knocked on several Unitarian Church doors, Shannon Boston's (Lifespan Education Director) assistant answered; she was the only one there. Gave her our business card, my email and brochure; asked her to give them to Shannon and request an appointment for me, and to notify me by email.

Found out that this church is the largest, single-church Unitarian congregation in the world, with over 1,500 members.

10:30 - **Discovery Lab** (children's museum) talked with **Ray Vandiver**, Executive Director, confirmed with Ray that he would contact 3 board members to meet with us. Made plans to play music one evening [Ray is an excellent guitarist; sat in with Exploraband when we played in Fort Worth for ASTC conference.]. Made plans for tonight's dinner with Ray and Chip Lindsey, Director of Education at Discovery Lab; looked around the museum. <https://www.discoverylab.org/>

12:30 - Randy arrives from work at OK State Tech in Okmulgee. Met with Ray & Stephanie Arnold de Verges, Director of Development, explaining to Stephanie why we were here and about contacting board members with whom we would like to talk.

11:45 - We spent most of the afternoon in the museum and talking with staff, explained our project to some. Spoke with an Educator in The Workshop Lab about light & shadows change-out coming soon. She suggested we look at the Kendall-Whittier district, also suggested a rural site north of Tulsa near Lake Skiatook on the Osage Reservation.

Walked around, observed, took pictures, went into classrooms, upstairs deck looking onto exhibit floor, enjoyed the stairwell view (looking south onto street), checked out two lab areas under upstairs classrooms. Ogled the closet full of wonder and tools. Musical Light Table! Barrel drumming, sharing the idea. Walked around outside the museum, checked out the creek and the Greek-style amphitheater, and parking lot across the creek that might fit a Learning Park.

2:30 - Went to the 100-acre **Gathering Place** adjacent to Discovery Lab; potential site of field trips for Learning Park. Wonderful public place created with millions of local, private money. Visited the lake, Boat House and explored the drawers in Cabinet of Wonder, looked in the Curator's Closet, watched the lights change triggered by motion. Went to Williams Lodge and took in the wondrous wooden architecture & furniture in the public commons and meeting room. Studied the Tulsa map downstairs & enjoyed a tasty gelato. Made our plan for Thursday location scouting.

<https://www.gatheringplace.org/>

The Gathering Place, as seen on its website, considers the Discovery Lab one of its park attractions. They have a close partnership, with shared supporters. The Gathering Place is a project of the George Kaiser Family Foundation. "We are committed to creating a culture that supports the overall mission of equal opportunity for all. We are committed to creating a gathering space that is a recreational, civic and cultural destination for all walks of life to enjoy, promoting inclusivity in our city. We are committed to enhancing the River Parks system while preserving the area's natural ambiance and integrating the new space into the greater surrounding area. We are committed to Tulsa, to all who live here and to all who visit, that they may be positively inspired to play, learn, interact, relax and gather together." At \$465 million, Gathering Place is the largest private gift to a community park in U.S. history.

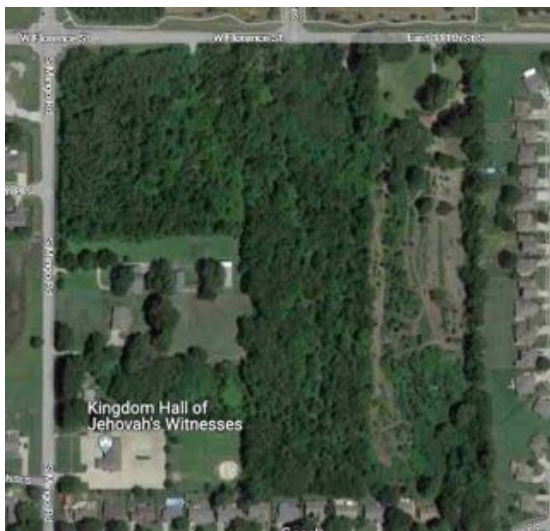




6:30 - Dinner with Ray and Chip. Both asked a lot of questions to get clear about a Learning Park and what we wanted to accomplish in Tulsa. Shared CINE's ideas and plans—this allowed us to practice explaining how a Learning Park may operate—answering questions, but also giving us the opportunity to adjust our message on the fly, for an efficient way to have a conversational meeting, with the understanding that CINE is not a franchise, but in the hands of the community we are visiting. A Learning Park is a challenging concept—using and explaining terms like listening sessions, community engagement, democratic management, mutual learning decisions, lifelong, and multi-generational helped. The Learning Park concept map gave a good visual aid for imagining what it could look like. We answered questions to describe more details of how a Learning Park might look, operate, who lives there, who works there, who learns there, who can participate, etc. Discussing CINE's values created an image to go with the descriptions: true democracy—whether you're 6, 16, 25, 37, 50, or 80—based on interest; deciding together what you want to learn/facilitate; elaborating the purposes and some of the practices most relevant to their questions, as outlined in our Learning Park document. These explanations gave Ray & Chip ideas of what areas of town would be most accepting and supportive, where land/development is available/happening, who could be good resources, how to approach the bureaucrats. :) Ray began to think about how Discovery Lab might collaborate with a Learning Park; imagining how they could be near each other.

