



**2023 ANNUAL
SEMIS COMMUNITY FORUM**

May 23

8:45 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Eastern Michigan University Student Center

900 Oakwood
Ypsilanti, MI
48197

Use the event hashtag **#SEMISCommunityForum23**
and follow SEMIS Coalition on Instagram **@semiscoalition**



[Image identification: A Clippert Academy student presents a place-based education project to peers from other schools. The text on the cardboard reads, "Climate Change." This poster presentation took place at the 2022 in-person SEMIS Annual Community Forum at Eastern Michigan University (EMU).]

Table of Contents

***Shorter Print Programs Will Be Provided on May 23, 2023**

SEMIS COALITION AND THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM	5
Agenda Overview	6
Bus Drop-off Protocol	7
COVID-19 Safety Protocol	7
Rain Plan	7
Helpful Map Links	7
Full Program	8
Breakfast, Welcome, and Sign In 8:45 - 9:45	8
Opening Ceremony 9:30 - 10:00	8
Break 10:00 - 10:15	8
Student Presentations 10:15 - 10:45	8
Presentation Descriptions and Room Numbers	8
Room 300 Schoolyard Stewardship (Tucker)	8
Room 301 The Period Project at Hamtramck High School (Albrecht and Walker)	9
Room 310A Learning In Community (Sherobbi)	9
Room 310B Arbor Day (Weiss)	9
Room 320 The Watershed is our Classroom (Albrecht)	9
Room 330 Deforestation (Bowman)	10
Room 352 Food Insecurity (Bowman)	10
Room 260 (Kiva Room) Water Pollution (Bowman)	10
Break 10:45 - 11:00	11
Student Posters 11:00 - 11:45	11
Poster Descriptions and Locations	11
Break 11:45 - 12:00	16
Lunch 12:00 - 1:00	16
Intergenerational Dialogue 12:30	16
Awards 12:50	16
Kid-friendly Feedback Form 1:30	16
Closing Remarks 1:35	16
AWARDS AND RECIPIENTS	17
Powerful Place-Based Education and Whole School Change Award	17
Commitment to Outdoor Teaching and Learning	17
Master Place-Based Educator	17
Dedication to Powerful Place-Based Education	18
Outstanding Contributions to the SEMIS Coalition	18
Powerful Place-Based Partnership	18
Powerful Place-Based Educator	19
Transformative Partnership	19
Community Engaged Scholarship in Place-Based Education	19
SEMIS Coalition Legacy Award	20

<u>Youth Leadership Award</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>OUR GRATITUDE</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Individual Sustainers</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>2023 Community Forum Sponsors:</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Funders</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Eastern Michigan University Service Providers</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>COMMON NEEDS</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Bathrooms</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Quiet Space / Reflection Room / Foot Wash Station</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Parking</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Can you Help us Support NEXT Year's Community Forum by Donating Today?</u>	<u>26</u>

SEMIS COALITION AND THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM

The Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition

The Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition was founded in 2008 to support teachers as they bridge classroom learning to the community. In partnership with others, students can solve real-world problems and create positive change. We do this through place-based education—an immersive approach to learning that empowers students to act as environmental stewards, caring for themselves, their peers, and the land and community where they live. Place-Based Education integrates studies across the curriculum.

The Annual Community Forum

The Annual SEMIS Coalition Community Forum consists of students from schools across southeast Michigan coming together to share the stories of place-based learning with the broader community. The Forum provides students and educators with the opportunity to share their work in a conference setting, with students in the position of educators. Sessions led by youth provide leadership and presentation opportunities for students, as well as learning between SEMIS Coalition member schools, families and communities. The SEMIS Coalition is excited to welcome schools and communities from across southeast Michigan for this inspiring event!

Agenda Overview

Morning

8:45-9:30 Welcome, Sign In, Breakfast, 2nd Floor Atrium

9:30 Opening Ceremony with words from SEMIS Coalition Director, Ethan Lowenstein, Ballroom 2nd Floor

10:00 – 10:15 Transition Time

10:15 – 10:45 Student Presentations, 3rd Floor

10:45 - 11:00 Transition Time

11:00 - 11:45 Student Posters, 1st Floor Outdoor Patio

11:45 - 12:00 Transition Time

Afternoon

12:00 Lunch in the Student Center Ballroom, 2nd Floor
(Remainder of program in the Ballroom)

12:30 Intergenerational Dialogue: Students, teachers, and community partners will engage in an intergenerational dialogue to imagine alternative possibilities for education.

