



Summer  
2013

## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

It's that time of year, and the Green Team is at it again- keeping the city of Lawrence fresh and clean. This summer 20 Lawrence youth became a part of the Green Team and learned what it meant to "change places and change lives". Together we accomplished much more than we could have imagined in our community. Both *So Fresh* and *So Green* were able to impact the residents of Lawrence through various projects including; growing and selling fresh produce at our farmer's markets, cleaning and activating parks, and partnering with multiple organizations across Lawrence and New England to achieve positive change. Through our projects, we bonded and became more than co-workers- we became a family.

### Team Building

This year Green Team attended a 3 day camping trip to Noble View for Orientation. The goal of the overnight trip was for both crews to have the opportunity to bond with each other and their leaders before working hard for the next 7 weeks. It was a great opportunity for all of us to get acquainted and learn more about each other, discuss goals and expectations for the summer, and most importantly: to have fun. Together we learned how to set up tarps, tents, and prepare meals for a group. These activities helped us learn new skills and how to work together cooperatively to prepare for a successful summer.

One of our favorite events this summer was the canoe and hiking trip at Harold Parker State Forest. This was our end of the year celebration and despite all of the rain, it was a great success!

Both *So Fresh* and *So Green* got to bond together as one big group. The canoeing portion showed us that we may struggle, but if we keep moving forward no matter how hard or long it takes us, we can achieve our goals. It was a challenge because it takes more than one person to steer a boat, so we had to work together as a group and effectively communicate. During the hike we saw a variety of trees and wildlife, which many of us rarely take the opportunity to observe and appreciate. We ventured down paths, unsure of their exact outcome. The hike taught us how to navigate using a map and our surroundings. It was a fun way to end our summer and learn new skills one last time together.

*I changed the way I see my community,  
and the way I work with people.*

-Evelin Reyes



### So Fresh

The crew poses after working hard in the fields of Johnson Farm in Windham New Hampshire.



### So Green

After 20 years of being locked, the front gates at Heritage State Park are finally opened, thanks to the hard work of the crew!

# Environmental Justice Summits

This year Green Team attended the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project's (REEP) Summit, focused on youth empowerment, and the EJ Summit at Clark University in Worcester, focused on multigenerational collaboration. At these two events, we took part in workshops concerning various social issues, such as climate change, food justice, race, and public transportation. The youth, adults, and seniors collaborated together to discuss these issues, come up with solutions, and write proposals to put these solutions into action. The event included a discussion panel, with representatives from revolutionary socialist and environmental organizations. These panelists spoke about environmental justice, various social issues and what has to be done in order to progress the



(From left) Nihal Bozkurt, Jaxell Negron, and Marianne Caceres discuss ways to expand the concept of environmental justice.

movement. The discussion was then opened to the EJ Summit participants, so everyone had a chance to voice their questions, concerns and solutions. This was a great opportunity for us to network with other youth organizations, such as REEP, the Worcester Roots Project, and the Youth Affordabili(T) Coalition.



## Johnson Farm

One of So Fresh's favorite activities this summer (and not just because of their delicious ice cream stand!), was working at Johnson Farm every week to help with various tasks around their fields. We had the opportunity to help with intensive weeding, raking, and harvesting of produce on the farm. We learned about the history of the farm and that it is the last family run farm in New Hampshire. As a family, they understand what it means to give back to the community as more than half of their produce is donated to Neighbors in Need. Neighbors in Need disperse it

throughout the Greater Lawrence Community to help feed the hungry. While working at Johnson Farm, we got a first-hand opportunity to learn what it takes to be a large-scale farmer. Johnson Farm helped us learn new skills and values, and we even got to make a new friend-Tom the Turkey!



Top: Abner Lora bonds with new friend Tom the Turkey. Below, from left: Anthony Curtis, Jaxell Negron, Nairobi Ubilez, and Arcadia Morales work hard pulling weeds.

Kyle Schwartz gets to work with his favorite new garden tool.

Green Team works hard to clear hiking trails at Noble View. Top: Alisandra Davila with So Green team leader Jesenia Lopez. Below: Jaxell Negron and Tomas Lopez



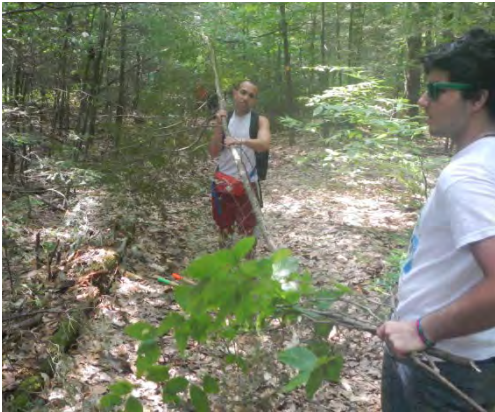
So Green comes together after a hard day of clearing invasive species

## FUNdamental Recreation

## Gates to the City

So Green met with the Summer Recreational Program twice a week for an hour and a half at both the North and South Common. We worked with more than 75 kids per session, ages 6-12 at the South Common and more than 100 kids per session at the North Common. During our time, we provided environmental education through games and hands on activities. We taught the youth about urban birds, recycling in the city, plant parts, and nutrition. The kids loved engaging in the activities. Some of their favorite activities included building a robot out of recycled materials, planting seeds to take home, and making fruit smoothies! We loved teaching the younger kids about things that are important to us and designing activities for them. We are looking forward to working with them again next year and developing new activities about more topics.

