



Greening Western Queens Fund Year Two Grants 2012

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 its current location, the church community turned the adjoining lot into a green haven. In a neighborhood with little open space, it was a place where residents could come to relax and contemplate nature. For the last several years though, the garden has been fenced off from the public and has suffered significant wear and tear.

Transformation of the garden started with year one of the Greening Western Queens Fund grant, when All Saints made important structural changes toward creation of a community green space. Building on this success, All Saints, with their year two grant, will complete the installation of a meditation garden, creating a lush, community sanctuary. Their children's play area will be revitalized with new plantings and a restored "tree path." Local residents can look forward to musical performances and a community setting where neighbors of all ages can enjoy each other's company.

An additional \$5,000 from the Greening Western Queens Fund is available as a matching grant to All Saints to support developing a base of individual supporters and to create long-term sustainability for the garden beyond the grant period.

Asian Americans for Equality (One-year grant: \$80,000)

To implement environmentally focused organizing and education, outreach, and a cooking oil recycling program.

Immigrant communities are often left out of sustainability initiatives because of language barriers and a lack of outreach. In response, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) will bring several significant environmental projects to the diverse population of Western Queens. AAFE is a highly respected community development and social services organization for New York City's nearly one million residents of Asian descent. With a year one Greening Western Queens Fund grant, AAFE conducted extensive outreach to 300 Asian tenants, homeowners, and business owners and developed successful partnerships with other grantees and local community groups. Expanding on their effective work with a grant in the first year, AAFE will provide solution-focused environmental education for 500 community members and their Youth Leadership program. AAFE's Youth Leaders will then educate local restaurants about how recycling cooking oil can cut costs and protect NYC waterways in a process that leads to the conversion of oil into bio-fuel. Their goal is to collect and recycle 1500 gallons of waste cooking oil by the end of the project year. AAFE will also conduct 85 energy audits and instruct homeowners and small businesses on greening retrofits and loan opportunities for implementation. The reduction of energy consumption is anticipated at 15-30%.

City Growers (One-year grant: \$45,000)

To educate youth in environmental stewardship and agriculture on an urban rooftop farm.

Many children don't know that potatoes are the roots of a plant, or that lettuce is actually a leaf. In fact, the bulk of children in City Growers' urban farm program, when asked where our city's water comes from, respond "the ocean." This lack of knowledge denies children the most basic understanding of the environment, natural resources, and where our food comes from. While at one time Queens was a highly agricultural extension of Long Island, today there are few opportunities for hands-on learning experiences at a real working farm. City Growers provides just that. By engaging 200 young New Yorkers and reaching over 1300 people with educational workshops at the Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm, based in Long Island City, City Growers is closing this knowledge gap and empowering children and young adults to imagine a healthier, greener future for Western Queens.

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. It has considerably less land devoted to green space than the rest of the city--only about 2%, compared to an average of 14% citywide. Increasing the number of shade-trees in this area will buffer the urban landscape, mitigating the heat island effect that causes cities to hold more heat in the summer and require more energy to cool the area's hard surfaces and buildings.

City Parks Foundation (CPF) brings a 20-year-long history of working in communities to develop solutions for local urban forest stewardship and open space improvement. In year one of the grant, CPF engaged nearly 130 residents in the development of a comprehensive community forestry plan to successfully plant and care for the first 87 trees. This year, they will continue their large-scale multi-year tree planting and stewardship program with hundreds of local residents. Together they will plant hundreds of trees along city streets and within parks to ensure a healthier, well-shaded Western Queens.

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).

Global Kids (Two-year grant: \$150,000)

To train youth in outreach and coalition building as they organize local residents to advocate for environmental and energy policies that reduce negative health impacts and ensure long-term sustainability in Western Queens.

Often left out of important public policy debates and decisions, young people can have a vital impact on the future demand for energy, and improve sustainability by promoting environmental awareness and helping to shape public policy. Most high school students in Western Queens remember the blackout of 2006. Global Kids, building on nearly 25 years of dynamic leadership and education programs, is shedding light on the how and the why of the environmental processes that led to this event. Global Kids' youth organizers in Western Queens will spearhead environmental sustainability initiatives by conducting hands-on research, community surveys, interviews, digital media outreach, peer education, town hall forums, and artistic events like street theater. They will also engage in public outreach, collaborate with hundreds of community partners, and mobilize thousands to advocate for environmental and energy policies to reduce negative health impacts and ensure long-term sustainability in Western Queens.