12:50 Awards

1:30 Kid-friendly Feedback Form

1:35 Closing Remarks

Bus Drop-off Protocol

Please ask your driver to pull into the **Eagle's Circle Loop**, off of Oakwood Drive. There is a bus loop there for drop-offs and pick-ups to the Student Center. This will have you entering on the 2nd Floor.

<https://www.emich.edu/map/index.php>

COVID-19 Safety Protocol

Covid-19 protocols are according to [Eastern Michigan University COVID-19 policies](#). Masks will be available for anyone attending that would like to wear one.

If you are not feeling well, please go home and get good rest. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Rain Plan

In the event of rain, all Poster presentations will be moved to the Ballroom and Rooms 310A/B.

Helpful Map Links

Student Center Building and Parking Maps

<https://www.emich.edu/studentcenter/maps/index.php>

Parking Maps

<https://www.parkemu.com/maps/>

Full Program

Breakfast, Welcome, and Sign In 8:45 - 9:45

Ballroom, Atrium and 2nd Floor Hallway

Opening Ceremony 9:30 - 10:00

Ballroom, please feel welcome to keep eating breakfast

Find the Ballroom Map [here](#).

Break 10:00 - 10:15

Use stairs or elevators to move to the presentation sessions on the 3rd Floor.

Student Presentations 10:15 - 10:45

Students present their place-based projects to the larger community for 30 minutes on the 3rd Floor of the Student Center. Find the 3rd Floor Room Map [here](#).

Presentation Descriptions and Room Numbers

Room 300

Schoolyard Stewardship (Tucker)

Fourth Grade students and Teacher, Calisa Tucker

Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor fourth-graders were inspired by Earth Day and Earth Force, and identified areas of concern on the school grounds and formed stewardship teams to address them. Their five projects include helping the pond, tending the pawpaw patches, removing garlic mustard, caring for the trees, and creating a pollinator garden and leading a No Mow May campaign at the school. The fourth-graders seem to be really enjoying the opportunity to not only work together but to work with the trees, plants,

and animals on the grounds. They've been getting to know the red-winged blackbirds nesting in the pond, cooking up garlic mustard and teaching the kindergarteners how to pull it, and even discovering hazelnut shells under the overgrown and neglected hazelnut bushes. As one fourth-grader said, "Look at the trees. They already seem happier!"

Room 301

The Period Project at Hamtramck High School (Albrecht and Walker)
High school students and their Science Teachers, Bill Albrecht and Dana Walker

High school students helped improve women's health at HHS. They will explain the arc of their student self-advocacy with a slide deck and a poster presentation.

Room 310A

Learning In Community (Sherobbi)

Elementary and Middle school students with Educators Kim Sherobbi, Piper Carter, Sam Scardefield, Linda Gadsden

Noble School students who participate in the Community Lens After School Program at Birwood House engage with many Community Educators. Co-learning occurred between the students and Community Educators when they engaged in knowledge exchanges about building construction, city government, nature, recycling and upcycling. Noble School students are looking forward to sharing their experiences with the Community Forum attendees.

Room 310B

Arbor Day (Weiss)

3rd Grade students and their Teacher, Anouk Weiss

Wylie Elementary students worked with Arbor Day Research and Distribution teams to learn about their mission, the value of trees, and how they could contribute to the effort around Arbor Day.

Room 320

The Watershed is our Classroom (Albrecht)

Hamtramck High School students and their Science Teacher, Bill Albrecht and Dana Walker

A team of high school students who camped, hiked, sailed, and did science on the Rouge and Detroit Rivers will discuss what it showed them about our ecosystem. They will present digital student artifacts about partnerships with SIC, REP, Detroit Outdoors and the Detroit Zoo. Students will bring a sample of analog student work and a petting zoo of objects collected from the field.

Room 330

Deforestation (Bowman)

Middle school students and Science Teacher, Jacinda Bowman

The Starlings at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School chose to focus on deforestation this year. They partnered with Arboretum Detroit and visited Circle Forest where they explored and helped plant trees. Starlings also invented a game to teach others about the importance of trees. The Starlings are dreaming up ideas to become stewards of the Boggs Forest in the future!

Room 352

Food Insecurity (Bowman)

Middle school students and Science Teacher, Jacinda Bowman

The Ravens at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School chose to focus on food insecurity this year. They partnered with the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network and Keep Growing Detroit to teach others about the issue of food insecurity and how to become involved in organizations

working to change the lack of affordable, healthy food for Detroiters. The Ravens are currently working on a commercial to advertise the Detroit People's Food Co-op!