Thursday, December 8 – Scouting land all day
 8:00 - scouted **private land** for sale on east 111th Street:

27 acres east of Mingo Road



10 acres west of Mingo Road



10 acres plus 4.5 acres across road at east 111th at SW Blvd

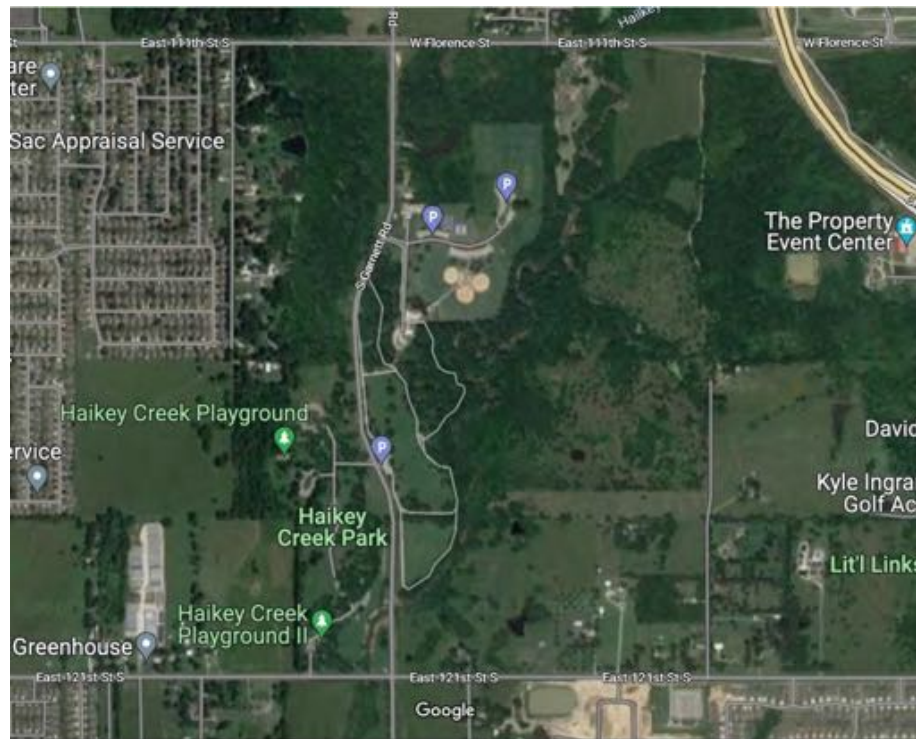


This part of the southeast county has a fair amount of open land for sale.

9:00 - **Haikey Creek Park** - 170-acre Tulsa County park: softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, fire station on-site, 2.3 mile nature walking trail, playground, picnic area, frisbee golf. Two-part park, separated by a large creek and road on west side of which is an undeveloped, heavily wooded area. Lots of open space. <https://www2.tulsacounty.org/parks/parks-facilities/haickey-creek-park/>



Haikey Creek Park



10:00 - **River Parks**, on Riverside Drive between 111th and Discovery Lab; Gathering Place events parking lot south of Discovery Lab, separated by a creek to land adjacent to Discovery Lab.

Helmerich Park,
Riverside: 78 acres





South half of the Gathering Place events parking lot; maybe 25 acres

Bales Park: 68 acres. 48 acres of woods and open space

Woodward Park: 34 acres. 20 acres of woods



10:30 - **Owen Park** – Ideal location, already set up with all the parts, space, and neighborhood. Old Discovery Lab is being refurbished into a community center with the goal of being open by September 2023 (but it looks like it may be delayed when we spoke to the crew of city workers). Neighborhood Association meeting is scheduled regarding community center, to possibly be attended by Chip (he lives in the neighborhood). Many times over, this area has been praised as a perfect spot for a learning park. Food desert; we'd bring food. Gentrification happening, but new families and open minds. On a bus line, with two stops at the park; easy access.

Tulsa School of Arts & Sciences with 523 high school and middle school students within park area. "TSAS is an independent public charter school in which every student is welcomed as they are, known and valued for who they are, challenged to become a better version of themselves, encouraged in their efforts to become that person, and celebrated for their successes." Sound familiar? TSAS could be an excellent partner to a Learning Park (more below). Wildlife: plenty of squirrels & geese, & pond life. Fire Station neighbor (potential learning collaboration). Historical landmark with oldest house in Tulsa. Park *needs* CINE. ;)

OWEN PARK - 24 ACRES

excluding the land occupied by the School for Arts and Sciences and the Fire Station shown as an example of how a Learning Park might be adapted to fit a city park while preserving almost all of its present, public purposes

