

Sustainability Initiative Newsletter

## Earth Day Celebrations!

With over 1,600 sustainability coordinators throughout the New York City Department of Education, we expected Earth Day celebrations all over the city, involving thousands of children, teachers, staff, and parents. This special edition of our newsletter is a tribute to those that spent countless hours of work putting these fantastic events together. We appreciate the hard work you do in our schools to educate students about the environment and make our operations more sustainable.

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### Department of Education

The New York Power Authority (NYPA) partnered with the City of New York and the Department of Education, holding a press conference at P.S. 84 the Lillian Weber School of Arts on April 25 to celebrate Earth Day.

Stacey Cumberbatch (Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner), Kathleen Grimm (DOE Deputy Chancellor of Operations), Gil C. Quiniones (NYPA President and Chief Executive Officer), John Shea (DOE Division of School Facilities Chief Executive Officer), and Margaret Watson (Green Schools Alliance President) spoke at the event, celebrating the completion of an energy efficiency project at the school. The lighting upgrades are part of a wider effort to replace lighting fixtures in classrooms, auditoriums and administrative offices throughout New York City schools to lower utility bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### Sustainability Initiative

Three of our favorite people were interviewed in an Earth Day retrospective on the Jenny Green Jeans blog. Ron Gonen (Deputy Commissioner of Sanitation, Recycling and Sustainability), Emily Fano (NYC Outreach Manager for Eco-Schools USA), and Robbie Lock (Manager of GrowNYC's Recycling Champions Program) reflected on their green achievements this past year. Check out the blog [here](#).



# Bronx

## DeWitt Clinton High School (X440)



DeWitt Clinton celebrated Earth Week starting Wednesday, April 23 when Angel Vides of NYC DEP gave a presentation to three combined senior English classes on New York City's Water Supply System and Water for the Future program. The following day, sustainability coordinator and teacher Ray Pultinas' class of seniors participated in a lively presentation on recycling by Laura Piraino of GrowNYC's Recycling Champions Program.

Later that day, over 300 students from science and health classes attended two assemblies led by John Joseph, author, athlete and punk rock singer with the band the Cro-Mags. Mr. Joseph is an advocate of eating vegan and spoke passionately about how food choices contributed to his personal transformation and positive life changes. After the assembly, Mr. Joseph, Amie Hamlin (Director of New York Coalition for Healthy School Food) and friends met up with Clinton's Environmental Affairs Students at The Clinton Garden just as the cloudy day finally brightened with sunshine.



## H.E.R.O. High (Health, Education, and Research Occupations High School) (X259), Samuel Gompers Career and Technical Education High School (X655), and New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II (X208)



Students and teachers from Hero High, New Visions, and Gompers collaborated to help neighborhood trees as part of an Urban Forestry workshop April 23. The volunteers removed litter, pulled weeds, and cultivated soil in 30 tree beds on the streets around the Gompers campus. They also earned two-hours toward community service credit.



On April 24, Gompers students Lucas Ayala and Darell Williams worked with the Hero High science club to celebrate Arbor Day by planting a tree in the NYC parks triangle in front of the Gompers building. Students also cleared litter and weeds from the triangle and pulled dead plants to rearrange and make room for the tree, which is a Hacksberry species that produces red berries in late spring. Special thanks to John Bowne Nursery for donating the tree, Science Club advisor and Living Environment teacher Angelique Tarazi, and her students for all their efforts this year!

# Brooklyn

## Williamsburg Preparatory High School (K561)



K561 had an exciting Earth Week! Jessica McClish and Juliet Crupi teach Urban Farming to 11th and 12th graders at Williamsburg Preparatory High School. On Earth Day, the teachers and students were featured with Jane Goodall on the Katie Show for the work they've done in the Roots & Shoots program: <http://katiecouric.com/features/how-to-build-an-at-home-composting-bin/>

Also during Earth Week, the urban farming students ran soil tests and maintained the hydroponic system. Other community action plans that students designed included; a worm composting bin for the school garden, seed bombs to spread butterfly seeds to empty lots, and an aquaponics system where students will show classmates how to build a system and grow plants using goldfish.



One week later, a group of students presented a lesson on nutrition to 6 advisories (~75 students). During the lesson, they demonstrated how to prepare a quick, healthy breakfast. On Thursday, a group of students hosted a school-wide movie night and educated students on how to read a nutrition label and prepare healthy snack options, before showing the movie Wall-E. Another group of students went to 11 different 9th grade advisories to explain a petition they are circulating to replace the cafeteria vending machines options with healthier choices.

