

Green Team Newsletter

The Camping Experience of a Lifetime

During the summer Green Team went on a three day camping trip in Barnard, VT along with Groundwork Somerville. While we were there, there was a good mix of play and work. Our play consisted of getting to know members of the Groundwork Somerville Green Team and swimming in Silver Lake. It gave us a chance to bond together and get to know each other. We also went star gazing and it was beautiful; nothing like we've seen in the city. One the second day we went to Marsh-Billings Rockefeller National Park. Both Green Teams got to learn about the history of Vermont, and the history of the Rockefeller estate where Laurence Rockefeller and his family lived. Our service was primarily trail maintenance, our team split into two groups to clear



from left, back to right - Winnie, Jessica, Luis and Yakaira

"It was pretty cool cleaning the trails because it wasn't service that you had to wait for the result, you saw the progress right before your own eyes. It was pretty amazing because people use those trails everyday. The trip, really brought us together as a group"
-Chelly

extensive trails around the park. We even had time to go to see the view of the town of Woodstock at the top of the trail, and on our way down we saw a deer. Even though the final night was raining, we made the best of it by sharing in each others company.

Our Special Tree...



Almost everyday of our summer program we ate lunch next to a specific tree that we all liked. A large maple tree that has a nice canopy to sit underneath. The tree is located in the North Common Park(*formal name Campagnone Park*). This became our special tree where we got to spend time as a group getting to know each other better and reviewing the week's schedule. Everyone enjoyed the time we spent there and we hope to make many more visits to our special tree.

Collaborating with Project Venture

During the summer we had the chance to meet a new group called Project Venture, a Family Service, Inc. program for middle-school aged kids. Our collaboration with them involved two days. The first day we lead them through preparing a healthy snack. We made a salad with caramelized walnuts that tasted so good and a yogurt parfait with blueberries. On the second day they taught us about bikes. We learned about bike safety, how to fix a bike tire, and hand signals. We had a lot of fun together!.



Interacting with young kids was one of my favorite aspects of the collaboration.

—Winnie



Johnson Farm & Neighbors In Need

I loved visiting the farm and being a helping hand. The large pig was also pretty cool.

—Luis

This summer we worked at Johnson Farm in Windham, NH. Johnson's is especially important to us because they set aside a portion of their farm land specifically to grow feed to donate to Neighbors in Need, a local hunger relief organization in Lawrence. The Green Team helped on the farm by hoeing and weeding alongside the growing vegetables. We also got to harvest 496 lbs of squash and cucumbers one morning. Wildlife on the farm another one of the features we enjoyed.



It made me feel good to know that all of my hard work was benefitting others” -Sacha

Kickoff with Groundwork Somerville

In the middle of July, we met up with the Groundwork Somerville Green Team at their local boat house to get ready for the camping trip that was coming the following week. There was a “Leave No Trace” training that taught us how to minimize the human impact on our natural environment. This training was a great thing to precede our camping trip as we also learned about being better stewards and respecting and appreciating the wild-life we may encounter while in the woods. We also got a chance to learn about what the Groundwork Somerville Green Team does around their city, and we helped them clean the walkway along the River (on the side of I-93) while they went in canoes cleaning along the riverbanks. The kick off was great because we got to know most of the members, and hang out with them before we all went on our camping trip to Vermont.

“This summer was really fun.”
-Luis



Stewardship and “Greening It Up”...

One of the main goals the Green Team had this summer, as part of our larger “Green It Up” campaign, was to reduce litter in the city. One of the ways we did this was by cleaning parks in the city. We had several park clean-ups that included Dr. Nina Scarito Park, Misserville Skate Park and Reviviendo Park. In a conscious effort to practice our 3R’s Reduce, Reuse and Recycle we separated the trash from the recyclables so that the recyclables could get recycled and not just thrown out with the trash. We hope someday to get recycling bins at our city parks but until that day we will continue to work with the City’s recycling coordinator to make sure the recyclables are actually “recycled”. Even though the parks kept getting trashed throughout the summer, we continued to go back because we felt it was important to continue to clean the parks to show people that we can be stewards and take care of our public spaces. Each time we went back to a park we had already cleaned we all put on our game faces on and cleaned up as much as we could. It felt nice to pass by the parks after work and show our friends and family what we did to make a difference. Leading by example is important and we hope others will help us maintain our parks.

We also spent some time being stewards of Den Rock Park this summer. Den Rock is Lawrence’s only large, naturally wooded area; it has great hiking trails, a beaver pond and the big “Den Rock” that rock climbers love. We re-blazed and cleared trails and cleaned up trash! It was great to spend some time at Den Rock taking care of it, seeing the beaver activity and knowing the difference we made would be enjoyed by many people.

“This summer we learned the meaning of Stewardship...”



What is a CSA?

Since late June the green team has been enjoying a CSA fruit and veggie share! After a full summer of asking what does CSA mean, I think we finally got it: Community Supported Agriculture. We received vegetables that were picked fresh from the farm that morning. We learned about new vegetables, how to cook with them, and why it is important to support a CSA and the value of farm fresh vegetables. Now we know that eating locally is important, that the food being picked that morning is better and more nutritious for you and having a CSA forces you to try new vegetables you otherwise wouldn't try. Every week when we picked up our CSA share we first had to identify what was in the box. Through this we learned about some new vegetables like kohlrabi and saw familiar ones like corn and tomatoes. We also had yellow watermelon for the first time! The opportunity to cook with our CSA vegetables was something we all really enjoyed, more on our cooking below!