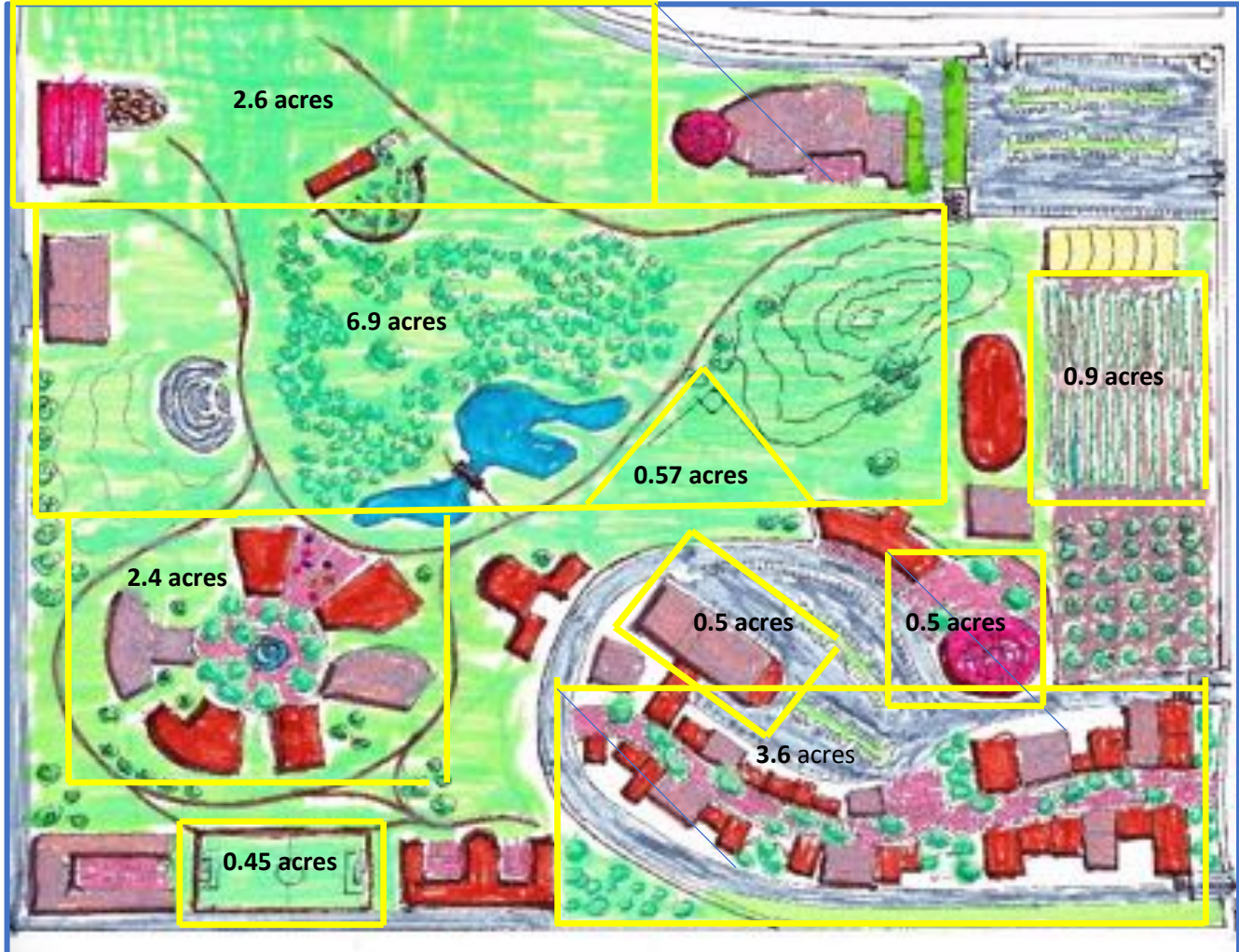


compare this mockup with our Learning Park concept drawing next page

LEARNING PARK CONCEPT - 25 ACRES [shown in this drawing]

see below for comparison with Owen Park areas of the components

[another 5 acres of pasture above here]



	<u>Owen Park</u>	<u>Learning Park Drawing</u>
small business mall/labs	4.1 acres	3.6 acres
woods and pond	8.9 acres	6.9 acres
chapter house	1 – 1.2 acres	0.5 acre
performing arts center	1 – 1.2 acres	0.5 acre
garden	0.75 acre	0.9 acre
small animal farm	1.1 acres	2.6 acres (large farm +5 acres)
playing fields (TSAS)	2 acres	0.45 + 0.57 acre
specialized learning centers (TSAS)	2.25 acres	2.4 acres

[Owen Park number is the area of the Tulsa School of Arts & Sciences, assumed as a partner, otherwise the area in Owen Park for specialized learning centers is 0.5 – 1 acre of the mall.]

More about the **Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences**, from its website.

"Our mission is to provide a life-changing and life-preparing education for middle and high school students through innovative teaching methods focused on developing individuals, holistically. TSAS uses the charter school framework, including choice and non-selective enrollment, to collaborate as students, faculty and parents to cultivate a high quality educational community that nurtures mutual respect, individualism, critical thinking, creativity in teaching and learning, life-long learners, and responsible citizens."