Room 260 (Kiva Room)

Water Pollution (Bowman)

Middle school students and Science Teacher, Jacinda Bowman

The Tiger Lillies at The James and Grace Lee Boggs School chose to focus on water pollution this school year. They created a skit and a trivia game to teach others about the issue and they picked up trash with Keep Belle Isle Beautiful to make a direct impact on their watershed.

Break 10:45 - 11:00

Student Posters 11:00 - 11:45

Outdoor Patio, 1st floor of the Student Center. You can find the odd numbered poster locations (P1, P3, etc) along the glass windows of the student center, or the west side of the patio. You can find all even numbered poster locations (2, 4, etc.) on the grassy side nearer to the pond, or the east side of the patio. A walking/rolling pathway can be found between these two poster rows.

Poster Descriptions and Locations

P1 Place-based Watershed Education

Wylie Elementary School Fourth Grade students and Teacher, Jim Barnes

This is the culmination of our year-long exploration of Mill Creek in Dexter and the Great Lakes Watershed. This includes some of the activities we did to become familiar with Mill Creek as well as our year-long adventure raising salmon in the classroom for release into Lake Michigan.

P2 CommuniTree

High school students and Math Teachers, Andrea Stanzyck & Abigail Woodman

Ypsilanti Community High School students helped spread information about climate by creating a tree to be used at the Ypsilanti 2023 Earth Day (EDY4) celebration. The tree had certain specifications, including being able to lie flat for storage. Students created prototypes and decided on the best model. With Ms. Voelker, students decorated the tree, created leaves and a tree came to life. Tree will be on display.

P3 Climate Literacy and Impacts

High school Math students, SEMIS Coalition Educator, Willie King III and Math Teachers, Andrea Stanczyk & Abigail Woodman

Ypsilanti Community High School students discuss climate change, why they need to understand and learn about climate. And their place as changemakers. Students will bring ideas and artifacts of learning with Mr. King.

P4 What is a tree worth?

4th Grade students and Teacher, Susan Karsch

Wylie Elementary School students were asked the question, "What is a tree worth?" and came to realize it's hard to put a value on a tree. They worked through math, science, and social studies to learn more.

P5 Exploring Climate Issues using Data Art (Stanczyk, Woodman)

Ypsilanti Community High School students and Math Teachers, Andrea Stanzyck and Abigail Woodman

With the world around us changing, we as living beings on the earth need to be able to see trends from the past and use that knowledge to make changes for a better world. Part of understanding what is going on is the ability to understand and explain past data and the trends that occurred. Each student chose a graph that relates to a climate change or social justice issue. Students accurately interpret and analyze the graphs, students will decide upon an image (modeled after Jill Pelto) that would best

communicate the issue in an imaginative and creative way that evokes an emotional connection. Included with their artwork, students will develop an 'artist's statement' to accompany their image.

P6 What is a tree worth?

Fourth Grade students and Teacher, Susan Karsch

Wylie Elementary School students were asked the question, "What is a tree worth?" and came to realize it's hard to put a value on a tree. They worked through math, science, and social studies to learn more.

P7 How do Rain Gardens Prevent Pollution?

Wylie Elementary School students and Teacher, Leah Tatara

Our third grade class worked on a project this year to answer the question, "How do rain gardens benefit the environment?" To answer this question, we had experts from the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office visit our school, visited a rain garden in our local community, and did lots and lots of research! After we figured out our need to know questions and found the answers, our group decided to focus on the area of pollution.

P8 Learning In Community

Elementary and Middle School Students with Educators Kim Sherobbi, Piper Carter, Sam Scardefield, and Linda Gadsden

Noble School students who participate in the Community Lens After School Program at Birwood House engage with many Community Educators. Co-learning occurred between the students and Community Educators when they engaged in knowledge exchanges about building construction, city government, nature, recycling and upcycling. Noble School students are looking forward to sharing their experiences with the Community Forum attendees.

P9 How do Rain Gardens Prevent Floods?

Wylie Elementary School students and Teacher, Leah Tatara

Our third grade class worked on a project this year to answer the question, "How do rain gardens benefit the environment?" To answer this question, we had experts from the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office visit our school, visited a rain garden in our local community, and did lots and lots of research! After we figured out our need to know questions and found the answers, our group decided to focus on the area of floods.

P10 Our Water, Our Voice

Ypsilanti Community High School students and Biotechnology/Chemistry Teacher, Dillon Williams

A student organized a call to action on water in the Huron River watershed through Civic-Science inquiry and advocacy.

