



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT (NYRP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to reclaiming and restoring New York City parks, community gardens and open space. In partnership with the City of New York, NYRP is also leading MillionTreesNYC – an initiative to plant one million new trees throughout New York City's five boroughs by 2017.

# GOODdirt

NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2009

It's no secret that times are tough. With the economic slowdown and no immediate recovery in sight, every New Yorker – including me – is reminded just how important it is to be "penny wise" with our resources – both financial and natural.

To survive in these difficult economic times and continue to serve the needs of our city's diverse neighborhoods, NYRP is doing what we do best by going "back to the basics" in everything we do.

It's the fundamental idea that every New Yorker deserves an accessible green place to play, relax and garden, that first inspired me fourteen years ago to begin cleaning up some of our city's most impoverished neighborhoods. With just a few garbage bags and a lot of goodwill, NYRP changed Upper Manhattan's landscape forever – bringing all of the health, environmental and economic benefits cleaner, greener open spaces provide each of us.

Since then, NYRP has removed more than 1,900 tons of trash from our city's parks, has become the caretaker of 55 community gardens and two parks, and is proudly co-managing the nation's largest, urban tree-planting initiative – MillionTreesNYC. All of this requires more garbage bags, staff gardeners, plant material and yes, lots and lots of trees – making it more important than ever for NYRP to be a good steward of our fiscal resources.

From utilizing sustainable and recycled materials in our community gardens to seeking out in-kind plant material and tools and keeping NYRP's administrative costs below eight percent of our total operating budget, everything we do at NYRP is about doing more with less. As a result, we are able to serve more gardeners, reach more classrooms and green more neighborhoods – and at the same time, invest in local commerce and promote green-collar job creation.

Even our Commander-in-Chief recognizes the critical role "green shoots" will play in rebuilding our nation's economy and the landscape of our urban communities. I am hopeful this moment in our history will force all of us to take a deep breath and truly smell the roses – meaning, we must never lose sight of everything Mother Earth provides us and our responsibility to protect her simple wonders.

By getting "back to the basics" and working more efficiently to reduce our costs and better leverage our partnerships, NYRP is able to invest more than ever in the communities and people we serve and continue our core mission of greening New York City... one block at a time.

*Bette*

Bette Midler  
Founder



## Ten Years Later: NYRP's Community Garden Program is Growing Strong

Ten years ago, when New York Restoration Project became the proud owner of 55 community gardens, even NYRP's Founder Bette Midler could not have imagined that so many Americans would be grabbing a shovel and embracing the simple idea of community gardening.

When New York City officials announced plans to auction off 114 of the city's community gardens in 1999, NYRP, the Trust for Public Land and other like-minded non-profits rescued these precious plots from

being permanently lost to development. That very public campaign to save the gardens heralded a new era in NYRP's commitment to the belief that clean, green neighborhoods are fundamental to every New Yorker's quality of life and put NYRP at the forefront of a movement that ensures every New York City neighborhood has access to a fully functioning and accessible green space.

Today, our city's community gardens are part of a popular movement promoting urban farming and more sustainable living.

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



When NYC Department of Education Chancellor Joel Klein asked 263 fifth graders participating in New York Restoration Project's RespecTree education program what the word "partnership" meant to them, one student quickly raised his hand and responded with confidence, "working together!"

His response made me think about what "working together" has recently meant for NYRP. Through innovative partnerships, NYRP has successfully expanded our reach into the city's diverse neighborhoods, and as a result, has significantly increased the number of families involved in our community garden and environmental education programs.

No doubt one of our most important partners is the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. Not only is NYRP collaborating with the NYC Parks Department on a daily basis – from our restoration and management of Swindler Cove and Highbridge parks to identifying new resources for community gardeners – but we're also co-leading MillionTreesNYC, which in only a year and a half has planted an unprecedented 200,000 trees citywide. Our ever-expanding partnership with the NYC Parks Department is critical to our overall mission and much appreciated.

In the last year, NYRP has also forged new partnerships with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and NYC Department of Education – making it possible for NYRP to plant thousands of trees on public housing campuses, schoolyards and playgrounds. Just as important, we're introducing NYCHA residents to green-collar job and stewardship opportunities, while launching innovative environmental education programs in classrooms citywide.

And our partnerships don't stop there! Most recently, NYRP joined with City Year – a non-profit promoting community service throughout New York City – to launch our first-ever "Root for New York Corporate Challenge" on Earth Day, an event to engage companies in volunteerism and help raise critical dollars that support our organizations' core missions.

And this summer, NYRP is launching its Green Stops Partnership. Working with Sustainable South Bronx, Solar 1 and Mount Sinai Center for Children's Environmental Health, NYRP will connect New York City's underserved youth to the city's 350 acres of family-friendly, outdoor spaces. And throughout the city's five boroughs, NYRP is working with block associations and community groups, like-minded non-profits and schools to promote community gardening, tree planting and stewardship, and environmental education and nature appreciation.

But our most important partner is YOU. It's you – our individual members who allow us to keep our streets clean. It's our corporate sponsors who help NYRP achieve our biggest and boldest endeavors to date – like MillionTreesNYC. It's foundation partners who allow us to connect thousands of urban kids to nature and outdoor classrooms. And it's our elected officials who advocate on behalf of our city's green spaces and protect their precious funding. Because of you and only you, NYRP is able to transform our community gardens and parks into beautiful, vibrant village greens and preserve them in perpetuity.

Now, more than ever, your membership contributions, corporate sponsorships, foundation support and unsolicited donations are helping us meet the growing needs of the communities we serve. So, visit [www.nyrp.org](http://www.nyrp.org) today, make a donation and be our partner in building a greener, greater New York City!

Drew Becher, NYRP Executive Director

ON THE COVER: NYRP's newest community garden redesign – The Home Depot Community Garden.

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!  
 NYRP is proud to be a member of





# NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT SITES

- PARKS
- COMMUNITY GARDENS
- MAJOR PROJECTS



- 1 FORT TRYON PARK**  
NEW LEAF RESTAURANT & BAR  
ANNE LOFTUS PLAYGROUND
- 2 SHERMAN CREEK CENTER**
- 3 SWINDLER COVE PARK**  
RILEY-LEVIN CHILDREN'S GARDEN  
PETER JAY SHARP BOATHOUSE
- 4 FORT WASHINGTON PARK**
- 5 HIGHBRIDGE PARK**

## NYRP MAJOR PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Sherman Creek Center
- Swindler Cove Park
- Riley-Levin Children's Garden
- Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse
- Fort Tryon Park / New Leaf Restaurant & Bar
- Highbridge Park
- 21 community gardens in Brooklyn
- 14 community gardens in the Bronx
- 15 community gardens in Manhattan
- 4 community gardens in Queens
- 1 community garden in Staten Island

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO MAJOR PARK SITES

- 1** Fort Tryon Park & New Leaf Restaurant & Bar: Take the M4 bus to the last stop (Fort Tryon Park–The Cloisters), or take the A train to 190th Street.
- 2 3 5** Sherman Creek Center / Swindler Cove & Highbridge Parks: Take the I train to Dyckman Street. Turn right on Dyckman, and walk 1/5 mile to the intersection of 10th Ave. and Harlem River Drive. Continue south on Harlem River Drive — Swindler Cove Park is on your left and lower Highbridge Park is on your right. For upper Highbridge Park, take the M101 bus from St. Nicholas Ave., and exit around 189th Street.
- 4** Fort Washington Park: Take the I, 9 or C trains to 168th Street or the M4 bus to 165th Street. Walk west on 165th to the park.