"Our Beliefs

- We believe learning is a process in which all can participate and succeed.
- We believe liberal arts education is the foundation for developing successful lifelong learners
- We believe our community should foster the intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being of each student.
- We believe in creating a supportive and responsive learning environment with high standards and expectations for all students which compels them to be active participants in their own education.
- We believe diversity should be welcomed for the strength it brings to the education of all members of our community.
- We believe our core strength is passionate, highly-qualified, professional faculty, who provide dynamic, rewarding and individualized learning experiences for students.
- We believe in promoting accountable and effective school leadership via inclusive and collaborative governance and administrative practices
- We believe all TSAS community members have a responsibility to secure abundant, appropriate resources to support and sustain it."

"Our world has changed and the needs of our students have evolved. TSAS is committed to responding creatively to the changes in our world...Our commitment has pushed us to reimagine the high school experience to better meet the changing needs of our students and our world."

11:20 - **Gilcrease Park**: 342 acres north of Owen Park; **Stuart Park**: 101 acres adjacent



2:00 - Scouted Kendall Whittier district, Turner Park, Private land in Cherokee Heights

Kendall Whittier Park: 14 acres—Good sized park directly behind elementary school, wedged between that and a neighborhood. Potential site when combined with Turner Park, and partnering with University of Tulsa (see Saturday, December 10). This neighborhood has also been recommended many times over, like Owen Park, by many we spoke to. Arts neighborhood, Circle Cinema art theater with marquee saying "Community Consciousness Through Film," entrepreneurial, independent shops, with ideals similar to what CINE needs to build support. Active, developing, multilingual, multicultural neighborhood that used to be an industrial area. **Kendall-Whittier Elementary School**, with 794 students is reasonably progressive for a public school, and has "a two-way dual language program where students have the opportunity to leave Kendall-Whittier being literate in both English and Spanish... Students have two different forms of expanded learning opportunities. Harmony Project El Sistema serves approximately 100 students with music lessons taught by Tulsa Symphony Orchestra members for pre-K through fifth grade students on weekdays. Students may select from a variety of stringed instruments, choir, and ballet. As part of the program, students also participate in tutoring and/or instructional support. Tiger Clubs are offered once per semester for 8-10 weeks to those students who are not in Harmony Project but would like to experience club opportunities once or twice a week that range from Bike Club, Chess Club, Arts and Crafts, Zoo 2 U, STEM Club, and more. Representatives from partner companies meet with the Kendall-Whittier staff three times per year and support our academic endeavors by providing teacher supplies, gifts and holiday packages for students and their families. Our partners also make it possible to host monthly family night events, such as literacy night, STEAM night, dances, and our annual fall carnival. In addition, we have a faithful group of volunteers who participate in Reading Partners, which provides one-to-one literacy tutoring for our scholars... We depend on our partners in education to thrive, and we are proud to be a **Growing Together school**. Through the support of this organization, we are able to provide opportunities our students wouldn't otherwise have and show them the value of being in a community."

Kendall-Whittier Elementary School: <https://kendallwhittier.tulsaschools.org/about-us>

Growing Together Tulsa: "Creating healthy neighborhoods for children. We are creating pathways for children to break the cycle of poverty through education, community vibrancy and the built environment. That means we guide and support community members, organizations and funders to create vibrant communities for children. To be a successful neighborhood, children must have the right conditions to live, learn and thrive. We work to change the fundamental conditions of a neighborhood to benefit kids, making it a more attractive, mixed income neighborhood for families and businesses. For years, **Kendall-Whittier** (the neighborhood) was on a steady decline and was a place where opportunity was elusive until an influx of new immigrants began to move in and stabilize the neighborhood. In 2007, they and many other longtime residents began to organize and in 2011, they helped create a new vision for the future that led to the founding of Growing Together. But we don't want to reinvent the wheel. Our job is to be the connection between businesses, non-profit organizations and other programs. Together, we can all improve our neighborhoods."

Growing Together Tulsa: <https://www.gttulsa.org/>



Kendall Whittier Park and Elementary School

Kendall Whittier Park looking west





Kendall Whittier Park looking east

2:45 - Turner Park: 9 acres

Ten blocks east of Kendall Whittier Park, about 0.8 mile, an 18-minute walk through the University of Tulsa Campus



Some of the Learning Park components that don't fit in Kendall Whittier Park might be located here.

Find all 135 Tulsa Parks at:

<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/park-and-recreation/tulsa-parks-and-map/>

3:15 - Private land in Cherokee Heights, a few miles northwest of Kendall-Whittier

Three large parcels of land almost contiguous with an industrial block between



Friday, December 9

9:00 - **Chip Lindsey** – Director of Education, Discovery Lab, and does science on the local TV morning show. Chip lives in the Owen Park neighborhood and described the nature and needs of the neighborhood: a changing demographic, renovation of homes, isolation by freeways from businesses, including the inaccessibility of food. He thought the neighborhood would welcome our garden and farmers market and the small business aspect of a Learning Park. He Also thought that with the right approach the Tulsa city may approve location of a Learning Park there, so long as it does not interfere substantially with its present public use and its historic value [Owen Park is the first public park established in Tulsa and includes Tulsa's oldest house.]. It would be good to meet with, and get the support of, the Owen Park Neighborhood Association.



