

# THE GREEN TEAM'S SUMMER UPDATE

July-Aug 2011



The Green Team is committed to the well-being of our city. We are a group of youth who understand that Lawrence is more than meets the eye, it's a place of opportunity. It's our home."

- Santiago

Throughout the summer, we, the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team, took part in many community development projects. Each project was led by two of us and this gave us the opportunity to develop our management and leadership skills. Our projects were Keepin' It Fresh (a business venture growing and selling produce) led by Jannelvy and Jessica, a clean-up of Riverfront park in South Lawrence organized by Mario and Anthony, National Night Out (a stand against neighborhood violence) led by Angel and Dorian, the Green Team documentary (a new way to show the community what we do) and a Public Service Announcement about buying fresh produce led by Nashira and Migueyli and a Health Workshop (a skit that educates youth about healthy eating) led by Santiago. It was a busy summer, but we had a lot of fun and made Lawrence healthier in the process!



"Being on the Green Team has helped me understand the importance of keeping the environment clean and the benefits of maintaining a healthy diet."

- Anthony



**Top:** The 2011 Summer crew outside our Island Street office (Clockwise from top left: Santiago, Jannelvy, Angel, Jessica, Nashira, Dorian, Migueyli, Anthony, Mario, and Elio). **Left:** The Green Team meets with representatives from ECCF. **Right:** Angel working hard to prepare the soil at our new garden plot in the Guiffrida Place community garden.

## HEALTH WORKSHOP

A project that we as a Green Team wanted to accomplish by the end of the summer was educating different groups of youth throughout the city about what it means to be healthy. Instead of a traditional PowerPoint-based workshop, we created an engaging skit about the challenges youth face trying to eat a healthy, balanced diet. The workshop helped to discard some of the myths about healthy eating that we have all been exposed to before. The workshop also included games that taught energy balance and making healthier choices (brown rice instead of white, grilled chicken instead of a hamburger, etc.). The workshop was presented to three separate audiences in the city: the Dirty Hands Club of the South Lawrence East School, the Urban Adventures Camp run by Mass Audubon through Groundwork Lawrence, and the Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence. The workshop was well-received each time we presented it, and we enjoyed teaching the kids something new about nutrition that they hadn't learned before.

**“ The health workshop was a great way to teach children about healthy lifestyles.” -**

**Jannelvy**

## BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS TRIP

This summer, we embarked with Groundwork Somerville on a three-day, two-night journey to Peddock's Island, one of the Boston Harbor Islands. We left all of our electronic devices behind so that we could really be present to each other and the beautiful nature around us. Throughout the course of the trip, we bonded with each other and the Groundwork Somerville Green Team, talking about our similar goals and achievements. Another integral part of the trip was volunteering to remove invasive plant species from nearby Bumpkin Island. In addition to our volunteer work, we hung out in our tents laughing, went swimming on the beach, played “Mafia” and wiffle-ball as well. Even though we weren't able to shower and the Port-O-Potty was less than ideal, the trip was a complete success and definitely a highlight of the summer!



**Above:** The Green Team on the harbor ferry on their way to Peddock's Island!

## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

On August 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, we participated in the annual National Night Out event along with the rest of the Groundwork Lawrence staff by hosting activities at Brook, Cronin, and Manchester Street parks. National Night Out promotes safety in Lawrence and community members occupy the parks for a night free from crime. Roughly 300 people attended the event between all three parks and enjoyed food, drinks, music, and games. Donations were provided by the Bread and Roses soup kitchen (Richardson' ice cream) and G & Z's pizza. We also performed our nutrition and healthy eating skit (which featured Green Team superheroes saving a family from eating at a restaurant where villains were serving unhealthy food) and engaged the kids by face painting and hosting games on the playground equipment. Volunteers from Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network, our community gardens network, YMCA, Lawrence CommunityWorks, and Café Verde helped us make this event possible.