Go to [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) for subway and bus maps.

# NYRP: GREENING NEW YORK CITY... ONE BLOCK AT A TIME



## NYRP Greens New York City One Block at a Time on 117<sup>th</sup> Street

New York Restoration Project (NYRP) uses each of its parks and 55 community gardens as an opportunity to plant the seeds that are essential in creating neighborhoods that respect, advocate for, and most importantly, utilize their open spaces. From engaging local schools in the maintenance and care of their neighborhood's green spaces to encouraging New York City residents to plant trees, NYRP's community gardens are today's village greens – epicenters for community interaction and participation.

NYRP's mission is to green New York City... one block at a time. A perfect example of NYRP's block-by-block approach to greening a neighborhood is 117<sup>th</sup> Street in East Harlem. Here NYRP – in partnership with community leaders and members – is literally changing the landscape of 117<sup>th</sup> Street.

### 1. TREE PLANTING TAKES ROOT

Just a few weeks prior to the official launch of the MillionTreesNYC initiative, NYRP joined 75 Home Depot employee volunteers in September 2007 to expand the green-scape of our two 117<sup>th</sup> Street community gardens by planting 40 new linden and oak trees on the block between Pleas-

ant and First Avenues – a great precursor to NYRP's ability to engage New Yorkers in this momentous tree-planting movement.

Last April, only a few blocks away from our Target and Home Depot community gardens, both located on 117<sup>th</sup> Street, NYRP worked hand-in-hand with more than 350 volunteers to plant nearly 300 trees along Pleasant Avenue and throughout neighboring New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses.

### 2. RE-IMAGINING OPEN SPACES

In the fall of 2008, NYRP opened its first completely "off-the-grid" community garden – the Target East Harlem Community Garden. Serving as our second Target-sponsored garden, this newly revitalized green space is a prime example of how NYRP is successfully bringing sustainability to each of our community gardens, showcasing such innovative features as wind turbines, solar panels and a rainwater collection system – an eventual goal for every NYRP garden restoration. And throughout this May, NYRP is utilizing this community space to bring our popular Fitness Fridays program to East Harlem residents.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, NYRP joined neighborhood residents for the official



NYRP's staff and Home Depot volunteers green 117<sup>th</sup> Street.

opening of its newest community gem – The Home Depot Community Garden – located on the same block as the Target Garden. Designed to serve as the city's first certified Nature Explore Classroom, this garden will provide a magnet for neighborhood schoolchildren to play, explore and engage in NYRP's ever-expanding environmental education programming.

### 3. CONNECTING YOUTH TO NATURE

As part of our dream to continue revitalizing this now thriving community, NYRP's



work has gone beyond just cleaning and greening and has led to us establishing fundamental partnerships with nearby schools, such as P.S. 155, whose students only serve to further ensure that this area remains beautiful for years to come. Led by NYRP educators, students from P.S. 155 will participate in NYRP's Nature in My Neighborhood curriculum in The Home Depot Community Garden and assist in maintaining this neighborhood green space.

#### 4. CHANGING NYC... FOREVER

In each of the neighborhoods NYRP serves, our staff partners with community members to preserve our city's green spaces by picking up trash, fixing sidewalks, repainting fences and planting ornamental and perennial flowers.

While 117th Street serves as a microcosm for everything NYRP does citywide, we have also expanded our greening efforts outside of this street, going block-by-block to green this once, under-resourced East Harlem neighborhood.

NYRP is now replicating our greening model in neighborhoods surrounding all of our community gardens across the city's five boroughs. By extending the work we are accomplishing in our gardens out into the surrounding streets and neighborhoods, NYRP's efforts to green New York City are not only spreading block-by-block, but neighborhood-by-neighborhood and borough-by-borough – taking root in some of the city's most neglected areas, and as a result, effectively transforming the face of our city... one block at a time. 🌱

## OBAMAS JOIN COMMUNITY GARDENING MOVEMENT



Ten years after NYRP successfully preserved some of our city's most vital green spaces, it seems everyone is discovering community gardening these days! Even the newest residents of the White House are carrying on the proud tradition of community gardening by growing fresh, all-natural produce that will be used in the First Family's meals and formal dinners. On

April 9<sup>th</sup>, students from Bancroft Elementary School in Washington, D.C. helped First Lady Michelle Obama and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack plant a variety of vegetables and set up a honeybee colony on the South Lawn of the White House.

The first of its kind at the White House in over sixty years, this garden also will be

used by the Obamas to educate children on the importance of eating healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables at a time when obesity and diabetes have become a nationwide concern. The students who helped the Obamas launch their garden will also be instrumental in planting, harvesting and cooking vegetables, berries and herbs that grow on the site. 🌱



### COMMUNITY GARDENING IN NYC

Community gardening has a long and significant history in New York City – dating back to the economic depressions of both the 1890s and 1930s, and spanning two World Wars. However, most urban gardening efforts were abandoned as crises passed. Sustained community gardening in New York City grew out of the activism of the 1960s, spurred by burgeoning environmental movements and the fiscal woes of the mid-1970s — laying deep roots that endure to this day.



NYRP Founder Bette Midler and Executive Director Drew Becher join Arbor Day Foundation Nature Explore Outreach Director Susie Wirth, President of The Home Depot Foundation Kelly Caffarelli and NYRP staff for the official opening on May 18th of our newest community treasure – The Home Depot Community Garden.

Through our work re-envisioning the city's open spaces, NYRP has also discovered that community gardens can transform not only entire neighborhoods, but people too. In ten years of reclaiming, restoring and maintaining our 55 gardens, NYRP has developed an innovative, community-based model that enables us to transform some of city's most neglected and blighted open spaces into village greens. Consisting of four core steps, this model sets a new standard for what community gardens can be and do for their surrounding neighborhoods and residents.

### 1. SECURE GARDEN FUNDING

As we begin each renovation, NYRP seeks out like-minded corporations and foundations and green-conscience donors to provide the necessary funding to not only underwrite each garden's restoration, but also ensure these gardens are maintained in perpetuity.

### 2. ENVISION GARDEN DESIGN

After a garden is "adopted" by a funder, NYRP begins the design phase of the proj-

**"Nothing is more rewarding than to see the community watch in amazement as the garden is literally transformed during construction."**



The Home Depot Garden's Tudor-style playhouse

ect – first engaging a landscape architect or garden designer to help us envision all of the possibilities the garden space holds.

In collaboration with neighborhood residents, NYRP creates a garden design that reflects the community's needs and vision for a beautiful and fully functioning green space. Ranging in design from urban farms to outdoor classrooms and public gathering places, NYRP's garden restorations are tailored specifically to the needs of each individual community.

### 3. CONSTRUCT GARDEN GEMS

Once a garden's design is approved, construction begins. Managed by NYRP's horticulture and construction department, contractors work hand-in-hand with NYRP staff and AmeriCorps members to construct new planting beds, install rainwater collection systems and build new casitas.