10:00 Stephanie Arnold de Verges began contacting board members for meeting times. She arranged meetings with Shan Glandon and Elizabeth Inbody; could not reach **Paige Sicking**, Assistant Director of Education and School Leadership, Community Action Project of Tulsa.

1:00 - **Shan Glandon** – Retired Executive Director of Teaching and Learning at Jenks Public Schools; Chair Oklahoma Alliance for Arts Education Tulsa. Shan oversaw a reading initiative that coordinated young students and elders reading together. From the May 5, 2022 board meeting minutes: "Ms. Shan Glandon shared a new initiative highlighting unique fine arts experiences at every grade. The District plans to capitalize on partnerships with Discovery Lab at The Gathering Place, Tulsa Ballet, AHHA, Philbrook and Crystal Bridges to name a few. This is designed to offer a unique fine arts experience for every student." Shan liked the idea of a Learning Park. She suggested we investigate the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood as a site. This neighborhood has a creative, multicultural, progressive population, and many economic and equity challenges. She said we might talk with Phil Lakin, Tulsa City Councilor. George Kaiser could fund the whole project. A local could introduce us to Ken Levit, ED of the Kaiser Foundation and Jeff Stava, COP of the Kaiser Foundation & CEO of the Tulsa Community Foundation (\$111 million annual grants, \$45 million to education.) Shan followed up with more info by email: contacts, other sites to investigate, website links to organizations we should talk with, city councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper, info about Food on the Move. She signed the email: "Exciting to think about this! Shan" [**George Kaiser Family Foundation**: 2019 Assets: \$4,050,202,254; in 2019 distributed \$95,000,000. See more below.]

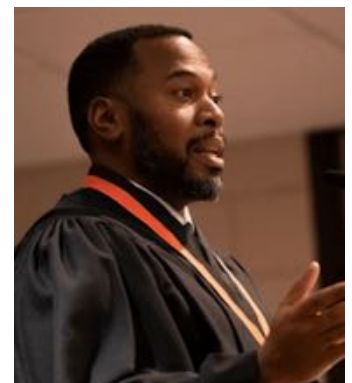


3:00 - CINE board meeting

4:30 - **Elizabeth Inbody** – Executive Director Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence – <https://www.ofe.org/> Served seven years as executive director of the award-winning Jenks Public Schools Foundation. Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is a 501 (c)(3) organization supported solely by private contributions from donors. One of its programs is the Oklahoma School Foundations Network providing free training, resources and networking opportunities for new and established school foundations. The program has been instrumental in helping build one of the nation's largest networks of more than 200 education foundations. Together, these citizen nonprofits have raised millions of dollars to support academic excellence and have encouraged community involvement in their local schools. We met at Discovery Lab. She said the complete Learning Park concept was challenging, but said she understood enough to like the idea and asked, "What can I do to support this?" We suggested she could notify the 200 foundations in the Oklahoma School Foundations Network of the opportunity to fund a Learning Park, if one started up in Tulsa. She thought this might be possible.



6:40 - **Aaron & Yolanda Ware** – Chef Aaron Ware, instructor at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology Culinary Arts program. When receiving the 2022-2023 Regents Distinguished Teaching Award he said, "Love has carried me in so many parts of life, and when I tell my students that I love them, my classroom is a safe place to stay focused and show them kindness, consistency and grace, I truly mean it. I am the chef of 2nd, 3rd, and 76th chances, because that is what I had." Randy had previously consulted with Chef Ware. Yolanda is an RN at a local children's psychiatric hospital. Met at Yokozuna for dinner. They both support the Learning Park idea. They are actively involved in many facets of Tulsa life –physical activity (organized runs, triathlons, judo), restaurant entrepreneurs, church, night life. Aaron personally knows TK Shannon, politician & former Oklahoma State House Speaker, and is willing to connect us with TK as a path to meet with Mayor GT Bynum. He mentioned George Kaiser as being interested in education and families and could fund our project, but we'd have to go through local friends of friends. Aaron agreed to meet with Paul at a later date to scout and to give more background and details of neighborhoods in Tulsa.



Beth Kieffer, Randy's friend, book author of *Okmulgee*, a cultural history, and former librarian at Riverfield Country Day School (that uses a Reggio-inspired and student-centered approach) didn't make it to dinner because of her new baby. The K-12, non-profit, independent Riverfield School occupies 120 acres with 600 students on the west side of Tulsa. Funded heavily by Tulsa philanthropist, Genave Rogers Trust (assets of \$12 million), Riverfield School might partner with a Learning Park and share some of its 120 acres.