## High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology (K485)



After brainstorming a list of community issues from student government and student surveys, the students chose the issues of neighborhood and parks cleanliness in the Bay Ridge and Sunset Park Communities as a long-term project. The students are working with Community Board 10 on addressing the issue of litter in the community and are making a presentation to their environmental committee later this year.

On Sunday April 27, sustainability coordinator Katrina Vogel, Principal Xhenete Shepard, teacher Shani Bretas, PTA Treasurer Cynthia Felix, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz and Community Board 10 member Josephine Beckmann joined students in a "Parks and Community Clean-Up" event. Assemblyman Ortiz' office donated all the cleaning supplies for us to complete the clean-up.



### Brooklyn Arbor Elementary School (K414)



Brooklyn Arbor students celebrated Arbor Day, in collaboration with [City At Work](#), with a day of hands-on service learning activities: street tree care, planting, bird-house building, making seed balls for empty lots and creating trees out of recyclable materials. The recyclable materials came from the school's new [Materials Depot](#), which is a room full of materials donated by parents and staff or collected by students. At Brooklyn Arbor, all classrooms are named after trees and the students used their tree names as a model for their creations. The student tree creations became part of a larger collection of all trees for a mini Brooklyn Arbor forest.

In addition to parent volunteers, we also had three staff members, Amber, Mike and Izzy from John Ericsson Middle School (K126) who came with 10 student volunteers to assist. It was a successful day, students and staff alike enjoyed themselves and we know the street trees surrounding the school are happy with new mulch, water and student care. Thanks to Beth Reed (Sustainability Coordinator), Stacey Cahn (Science Teacher), Anne Kenney and Louisa Pregerson (parents and co-founders of the Materials Depot), and Esther Velez (parent)!



### East New York Elementary School of Excellence (K677)

Sustainability coordinator Lynnea Moore and P.S. 677's Green Team planted 3 trees for Arbor Day.

### John Ericsson Middle School (K126)



Ten middle school students from K126 volunteered their time at K414 for Brooklyn Arbor Elementary School's Arbor Day event. They helped the students plant flowers and care for street trees around the school.

### Academy of Innovative Technology (K618)

At the Academy of Innovative Technology High School, sustainability coordinator Rebecca Kroll and others planted three different trees around campus (one oak and two cherry poplars). They also kicked off their "Greenager" program, in which they will be planting and caring for two beds of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers at a local Brooklyn Community Garden. They are very excited for this project to be up and running and look forward to sharing more!

P.S. 119 Amersfort (K119)

P.S. 119 celebrated the earth and stars throughout the month of April. Principal Lisa Fernandez practiced yoga with students outdoors during recess as the children transformed into trees and mountains in traditional yoga form. Students analyzed Van Gogh's Starry Night and celebrating the masterpiece with poetry using personification, rhyme, simile, metaphor, repetition, and imagery. Students visited the school garden and crafted poetry to celebrate daffodils, tulips and grape hyacinths, which had been planted in the fall by students and New York Cares volunteers. The newly formed Garden Club planted pansies and more around the green spaces that surround the school.



P.S. 186 Dr. Irving A. Gladstone (K186)



JoAnne Carillo and Margaretan Generoso, teachers at K186, led the way on Earth Day. The children were taught lessons on the importance of maintaining a healthy planet by incorporating the three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The kids were challenged to make crafts out of recycled materials, tapping into their creative side. One student made a handbag and pair of earrings out of soda can tabs. Another student made a pistachio shell necklace. A first grader made a truck out of cardboard boxes, tuna cans, vegetable cans, duct tape and materials from old toys.



# Manhattan

## The College Academy (M462)

For Earth Day, the school organized an Earth Day Poster Contest for students to display their creativity and content knowledge within the theme. Students were asked to create an 11 x 14 poster on an Earth Day theme such as littering, recycling, carbon footprints, etc. They had to include at least one relevant and accurate statistic. There were over 25 entries for the contest. The winner and runner up received an Earth Day themed prize pack as well as movie tickets.



The winner used very relevant statistics related to landfills, while the runner up wrote a very original and meaningful wish for a clean Earth, in both English and Spanish. The event was organized by Assistant Principal Karen Remer, Principal Peter Sloman, and sustainability coordinator Neil Rosen.



