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ST. LOUIS SCHOOL'S SECOND CAMPUS SERVES AS CENTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

St. Louis, MO - Five years ago, The College School's sustainability coordinator, Tim Wood, was driving to a fourth graders' field trip when he saw a for sale sign for a piece of property near Pacific, MO. At the time, the school was searching for an off-site campus that could provide students an intimate connection to the outdoors and a place for immersive adventure education.

The 28-acre site sits in the center of the 8,400-acre LaBarque Creek watershed, one of the most pristine in the state of Missouri and one of only a few in the state with an organized management plan.

"LaBarque Creek offers a lot of biodiversity," Wood said. "On our 28-acre campus alone, there are seven unique 'econiches,' including upland forests, wetlands, prairies, and sandstone glades." In addition, two pristine streams come together on the site. LaBarque Creek has greater fish diversity than any other stream in the Meramec River watershed, with 53 species, compared to an average of 10 for other streams. The campus also features 93 species of native trees and shrubs.

"We are so lucky to have found this property," Wood said. "It was a happy coincidence that this panned out for us."

One of the most exciting things for Wood is that the site provides The College School with abundant opportunities for place-based and experiential learning. "More than that, though," Wood said, "it gives us a canvas where we can paint our dreams of a sustainable campus and future."

Today, The College School's LaBarque Campus includes six rain gardens, an orchard, a butterfly garden and Monarch butterfly way station, a creek play area, a fairy cave, a pine tree climbing area, an area for architectural digs, and a rock climbing/rappelling area.

Students of all ages get to experience this adventure education wonderland. First graders, for example, tap maple trees on the property then make syrup from the sap. As part of their "River City" project, third graders build a model community there.

When it opens later this month on the LaBarque Campus, the new Jan Phillips Learning Center will allow The College School to connect with other schools in the St. Louis area by offering programs for students and teachers.

Head of School Ed Maggert sums it up by saying, “This really is a special piece of property. We want to share it with the larger community.”

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About The College School

The College School engages children, ages 3 to 13, in curriculum that is adventurous, theme-based and experiential. Our newest updates and offerings include a digital recording studio, renovated play spaces and a state-of-the-art learning center on our second, 28-acre property. Visit www.thecollegeschool.org to learn more about The College School journey and to see how our students think, collaborate and have real impacts on their worlds.