"Nothing is more rewarding than to see the community watch in amazement as their garden is literally transformed during construction," said Barrett Robinson, NYRP's vice president of horticulture and construction. "From the look in residents' faces, it's evident we're not just building gardens, but also building people's dreams and hopes for what their neighborhood can be for them and their children."

### 4. PROMOTE COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

After completing each garden's restoration, NYRP's community outreach team works with neighborhood members to recruit additional gardeners and enhance participation in the garden, inspiring local residents to embrace these re-envisioned community treasures as their own.

And through the generous support of our donors, NYRP continues to serve our community gardens and members by providing ongoing maintenance and building and plant material, including wood for raised planting beds, gardening tools, compost and vegetable seedlings.

The most recent example of NYRP's holistic approach to garden renovation is our newest garden – The Home Depot Community Garden located in East Har-

lem (opened on May 18th). To create the visionary design for this garden makeover, NYRP's in-house design team, in conjunction with landscape architect Art Kleinman from the RBA Group, worked with community members for more than six months to plan and finalize a garden design that met the neighborhood's diverse needs.

Local residents requested that The Home Depot Community Garden provide a space for children to learn about and explore nature. As a result, NYRP decided to design and build the city's first-ever certified Nature Explore Classroom.

The Home Depot Foundation embraced the community's kid-centric vision and granted NYRP \$300,000 to create the garden, which now includes an outdoor classroom where children can learn, play and embrace their natural environment. The Home Depot Community Garden also features an oversized checkerboard, a children's stage, a Tudor-style playhouse, planting beds and topiaries.

As NYRP looks forward, we want to continue working with forward-thinking donors and designers, as well as our enthu-



*Design layout for NYRP's newest community garden – The Home Depot Community Garden*

siastic and ever-expanding membership base, to not just replicate the achievements from our first 10 years in community garden design, but to also look ahead for ways to think “outside of the garden box”

– applying creativity and ingenuity to each and every project.

And as a result, NYRP is changing the landscape of New York City neighborhoods forever. 🍷

## NYRP REMEMBERS ANN RICHARDS WITH A GARDEN

The late Ann Richards was a political legend, who grew up in Texas and went on to represent the Lone Star State as its 45th Governor.

Despite her Texas roots, Richards shared a great love for all things New York City – especially its public parks and green spaces. Richards passed away in September 2006.

Spearheaded by her dear friends Bette Midler and NYRP supporter Liz Smith, the idea of creating a garden to celebrate Richards' brassy, tough-talking persona and her lifetime contribution to Democratic politics and ideals was conceived.

With the help of seed money provided by Midler, Smith and other close friends of Richards, NYRP engaged garden designer Lynden Miller to envision a garden space along the Harlem River and within NYRP's



Swindler Cove Park. The garden will feature native wildflowers and several varieties of shrubs and trees – including cherry trees that connect the garden with NYRP's Harlem River Cherry Esplanade.

NYRP is currently seeking funds for

this important project that will further green the landscape of Swindler Cove Park. Individual donations will not only enable NYRP to execute Lynden Miller's design, but also create a maintenance endowment to ensure that this community garden continues to thrive and grow for years to come.

Join Bette, Liz Smith, and friends and colleagues of Richards in honoring her passion for politics and the Big Apple by making a contribution to The Ann Richards Garden. To make a donation, contact Kristin Dougherty at NYRP at 212.333.2552 or e-mail [kdougherty@nyrp.org](mailto:kdougherty@nyrp.org). 🍷

# MILLIONTREESNYC: EVERY DAY IS ARBOR DAY DURING MILLIONTREESNYC MONTH!



For a second year, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg declared April MillionTreesNYC Month – providing co-leaders New York Restoration Project and the NYC Parks Department an entire month to promote tree planting and stewardship.

MillionTreesNYC Month kicked off on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Keil Brothers Garden Center and Nursery in Bayside Hills, Queens. NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher and NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe were joined by local Queens residents and more than 100 students, from neighbor-

ing M.S. 158 and P.S. 31, to announce the programs and calendar of events that would comprise MillionTreesNYC Month 2009. Lead sponsors The Home Depot Foundation and Toyota were joined in their support of the month by BNP Paribas, who again served as MillionTreesNYC Month's presenting sponsor.

Kiel Brothers Garden Center and Nursery provided the perfect location for NYRP to announce the beginning of the city's second MillionTreesNYC Month and the initiative's One in a Million Tree Coupon Program – designed to encourage New York City homeowners to plant trees on their own front and backyards by offering a \$20 discount on trees purchased at participating nurseries.

**“We salute these homeowners for digging in and planting trees in their front and backyards, and thank the countless donors who have sponsored the planting of thousands of trees in Trees for Public Health neighborhoods.”**

“As a direct result of trees being purchased through the MillionTreesNYC One in a Million Tree Coupon Program, we are supporting our city's small businesses – like Keil Brothers Nursery – by inviting homeowners to purchase trees from local nurseries and garden centers,” said Drew Becher. “We salute these homeowners for digging in and planting trees in their front and backyards, and thank the countless donors who have sponsored the planting of thousands of trees in Trees for Public Health neighborhoods.”

In the city's biggest and boldest Arbor Day celebration to date, more than 500 volunteers competed in the city's first-ever Arbor Day Tree-mendous Challenge on April 24<sup>th</sup>. More than 260 New York City students from NYRP's RespecTree program – an in-depth, tree education program that engages schoolchildren in the design, planting and greening of their







schoolyards – teamed up with BNP Paribas employees and public housing residents to plant more than 200 new trees on four NYCHA developments and two nearby schools in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn. In addition to tree planting, participants completed a series of challenges, including the mulching and watering of trees and a quiz that put their urban forestry knowledge to the test.

To kick-off the Arbor Day Tree-mendous Challenge, Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning actress Glenn Close, NYC Department of Education Chancellor Joel Klein, Toyota Group Vice President of Corporate Communications & General Counsel Pat Pineda and CEO of BNP Paribas North America Everett Schenk welcomed volunteers. Close later joined Commissioner Benepe, NYRP's Drew Becher and a group of students in planting a ceremonial tree in front of nearby P.S. 25.

From community events to citywide, tree-planting volunteer days, NYRP, with the help of our MillionTreesNYC partners, volunteers and New York City residents, successfully raised the bar for this year's MillionTreesNYC Month – proving that all New Yorkers are answering the initiative's call to green and beautify our city. 🌱



Students from NYRP's RespecTree Program water trees as part of our Arbor Day celebration

### Did you know?

MillionTreesNYC has planted more than 200,000 trees since the initiative launched in October 2007. Prior to the initiative, approximately 15,000 trees were planted annually in New York City.

# MILLIONTREESNYC: COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS “DIG IN” CITYWIDE



volunteers planted 20,000 trees – reforesting City, State and Federal parkland at 18 individual planting sites. The tree planting was part of New York Cares’ annual “Hands on New York Day,” held on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. The tree-planting sites were funded through a MillionTreesNYC Home Depot Community Grant – one of 12 grants NYRP has awarded to non-profits this year.

