



Greening Western Queens Fund Year One Grants

All Saints Episcopal Church (One-year grant: \$20,000)

To revitalize their garden, providing public access to local green space.

In 1928 when the All Saints Episcopal Church came to reside in its current location, the church community turned the adjoining space into a green haven. Among all the concrete and bricks, it was a place where neighborhood residents could come to rest and contemplate nature. But for the last several years, the garden has been fenced off from the public and has suffered significant wear and tear. The All Saints Episcopal Church will re-vitalize and open up their garden again. It will be transformed into a joyful gathering place for musical performances and a community setting where neighbors of all ages can enjoy each other's company.

Asian Americans for Equality (One-year grant: \$90,000)

To implement environmentally focused organizing and education, outreach, and community-planning programs.

Immigrant communities are often left out of sustainability initiatives because of language barriers and lack of outreach. In response, this project will focus on neighborhoods with large and diverse immigrant populations: Woodside, Sunnyside, and Astoria. An established and highly respected community development and social services organization for New York City's nearly one million residents of Asian descent, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) will bring several greening projects to Western Queens.

First, AAFE will educate homeowners and small business owners about loan opportunities to retrofit and "green" homes and businesses through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and will provide assistance in the loan application process. Second, through a targeted environmental education program, local youth will learn about water systems and conservation. The youth will then go out into the community and educate local businesses about how to responsibly recycle cooking oil in order to cut costs and protect NYC waterways. Third, building on the success of their work in Chinatown and the Lower East Side to increase open spaces, AAFE will bring its community planning expertise to Western Queens. From visioning sessions to assistance on dealing with multiple City agencies, AAFEE will work neighborhood and community groups who want to create new open spaces and community gardens.

Center for Urban Pedagogy (One-year grant: \$30,000)

To lead Aviation High School students in a community research and design project that explores and explains the inner workings of NYC's energy infrastructure.

Where does our energy come from? Who produces it? How is divided up? For many of us, the answers to these questions are hazy at best. It takes a crisis like the 2006 Queens blackout to demonstrate how little we know about the huge system that produces energy, which we rely on every day for our most basic needs.

Low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and communities of color have the fewest resources to cope with crises like the 2006 blackouts. At the same time, they are too often excluded from community decision-making processes – such as where transformers are located or from where municipal energy is purchased – that affect the operation of our energy infrastructure.

Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) will lead students at Aviation High School (a public high school in Queens) in an arts education project. Students will take on the role of designers and problem solvers to create a community-education tool. Depending on the design process, a documentary video or publication will result. The piece will be translated and placed in public libraries, accessible to thousands of Queens residents. This tool will help members of their community visualize their role in the energy system, educate them on how they can contribute to energy conservation, and encourage them to become more active participants in community environmental decision-making processes.

City Parks Foundation (Three-year grant: \$2,150,000, including a \$150,000 challenge grant)

For the planting and stewardship of up to 850 trees in Western Queens.

Most of the area affected by the 2006 blackout lacks significant green space. The city district has considerably less land devoted to green space than the rest of the city: only about 2% of the district is green space, compared to an average of 14% citywide. Increasing the number of shade-providing trees in this area will soften the hard, hot edges of the area's urban landscape, mitigating the "island heat effect" that causes urban areas to hold more heat in the summer and require more energy to cool.

City Parks Foundation will coordinate a large scale, three-year tree-planting and stewardship effort in Western Queens. This initiative will begin with the development of a community forestry plan. City Parks Foundation will oversee the planting of trees along streets and within city parks. City Parks is currently exploring partnerships with other leaders in urban forestry, such as New York Restoration Project (NYRP), and Trees New York to leverage resources from other sources. In particular, NYRP would bring resources and expertise from its public-private MillionTreesNYC project to plant trees on publicly accessible lands such as churches, parking lots, private playing fields, and residential developments, and Trees New York would educate and train community residents to become Citizen Pruners (allowing them to legally prune street trees) and Volunteer Tree Stewards to bring the newly planted trees to maturity. This project will engage hundreds of local residents to learn about and care for the trees in their neighborhoods for the long term, ensuring that an urban forest can take root in Western Queens.

DAMAYAN Migrant Workers Association (One-year grant: \$15,000)

To research the feasibility of a community garden for domestic and other low-wage workers.

Immigrant and migrant workers must leave behind not only family and friends, but also their home land. Many newly arrived Filipino immigrants and migrant women in New York City find jobs as domestic workers. They work long, grueling hours for low wages and suffer health problems that stem from exposure to toxic cleaning chemicals and not having access to familiar food. Rarely do they have adequate health care. Many rely on home remedies to prevent and treat their illnesses, but are not able to buy affordable, chemical- and pesticide-free food and medicinal plants.

A community garden in Western Queens would provide domestic and other low-wage workers with green space to grow culturally appropriate foods and medicinal plants. A natural gathering place, it would provide

a sense of community for workers who often experience social isolation because their jobs require them to live or spend long hours away from their communities. DAMAYAN, a group organized and run by Filipino low-wage, mostly domestic workers, will research the feasibility and develop a plan to create and implement a thriving community garden in Western Queens.