Every Wednesday, So Green spent the day with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Those days were fun and immensely educational. We learned so much about our city's history and how the parks in Lawrence came to be. We had an opportunity to make our visions for the city come to life by beautifying areas that needed improvement. The Lawrence Heritage Park was one of the locations that made us realize how much our involvement really influences the city. The front gates of the park that face the street had been closed due wild and overgrown vegetation. One of our projects was to cut back the vegetation behind the gates to provide visual access to the public. After a full day of pulling out weeds and overgrown vegetation, DCR was incredibly impressed by our work and decided to cut off the old and rusty lock to re-open the gates for the first time in 20 years! It was an exciting event that reminded us that hard works pays off and makes an impact on our community.



Above: Aimee Valdez leads a recycling game with kids from the summer rec program.

*[Green Team] is the best opportunity that an individual in high school can have. This program encourages youth to become future leaders.*

-Dorian Straker

# Annual City-Wide Events

## Urban Birds Festival

Habitat for wildlife in urban areas can be hard to come by. When looking for a place to live, birds need to find food, water, shelter, and a place to nest. In urban areas, birds often have a hard time finding the resources they need to survive. In an effort to continue to improve open green spaces and bird habitats in Lawrence, Groundwork has teamed up with AmeriCorps and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to Celebrate Urban Birds in the city. This year Green Team worked alongside Ben (our in-house AmeriCorps Ornithologist), New Balance employees, and community volunteers to plant over 1,600 native grasses, shrubs, and flowers at Manchester Street Park. Our goal is to keep invasive species at bay, and as a result attract more birds, insects, and mammals native to our city!

## National Night Out

National Night Out is a nation-wide event focused on crime and drug prevention. It is filled with food, music, activities, and local performers as an effective and fun approach to promote neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships. Groundwork Lawrence hosts the event at both Dr.Nina Scarito Park and Manchester St Park. Green Team was on scene this year, ensuring everyone had a fun and safe experience.



## The Kite Festival

Every year Groundwork Lawrence partners up with other community outreach organizations to host events within the city. One of our favorites is Kite Festival. "Archie" the kite maker comes to Pemberton State Park along the Merrimack River to teach Green Team and other Lawrence youth the art of kite making. Children have the opportunity to design their kites with colored markers and Green Team helps with the assembly. Our favorite part is when all the kids start flying their kites along the river-they look so accomplished and excited. This event was filled with great food, music, storytelling, face paint, and lots of fun.

*Working for Green Team was a truly life changing experience. I've learned more about the city where I live and how to care for it.*

*-Arcadia Morales*

## AROUND THE EVENTS



## Urban Birds

Green Team takes a break from planting to pose for this awesome group shot.



## National Night Out

Only smiling faces to be found at this year's National Night out at Scarito Park!



## The Kite Festival

So Green's Aimee Valdez and Luis Martinez construct their kites.

## Green for a Cause

This summer, So Fresh continued their agriculturally based business venture and expanded to producing food for the Farmer's Market from eight gardens throughout the city. When we weren't selling at the Farmer's Market we were working hard in the gardens—weeding, watering, planting, and harvesting. One of our biggest accomplishments was the work we did at Costello Park, our newest garden. We managed and maintained a half of an acre of growing space. The time spent in all the gardens allowed for a bountiful harvest every week. One of the best parts of this work was the opportunity to sell our fresh produce at the market. It felt good to know that people in our community were able to nourish their bodies with healthy food that we had worked so hard to grow. It was fun to sell and meet new people every week. One of our latest marketing tactics was to add face paint and henna tattoos to our table. In addition to our sales, we had the opportunity to grow food for the Bread and Roses soup kitchen. It was an amazing feeling to go and drop off the produce we had grown for the soup kitchen. This summer was a huge success for production and sales, as a team we were able to harvest more than 240 pounds of fresh produce for our community!

**For more information about the Green Team please visit:**

<http://groundworklawrence.org/greenteam>

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From left: Arcadia Morales, Kyle Schwartz, Nihal Bozkurt, and Anthony Curtis (front) man the Green Team table at the Wednesday farmers market on South Common.

## Saugus Iron Works

So Green spent a day at Saugus Ironworks touring the facility and being educated on the Iron revolution that began there during the 1700's. We were able to explore what life was like as an Iron worker and a Blacksmith. We learned that the facility was once buried and then found many years after by an archaeologist that worked really hard to replicate the original buildings. There were separate buildings and each played an important role

in manufacturing the finished iron that would be exported down the Saugus River. Interestingly enough, the Saugus River is also habitat for various animal species and native plants. We spent multiple hours working on the site removing invasive species as part of the National Park Service's Turning Basin Restoration project in efforts to restore the native plant habitat that once existed in the National Park.