Volunteers from Toyota, BNP Paribas, CIT and the WellPoint Foundation joined community members and NYRP staff at three locations across the city to plant, mulch and water thousands of young trees. Even President of Toyota Motor

North America, Shigeru Hayakawa, joined volunteers to “dig in” and plant trees as part of the day’s activities.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, nearly 300 community members and students worked side-by-side with employees from The American Express Foundation and NYRP staff to plant more than 180 trees on public housing campuses in Red Hook, Brooklyn. The planting day was the first of three being supported by American Express – with two additional community volunteer days occurring during the fall planting season.

NYRP’s community volunteer days are a great opportunity for



While MillionTreesNYC Month involved many celebrations and public events, NYRP and the NYC Parks Department spent the majority of the month planting thousands of trees across the city’s five boroughs – more than 30,000 in total.

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, NYRP joined JetBlue Airways to register more than 500 community volunteers to do ‘One Thing That’s Green’ by planting more than 300 new trees in Jamaica, Queens – transforming the landscape of New York City Housing Authority’s Pomonok Houses. In collaboration

with the *Greening of NYCHA Initiative*, the volunteer day brought together JetBlue employees – including JetBlue CEO Dave Barger – New York City families and local NYCHA residents for one of NYRP’s largest volunteer days to date.

In celebration of Earth Day 2009, Bank of America partnered with NYRP and City

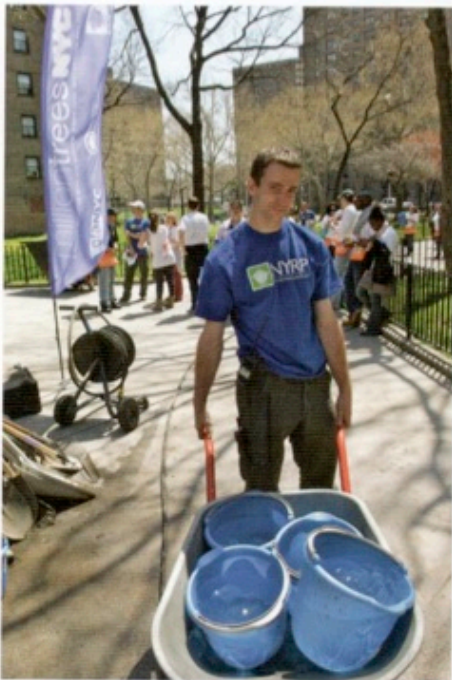
Year to bring together corporate leaders and employees to plant trees on public housing developments in East Harlem. Bank of America brought 100 volunteers to the effort, helping to improve the community environment. In addition, American Express, NBC Universal, Legg Mason and Recycle Bank were joined by financial guru Suze Orman to green this East Harlem community as part of NYRP’s inaugural “Root for New York Corporate Challenge.”

MillionTreesNYC Month culminated in a citywide volunteer effort in which

New Yorkers and corporations alike to get involved in the organization’s tree-planting efforts, which are literally changing the landscape of the city’s five boroughs. Each of our community volunteer days would not be possible without essential funding from our corporate sponsors and physical support from our volunteers. To learn how your company’s employees can participate in an NYRP volunteer day or your company can support a community planting day, contact Jimmy Owens at 212.333.2552 or e-mail [jowens@nyrp.org](mailto:jowens@nyrp.org).

**Did you know?**  
NYRP engaged 1,800 community and corporate volunteers this spring in park cleanup and tree-planting projects – that’s 3,600 hands!

While the spring tree-planting season might be winding down, there are a million ways New Yorkers can continue to get involved in the MillionTreesNYC movement throughout the hot, summer months. Here are four ways you can support the greening of New York City and be one in a million:



### 1. WATER:

Join MillionTreesNYC's Stewardship Corps

Launching this summer is a new, citizen-based MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps that will provide eco-minded residents with free, tree-care workshops and community organizing training, tree maintenance tools, and an online informational and networking resource. The Stewardship Corps – managed by NYRP and the NYC Parks Department – will connect local residents, community gardeners, neighborhood block associations and community groups with real opportunities to water, protect and, in some cases, prune newly planted trees.

To learn how you can become a trained member of the MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps in your neighborhood, visit [milliontreesnyc.org/corps](http://milliontreesnyc.org/corps).

### 2. REGISTER:

Calling all NYC Tree Planters – Be Counted!

NYRP is now calling on every citizen to register trees planted since fall 2007—ensuring they are counted toward our one million tree goal. And beginning this summer, for every tree registered online, you will be entered in a sweepstakes to win valuable prizes, including roundtrip airline travel on JetBlue Airways, tickets to Bette Midler's Hulaween gala and other exciting prizes. So register your newly planted trees today at [milliontreesnyc.org/register](http://milliontreesnyc.org/register), and be one in a million!



### 3. SCOUT:

NYRP Seeking New Tree-Planting Opportunities

Charged with planting trees on publicly accessible properties across New York City's five boroughs, NYRP is now looking to identify large-scale planting opportunities, including schoolyards and playgrounds, places of worship, libraries and cultural institutions, low-income housing developments, and other properties accessible to the public. So as you travel the five boroughs and happen upon properties in need of trees, share these tree-planting opportunities with us at [milliontreesnyc.org/plant](http://milliontreesnyc.org/plant). Street tree planting is managed by the NYC Parks Department and should be requested at [milliontreesnyc.org/streettree](http://milliontreesnyc.org/streettree).

### 4. DONATE:

Plant a Tree in an Under-resourced NYC Neighborhood

The only reason NYRP has been able to plant thousands of new trees across the city's five boroughs is because of individual, corporate and foundation supporters like you, who have given generously to the MillionTreesNYC initiative. So, join NYRP in our movement to green our neighborhoods, and help us as we bring the many health, environmental and economic benefits trees provide to all New Yorkers. Visit [milliontreesnyc.org](http://milliontreesnyc.org) today, and gift a tree for a New York City neighborhood or schoolyard in need.

## MILLIONTREESNYC: U.S. FOREST SERVICE AWARDS MILLIONTREESNYC TRAINING PROGRAM \$2 MILLION

Last fall, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) and the NYC Parks Department launched the MillionTreesNYC Training Program, a green-collar job training program designed to prepare young adults – aged 18 to 24 – for highly skilled careers in the growing green sector. This hands-on, intensive program provides paid, on-the-job forestry and horticulture training to New York City residents – pairing trainees with NYRP and Parks staff for eight months of apprenticeship and mentoring.

**“This funding will provide vital work and training skills to young adults from low-income communities, while at the same time helping to restore the city’s urban ecosystems, making it a healthier place to live.”**

On April 8th, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Forest Service had awarded a \$2 million grant to MillionTreesNYC to create green-collar jobs and restore urban forests throughout New York City. As a result of the funding, both NYRP and the NYC Parks Department will be able to hire a number of program graduates for full-time positions, while additional trainees will be



employed by New York City non-profits seeking new staff with horticulture and forestry skills.

On the day of the announcement, the MillionTreesNYC Training Program’s 28 participants joined Mayor Bloomberg, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, U.S. Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell, U.S. Congressman Jose E. Serrano, NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher, as well as program funders including the NYC Center for Economic Opportunities, the Altman Foundation and the Arthur Ross Founda-

tion, at a Bronx reforestation site – which was cleared of invasive plants and prepped for replanting by the trainees.