P11 Food Deserts (in Washtenaw County)

High School students and Earth, Life, Physical Sciences Teacher, Paula Sizemore

Food deserts have caused severe health problems for people who live in them. This research investigates why food deserts exist, and solutions by individuals, families and groups to alleviate this problem.

P12 Our Water, Our Voice

Ypsilanti Community High School students and Biotechnology/Chemistry Teacher, Dillon Williams

A student organized a call to action on water in the Huron River watershed through Civic-Science inquiry and advocacy.

P13 Stormwater Pollution

Ypsilanti Community High School students and Earth, Life, Physical Sciences Teacher, Paula Sizemore

Storm water pollution is a growing problem in our area. This research will look at how to educate and mitigate storm water pollution where we live, work and play.

P14 Protecting Our Watershed

Third Grade students and Teacher, Sarah Russell

Students are creating PSAs to protect the Huron River Watershed. They are also creating visuals to support what they've learned.

P15 Food Deserts (in Washtenaw County)

High School students and Earth, Life, Physical Sciences Teacher, Paula Sizemore

Food deserts have caused severe health problems for people who live in them. This research investigates why food deserts exist, and solutions by individuals, families and groups to alleviate this problem.

P16 Monarch Migration

Fourth Grade students and Teacher, Roxanne Kohler

Over the summer, Ms. Kohler's Wylie Elementary School students heard that monarch butterflies are now on the endangered species list and wondered why. We investigated their questions and learned a lot from a local family who rear monarchs. We even got to participate in a release this fall!

P17 Our Water, Our Voice

Ypsilanti Community High School students and Biotechnology/Chemistry Teacher, Dillon Williams

A student organized a call to action on water in the Huron River watershed through Civic-Science inquiry and advocacy.

P18 Changing the state bird of Michigan

Fourth Grade students and Teacher, Deb Eber

Wylie Elementary School students were learning about the Michigan Legislative Process and discovered that House Bill #6382 had been introduced to the House of Representatives in September 2022. This is a bill to change the Michigan State Bird from Robin to Kirtland's Warbler. Students researched both types of birds and were very interested in learning more about the Kirtland's Warbler and its unique story to Michigan. The students wrote persuasive essays expressing their opinions for changing the bird to the Kirtland's Warbler, or keeping the State Bird a Robin. Students were so interested that they invited State Representative Carrie Rheingans into their school on January 30th. Rep. Rheingans spoke about the process of a bill becoming (or not becoming) a law, as well as hearing student ideas supporting and opposing the bill. Interacting personally with Rep. Rheingans inspired students to become active community members, both now and in the future.

P19 Summers-Knoll School Garden

First and Second Grade students and Teachers, Emma Boel and Barbara Hohmann

Summers-Knoll students will teach participants about how to compost with worms, how to companion plant, and how to plant seeds (participants can take their planted seeds home!)

Break 11:45 - 12:00

Lunch 12:00 - 1:00

Will be served in the Ballroom in buffet style. Our meals have been prepared with local ingredients, and include halal chicken, macaroni and cheese, and vegetables with other delights to enjoy. Dessert included!

Intergenerational Dialogue 12:30

Students, teachers, and community partners will engage in loving intergenerational dialogue to imagine alternative possibilities for schooling and education.

Awards 12:50

Kid-friendly Feedback Form 1:30

Closing Remarks 1:35

AWARDS AND RECIPIENTS

Each year, we recognize members who have displayed excellence within the SEMIS Coalition.

The 2023 categories include:

Powerful Place-Based Education and Whole School Change Award

This award is given to schools that integrate justice-oriented, and culturally sustaining, place-based educational practices into multiple subject-area departments, coaching structures, and whole school approaches to learning.

- **Ypsilanti Community High School**, Math, Science Department, and English Language Arts

Commitment to Outdoor Teaching and Learning

This award is given to schools and communities that have demonstrated a strong multi-year commitment to outdoor learning and integrating outdoor experiences for their entire school community.

- **Salina Intermediate School**
- **Ypsilanti Community High School**
- **Birwood House**

Dedication to Powerful Place-Based Education

This award is given for long-term commitment to the development of youth in southeast Michigan as civic-stewards of their place and community.

- **Pam Krebs**, Instructional Coach, Dexter Community Schools

Outstanding Contributions to the SEMIS Coalition

A special thank you to individuals from within the University or partner organizations who have made a difference in the SEMIS Coalition through their behind-the-scenes support, commitment, and dedication to the SEMIS Coalition.