Riverfield School



Saturday, December 10 –

9:30 - Returned to Kendall-Whittier and Turner Park. Looked more carefully around the neighborhoods and took more photos of **Turner Park**, largely open space with no sports fields or buildout except a splashpad.

10:00 - **Kendall Whittier Park and University of Tulsa**

Photographed the park and scouted the street that separates the park from the University of Tulsa campus. The University might join in a partnership with the Kendall-Williams neighborhood and school, and a Learning Park. It could house some components of a Learning Park. The University declares as one of its five areas of priority: "Truly The University of Tulsa: deeply embedded in Tulsa, representing and uniting a vibrant and diverse Tulsa community, and playing a pivotal role in propelling Tulsa forward."



Satellite view shows proximity of Kendall-Whittier Park and Elementary School to University of Tulsa and Turner Park across the University of Tulsa campus just beyond this view to the east; a 0.8-mile, 18-minute walk, from Kendall-Whittier to Turner Park.

University of Tulsa



11:00 - Met **Donna Vandiver** and **Undercroft Montessori** [www.undercroft.org] **staff:** Amanda Wilmoth, Kate Lehman, Gretchen Sterba, Barbara Stuart, and Stephanie Jones, with Ray at Chimera coffee shop. After some conversation and responding to questions, Amanda said she'd work in a Learning Park. Clear Montessori perspective for most. Concerns about safety and structure – "sounds ideal, but what about...?" Maybe a learning park felt too unstructured. Spent most of our meeting presenting the ideas of a Learning Park vs. school; age inclusiveness; time structures of how a typical program day might work; physical spaces and what goes on in them (e.g. pharmacy up front, classroom in back, internship/apprenticeship); who oversees daily operations? They asked for in-depth details – which helped me think further into operations. The group was very helpful with suggestions for locations we should investigate. Talked about Owen Park; all agreed it was an ideal location. Kendall-Whittier also was recommended, and 33-acre Johnson Park at 61st & Riverside Drive; a Park at Tulsa & Sand Springs boarder, probably Tulsa County Chandler Park, 192 acres of wooded and large open green space, plus community center, 5 baseball fields, 2 playgrounds, picnic/hiking. Or WOMPA Community of Creatives, west side of river, an arts center with available warehouse space and land. <https://www.facebook.com/WOMPATULSA>

<https://www.nearme.cool/b257938/wompa>

Fred Johnson Park



Wompa warehouses and land on border of Tulsa and Sand Springs



Chandler Park: 192+ acres on far west side of Tulsa



12:30 - Randy goes back to work in Okmulgee. Ray rides with Paul to meet **Scott Ferris** at Shades of Brown Coffee Shop. Scott works at **Phoenix Rising Alternative School** [<https://prasf.org/school/>] that serves students in Tulsa County, grades 9–12, "who are involved with, or are at high risk for, involvement with the juvenile justice system. Typically, PRAS students have not experienced success in traditional public school settings and find PRAS to be a restorative pathway for their educational and life journey. PRAS is a partnership between the Tulsa County Family Juvenile Justice Center and Tulsa Public Schools. Emphasis is placed on students' interests and strengths, leadership skills, goal setting, and workforce development. There are also intensive social/emotional supports and evidence-based practices to enhance literacy and math skills provided on a multi-tiered level system....Utilizing Restorative Practices, repairing harm and learning how to resolve conflict is one of the greatest gifts that all of the students at Phoenix Rising receive. Because of the trauma and extreme obstacles many of our students face...unconditional acceptance has been brought to the walls of Phoenix Rising." Scott liked the Learning Park idea and the multigenerational aspect, and would work in the Learning Park if it happened in Tulsa. He thought it probably would have to start out as a private nonprofit, because he knew only one person in the school district administration that would get behind the project. Suggested that George Kaiser could be interested in funding a Learning Park.

2:30 - Dropped Ray off at home. Went to scout Greenwood District, site of the 1921 Black Wall Street and the Tulsa Race Massacre. Also checked out the Woody Guthrie Canter and Bob Dylan Center.

Sunday, December 11 –

10:00 - Paul went to the Unitarian Church service. After several unsuccessful attempts to talk with the Unitarians, I went to church Sunday morning and afterwards, being a PK, I knew the minister would stand at the door after the service and shake everyone's hand and say a few words as they left. So I went to the end of the line and when I got to Reverend Lavanhar, I handed him our brochure and business card, gave him a few-sentence account of why I was in Tulsa, and asked if he had 15 minutes to talk with me now, or after the congregational meeting at 1:00, or before the Christmas choir concert at 4:00. We talked in his office for half an hour before the concert at 4:00.