“This funding will provide vital work and training skills to young adults from low-income communities, while at the same time helping to restore the city’s urban ecosystems, making it a healthier place to live,” said Secretary Vilsack. “As a result, these young Americans will embark on careers in the growing field of urban natural resource management and restoration and lead the way in showing others that green job programs can be a real path out of poverty.”



### TREES DO MORE THAN YOU THINK.

In April, MillionTreesNYC launched a citywide public service announcement campaign – Trees do more than you think – that introduced New Yorkers to the many health, environmental and economic benefits trees provide the city, as well as invited residents to “dig in.” Throughout MillionTreesNYC Month, the colorful campaign could be seen throughout the city’s subway and bus systems, as well as in community newspapers and on electric billboards in Times Square.

# MILLIONTREESNYC: NYRP LAUNCHES RESPECTREE EDUCATION PROGRAM

As summer approaches, we are reminded of the sweltering heat we often experienced as a child playing on our school's playground. Too much asphalt and not enough trees and green space often made lunch hour and recess unbearable. When the idea of greening the schoolyard was suggested, it was quickly dismissed because it was believed the students would trash the lawn or the custodian didn't want to mow around the trees or simply because there wasn't enough money in the school's budget.

For all of these reasons and more, NYRP has begun planting trees on New York City's schoolyards and playgrounds. And to ensure the long-term survivability of the trees we are planting, NYRP is piloting a tree planting and education program. The RespecTree program makes sure students (and custodians) understand that trees are living things that need tender, loving care and respect, and engages them in watering and maintaining their trees, especially during the hot, summer months.

In November 2008 – as part of our newly formed partnership with the NYC Department of Education – NYRP launched its MillionTreesNYC RespecTree program, with 10 public schools participating in its first year. RespecTree is an eight-month-long education program that incorporates environmental, life and earth science curricula into classrooms, and most importantly, involves students in the design, planting and caring of a greener schoolyard.

"All of my students are extremely excited to be part of such a hands-on program that prepares students to be good stewards of our urban forest," explained New York City schoolteacher Lauren Maltz.

In addition to classroom activities, students from Maltz's class, along with fifth graders from the nine other RespecTree schools, recently participated in nature field trips to NYRP's Swindler Cove Park to investigate the impact of plantings surrounding the park, as well as explore the site's various ecosystems and wildlife. Students also celebrated Arbor Day 2009 by planting more than 200 trees in East Wil-



RIGHT: Recently, NYRP greened the schoolyard at P.S. 146.

liamsburg, Brooklyn – all part of NYRP's inaugural Arbor Day Tree-mendous Challenge and a student-led planting day that greened an under-resourced neighborhood.

"Being a part of New York Restoration Project's Arbor Day celebration was so exciting for my students," said Maltz. "They especially loved planting and can't stop talking about the mulch 'donuts' they created to protect each tree. My students can't wait to see their trees grow!"

Trees are already being planted in many of the RespecTree schoolyards, with student celebrations planned for early June. P.S. 146 in the Bronx's Morrisania neigh-

"All of my students are extremely excited to be part of such a hands-on program that prepares students to be good stewards of our urban forest."

borhood served as NYRP's first schoolyard planting site, where asphalt was removed, new tree beds were created and 27 trees were planted – providing new shade to what was once hot, impervious playground surfaces.

"It's incredible to see how the trees we are planting are instantly transforming schoolyards and playgrounds," said Chris Vanterpool, manager of NYRP's tree unit. "Principals, custodians and students are so excited when we begin tearing up the asphalt, replacing it with new tree beds and large caliper trees. At the same time, NYRP educators are introducing each school's students to the fundamentals of ecology and creating a better understanding of our city's urban forest."

NYRP is proud to be educating New York City's next environmental leaders, while greening our city's public schoolyards and playgrounds – bringing significant health and environmental benefits to students, schools and neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

To learn how you can sponsor the greening of a New York City schoolyard, contact Kristin Dougherty at 212.333.2552 or e-mail [kdougherty@nyrp.org](mailto:kdougherty@nyrp.org).



## IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN: NYRP HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY GARDENERS' GATHERING

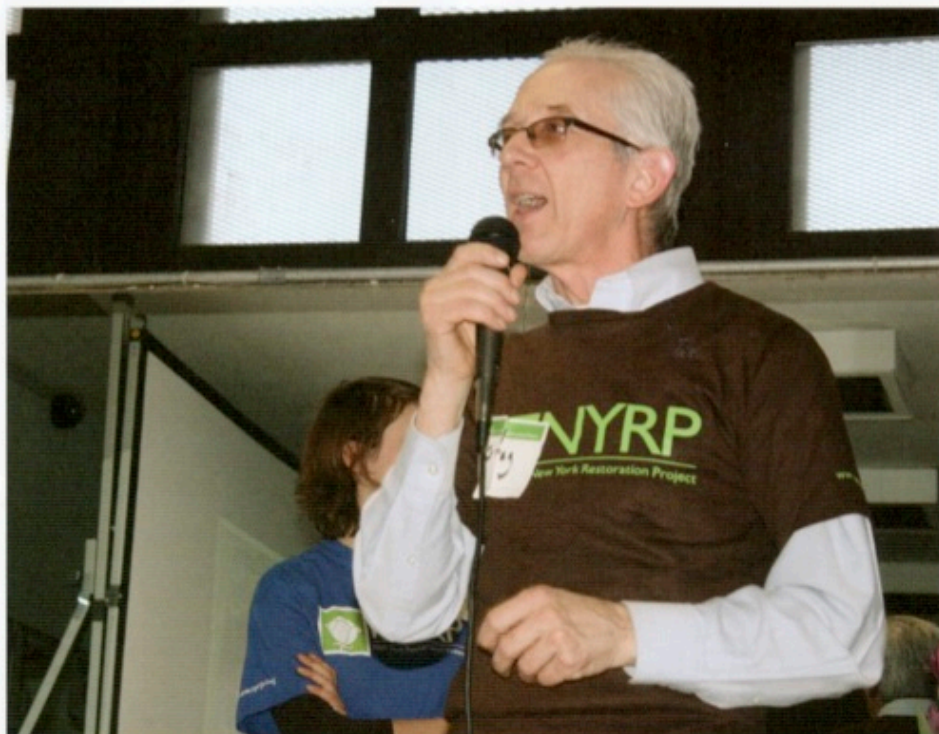
With NYRP now serving more than 1,000 gardeners working in our 55 community gardens, NYRP's Community Outreach Manager Angela Michie and her team of outreach coordinators are creating new programs and identifying creative resources to support our growing and diverse community of gardeners.

One way NYRP is assisting this expanding network of green thumb enthusiasts is by bringing our gardeners together each year to share best practices and resources, learn from one another through presentations and discussions, and most importantly, celebrate the amazing work these individuals and families are accomplishing in our gardens and throughout their neighborhoods.

NYRP's Second Annual Gardeners' Gathering – held on March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Thomas Jefferson Park Recreation Center in East Harlem – brought together more than 200 local gardeners, who each received free heirloom seeds, plants and other gardening materials as part of the day's festivities. In addition to representatives from NYRP's horticulture, education and community outreach departments, the organization invited a number of eco-friendly non-profits – including the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Lower Eastside Ecology Center, GreenThumb and Just Food – to attend our gathering, connecting our gardeners to additional citywide resources and new opportunities to expand and enhance their beloved green spaces.

