

Sustainability Initiative Newsletter
January 7, 2015

[School Spotlight](#)



J.H.S 217 in Queens hosted a Teach-in on environmental justice issues and an Earth Day Carnival with fun activities in December.



The [NYC Compost Project](#) works to rebuild NYC's soils with special composting programs just for schools.

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School Spotlight

J.H.S. 217, Robert A. Van Wyck: The Green Magnet School for Career Exploration



On December 12, 2014, J.H.S. 217 in Queens hosted a teach-in called "Earth Day Carnival - Teach for the Future". Led by the school's green team and sustainability coordinator Karen Phillips, ninety students and 12 staff members organized this event for hundreds of attendees. At the opening assembly, Principal Burns spoke about the importance of making a difference in our world. After the assembly with singing and poetry, attendees then dispersed to a teach-in in the library and Earth Day carnival in the gymnasium.

At *Teach for the Future*, students presented research on water, climate change, child labor in the Congo, poverty in New York, genetically modified organisms, energy, and safe cosmetics. As people entered the Earth Day carnival, attendees signed pledges to work on school sustainability and signed a petition to SchoolFood, Carmen Fariña, Bill de Blasio, Rory Lancman, and other officials to get halal food in our school. At the carnival, there were recycling relay races, a recycling toss, karaoke, a wrestling exhibition, a book giveaway, an animal farm, and a *Student Art - Nature's Art* exhibit. Students also worked outside and began putting the school gardens to bed for the winter.



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News

- **Job Opening in the Office of Sustainability!** We are seeking a Communications and Training Coordinator. Resumes may be submitted via the Division of Human Resources [Open Hire](#).
- **Center for Green Schools Announces the Best of Green Schools Awards for 2014:** This recognition features individuals, institutions, projects and events that are taking risks, setting an example, innovating and diligently pursuing a world in which every student attends a green school within this generation. Shout-out to Stephen Ritz with the Green Bronx Machine and P.S. 55 in the Bronx for their recognition in the “Best Transformation” category. Check out the full list of [awardees](#) and learn more about Stephen’s project!
- **Youth Summit Registration Open!** Hosted by [Greening Forward](#) and co-sponsored by the NYC DOE Sustainability Initiative, the [International Young Environmentalists Youth Summit](#) (IYEYS) on **March 1** in the Bronx is a youth-imagined, youth-driven, and youth-executed event aimed at providing young environmentalists the tools they need to take their campaigns to the next level. From youth who have started global organizations, to those who are leading school-based environmental projects, IYEYS is for everyone. We also welcome adults who are looking to learn more about how to implement youth leadership and engagement strategies into their classrooms, organizations, or even businesses. [Register by February 5.](#)
- **White House Launches a Climate Education Initiative:** On December 3rd, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy announced a new Climate Education and Literacy Initiative to help connect American students and citizens with the best available science-based information about climate change. As part of this announcement, it acknowledged two of our partners; the Alliance for Climate Education and the Green Schools Alliance. Check out the [press release](#).
- **Free Environmental Education Materials from the EPA:** The National Service Center for Environmental Publications offers materials grouped by grade range (K-3, K-12, elementary school, middle school, high school, and general information for teachers). Resources include activity books, calendars, posters, and science fair activities in waste management, indoor air quality, wetland protection, and environmental science. Check out the [order forms](#) and submit a request today!
- **New York State Electronic Waste Ban Starts January 2015:** As of January 2015, it is illegal to discard electronics in the trash or at the curb. This includes computers and their peripherals, televisions, fax machines, VCRs, DVD players, printers/scanners, video game consoles, MP3 players, tablets, and small servers. For information on how to dispose of residential electronics, see nyc.gov/electronics. To review DOE procedures for your school’s electronics, check out the “How To” page on our [website](#).

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Events

- **March 1:** The [International Young Environmentalists Youth Summit](#) is coming to the Bronx. For ages 5 to 25, the summit empowers youth to take what they know and put it into action. Hosted by Greening Forward and co-sponsored by the NYC DOE Sustainability Initiative.

- **March 4-7:** Now's the time to register for the 5th annual [Green Schools National Conference](#). The Sustainability Initiative sponsored ten scholarships for sustainability coordinators to attend the conference. If you are attending on your own, please let us know!
- **March 12: Basic Sustainability Initiative Training:** Our annual trainings are open to anyone in your school community that is on your green team. It doesn't matter if it's the principal, a teacher, a parent volunteer, or the custodian. Substitute coverage is subsidized. Click [here](#) for more info and to register. Deadline to RSVP is March 3!
- **April 24-26:** The national [Green Festival 2015](#) is coming to town Earth Week! We're working with the organizers to sponsor a citywide K-12 environmentally-themed science fair to be hosted at the festival! Stay tuned for more details.

