

Sustainability Initiative Newsletter

News

October 3, 2015

The Brooklyn New School is a Top Eco-School

Congratulations to The Brooklyn New School—P.S. 46 for being one of the National Wildlife Federation's Top 10 Eco-Schools nationwide. The Brooklyn New School is an elementary school with a dedicated core curriculum centered on sustainability that has been in use for more than a decade. It is a Green Flag school that has addressed 6 of the 10 pathways, and students spend an average of 200 minutes per week learning outdoors. Teachers focus on experimental, hands-on instruction, and creating a healthy environment for all students. Let's applaud the administrators, teachers, staff and most importantly the students of The Brooklyn New School!



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Every Kid in a Park initiative begins



Earlier this year, President Obama launched the [Every Kid in a Park Initiative](#) to get every child outside to learn about the rich history and natural wonders of our federal lands and waters. Beginning September 1st, Every Kid in a Park (EKiP) grants every 4th grader in the country and his or her family free access to these places for one (1) year. 4th grade students can go to www.everykidinapark.gov to complete an activity and obtain a free annual entry pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks. A primary goal of the Every Kid in a Park initiative is to

bridge the growing disconnect between the next generation and the great outdoors, and to inspire children to become future stewards of our nation's natural and historic treasures.

Educators and community leaders can benefit from the EKiP initiative too! The EKiP website provides educational activities, field trip options, and the ability to print passes for their classrooms. The free passes for 4th graders and their families are good now through August 31, 2016. Parks and outdoor spaces are living classrooms, so Let's get every kid in a park!

To learn more and to find parks in your area, visit www.everykidinapark.gov.

United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015

More than 150 world leaders attended the UN Sustainable Development Summit from September 25-27 at the United Nations in New York City to formally adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals which will aim to eradicate extreme poverty, tackle inequality and injustice, and ensure a sustainable planet within the next 15 years.

For the first time ever in UN history, live-scribers attended the meetings and the result is a series of illustrations showing what was discussed at these meetings. You can watch the illustrations [here](#) or [view the slideshows](#) to look at each of them more closely.

Get Free Posters from the Sustainability Initiative!

Schools can order FREE posters created from the 2015 winners of the student Artwork Contest! Place your order by filling out this [form](#) as soon as possible. Many thanks to all who submitted their artwork and congratulations to the 9 winners! View [winners artwork slideshow](#).



A Green Design Manual For Teachers

[GrownYC's Environmental Education Program](#) is proud to announce the publication of [Green Design for Students](#), a manual of all of the major environmental and infrastructure issues that impact our daily lives, such as energy consumption, water treatment, agriculture, waste management, and sustainable construction, written specifically for Grades 7-12. The manual is designed to augment the common core curriculum and provide exposure to critical real-world issues that are frequently overlooked in a standard lesson plan. We encourage teachers to use and share the Green Design manual and help educate future generations about these pressing issues. [Click here](#) to access the manual.

Staff Matters

This is the first of our “Staff Matters” profiles. These profiles will help us get to know a little bit more about our fellow Sustainability Coordinators, Custodian Engineers and Green Team members.



Phil Richford

In September 2014, Phil became the Sustainability Coordinator at P.S. 197 in Brooklyn, NY. In one year he has managed to energize the student body and the entire staff regarding sustainability, says P.S. 197’s principal Rosemarie Nicoletti. He is also the winner the (K-6) 2015 Sustainability Excellence Award. This award recognizes outstanding individuals for excellence in environmental leadership and contributions to the DOE’s Sustainability Initiative in which he received \$1,000 to expand on his school’s sustainability efforts.

Why did you become the sustainability coordinator for your school?

I was part of the sustainability team in our school prior to becoming the coordinator. As a member of this team I was involved in starting the school’s community garden. When the previous coordinator retired I volunteered to take on her responsibilities. My principal gave me her full support and I developed a yearlong plan of how to implement some changes in our school. I wanted to expand our garden to include a native plant pollinator section, and I was ready to take on our recycling program which was non-existent.

What sustainability initiatives did you lead in your school during 2014-15?

I have reached our entire school community of approximately 600 students and 70 staff members through our recycling program. The program is school wide. Every class including pre-k is involved in our recycling initiative. We have gone from being a school with no recycling happening at all, to a fully functioning program. We also worked on the Green Cup Energy Challenge. I started a Green Team with two students from every class, PreK-5. We communicate via Edmodo to talk about our plans and ideas. During the Green Cup challenge, the students spoke to their teachers and classmates about the importance of conserving energy. We held an assembly to discuss and model ways energy could be conserved in the school and at home. The Green Team was then responsible for turning off unnecessary electronics (Smart Boards, Elmos, classroom lights) whenever they were not being used. Another program I expanded was our school garden. When the students returned to school in September, they were amazed to see how the herbs and vegetables they had planted in the spring had grown. They were able to get back into the garden and harvest the tomatoes, peppers, cabbages, and many herbs. The “Flip, Tap, Stack” program has been a huge success as well. We have been able to reduce the amount of plastic bags we use in the cafeteria by half and I worked on getting students to sort and recycle the milk containers. I also enrolled us in the Recycling Masters program with GrowNYC and participated in their Big Lift competition to try to get a Zero waste day in our school. Our school came in 2nd place and won \$1,000 for reducing trash and increasing what we recycle. Over the year, I have led many professional development sessions around recycling and how to implement in our school. I work closely with our custodial staff and kitchen staff to help the recycling program move forward.