## KEEPIN' IT FRESH!

In February 2011, the Green Team was awarded a \$1000 grant from Youth Venture in order to start a business that will last at least two years and benefit the community of Lawrence, MA. After much thought and deliberation, we came up with a plan to start a business that would reflect our core values. The name of the business is Keepin' it Fresh, and it's our way of making fresh, locally-grown vegetables more accessible to the people of our city. We grow vegetables and herbs in two community gardens in the city, and sell our harvest to a bodega and a restaurant.

The Green Team has dedicated the entire summer to this project, and we've spent lots of time weeding, watering, and harvesting our garden plots located at Scarito Park (Brook Street) and Giuffrida Place. Our produce is sold to Café Verde, located at 275 Essex Street in Lawrence, and Rancho Market (157 Lawrence Street), where we have a farm stand display. So far this summer, our herbs (like basil, rosemary, sage, and parsley), cherry tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, and peas have given us the best yield, and we're looking forward to being able to harvest our eggplants in a few weeks!

Throughout the summer, we have vigilantly tended our gardens and harvested and sold the best of our produce as soon as it's ripe to ensure that the product we're selling is as fresh as possible. We've learned valuable business skills along the way too, such as goal-setting, marketing strategies, establishing and maintaining good relationships with business partners, and responsibility. Overall, the Keepin' It Fresh project has been a success and we look forward to how it's going to continue to grow and expand throughout the school year and into next season.

**Below left:** Dorian, Jessica, Angel, and Anthony prepare the soil to plant lettuce at their Scarito Park community garden bed. **Below right:** Jessica pulls weeds at Guiffrida Place to get the soil ready for planting.



**Above:** Our Keepin' It Fresh sign—look for it around the city! **Below:** The Keepin' It Fresh display at Rancho Market. Yum!



## WORKING AT THE JOHNSON FARM

One of our favorite weekly activities this summer was driving up Windham, NH to work on Scott and Christy Johnson's farm. They own the last family farm in Windham and have a special partnership with Neighbors in Need, a non-profit that runs food pantries in the Greater Lawrence Area. The Johnsons donate over half their produce to Neighbors in Need to allow people without access to food in Lawrence to be able to have fresh fruits and vegetables during the spring, summer, and fall, in addition to the canned and boxed non-perishable food items. To help them help the hungry in our community, we weeded and harvested the crops weekly at the farm. We also got to experience farm life there, from their farmstand where they sell their produce, to their chickens, horses, pig, and goats! Scott taught us a lot about local farming. We can now take the skills we learned and bring them back to our own community garden plots.



**Above:** Elio, Nashira, Jessica, and Mario working hard weeding squash plants at Johnson Farm.

## GARDEN OPENING AT SPRUCE & MYRTLE STREETS

On August 16th, the Green Team joined Groundwork, members of the EPA, and Mayor Lantigua and his associates for a garden opening ceremony at the newest community garden plot on the corner of Spruce and Myrtle Street. This garden is the newest in a string of garden openings throughout the city. The Green Team helped to plant raspberry bushes and apple trees before the official ceremony. We also took part in the fencing and removal of invasive species. We feel that these community gardens, with the number of gardeners growing rapidly, will greatly benefit the city of Lawrence.

**Right:** The Green Team with leaders Yicaury, Annie, and Anna at the garden opening ceremony.



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Part of the skill set we were developing this summer is how to be leaders to make a difference in our community. Our health workshop and Keepin' It Fresh! campaign allow us to share our knowledge within the community, specifically regarding health and diet-related diseases in Lawrence. But we are always looking for more ways to spread the word about keeping Lawrence green and clean, healthy cooking and diets, and the benefits of gardening and eating locally grown foods. Please let us know how we can be of service to you, your community organization, or local business. We are happy to host a group of volunteers to clean up a park or garden, or bring a workshop about recycling, trash, cooking, or gardening to you! Or if you have any other projects that you think would be a good match for the Green Team just let us know. Please contact Anna at Groundwork Lawrence at (978) 974-0770 ext 4 or [arickards@groundworklawrence.org](mailto:arickards@groundworklawrence.org)