**"I enjoy coming to NYRP's community gardening events because they remind me how many people in New York City truly love and cherish their neighborhood gardens."**

NYRP education staff introduce gardeners and kids to our animal family!



The event culminated with presentations from six "all-star" NYRP gardeners, including remarks by James Garcia from NYRP's popular Herb Garden, who spoke about the garden's innovative design and its importance as a community village green. Additionally, a member from NYRP's Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden described how the Gardeners' Gathering is further enhancing the important role NYRP's green spaces play in the city's overall health and vitality.

"I enjoy coming to NYRP's community gardening events because they remind me how many people in New York City truly love and cherish their neighborhood gardens," said Lucia Bravo, gardener from NYRP's Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden. "The Rodale Community Garden has improved my life in so many ways – providing me with healthier food, community ties with others and a special place to relax. And it is great to have the opportunity to share what my garden has meant to me with other green thumbs, as well as learn about other ways that I can continue to improve my community oasis." 🌱

## IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN: NYRP COMMUNITY GARDENER: MAGGIE BURNETT, MAGGIE'S GARDEN



"I knew in an instant that NYRP had not only transformed our garden, but our entire neighborhood. To this day, passersby still tell me how they can't believe something so beautiful exists in Harlem."

Maggie taking a break after working in NYRP's Maggie's Garden.



Maggie joins NYRP Founder Bette Midler, President Bill Clinton and neighborhood residents to celebrate the opening of our first garden restoration – Maggie's Garden. (Sept. 2002)

Seven years ago Maggie Burnett received a phone call that changed her life and the landscape of her community forever. After becoming a resident of her Harlem community more than 56 years ago, Maggie has served as the protector and chief steward of her neighborhood's, and now NYRP's community garden – a once, under-resourced green space located directly across the street from her apartment building.

For years, Maggie had dreamed of restoring this open space, but cuts in City funding for community gardens and a lack of resources made it impossible for her to realize the garden's full-potential. But that all changed one spring morning when Maggie received a phone call requesting her presence at the garden.

When Maggie walked outside, she was greeted by a member of NYRP's staff. "I'll never forget that day for as long as I live,"


Maggie said. "There in front of my raggedy garden gate, held together with clothesline, stood Bette Midler." Maggie recalled how Midler shared that she and her organization wanted to help transform this green space into a beautiful, thriving community oasis. And Maggie soon learned that Midler was serious about her offer.

The next morning Maggie woke up to the sound of construction and was delighted to see that NYRP was making good on Midler's promise. Throughout the following months, Maggie worked with NYRP staff and garden designer Billie Cohen to realize her dream of restoring this undeveloped green space.

Serving as NYRP's first-ever, successful garden restoration, Maggie's Garden was re-imagined through the vision and generous funding provided by the Brownstone Family Foundation. Maggie considers the day Maggie's Garden officially opened

in 2002 as one of the most incredible days of her life. She recalled hundreds of people attending the opening, including Midler and President Bill Clinton. "I would have never imagined in a million years the kind of community response and outpouring that occurred when we opened those new garden gates," said Maggie. "I knew in an instant that NYRP had not only transformed our garden, but our entire neighborhood. To this day, passersby still tell me how they can't believe something so beautiful exists in Harlem."

Every time Maggie sees community members enjoying the serenity the garden provides, she is reminded how hard she fought to keep the garden alive and how NYRP made her dream of rebuilding it come true.

"When Bette Midler and NYRP saved our garden and took the lead in supporting its restoration, they showed me what I was working for all those years and why I never gave up my dream," said Maggie. "This garden has meant so much to me. Like so many community gardeners, this garden is my life. Because of the resources NYRP continues to provide community gardens like ours, local residents and families across New York City are benefiting from this green space and many others, using each garden as a place to gather, relax or just enjoy the great outdoors." 

## IN THE COMMUNITY: NYRP – INSPIRING TOMORROW'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS



The best way to guarantee that New York City's beautiful green spaces continue to grow and flourish is by working with our city's youngest and most enthusiastic green thumbs. In that light, NYRP's education department is teaming up with students of all ages to bring environmental education into the classroom and inspire kids to take that education back out into their neighborhoods, parks and community gardens – helping to green some of New York City's most impoverished communities.

The youngest of NYRP's green ambassadors are the Harlem Gems, two pre-kindergarten groups comprised of four- and five-year-olds attending classes at P.S. 149 on West 117<sup>th</sup> Street. In partnership with the Harlem Children's Zone, NYRP's education team is introducing these schoolchildren to environmental education for the very first time – engaging them in hands-on greening projects, including creating soda bottle greenhouses, where seedlings are currently sprouting in discarded two-liter plastic bottles.

As NYRP's AmeriCorps member Mya Jenkins explained, "It's great working with our Harlem Gems because NYRP is getting the opportunity to take a holistic approach in changing the way these kids think about the planet and our environment at a very young age, while also introducing them to how much fun the outdoors can really be. There is nothing more gratifying than see-

ing how excited these kids get when they see one of their seedlings grow and blossom for the first time," said Jenkins.

To further expand NYRP's growing corps of green ambassadors, the organization created its first-ever team of Junior Naturalists by bringing together 24 green graduates from NYRP's inaugural summer camp, held at Swindler Cove Park in 2008.

Since then, these adolescents have taken it upon themselves to join NYRP in greening New York City, while inspiring their peers to do the same. From volunteering at NYRP's annual Little Red Lighthouse Festival

to supporting the organization's recent Wildflower Week activities, these green enthusiasts are helping to advance NYRP's education programs in a real and meaningful way.

Recently, NYRP's education team was approached by a group of six, green-conscience teenagers interested in working with the organization to realize their already budding, environmental creativity.

Calling themselves the "Green Teens," these students from the High School for Environmental Studies work weekly with NYRP's education department to provide a number of services to neighborhoods citywide, ranging from community



Two kids plant flowers and herbs as part of NYRP's NatureMania program

cleanups and recycling workshops to tree plantings and NYRP education events, including NYRP's Nature in My Neighborhood program.

In one of NYRP's newest projects aimed at involving New York City's youth in the greening and maintenance of our city's open spaces, NYRP partnered with the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics High School in December 2008 to launch our first Greenhouse Club program.

After bringing the school's under-utilized rooftop greenhouse to the attention of NYRP, New York City schoolteacher Yecenia Delarosa and 20 students, ranging from freshman to seniors, have worked with NYRP to reclaim this space. In addition,

NYRP education staff has incorporated the greenhouse into its overall education program, introducing students to the basics of greenhouse gardening and maintenance. As a result, students are cultivating plants for installation in NYRP's community gardens and on city school grounds.

With every student NYRP reaches, the organization is inspiring tomorrow's community gardeners, urban tree planters and stewards and future advocates for environmental issues — all promoting a greener and greater New York City and planet.

"With every child I teach how to plant their very first tree or grow a tomato in one of our gardens, I am reminded of how vital today's youth are to tomorrow's green spaces," said Akiima Price, NYRP Chief of Education.

