Emily G.

Since the beginning of time circles represent the unity of life, the constant give and take. It is not simply a shape. It is a symbol of harmony. Many pieces of my design revolve around circles and the ideas they symbolize. The design is unique to my community, my life. Richmond is a quaint town where you blink and you’ve missed it. The slightly larger town of Spring Grove is right next door. Together these two towns form a loving community. It doesn’t feel like two severed towns, but one joint family, and I am honored to call it my home. The two villages each have their own grade school and come together in high school. Richmond Burton Community High School is the proud center of this community.

The design I’ve submitted is located at our high school. Every piece of the design is circular to tie in the theme of unity to our modern, straight-lined school. The two outer stone circles are tiers of benches below ground level. Each of them has a ramp that leads to the ground level patio with the school emblem embossed in the center. The outer circles represent each of the villages bonding together into the center which is Richmond-Burton Community High School. Even the circular tree adds a touch of unification to the area. In the center on the left outer edge is a stage for the free expression of all students. If I were to make this design come to life, I would be sitting at a table in the front row cheering on anyone brave enough to take the stage. The vintage tables in the center are inspired by the old fashion qualities of both towns. After all Richmond is known as “The Village of Yesteryear”. Next the eye is drawn to the three-tiered stone bleachers. These benches are a twist on the generic bleachers in the football stadium and offer soft grass between each elevated level. The pine trees directly behind provide shade and remain in a constant state throughout all seasons. Raised above ground, the stadium structure has a beautiful view of the stage to sit and enjoy the company of other students.
The layout is not only symbolic, but functional. My creation is located directly outside the library door (before it was an empty field with a cracked sidewalk). Day after day, before and after school, the library is packed to the brim with people - people doing homework or gathering for a club meeting, or simply socializing. The library is the only place for students go in the morning besides cluttering the hallways. Our librarian is nice, yet he scolds many people for being too loud. He promotes a quiet environment for students who come to get work done. The garden space offers an alternative with many places to sit comfortably to do homework and for socialization. With this new outdoor space students could speak freely and eat any foods they desire, as the library rules prohibit food and drinks. My idea was to take the space and not only make it beautiful, but also a place for students to express themselves.

The stage is not only available for music students. It can be for poetry or drama lovers as well. Many students have hidden talents, but we just don’t have room in our school to express it. With music classes taking the combination choir and band room every afternoon and morning, this location is needed for those hidden talents. Our cafeteria also doubles as an auditorium granting its name, ‘the auditoria’. With only one small stage in the auditoria, the outdoor area would provide a second rehearsal area for the spring musical as well.

In addition to the structural pieces, the plants are also a large part of the design. I used many plants for this layout; most were perennials. Since the wall of the school is shaded for most of the day, I used shade plant combinations in this area. These shade plants include greenery such as Yellow grass, Japanese painted fern, Hosta 'June', Wild ginger groundcover, Astilbe 'Pumila', Hosta 'Halcyon', Heuchera 'Plum Pudding', and Creeping jenny groundcover. On the perpendicular wall I placed plants with more color using sun perennial combinations. Autumn Joy Sedum, Echinacea 'Fatal Attraction',

Emily G.
Emily G.

Joy Pye Weed, Russian Sage, Karl Foerster Grass, and Yarrow 'Moonshine' were placed in the path of the sun.

Harmony is needed in any community to prosper and grow. This circle of life doesn't end with a single group. New people will come and go each year and will care for this new communal area, protect it and use it in new ways. My goal is for this outdoor garden to be a peaceful, relaxing place for students to express themselves, meet new friends and relax for many years to come.