## The Greenwich Village School (M041)

The 1st graders at M041 learned about the serious problem of plastic garbage in our oceans and waterways. Sustainability coordinator Vicki Sando used the teaching kit from the [5Gyres](#) organization to look at photos, video clips, and samples of "plastic confetti" from both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They discussed and looked at a sample of plastic micro-beads in water, which are found in face exfoliating scrubs. Students participated in a hands-on activity where they tried to sort the plastic micro-beads from birdseed to appreciate how a bird or other animal would easily ingest it. They ended the lesson by discussing how people can try to remove plastic from waterways.



# Queens

## P.S. 14 Annex (Q014)



In honor of Earth Day, P.S. 14's Patricia Kazas' K-1 Bilingual Special Education class created different things out of recycled materials.



The main project was a piñata made out of a plastic container, empty paper towel rolls, plastic coffee cups and recycled newspaper.

The class also made a paper mache model of planet Earth out of recycled newspaper and used paper towels. Music teacher Sunday Hagicostas led her students in creating musical instruments out of recycled materials.

## P.S. 152 Gwendoline N. Alleyne School (Q152)

The P.S. 152 Community Flower Garden was a huge success this year. With the help of the "Daffodil Project", sustainability coordinator Daniel Stegner picked up the bulbs and planted 300 bulbs in October. The students took great interest in learning about the plants and putting them in the ground. With the arrival of spring, there was a full bloom of yellow and white flowers adorning the garden. Staff members, parents, and students commented on how beautiful it looked. Science teachers helped immensely with the project and they are exploring doing it all again next year!



## I.S. 059 Springfield Gardens (Q059)



Sustainability coordinator Marcia Young and others took a group of 8th graders and a few parents to the MillionTreesNYC Spring Stewardship Day at Marine Park on April 26. Joining a larger group, they cared for trees and shrubs at the park. Ms. Young stated "it was beyond successful, fun, very wet, and a learning experience the students won't soon forget!"



## The Fresh Meadow School (Q173)



For Earth Day, The Fresh Meadow School celebrated their 3rd Annual Recycling Challenge! Students, staff and families were challenged to bring in plastic water bottles and soda cans. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> annual challenge, the proceeds from the redemption of the cans and bottles went to establish a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat Garden on site.

This year, the funds will expand the garden! The kids really enjoyed seeing the collection of "trash" turn into something both beautiful and good for the environment! The school's new Cub Scout Pack is in on the action by helping to count the bottles and making birdfeeders for the garden. Thanks to sustainability coordinator Jean Mendler, Principal Molly Wang, Assistant Principal Denise Gilrane, several teachers, and PTA members who coordinated the event.



## P.S. 161 Arthur Ashe School (Q161)



Earlier in the month, P.S. 161's 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Student Council students teamed up with MillionTreesNYC, PwC, and the New York Knicks to plant 1,500 trees and 200 shrubs in Jamaica Bay Park, Queens. Attendees included Knicks legends Walt "Clyde" Frazier and Anthony Mason, Liberty legend Kym Hampton, the Knicks City Dancers, PwC New York Market Youth Education Leader Mitch Roschelle, and more than 120 volunteers from PwC, the Knicks, and NYC Parks.

As part of the "Trees for Threes" program, PwC New York donates one tree for every three-pointer made during the Knicks' home games in conjunction with the MillionTreesNYC planting program. Through 39 home games, the Knicks have connected on 369 three-pointers. PwC New York more than tripled that number, planting 1,500 trees and 200 shrubs.



## **Staten Island**

### I.S. 2 Egbert Intermediate School (R002)



Sustainability coordinator and health science teacher Eydie Oberbeck and teacher Donna Berry are creating a Community Garden to grow vegetables and herbs to harvest and give to the community. The school will be planting seedlings in May in raised garden beds (paid for with grant funding). The plants include three different types of tomatoes, spearmint, radishes, and two types of pole beans.

## P.S. 38 George Cromwell School (R038)



During spring break, the George Cromwell School hosted a work day to re-plant their garden, which had been damaged by Superstorm Sandy. Staff, parents, and students went to school on April 21 and 22 to work in the garden, paid for with a \$5,000 grant from Lowes.

Thanks go to sustainability coordinator Allison Regan, the custodial staff headed by William Farrell, parent coordinator M. Chow, and Principal E. Robles.

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Office of Sustainability, Division of School Facilities

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