Earth Day New York (One-year grant: \$20,000)

To research and plan the implementation of public green roofs.

Urban areas without open land and vegetation – like Western Queens – are hotter and hold more heat than areas that have plenty of green space, especially in the summer. Higher temperatures mean more need for cooling and electricity use. One way to combat this “heat island effect” is to increase the amount of green, open spaces. While Queens is home to many of New York’s finest parks, Western Queens does not have as much green space as other parts of the borough. But Earth Day New York (EDNY) has determined that there are many rooftop spaces in the area that have the potential to become flourishing green roofs. A highly successful environmental awareness and education organization, EDNY will research potential sites, conduct outreach to building owners, and partner with local organizations to envision and plan for the development of publicly accessible green roofs throughout Western Queens. Their work will increase residents’ access to green jobs, healthier foods, and outdoor activities.

Friends of Sunnyside Gardens Community Association (One-year grant: \$10,000)

To plant trees outside the historic Sunnyside Gardens park.

An historic residential community built in the 1920’s, Sunnyside Gardens has always had community green space as an integral part of its design. Inspired by the Garden Cities movement, it was designed to provide affordable housing for a vibrant mix of people. Today, the delicate ecosystem of trees, vegetation, and green space in the neighborhood needs to be preserved and maintained. The grant will provide funds to replace dead trees, remove garbage, debris and other environmental hazards, and plant sustainable vegetation and new trees around the public perimeters of the park (which is membership-based).

GrowNYC – Environmental Programs (One-year grant: \$20,000)

To involve public school students in hands-on environmental education programs.

Out of 169,920 students who took the New York State Earth Science Regents Exam in 2009, only 30% scored an 85% or above. GrowNYC – a long-running organization dedicated to improving the environment in all five boroughs and raising public awareness about environmental issues – estimates that only half of NYC schools offer environmental education programming to students. Low-income communities in New York City are often disproportionately impacted by hazardous environmental conditions that cause public health problems. Yet these communities have the least amount of funding for environmental education programs.

GrowNYC will bring experiential, environmental learning programs to public middle and high school students in Western Queens. Through service-learning projects and activities that take them outdoors – creating and testing solar ovens and planting trees and native vegetation – up to 300 students will learn about energy use, conservation, and alternative energy as well as environmental health. GrowNYC’s proven curriculum teaches students about global problems through a local lens and motivates them to change the

world around them, beginning with their own homes, schools and neighborhoods.

GrowNYC – School Gardens (One-year grant: \$50,000)

To develop five gardens in local public schools.

In New York City, many young people do not connect with nature – in or out of school. They may not visit public parks on a regular basis, and schoolyards are often fenced in and asphalt covered. School gardens bring nature to the schoolyard. Gardens provide excellent, hands-on opportunities for students to learn science concepts and healthy nutrition. They also provide students with behavioral and cognitive disabilities a variety of ways to learn. While many schools might want to build a garden, most do not have the time, resources or understanding of the complex process of launching and maintaining one. Out of 24 schools within the area affected by the 2006 blackouts, only one has a school garden.

Grow NYC will significantly raise that number by creating gardens in five public schools. From earth boxes, to raised beds, to larger plots with native plants and shrubs, the gardens will be tailored to reflect each school’s needs. They will be big enough to accommodate varying ages, but small enough to be easily maintained by the school and a garden committee. These gardens will provide Western Queens with much-needed youth-oriented green space and serve as models for creation of gardens in other Queens and New York City schools.

The Horticultural Society of New York (One-year grant: \$50,000)

To create a Learning Garden in a Queens public school.

A garden – from its design, building, and planting to its upkeep and maintenance – provides a wealth of educational and green-job-training opportunities for students. The Learning Garden as planned and implemented by The Horticultural Society of New York in partnership with the Department of Education will provide the students of a Queens public school with integrated learning experiences centered around a garden. Students will be an essential part of the garden planting process, gaining in-depth knowledge about plant anatomy and function, including the role plants play to decrease global warming. Intensive professional development for teachers, the creation of a school leadership team of both teachers and students, and on-site workshops for the entire school community will ensure the long-term sustainability of the garden as an educational tool for the school and the larger community for years to come. In addition, high school students may take part in the Horticultural Society’s GrowingGreen internship program, a school-based career and technical education program that combines academic study with workforce skills in horticultural science and landscape/garden design, construction and maintenance.

ioby (One-year grant: \$10,000)

To provides matching grants to small-scale environmental projects.

An online fundraising platform, ioby connects donors and volunteers to environmental projects in New York City neighborhoods. ioby stands for “in our backyards” and is built on the belief that environmental knowledge, innovation, action, and service begin and thrive in our backyards. Because funds come from individual donors, groups who raise money through ioby do not have to have nonprofit status. Local, ad-hoc groups of neighbors and small organizations with limited resources in Western Queens will raise funds for small-scale projects that have a high impact and provide significant benefit to their neighborhoods. Every dollar raised through ioby for projects in the affected area will be matched by the grant. This initiative

aims to build and encourage a community of local residents who have their own ideas and solutions to the environmental problems they face and are financially empowered to put those solutions into action.