GrowNYC – Environmental Education Program (Two-year grant: \$50,000)

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

When environmental justice concerns are merged with global ecological issues such as water and air quality, the need to support environmental education is clear. In NYC, of 169,920 students who took the Earth Science Regents Exam in 2009, only 30% scored an 85% or above. Clearly, essential learning is being missed.

GrowNYC, an organization whose mission is to raise public awareness of environmental issues, estimates that only half of New York City public schools offer environmental education programming. Low-income communities 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. In direct response to the stated need for comprehensive education which supports academic performance and empowers youth to solve environmental problems, GrowNYC embarked on such programming in year one of the grant, reaching 140 students. With Trees NY and Green Apple Corps, GrowNYC will build on this success, using their year two grant to deliver hands-on, experiential learning in parks for 550 Western Queens youth that will result in local ecological restoration projects.

GrowNYC – School Gardens (One-year grant: \$100,000)

To develop five gardens in local public schools and create a local public garden.

In New York City, many young people do not connect with nature, in or out of school, on a regular basis. School gardens bring nature to the schoolyard and a unique opportunity for students to learn about environmental concepts and nutrition. For 40 years, GrowNYC has been rolling up its sleeves alongside New York City residents to provide access to healthy food, grow green spaces, promote recycling, and create the next generation of environmental leaders through hands-on education programs. As a year one grantee, GrowNYC developed gardens at three (3) schools and worked with nearly 300 students to build raised beds and fill gardens with vegetables, flowers, and bulbs. Nearly 800 students and 60 teachers have participated in creating the gardens, innovative curriculum, and learning.

In 2012, GrowNYC will create five (5) new gardens in five (5) public schools within the area affected by the blackout. From compost bins, to raised beds, the gardens will be tailored to reflect each school's needs, and provide much needed youth-oriented green space. GrowNYC will also partner with the local LIC Roots Community Garden to expand green space in Western Queens, transforming a vacant MTA lot into a public garden filled with native plants.

The Horticultural Society of New York (One-year grant: \$222,000)

To establish learning garden ecosystems at three public schools.

A garden—from its design, to its construction, planting and maintenance—provides a wealth of educational opportunities for students. With funding in year one, the Horticultural Society developed a learning garden, which provided students of PS 84 in Queens with integrated learning experiences. The students learned how to improve stormwater run-off, essentials of food production, and the role plants play in decreasing global warming and mitigating the heat island effect.

With a grant this year, the Horticultural Society will work with three (3) schools to install new learning gardens and provide teachers with inter-disciplinary and real-world applications of science, math, and English. Through the learning gardens, students will be encouraged to apply creative problem solving to familiar environmental problems.

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

To provide 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, local ad-hoc groups of neighbors and small organizations with limited resources in Western Queens can raise funds for small-scale projects that have a high impact and provide significant benefit to their neighborhoods. With last year's grant, ioby matched funds raised for five (5) projects, including composting and education projects across Astoria and Sunnyside. Every dollar raised through ioby for projects in the affected area will be matched by the Greening Western Queens Fund, thereby building long term sustainability for greening projects in Western Queens by building a base of supporters of those projects.

Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement House (One-year grant: \$20,000)

To increase knowledge of, and access to, public green space and healthier food to public housing residents at Queensbridge Houses.

Queensbridge Houses is the largest public housing development in the United States, home to nearly 7,000 African-American, Latino, and South Asian residents. It is also the home of Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement, and sits at the southern end of NYC's “Asthma Alley,” crisscrossed by major transportation arteries and home to one of the highest rates of child asthma in New York. Through expansion of their community garden, Jacob Riis Settlement will increase the neighborhood's green space and use this to foster inter-generational community connections. They will also provide nutritional counseling, and an ethnographic food program that will be on display at their annual Multicultural Festival and Spring Arts Festival.

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

To continue its “Greening Libraries” program, which includes expanding their environmental resource centers, creating more greenspace, increasing community-based education and continuing to retrofit its buildings with energy efficient lighting and equipment, sustainable interiors, optimized use of water, and the purchase of environmentally sound products.

The Queens Library System serves the most ethnically diverse county in the nation, representing nearly all the world’s countries, and speaking more than 160 languages. By transforming libraries in Western Queens into environmental resource centers called “Greening Libraries,” the Queens Library Foundation is playing a lead role in community environmental awareness and sustainable action. As a result of the Library Foundation’s year one Greening Western Queens Fund grant, over 2,200 people participated in programs offered at five (5) libraries and their gardens in the

Queens Public Library System, and they started retrofitting their buildings. In 2012, with the year two grant, the Library will increase programming, expand their pilot environmental ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program, and create “green” web pages in Spanish and Chinese. They will incorporate library retrofits into their programming and create an exterior living wall, indoor hydroponic gardens, and outdoor gardens with rainwater harvesting systems. All of these signature green spaces will be centerpieces for events and programs.