"I didn't know watermelons could be yellow"

...said after having a watermelon that was yellow inside instead of red

My favorite, the Frittata...

During the summer we used the CSA share to make different healthy dishes. Before beginning cooking we learned some important hand sanitation skills to keep our hands clean (so as not to spread germs or get anyone else sick from eating our food), general food safety, goals of cooking, some cooking terms and tips for how to cut different things. We also learned that a lot of the ingredients we used can be found at the Farmers Market too. Some of the things we made were veggie loaf, zucchini fudge cake, cold salads, fruit parfait, and a veggie frittata.

Cooking was a great experience. It gave me ideas of how to make a delicious dish with vegetables, which became a very useful skill now that I am a vegetarian."

-Sacha



Recipes

We made a green team recipe book to share with our families at the end of the summer, that included the different recipes we tried: Green Beans With Caramelized Onions , Yogurt and Granola Parfait , Frittata With Potatoes and Vegetables, Fresh Corn Salad, Fruit Zucchini Muffin Shortcake, Hakurei Turnip Salad, Pesto Potato Salad, Vegetable Loaf and Zucchini Fudge Cake.

Thank you to Lawrence Heritage State Park and Dharma Crafts for letting us use their kitchens!

Staking tomatoes and trellising cukes...

This summer, one of the core staples of the program was gardening at the Leonard School-yard garden and the Brook Street community garden (where we have two garden plots). We grew corn, eggplant, cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, basil, cilantro, parsley, green beans, snow peas, lettuce, strawberries and shallots just to name a few...! Weeding was one of our main tasks ...every time that we went to the gardens...more and more weeds would be there. Did you know that weeds can be harmful to the plants you are trying to grow because they suck up all of the nutrients that the plant needs? Those weeds just kept coming back. We learned the difference between a plant and a weed, what plants looked like in different stages of their development, how to maintain our garden by staking and trellising certain plants and how/when to properly harvest. As a team we managed to keep the gardens alive and beautiful. When vegetables were ready to be harvested we would get the chance to take some home to use them in mom's cooking.

"Weeds...are a punishment to all gardeners and farmers"

-Jessica



The importance of Service...

One of the important things we learned this summer was the importance of service. This summer alone we gave back 40 volunteers hours each to service projects. As a team that equals 400 volunteers hours over eight weeks! We learned that service is important not only to your community but beyond; our service included many hours right here in Lawrence, but we also went to Lowell, Somerville, Windham, NH and even to a National Park site in Vermont. It was great to learn through our service and feel good about giving back. We were also happy to engage our peers in service through GWL's 8th Annual Spicket River Cleanup, more on that on page 6.

"The couple of times we visited the farmers market we helped out vendors, passed out flyers and food samples. We even had our faces painted one week. We had fun at the farmers market." -Elio

8th Annual Spicket River Cleanup

The 8th Annual Spicket River Clean-up was a great success! We worked hard to reach out to our friends at school, we set-up registration tables, made posters, and had announcements over our school intercom. Our Green Team is made up of students from both Lawrence High School and Central Catholic, so we were able to reach many students. We were glad to see that in addition to our outreach at the high schools the Community Day Charter School brought a large group (young stewards in the making). During the event 350 volunteers worked to pull out approximately 10 tons of trash from the Spicket River Greenway!



We love the event because you can see the immediate impact., we know our outreach made a big difference, volunteers were very energetic, it was sunny and cold but not raining and we got to see Green Team alumni. We were also excited to have 100 people sign our Green It Up! pledge sheet. By signing our pledge sheet people committed to "... help Groundwork Lawrence Green Team Green It Up in Lawrence by not littering and by working to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle!". Volunteers also received a "Green It Up" button which we see people wearing now in school. The Spicket River Cleanup reminded us that every single person can make a difference! We celebrated after with lunch and Richardson's ice-cream!



Winnie wins 3rd place in Essay Contest!

At the annual Youth Summit at Lowell National Historical Park one of our very own won 3rd place in the essay contest. We were all asked to answer this question: Based on my experience with the National Park Service and Green Team I will continue to make a difference by...

Some of Winnie's winning words:

"... I started working for Groundwork Lawrence Green Team this summer and it has changed the way I view things around me. It has taught me how I can live more practical, how to eat healthier food, how to maintain not only my community but other places around me. Green Team has been a really good opportunity to learn new things I wouldn't have tried on my own. I've learned how to tell plants from each one another and how to make healthier meals. One of my favorite experiences would have to be the camping trip in the State of Vermont. We were away from technology for three days and maybe it would have bothered me but it didn't. I felt at peace and I got to admire the beauty of the scenery around me. On our service day we had to clean a trail in The Marsh Billings National Park. I remember how it felt being up there. The work was hard but it was worth it. The smell of pine trees was unbelievable, how good it felt when the rain started falling, how nice it was to hike up the mountain to watch the town below us. For me it felt magical, it was absolutely beautiful.