4:00 - **Marlin Lavanhar** – "In 2000, the All Souls' congregation, then comprising about 1,000 members, voted to call Reverend Marlin Lavanhar as its senior minister. Lavanhar had grown up in suburban Chicago, Illinois, where he grew up in the Unitarian Universalist Church. After high school, he moved to New Orleans, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology at Tulane University in 1990. After graduation, he and a friend moved to Kyoto, Japan, to work and study for two years. The pair then began a three-year adventure traveling the world on mountain bikes. They covered about 20,000 miles, to learn about religions and religious practices in different cultures and traditions. Not only did he study the main religions along the route (Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity), he searched out Unitarian-related communities on Negros Island in the Philippines, in the Khasi Hills of Northeast India, and in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania. He later said that the journey helped him recognize that he was called to become a Unitarian minister. Harvard Divinity School. One historian of the Unitarian Universalist movement has described Tulsa's All Souls Unitarian Church as a "prominent" example of a small group of urban UU churches that became "powerful voices of liberal religion in their communities and in the nation."



Marlin and I had a good talk. He asked thoughtful questions and made perceptive comments. He quickly understood the idea. We talked again in the hall later, and, after I said that if the Unitarians were to create a place of learning it probably would look like a Learning Park, he smiled and said "You're probably right." He seemed to like the Learning Park idea, even seemed enthusiastic. Said he'd give the extra brochures and cards I left with him to people he thought would be interested. He knows a lot of people in town.

5:00 - The church members were having a social, so I talked with several, including brief conversations with Shannon Boston, Lifespan Education Director, who didn't seem interested in a Learning Park, Rick Fortner, Director of Music, who was interested in music in a Learning Park, and a couple of teens from the choir. When I mentioned how much I liked this afternoon's Christmas concert, an elderly woman nearby said that if I liked that, I needed to go to the Methodists at 6:00. She wouldn't miss it.

5:40 - Left the Unitarians and went downtown for the concert at the First Methodist Church, a cathedral. Best Christmas concert I ever heard. Outstanding local musicians: 40-piece orchestra, 80-member choir, first-class soloists, original and traditional music.

More about George Kaiser and the Kaiser Family Foundation

<https://www.gkff.org/>

"The Foundation's mission of providing every child with an equal opportunity is reflected throughout the work that we do in our community. Our four focus areas give us the opportunity to address community issues at a deeper level. GKFF supports early childhood education initiatives, as well as continued support for children and families, to ensure each child reaches his or her full potential. GKFF believes that a strong educational foundation is critical to a child's long-term success. Through strategic investments in public education, including high-quality charter schools, GKFF ensures that the investment made in a child's early education translates to long-term educational success through high school."

A LETTER FROM GEORGE KAISER

I suppose I arrived at my charitable commitment largely through guilt. I recognized early on that my good fortune was not due to superior personal character or initiative so much as it was to dumb luck. I was blessed to be born in an advanced society with caring parents. So, I had the advantage of both genetics (winning the “ovarian lottery”) and upbringing. As I looked around at those who did not have these advantages, it became clear to me that I had a moral obligation to direct my resources to help right that balance.

No child is responsible for the circumstances of his or her birth.



George B. Kaiser

I have therefore developed my charitable focus around the concept of providing the greatest opportunity for self-fulfillment for each child, focusing on those who arrive in the least advantaged circumstances. That governing concept has led us to those initiatives which attempt to reverse the generational cycle of poverty, especially for very young children and their families: prenatal health care; early learning and development for at-risk kids, birth to three; family health care; parenting training; job and income assistance for families with young children; operating a robust program to provide alternatives to incarceration for mothers who have committed non-violent crimes; and other initiatives

My family joins me in my intention to devote virtually all of my financial resources to these same general charitable purposes. We have also chosen to focus these efforts in the community that welcomed my family from Nazi Germany. By doing so we hope to pursue the best approaches, drawing from the experience of others, and make a measurable impact.

If we can be successful, then maybe we will more closely approach the ideal of equal opportunity throughout the United States and the world.

Monday, December 12 -

11:00 - Raining since dawn; checked out of hotel. Perused the very large, and very good used bookstore on S. Mingo Road before heading to Fayetteville.

Saturday, December 17 - 10:00 - Met Keaton Smith at Arsagas Coffee,

At-Large School Board member since 2018, Commercial Banker | Board of Ed @ Fayetteville Public Schools | Mixed-Income Housing Developer | Sustainability Advocate | Community Builder; Vice President/Commercial Relationship Manager First Horizon Bank; Chair of the Board of Partners for Better Housing. "Founded in 2007, Partners for Better Housing is a non-profit 501(c)(3) housing development organization endeavoring to build quality workforce housing and facilitate upward mobility for modest and moderate-income families in Northwest Arkansas." <https://partnersforbetterhousing.org/about>



The meeting with Keaton Smith in Fayetteville was as optimistic as those in Tulsa. He acknowledged it might be uphill with the Fayetteville school board, but there were people he knew that would like our idea. He offered to set up a meeting with Betts McCombs, a founder of the nonprofit, Spectrum Living Solutions, that just bought 232 acres of land with public utilities for \$6 million. They're planning to use about 200 acres to build a mixed neighborhood with housing and clinical support for neurodiverse families, for example families with an autistic spectrum member, Down syndrome or other neurological differences. 30 of the remaining acres may be available for a Learning Park. This meeting was postponed to a later visit, because Betts McCombs was out of town for the holidays.