"Through their enthusiasm and passion for the outdoors, these kids really teach me and NYRP why having clean parks, accessible community gardens and greener streets are so important to the future health of our city and its residents." 🌱

### Did you know?

Akiima Price was recently nationally recognized for her work at NYRP. USA Today named Price its Outdoor Ambassador for April 2009.



## IN THE COMMUNITY: SUPPORT NYRP'S SUMMER CAMP AT SWINDLER COVE PARK!

New York Restoration Project's education staff has kicked into high gear planning for the organization's second annual NatureMania Summer Camp – a six-week program that provides students from third to fifth grade with the ultimate urban, outdoor experience.

This year, NYRP's summer camp will introduce 30 participants to the world of green careers – ranging from urban arborists to landscape designers and environmental educators.

NYRP knows that not every kid can afford a summer camp experience, especially in many of the neighborhoods we serve. Through the generous support of NYRP members like you, NYRP's summer camp is offered completely free to youth living in the Washington Heights, Inwood and Dyckman communities. And as a direct result, NYRP is able to provide kids with a fun summer experience that connects them to nature and the great outdoors, while preparing them to be our city's next generation of environmental stewards and green professionals.



NYRP member and individual support of our annual Summer Camp is critical to ensuring New York City's youth reach their green potential! Donate today, and help NYRP make sure these young, budding minds grow for years to come! To donate, contact Kristin Dougherty at 212.333.2552 or e-mail [kdougherty@nyrp.org](mailto:kdougherty@nyrp.org).

## NYC STUDENTS INVEST IN CLEANING, GREENING NEW YORK CITY



New York Restoration Project couldn't imagine a more important gift than one coming from the children we serve. In April, fifth graders from P.S. 5, who are participating in NYRP's RespecTree program – an in-depth, tree education program that involves New York City schoolchildren in the design, planting and greening of their schoolyards – chose NYRP as one of the school's recipients of a grant made possible through the student body's collection of pennies. As students researched their non-profit grantees and learned more about how NYRP's work extends beyond just tree planting, they decided to double their original \$250 contribution to NYRP – quite a testament to our work!

The student council at P.S. 188Q in Bayside Queens also collected pennies to support NYRP's programs, contributing \$500 to the MillionTreesNYC initiative. In addition to their philanthropic efforts, the students pledged to help the environment by creating a recycling and composting program at their school and completing a beautification project at Cunningham park.

Both schools' contributions were made possible through the youth-inspired and led fundraising initiative, Penny Harvest – a national program created by Common Cents that invites youth to provide grants to community organizations through the collection of pennies.

Thank you P.S. 5 and P.S. 188Q for supporting NYRP's mission and recognizing that every penny counts. As a percentage of their annual incomes, these junior philanthropists are truly NYRP's biggest donors!



### OUR FAVE IN THE NABE

Santa Clarita  
237 Willis Ave  
Bronx, NY 10454  
718.292.9399



A favorite of NYRP staff, Santa Clarita has made a name for itself in the South Bronx neighborhood of Mott Haven for serving delicious, reasonably priced and authentic Mexican cuisine. According to Fave finder and NYRP staff member Jason Sheets, top menu picks include the pollo veracruzana – a native Mexican dish – and the restaurant's homemade nachos and fajitas. Sheets recommends sliding into one of Santa Clarita's wooden benches and enjoying the restaurant's signature Jamaican drink made from sorreo leaves. And while in the neighborhood, be sure to visit NYRP's Bronx Community and Cultural Garden as you may find some of the same vegetables or herbs that you just enjoyed at Santa Clarita growing there.

# NEW LEAF RESTAURANT & BAR UPPER MANHATTAN'S MOST DISTINCTIVE OUTDOOR PATIO OPEN!



## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ON THE RUNWAY WITH PROJECT EARTH DAY

New York Restoration Project (NYRP) was proud to partner with Project Earth Day for its third annual fashion show and student competition at the open house gallery in Nolita on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The fundraising event was dedicated to sustainable, innovative and environmentally responsible design. Hosted by fashion designer Bahar Shapar and the United States Green Building Council, the eco-minded fashion show featured forward-thinking designs and previewed spring collections. Recognizing NYRP's appreciation for great design and its sense of style, NYRP's

**M**ay marks the much anticipated opening of the garden patio at NYRP's New Leaf Restaurant & Bar in Upper Manhattan's Fort Tryon Park. This stunning outdoor setting is the perfect place to enjoy lunch or weekend brunch before touring Fort Tryon Park's Heather Gardens or the historic Cloisters museum & gardens.

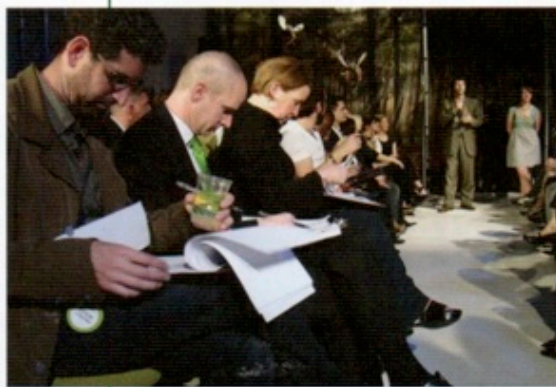
And most importantly, with every dining experience at the New Leaf, guests are supporting NYRP's 55 community gardens, as well as the organization's park maintenance and environmental education programs. All profits from the New Leaf are reinvested in NYRP – making the restaurant a for-profit enterprise that is supporting a non-profit cause. So, whether you are

making dinner reservations with friends or planning a party, dine at the New Leaf, and you will be helping NYRP grow!

For reservations at the New Leaf, call 212.568.5323 or visit [www.nyrp.org/newleaf](http://www.nyrp.org/newleaf).

### SPECIAL PHOTO EXHIBIT AT THE NEW LEAF!

This summer, visit the New Leaf Restaurant & Bar to see a special exhibit featuring photography from Amy Goldman's critically acclaimed books "Melons for the Passionate Grower" and "The Complete Squash: A Passionate Guide to Pumpkins, Squashes and Gourds." The exhibition, which opened on May 19<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with NYRP's Eighth Annual Spring Picnic, highlights award-winning photographer Victor Schragar's work. All 35 photographs showcase heirloom vegetables grown by Goldman and featured in her books. Goldman, a passionate gardener, seed saver and persuasive advocate for heirloom fruits and vegetables, serves as one of NYRP's board members and has long been an avid supporter of the organization. 🌱



own Executive Director Drew Becher was invited to judge the evening's student competition and help select a young designer, whose work exemplified creativity and sustainability. NYRP looks forward to collaborating with Project Earth Day in 2010.

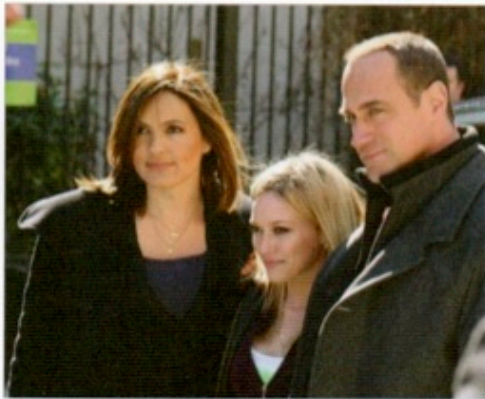
### Did you know?