Recycle-A-Bicycle (Two-year grant: \$200,000)

To position Western Queens as a center of New York City’s biking culture and infrastructure through youth development, green job training and recreational programming.

Every day, 236,000 New Yorkers ride bikes, making cycling the city’s fastest growing mode of transportation. These numbers are increasing as NYC launches its *Bike Share* program, adding 10,000 bikes this year and up to 50,000 bikes over the next five years. Individual health benefits are obvious. Beyond that, the increase in bike use will minimize air pollution from greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a greener New York City.

As the demand for energy conservation increases, so does the need for transportation alternatives and the services of Recycle-A-Bicycle (RAB). RAB is a community-based bike shop and nonprofit organization that conducts environmental education, promotes everyday bicycle use, and provides the newest crop of green job trainings–bicycle repair. Building on what they learned from their feasibility study with a year one Greening Western Queens Fund grant, RAB will engage the community and encourage a more environmentally sound lifestyle by disseminating programming throughout the affected area. Their programs will include school-based education, green job-training, Earn-A-Bike programs, an annual Bike Bonanza, bike recycling, and a Kids Ride Club. Ten students will enter RAB’s Youth Ambassadors program to explore the affected area by bicycle, study its environment, create a map of their findings and make recommendations to the New York City Department of Transportation for the future of bicycling in Western Queens.

Refugee and Immigrant Fund (One-year grant: \$20,000)

To provide green job training and psychological healing for refugees in Western Queens through urban farming.

Refugees come to New York City as survivors. Having endured a myriad of traumas from torture, political and religious violence, to gender and sexual violence in their home countries, they seek asylum, recovery, and opportunities to rebuild their lives. Refugee and Immigrant Fund–the first Asylum Help Center in NYC–offers not only necessary legal advice, but also a place to heal and connect with others through their Urban Farming Recovery Project. Housed on the one-acre Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm in Long Island City, the Recovery Project will provide job training internships in urban farming, workshops on greening as an economic opportunity, and offer relief from the social isolation often experienced by refugees. It will also provide the new immigrants, many of whom come from agrarian backgrounds, the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills as they build community and rebuild their lives and contribute to a greener Western Queens.

Solar One (One-year grant: \$60,000)

To implement Green Design Labs in five 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. With their year one Greening Western Queens Fund grant, Solar One conducted Green Design Lab professional development workshops for 100 teachers and facilitated assemblies in 8 schools, to engage students and teachers about student-led greening projects and energy efficiency.

This year, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education, Solar One will work with five (5) of their previous public schools to deepen their project-based environmental education curriculum. Green Design Labs inspire students to be the grassroots engine behind greening their school—and they learn (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills while making a difference. The Green Design Lab also 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: \$75,000)

In collaboration with Trees New York, to provide a summer urban forestry internship program.

Innovative and forward-thinking organizations and companies understand that green jobs play a vital role in building a sustainable future. As the industry continues to grow, people with relevant skills will have even greater opportunities. Since its establishment in 1974, the mission of Sunnyside Community Services (SCS) has been to strengthen the Western Queens community by providing services and activities that enrich the lives of individuals of all ages. With funding in year one, SCS partnered with Trees New York, an organization whose mission is to plant, preserve and protect New York City's urban forest. Through their partnership, they mentored and trained 14 youth during an in-depth summer environmental education program. This year, Trees New York and SCS will provide a paid summer internship to 10 out-of-school youth and 15 in-school youth, providing them with valuable work experience, work readiness training, and comprehensive knowledge of urban forestry. Interns will learn about tree pruning and care, water quality, NYC's watershed, and green infrastructure. They will also maintain and map 300 trees and learn how environmental stewardship can translate into opportunities in the green jobs sector.

Western Queens Compost Initiative (One-year grant: \$134,000)

To expand an initiative that brings community-based, organic 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 New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to provide community food waste drop-off points and educational programs. Last year, with their year one grant, WQCI created eight (8) compost collection sites that collected 12,000 pounds. of compost. As a year two grantee, WQCI will expand composting infrastructure in Western Queens; increase community outreach, education, and training programs; and establish WQCI as a viable social business model which generates revenue from composting activities.