What challenges did you overcome to make these initiatives happen?

Time is a big problem. There is not enough time in the day to do all the things necessary to make our building “Green”. It takes staying late, working through lunch and preps or coming in on a Saturday. I wear many hats in the building, so I often have to get the sustainability responsibilities done during my “off” hours. Another challenge is changing the culture of our school to be receptive to recycling.

What mechanisms have you put in place to ensure these initiatives sustain themselves long term?

The students on the Green Team will stay as they progress through the grades to ensure continuity. I will add more students to it as we move forward. The students are excited and want to be on the team. They work hard in the cafeteria to keep it neat and orderly. I have also implemented some new ideas to make the garden self sustaining by installing a watering system with a timer which was a big problem in the garden. This will make it easier to maintain the plants and keep the garden going in the future. I am also starting a gardening club for parents to get the community more engaged in the garden project, which will make our green space more ingrained in our school culture. I am also building stronger relationships with the kitchen and custodial staff to keep our projects moving forward. This is a key element, if they are not on board, our program cannot continue. The custodial staff agrees with our recycling initiatives and are on-board. Next year, I need to reach out to staff members who want to take on a greater role and help implement our recycling initiatives. I try to keep everyone happy in order to keep the momentum going forward and ensure the program continues well into the future.

If you would like to know more about the projects Phil and the P.S. 197 Green Team have developed at their school, come to the [Sustainability Basic Training](#) on October 16, Phil will be speaking!

Updates

- **Sustainability Plan submission:** Submit your [school’s plan](#) by Friday, October 30, 2015.
- **Sustainability Initiative Trainings:** We understand that sustainability efforts in your school take a team of people, all working toward meaningful change. Therefore, all sustainability 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 custodial engineer. So put together a team and bring them to training to learn about the DOE’s sustainability initiative and how to affect change, with your school!

* Save the Date*

Basic Training - **Friday, October 16, 2015** - [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Advanced Training - **Tuesday, November 24, 2015**

Events

October 3 - [GetGreen South Bronx Earth Fest](#) - 12– 4pm

Mark your calendar for GetGreen, the South Bronx's first and only celebration of environmental awareness. Now in its eighth year, this grassroots community event draws thousands of local residents with a day full of education, activities, recycling and fun with a green theme!

October 6 - [Walk to School Day](#): Plan for your school to participate in National Walk to School Day. Walkbiketoschool.org encourages schools to register your event – you may receive incentives.

October 8 - Webinar: [Air Quality and Asthma Solutions: EPA's Air Quality Flag Program](#)

Do you work in a school or community where issues like asthma or obesity are a concern? Maybe you've heard of Ozone Alert Days or seen the air quality forecast on certain days change from green to yellow or orange. What do these colors mean?

October 14 - [A Day of Climate Action Nationwide](#)

Plan or join a day of action for the climate this October. Organized by the folks who coordinated 400,000 people to attend the largest climate march in history in NYC last fall. [Click here](#) for more info.

October 23 — The NYC Department of Environmental Protection invites you and your school to attend a performance of *City that Drinks the Mountain Sky*, an epic story of the NYC water supply system as told through masks and puppet theater with live music. Two performances will take place (10:15am and 12pm) at the BMCC Performance Arts Center. Learn more, [here](#).

October 28 -- [Take Me Outside Day](#)

Come together with this Canadian initiative to help kids better value nature and the outdoors. Pledge to spend 1 hour outside on October 28th during the school day. [Click here](#) for more info and background materials.