NYRP's New Leaf Restaurant & Bar served more than 52,000 guests in 2008 – that's 52,000 diners who helped advance NYRP's mission of creating a cleaner, greener NYC!

## LOOK WHAT WE FOUND

### Law & Order: Special Victims Unit

This spring, NYRP staff spotted famed actors Christopher Maloni, Mariska Hargitay and Hilary Duff filming an episode of NBC's Law & Order: Special Victims Unit at one of New York Restoration Project's most popular community gardens, The Herb Garden.



Located in East Harlem, The Herb Garden served as the location for a scene, which aired on April 29th in a Law & Order: SVU episode. Location fees for the shoot in NYRP's Herb Garden will support the garden's maintenance and the organization's work in East Harlem.



## NYRP'S BUDS WELCOME SPRING AND NEW MEMBERS!

### The Buds 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Event

The Buds – NYRP's Junior Committee for New Yorkers aged 21 to 40 – kicked off the spring season in style with a night of food, drinks and fun at the group's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring Fling at Manhattan's Arctica Bar. With the help of Buds members, the event was a smashing success – raising more than \$10,000 and enlisting scores of new Buds members!

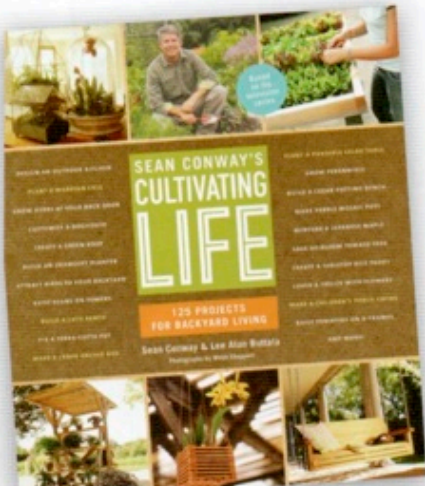
So, if you are under 40 and share a green thumb or just a passion for New York City's green spaces, become a member of NYRP's growing junior committee. For more information about becoming a Bud, contact Nyla Karsan at 212.333.2552 or email [nkarsan@nyrp.org](mailto:nkarsan@nyrp.org).

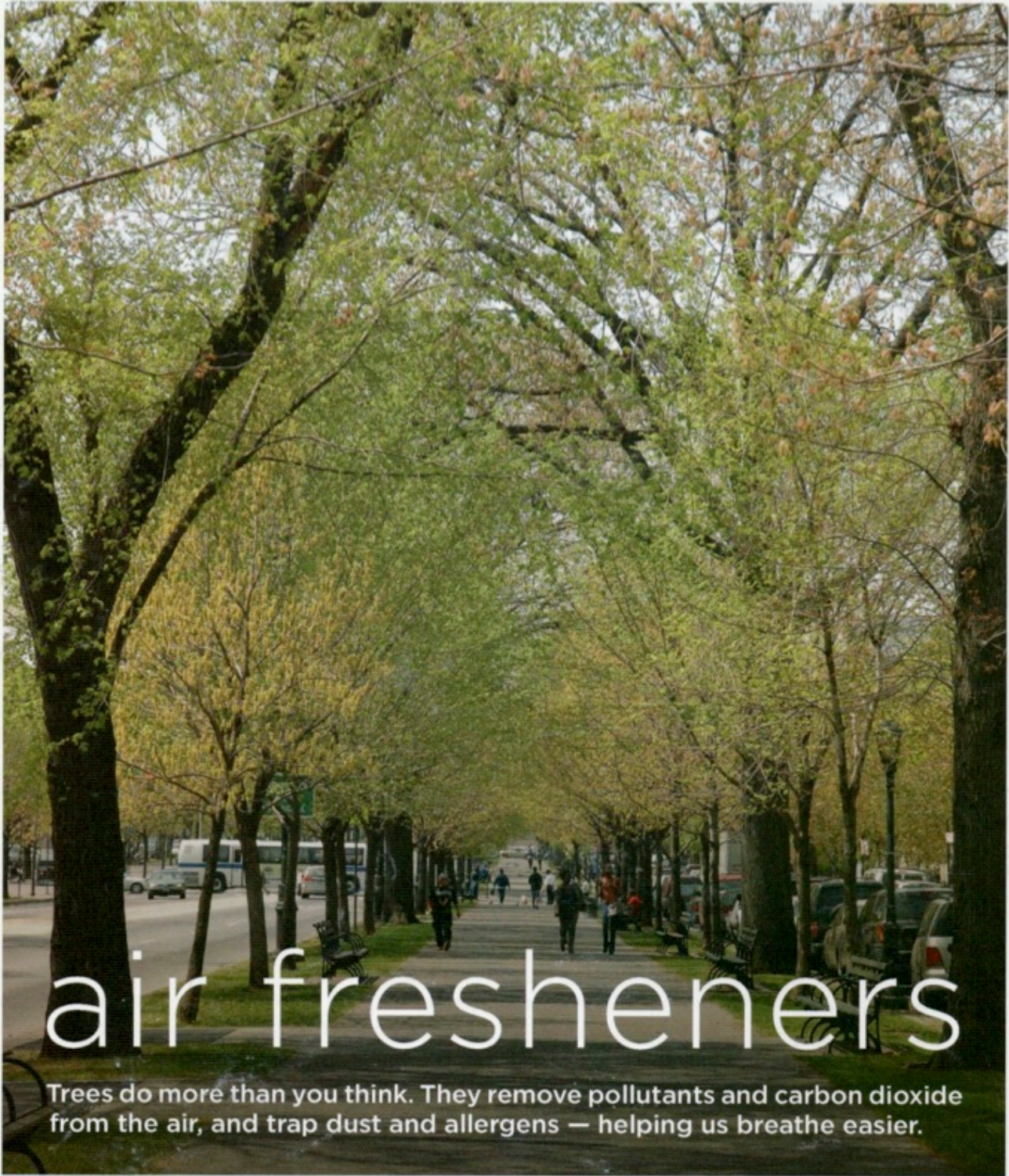


## SEAN CONWAY'S CULTIVATING LIFE: 125 PROJECTS FOR BACKYARD LIVING

By Sean Conway & Lee Alan Buttala

Acclaimed landscape designer Sean Conway has contributed to New York City's beautification in a big and bold way through his work as lead designer for three of NYRP's Target-sponsored community gardens, located in East Harlem, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Now, Conway has turned his attention to penning a much anticipated book, titled "Cultivating Life: 125 Projects for Backyard Living" – a collection of step-by-step projects, lessons learned and instructional, stunning photographs that make outdoor living easier and more enjoyable. Conway's book goes beyond being a resource for gardening tips and advice, containing creative and fun projects that enhance the experience of being outdoors for the entire family. A fun must read!





# air fresheners

Trees do more than you think. They remove pollutants and carbon dioxide from the air, and trap dust and allergens — helping us breathe easier.

Help NYC clear the air by planting and caring for trees.

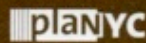
To dig in or donate visit [milliontreesnyc.org](http://milliontreesnyc.org) or call 311

**milliontreesNYC**

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