- **Luke Yates, MPA**, Community Program Development Manager, Engage@EMU, Eastern Michigan University
- **Sarah Ghotane**, Accountant/Analyst Grants Accounting, Eastern Michigan University

Powerful Place-Based Partnership

This award is given for visionary commitment to building, growing, and sustaining collaborations to support Place-Based Education.

- **Dexter Community Schools**
- **Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor**

Transformative Partnership

This award is given for visionary commitment to building, growing, and sustaining collaborations to support transformative Place-Based Education.

- **“The Good Part”** created by
 - **Audra Carson**, Community Partner, Chief Beautification Strategist, Izzie LLC
 - **Willie King III**, SEMIS Coalition, Program Associate

Community Engaged Scholarship in Place-Based Education

This award is given to those who have made a strong commitment to SEMIS Coalition, our place-based educational movement, and the development of leading-edge praxis that anchors our work in building community, transforming education, and changing lives.

- **Miriam Furlan Brighente, Ph.D.** Lecturer, Women and Gender Studies, Eastern Michigan University
- **Nigora Erkaeva, Ph.D.**, Ecojustice and Settler Colonial Educator, SEMIS Coalition

Master Place-Based Educator

This is our highest teaching award and recognizes those who have mastered the art and science of an EcoJustice approach to Place-Based Education.

- **Paula Sizemore**, Teacher, Ypsilanti Community High School

SEMIS Coalition Legacy Award

This award is given to educators who have had a deep impact on SEMIS Coalition and/or are retiring, graduating, or moving on to new adventures.

- **Mary Whitmore**, Executive Director, Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI)

Youth Leadership Award

This award is given to students for their excellence as advocates, organizers, and leaders within their schools and communities.

- Ypsilanti Community High School (Teacher Abigail Woodman)
 - **La'Maiya Evans-Gardner**
 - **Alan Hodge**
 - **Chea Malcolm**
 - **Angel Martinez Rodriguez**
 - **Leroy Spann**
 - **Cameron Powell**
- Ypsilanti Community High School (Teacher Andrea Stanczyk)
 - **Annabelle Bodner**
 - **Ahmad Brown**
 - **Aubree Crandall**
 - **Deon Massey**
 - **Ka'Lei Jackson**
- Renaissance High School, Detroit Public Schools Community District (Teacher Emily Phillips)
 - **Entire Class**
 - **Shaniya Adams**
 - **Samayia Boyd**
 - **Ali Carter**

- **Chilaka Christopher**
- **Asa Coleman**
- **Stevae Crumsley**
- **Ryann Douglas**
- **Jayniya Gamblin**
- **Chila Greenlee**
- **Maya Griggs**
- **Desiree Slappy**
- **Kamela Webb**
- **Martia Williams**

OUR GRATITUDE

Thank you to our 2022-2023 individual donors who helped make this Community Forum possible!

Individual Supporters

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- Office of Research Development and Administration, Eastern Michigan University
- Teacher Education Department, Eastern Michigan University

COMMON NEEDS

Bathrooms

There are **wheelchair-accessible bathrooms** in the Lake House **Gender-neutral bathrooms** are located in the Student Center building, You find three options: on the **first floor**, next to Build Pizza; on the **second floor**, across from ATMs and Lobby Shop; on the **third floor**, next to Kiva Room (across from Room 350).

Quiet Space / Reflection Room / Foot Wash Station

Several quiet spaces are available around the Student Center building on the picnic tables with the umbrella on them. **You can find the Reflection Room 342B on the Third Floor**, as well as a Foot Wash Station across from Room 350. In addition, there are benches next to the tree line located next to the sand volleyball areas.

Volunteers

They can help you find sessions and direct you to the nearest water source. We introduce them during the Opening Ceremony, and they also have special name tags so that students feel safe to ask for help if they need it.

Parking

Please use the Student Center or Bowen Field House Pay Lot. Parking Vouchers will be provided for volunteers, teachers, chaperones, administrators, and bus drivers. Otherwise, we ask that you plan on paying for parking. ADA accessible parking can be found in the Student Center Pay Lot. You can find additional details on [the Park EMU website](#).

Can you Help us Support NEXT Year's Community Forum by Donating Today?

- **\$12** can provide lunch for a student presenter
- **\$35** can provide breakfast for a school group
- **\$75** can provide lunch for a school group
- **\$100+** can help provide transportation for a school group to attend

Make a DONATION!



semiscoalition.org/donate

Please share your feedback about the Community Forum here!