Keaton said the school district also owns large plots of vacant land that could accommodate a Learning Park.

Spectrum Living Solutions is "a community of tenacious advocates alongside neurodiverse adults. Building together now to make our vision a reality in Fayetteville, Arkansas: an innovative, replicable, 'live, work, play' community where residential, vocational, health and wellness, community, and clinical resources are accessible and affordable for neurodiverse adults to reach their full potential...The neurodiversity movement challenges widely accepted thought that a neurodivergence like autism or an intellectual disability inherently needs fixing or requires treatment. Instead, it invites others to recognize & respect neurological differences. It challenges society to further reimagine and evolve to meet needs and remove barriers— allowing ALL people to flourish." <https://slscommunity.org/>

Ashton and Betts McCombs founded the SLS Community organization in 2016 and are parents of a young adult daughter with autism. Ashton McCombs is also president of Phigenics, a water management company. "Phigenics is committed to helping

facilities prevent disease resulting from waterborne pathogens and manage the world's most precious resource. We work to ensure that our clients are following best practices and are aligned with existing and forthcoming industry standards... We do not sell water treatment or hazard control chemicals and we are not driven to provide a solution that is restricted to an internal product line." <https://info.phigenics.com/>

Keaton promotes progressive ideas on the school board, such as in the two following Facebook posts:

February 19, 2023 Keaton Smith, Fayetteville School Board At-Large

Electric school buses offer several benefits to school districts and the communities we serve...I particularly love this quote from the article: "In a bus what happens is all the kids are going to have to talk over the roar of the engine. That will be done away with," he said. "It's going to be so much quieter. I'm anticipating much less of the minor issues on the bus that a lot of kids get in trouble for, having to talk over the bus and talk over their friends. I'm expecting it to be just a better experience for our students." So what do you think? Should Fayetteville Public Schools pursue pilot programs to implement electric busses?

September 7, 2022 Keaton Smith, Fayetteville School Board At-Large

Great opportunity for schools and nonprofit organizations working with youth in the Ozark and Ouachita regions.

Keaton suggested that a skeptical school board may not matter, because if any of the Waltons liked the idea they could fund it themselves. [This story is similar to the one about the Kaisers in Tulsa.] The Waltons have funded numerous projects in NW Arkansas. They are known to like local projects, from Bentonville south to Fayetteville, like the \$39 million performing arts center in Fayetteville, and over \$317 million donated by Alice Walton to build the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville.



Alice Walton has a current net worth of \$59 billion. She formed the **Alice L. Walton Foundation** in 2017 (2020 assets: \$3,178,458,151). The foundation promotes arts, education, health, and improving economic opportunity. In 2019 she established the Whole Health Institute to work with health systems, employers and communities to build and expand access to holistic healthcare. In March 2021, she announced that the institute would build a nonprofit medical school in Bentonville. The campus will be located near Crystal Bridges. Alice is not afraid of big, unusual projects. <https://alicewalton.org/>

Walton Family Foundation: 2021 assets: \$7,917,852,086 <https://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/>

Our Work: Real change takes time and must be guided by the people and communities where we work. We are committed to collaborative, community-driven solutions.

What We Fund: For more than three decades, the Foundation has focused on three core objectives:

strengthening the connections between K-12 education and lifelong opportunity, protecting rivers, oceans and the communities they support, and advancing our home region of Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta.

K-12 Education: Community-Designed, Community-Driven Educational Change

Across decades of work alongside education leaders in communities across the country, the Walton Family Foundation has sought to increase access to high-quality K-12 education that puts opportunity and a self-determined life in reach for every child. While the progress made by grantees and partners to address educational and racial inequities is significant, the challenges that remain are both daunting and humbling.

Accelerate Breakthrough Innovation: Courageous and bold thinking is needed to address critical, long-standing challenges in education, especially in the midst of COVID-19. With more dedicated resources, dramatically increasing our support for innovation over the next five years, **we'll support revolutionary solutions** to harness and accelerate opportunity and mobility for all children, with a focus on those most in need. **We will fund entrepreneurs and innovators with new ideas and pluralistic solutions that can meet the needs of diverse communities to foster innovation that can advance students' learning and growth.** [Paul's emphasis]

2020 Giving

\$749.5 MILLION in grants awarded in 2020

- Environment (\$95.3 million)
- K-12 Education (\$245.6 million)
- Home Region (\$66.4 million)
- Special Projects (\$342.2 million)

Sunday, December 18 -

Planned to meet with an old friend, **Sam Dean**, but he was at a conference in Philadelphia and then went out of state to be with his parents for Christmas. Sam is Executive Director of the Amazeum, children's and family museum in Bentonville, that got its major startup funding from former Walmart CEO Lee Scott and family, as well as the Walton Family Foundation. A couple of days later Keaton Smith called to ask if I were coming up to see Sam, because he was in Bentonville and wanted to join in our conversation.