Opportunities

Edible Schoolyard NYC is pleased to announce four free cooking workshops for fall! Check out the list below for more information. Click the links to register:

- ◆ [Cooking and Learning with Kids](#)
Wednesday, October 14, 4:30-6:00p
Learn ways to make cooking with kids safe, fun and educational. Use Edible Schoolyard NYC lessons to re-enforce literacy, math, science and social studies while cooking health and delicious food.
- ◆ [How to Make Garden Jobs Fun and Educational for the Whole Class](#)
Thursday, October 15, 4:30-6:00
Come do some hands-on gardening while learning how to make this activity safe, fun, manageable, and educational for the students you teach.
- ◆ [Introduction to Edible Education: How to Cook and Garden with Kids?](#)
Tuesday, November 3, 9:00-3:00p
This is an introductory class for people who have never attended an Edible Schoolyard NYC workshop before. Learn the basics of how to start, maintain, and teach in a school garden.
- ◆ [Cooking and Learning with Kids-- Dominican Harvest Soup Edition](#)
Thursday, November 12, 4:30-6:00p
Come make Dominican-inspired harvest soup. Learn ways to make cooking with kids safe, fun and educational. Use Edible Schoolyard NYC lessons to re-enforce literacy, math, science and social studies while cooking health and delicious food.

Grow To Learn Mini Grants

GrowNYC, NYC Department of Education and NYC Park's GreenThumb Division are happy to announce that Grow to Learn is currently accepting applications for Mini-Grants of \$500 to \$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 **Monday, November 9th**. [Click here](#) for the application. If you would like to view the form in its entirety before beginning the online application process, you can view the full list of [application questions here](#).

Join New York Sun Works on for the fall session of **Water, Energy, and Waste: Integrating Themes of Sustainability into Your Classroom** offers K-8 science and classroom teachers the unique opportunity to delve deeper into global environmental issues on a local level. This course has been approved by the DOE After School Professional Development Program (ASPDP) and may be counted for three "P" Credits. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Healthy Communities Garden Grant: Farm-to-School program

The New York State Department of Health announced \$6.7 million in grants to 26 organizations statewide to help increase access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity in high need communities. The program will make \$350,000 in grants available to school districts for capacity-building to procure and serve locally produced foods on school menus. For more information on this program, visit http://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2015/2015-07-10_initiatives_local_growers_producers.htm

Opportunities

Fall 2015 Made by Milk contest



Take a walk on the wild side with this semester's theme: **Animals!** The [Made by Milk contest](#) not only promotes milk consumption but it also allows students

to explore their creativity in a unique way while giving your school the chance to win up to \$5,000 in cash prizes! You can even earn extra points if your school plans to use award money for a green project. Deadline for submission is **November 15, 2015**.

Bring sustainability into your classroom.

All K-8 teachers are invited to the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation's (CELFF) Fall P-Credit Course: [Project Based Learning in Education for Sustainability](#). Participants will develop a thorough understanding of problem-based learning and the principles and practices of Education for Sustainability (EfS). The course provides a unique opportunity for participants to learn strategies to cultivate environmental literacy and civic reasonability while encouraging students to think about 21st century problems and solutions. This 36-hour course will be held at the United Nations International School on Saturdays, the remaining 13.5 course hours will be conducted online and through in-school visits Click here to [register](#).

Take the Pledge to B.Y.O



Join the many New Yorkers already living a less disposable life by carrying reusable bags, mugs and bottles. DSNY collects more than 3 million tons of waste annually. When you use your own mug, water bottle and shopping

bag, you help to significantly reduce the amount of trash that ends up in landfills or littering our streets. Take the [pledge](#) today to **Bring Your Own** mug, water bottle and shopping bag to work, to school or whenever you are on the go and receive a FREE GreenNYC promotional item, while supplies last. [Pledge Today!](#)

TreesCount! 2015

This year, NYC Parks is counting and mapping all the beautiful street trees that grace our city, and they need your help! Sign up to become a 'volunteer' for [TreesCount!](#) 2015 and play a key role in the future of our urban forest!

If you would like to participate with your student 'volunteers', your class will be provided with all of the equipment and training materials necessary to provide an educational (and fun) activity in your community. [Register](#) for a TreesCount! 2015 application!

Schoolyard Habitats

To help reconnect today's children to the outdoors, [National Wildlife Federation](#) assists schools in developing Schoolyard Habitat outdoor classrooms where educators and students learn how to attract and support local wildlife. These wildlife habitats become places where students not only learn about wildlife species and ecosystems, but also outdoor classrooms where they hone their academic skills and nurture their innate curiosity and creativity. To learn more, [click here](#).

Recycling Grant for 10 NYC Eco-Schools

The National Wildlife Federation's NYC Eco-Schools is offering **\$500 grants** (on a first come first served basis) to 10 [registered NYC Eco-Schools](#) to participate in the "Litter Less Campaign" and implement Eco-Schools' [Consumption and Waste Pathway](#). This is a great opportunity to jumpstart a recycling and/or waste reduction program. Schools that complete the Campaign will be eligible for an Eco-Schools award. Please contact fanoe@nwf.org for an application. **Deadline for submission is October 9, 2015**. Program must be completed by May 2016. (*Only schools that have not participated in the Litter Less Campaign before may apply*).