Queens Library (One-year grant: \$250,000)

To transform five local Queens Library branches into “Greening Libraries” – innovative resource centers for environmental conservation.

A hub of local activity for all residents, the Queens Library excels at providing culturally sensitive information in many languages. The Library will build on this experience to create a major greening effort at five local libraries in Astoria, Long Island City, Sunnyside and Woodside, whose combined reach would span the entire targeted geographic area affected by the 2006 blackout. Working with local community partners, Queens Library will create centralized Green Resource Centers to provide a wealth of free, multi-lingual resources about environmental issues and local green initiatives. This information will include the grassroots organizations that are creating or operating community gardens, bike lanes, and farm-to-city community supported agriculture programs (CSAs). In addition, the Library will develop workshops and classes on topics such as understanding sustainability, urban agriculture and healthy food, alternative sources of energy, and green jobs. Designed to be immersive green environments, all five libraries will also become learning laboratories through their own on-site environmental improvement projects. The projects include energy audits, selected retrofitting projects, and the creation of reading gardens at the Woodside and Astoria libraries. Signs in several languages at each library will showcase the energy-efficiency improvements in progress, creating highly visible demonstrations of sustainability and raising public awareness of these efforts.

Recycle-A-Bicycle (One-year grant: \$25,000)

To create a plan for developing a community and bike center in Western Queens.

Recycle-A-Bicycle (RAB) will create a plan for a community center humming with activity in Western Queens: youth learning how to become bike mechanics, adults taking bike repair and safety classes, and workshops where participants transform recycled bicycle parts into jewelry and sculptural objects. RAB is a community-based bike shop and nonprofit organization that conducts job training and environmental education and promotes everyday bicycle use. RAB provides youth development opportunities for young people in all five boroughs by offering hands-on courses and workshops that teach participants the importance of cycling and recycling, how to maintain and repair bicycles, how to ride safely in the city, and how to work in a retail environment. Building on their success in nearby Long Island City, RAB will research a site, create a plan to retrofit, sustain, and maintain the property, and forge strong partnerships with local organizations to serve the community with environmental and bike-related educational offerings and activities.

Solar One (Two-year grant: \$110,000)

To implement Green Design Labs in eight public schools.

New York City’s municipal buildings – and in particular the public schools – are responsible for a quarter of the City’s total light, heat and power spending. Solar One’s innovative Green Design Labs turn the school building itself into a laboratory and learning tool for K-12 students. In partnership with the NYC Department of Education, Solar One will work with eight public Queens schools to implement their

project-based environmental education curriculum. Green Design Labs inspire students to be the grassroots engine behind greening their school – and they learn STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) skills while making a difference. The Green Design Lab trains teachers to adapt the curriculum to fit their particular school and classroom and provides onsite support for each school to improve energy efficiency and reduce health hazards. By raising awareness, modifying behaviors, and encouraging the adoption energy efficient practices, the Green Design Labs not only provide rigorous hands-on learning experiences for students, but also encourage sustainable behavior in the surrounding community, ultimately making a long-term impact on the city’s energy consumption.

Sunnyside Community Services (One-year grant: \$125,000)

To provide green-jobs training to youth through an urban forestry summer internship program, in collaboration with Trees New York.

Many youth in Western Queens come from recent immigrant and/or low-income families, and are at risk for dropping out of high school. Youth unemployment is a major problem in Queens. Sunnyside Community Services (SCS) has a long history of working with the youth in the area to provide job-readiness training, career counseling, and follow-up services for out-of-school youth and youth at risk of dropping out of school. With this grant, SCS will team up with Trees New York (TreesNY) to create the Young Urban Forester Summer Internship Program. The paid internship program with subsequent follow-up services will provide at-risk high school students with experience in environmental careers. Through environmental education and hands-on stewardship activities, youth will learn about urban forest conservation, restoration, and planning, and they will receive skills training to help them build careers in urban forestry. Following the summer program, SCS and TreesNY will engage in an intensive planning process to develop future programming that will connect youth to green jobs.

Western Queens Compost Initiative (One-year grant: \$65,000, including a \$50,000 challenge grant)

To develop an initiative that will bring community-based, sustainable waste reduction programs to Western Queens.

New Yorkers throw away a lot of food – almost four times the national average. Much of that waste could be diverted from landfills if composting were easy and affordable. But the City does not have a municipal facility to manage organic waste, and New Yorkers who want to compost are left to create their own composting bin or pay for a hauling service. Since 2007, Western Queens Compost Initiative (WQCI) has been helping to reduce New York’s food waste. The organization promotes composting efforts in Queens and has successfully partnered with community and environmental groups and the Parks Department to provide community food waste drop-off points and educational programs. In the next year, WQCI will create a strategy and business plan to formalize and expand the reach of their work. They will research and develop best practices for implementing sustainable waste reduction programs, and engage and educate the public about composting and recycling.