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GRANTS TO MAKE WESTERN QUEENS A MODEL GREEN NEIGHBORHOOD WILL CREATE GARDENS, GREEN BUILDINGS AND JOBS North Star Fund Announces Grants at Queens Library

Western Queens will soon see an infusion of trees, green jobs and youth environmental programs thanks to over \$3 million in grants distributed by North Star Fund. The grants mark the beginning of a three-year, \$8 million initiative to create environmentally sustainable neighborhoods in Woodside, Sunnyside, Astoria and Long Island City.

“We’d like to help these neighborhoods transform themselves into model green communities,” said Hugh Hogan, executive director of North Star Fund. Currently, Western Queens has among the lowest amounts of green space of any neighborhood in New York City – only 2 percent compared to a citywide average of 14 percent.

This first round of grants will give way to up to 850 trees, support environmental education and recycling programs, and help fund community gardens and green jobs training programs. Grants will be awarded to both Queens-based and citywide programs to benefit the Queens community.

First year projects include:

- City Parks Foundation will work with local residents to develop an urban forestry plan and plant up to 850 trees.
- Sunnyside Community Services will create a green jobs program for low-income, disaffected immigrant youth.
- Damayan Migrant Workers Association, which organizes Filipino workers, will plan a community garden; members will grow culturally familiar organic vegetables to sell in the Filipino community.

North Star Fund will announce the grants when it brings together all 15 grantees on **Thursday, February 10, 2011, at the Woodside Branch of the Queens Library**. Grantees will present their projects and explore opportunities to collaborate, pool ideas and share resources.

“Our goal is a coordinated and sustainable initiative that makes the entire area more vibrant, healthier and energy efficient. What we don’t want is a patchwork of programs that affect only isolated areas,” said Hogan.

North Star will make additional grants in each of the next two years. To select the grantees, North Star Fund brought together an advisory board that included both community members and experts in green infrastructure and urban forestry. A full list of Advisory Board members and descriptions of grantees is available at www.northstarfund.org.

North Star was selected to be the distributor of funds because the foundation is skilled at working in partnership with diverse New York City communities. The Greening Western Queens program is supported by an \$8 million settlement fund created in response to the 2006 Long Island City electric outage.

For more information about the presentations at the Woodside Branch of the Queens Library or to coordinate interviews, please contact Amy Sutnick Plotch at 201-703-4302 or amy@ amyplotch.com.

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About North Star Fund

New Yorkers deserve a city guided by a vision of peace, economic justice and equality; a city defined by strong communities, ample opportunity, and a just and fair government. Since 1979, North Star Fund has brought together New Yorkers from all backgrounds to work towards this vision by investing in grassroots community activists who make change happen.

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