The Green Strides Webinar Series

The Green Strides Webinar Series promotes sessions offered by federal agencies and non-profit organizations that provide free tools to reduce schools' environmental impact and costs; improve health and wellness; and teach effective environmental education. Check out the [webinar calendar](#) for upcoming webinars.

NYS Green Ribbon Schools Program

Receive recognition for your school's efforts at being GREEN! Apply for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) award honoring public and nonpublic early childhood, elementary, middle and high schools, that demonstrate high achievement in all three of the following areas:

- ◆ Reducing environmental impact and costs
- ◆ Improving health and wellness of schools, students and staff
- ◆ Providing effective environmental and sustainability education

Awardees receive state and national recognition, and an invitation to the national ceremony in Washington, DC. To apply, visit the NYSED.gov website.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) provides access to FREE resources related to school environmental health, including materials to launch the [Air Quality Flag Program](#), a [School Indoor Air Quality Assessment app](#), a 9 lesson student curriculum for ages 9-13 called '[Recipes for Healthy Kids and a Healthy Environment](#)' and a website to download or order any EPA publication, including fact-sheets, kids activity books, and more.

If you have interested in obtaining any of these resources for your classroom or need support for your school, please contact visit the EPA [website](#) or contact Region 2 Schools Coordinator, Rebecca Ofrane, at (212) 637-4302 or Ofrane.rebecca@epa.gov.

Teachers Training Program

Build a school garden and integrate farm education into your classroom curriculum! [Register here!](#)

The [Battery Urban Farm \(BUF\) Teacher Training Program](#) is a two-part intensive program to train NYC public school teachers to create or expand a sustainable school garden and integrate garden activities into their school curriculum. This comprehensive program covers everything from growing your garden committee and creating a garden layout, to identifying and managing weeds and pests, soil fertility and compost, and cooking in the classroom.

Want to know more? [Download](#) the Teacher Training Info Sheet! Deadline for submission is **October 9, 2015**

Resources

Teaching Resources

[TurfMutt: Saving the Planet One Yard at a Time](#) - TurfMutt is a science-based program featuring standards-aligned curriculum that teaches students how things grow, the value of personal and community green spaces, and how to tend to them in a sustainable way.

[Fresh and Salt Water Curriculum](#) - for teachers of grades 5-10, this free, downloadable curriculum provides an interdisciplinary approach to understanding Great Lakes and ocean literacy principles.

[Waste In Place Curriculum](#) - this K-6 classroom curriculum supplement, builds critical thinking, processing and problem-solving skills through imaginative, hands-on lessons that can be taught individually or in sequence.

[Investi-gator Science Journal](#) - this journal is for upper elementary level students. The journal focuses on contemporary, Forest Service research and is written in the format of a scientific article. Receive [free copies](#) for your class.

[Farm-to-Kindergarten Toolkit](#) - toolkit includes lesson plans, sample activities, and other resources for fitting nutrition topics into a standards-based curriculum that follows the kindergarten year thematically.

National Grants for Educators

[Toshiba K-5 Math & Science Grants](#) - up to \$1,000 to help bring an innovative hands-on project into your classrooms. Deadline: *October 1*

[Herb Garden Grants](#) - up to \$200 in "seed money" to establish an outdoor herb garden. The funds may be used for supplies such as soil, plant trays, containers, child or youth sized tools, etc. HSA will provide the educational materials and herb seeds. Deadline: *October 1*

["It's All About the Fruits and Veggies" Garden Grant](#) - up to \$500. Programs will receive gardening equipment, curriculum, soil amendments, seeds, and plants to help create engaging nutrition and gardening experiences. Deadline: *October 2*

[Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant](#) - up to \$500. Funds may only be used to purchase native plants and seeds. Deadline: *October 15*

[Knowles Science Teaching Foundation Fellowships](#) - Awarded based on three criteria: the potential to develop the content knowledge needed for teaching, the potential to develop exemplary teaching practices, and the potential to develop the qualities of a teacher leader. Deadline: *November 1*

National Competitions & Contest

[Recycle-Bowl: K-12 School Recycling Competition](#) – Deadline: *October 13*

[Future City Competition](#) - Deadline: *October 31*

Trash Talk...

There should be a notable difference in your school's cafeteria(s): no more polystyrene foam trays! Compostable trays are now being used in all NYC Department of Education schools. And in schools that receive NYC Organics Collection, the trays go right in the organics bin, along with food scraps.

New posters featuring the compostable trays are now available for school cafeterias, as well as posters showing schools how to set up cafeteria waste sorting stations. Getting NYC Organics Collection? New food scrap decals are available, too. Click [here](#), to order school posters, decals and other recycling materials.



Please share this information with other staff at your school.

If you have any questions, send an email to sustainability@schools.nyc.gov.

Contact Us

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Submissions for Newsletter/Spotlights: nhudlin@schools.nyc.gov

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