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Opportunities

- **Wangari Maathai Student Award – Deadline is Next Week!** The Maathai Award for Civic Participation in Sustainability, sponsored by The Rockefeller Foundation, The Bette Midler Family Trust, and MillionTreesNYC, is a \$10,000 cash award granted to two New York City public high school seniors graduating in the 2014-2015 school year. The award was established in honor of Dr. Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize (2004), a visionary environmentalist and founder of the Green Belt Movement, a tree-planting campaign to promote sustainable development, woman's empowerment, and democracy in Kenya. Submit the [online application](#) **by 5:00pm EST on January 16.**
- **Earth Day/Every Day Food Toolkit Pilot Program Recruiting Participants!** Earth Day New York is looking for a few high school classrooms to participate in a pilot program for its new Earth Day/Every Day Food Toolkit, including their Earth Day Organic Indoor Learning Gardens. The toolkit is an overview of sustainable food, a guide to mapping sustainable food resources in your neighborhood, and advice on stimulating sustainable food resources in your community. Participating classrooms will use the toolkit to map their own neighborhoods and develop a project to help stimulate food resources in their own communities. Teachers do not need a background in sustainable food but will need to guide their students through the process of identifying food resources in the surrounding community (e.g., supermarkets with local produce, community gardens, farmers markets). The pilot will run from March to May 2015. If you're interested in participating, email info@earthdayny.org or call 212-922-0048 **by January 15.**
- **Grow To Learn opens application for \$500-2,000 Mini-Grants for NYC School Gardens:** GrowNYC's [Grow To Learn](#), the NYC Department of Education and NYC Park's GreenThumb is currently accepting applications for mini-grants of \$500-2,000 to start or expand a learning garden program at NYC public and charter schools. Grow to Learn Garden Grants are funded in part by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York and Green Mountain Energy Company. [Grant applications](#) are **due on Wednesday, February 11.**
- **Carton 2 Garden is now a National Contest!** Piloted by NYC DOE schools last year, Made by Milk announces the national roll out of the [Carton 2 Garden](#) carton recycling contest. The contest highlights students' creativity by re-purposing milk and juice cartons from the cafeteria to either build or enhance a school garden. Educators engage students in a hands-on experience creating teachable moments on environmental stewardship, sustainability and living healthy. The best use of cartons in the school garden can win a prize valued up to \$2,500 for building or enhancing the garden. Contest submissions are due April 22 so get [registered](#) today for your entry kit and start planning!

- **National Awards:**
 - [USDA: Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award](#) - Deadline January 15
 - [Award for Excellence in K-8 Earth Science Teaching](#) – Deadline by January 20
 - [Beneath the Sea Marine Career Scholarships](#) – Deadline January 25
 - [Oceanography Honors Research Program](#) – Deadline January 30
 - [Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program](#) – Deadline January 30
 - [Young Eco-Hero Awards](#) – Deadline February 28
 - [Norm Strung Youth Writing Award](#) – Entries postmarked by March 16
 - [Craig Tufts Environmental Education Scholarship Award](#) – Deadline March 27

- **National Competitions & Contests:**
 - [StudentCam Documentary Competition](#) – Entries Due January 20
 - [SchoolsNEXT Design Competition](#) – Register by January 30
 - [DuPont Challenge Contest](#) – Grades 6-12 – Deadline January 31
 - [Christopher Columbus Awards for Middle School Students Competition](#) – Register by February 2
 - [World of 7 Billion Video Contest](#) – Deadline February 19
 - [Audubon Photography Contest](#) – Deadline February 23
 - [Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam Grant Competition](#) – Deadline to register February 27
 - [Plastic Film Recycling Contest](#) – Deadline March 1
 - [Endangered Species Day Art Contest](#) – Entries postmarked by March 1
 - [DuPont Challenge Contest](#) – Grades K-5 – Deadline March 1
 - [NWF Young Reporters for the Environment Competition](#) – Entries due March 13

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Resources

- [Catskill Watershed Education Grant](#) – Deadline February 2
- [Fiskars Project Orange Thumb Garden Grants](#) – up to \$3,500. Deadline January 31
- [Disney Friends for Change Grants](#) – up to \$500 for Global Youth Service Day projects. Deadline February 18
- [Mantis Awards for Community and Youth Gardens](#) – Gardening equipment award. Deadline March 6
- [Grant-Funded Summer Institute for Middle School Science Teachers](#) – Deadline March 13
- [Captain Planet Foundation EcoTech Grants](#) – up to \$2,500. Rolling deadlines through April 30
- [New York Restoration Project’s Gardens for the City](#) – For assistance with revitalizing public spaces
- [Hart Seed Company Donations](#) – Free seeds for the cost of shipping and handling
- [The Awesome Foundation](#) – up to \$1,000. Rolling deadlines
- [Build It Green!NYC](#) - two non-profit reuse centers filled with low-cost salvaged building materials
- [The Pollination Project](#) – up to \$1,000. Rolling applications
- [The World We Want Foundation](#) - \$500 - 5,000. Supports youth making positive social change
- [NWF Trees for Wildlife](#) - Get 100 free tree seedlings for your school. Apply 90 days before event.
- [Toshiba America Foundation STEM Education Grants](#) – Rolling deadlines
- [Fund for Teachers Professional Development Grants](#) - Rolling deadlines

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Partner Spotlight



The [NYC Compost Project](#) works to rebuild NYC's soils by providing New Yorkers with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to produce and use compost locally. The NYC Compost Project offers compost-related [workshops and classes](#), runs the [Master Composter Certificate Program](#), provides [technical support](#), [distributes DSNY compost & mulch](#), develops urban farms, and conducts outreach at public events throughout all five boroughs. The NYC Compost Project also operates [neighborhood-based food scrap drop-off opportunities](#), and ensures that those food scraps are composted locally.

Specifically for schools, the Project has designed a range of [workshops](#) on indoor and outdoor composting. Contact the [NYC Compost Project site](#) in your borough if you're interested in hosting or attending a composting workshop. Their website also has useful [composting education](#) resource links for your classroom.

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Contact Us

Office of Sustainability, Division of School Facilities

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