



GREENING NEW YORK CITY'S STREETS

Have you noticed recently that New York City's streets are just a little bit greener? If you're out taking in the city and observe that a formerly barren traffic circle, triangle, or cul-de-sac is suddenly an oasis of green, you're looking at the handiwork of Parks & Recreation's Greenstreets program. Initiated by Commissioner Stern in 1986 during his first term as head of Parks & Recreation during the Koch administration, the program is a joint venture with the City of New York/Department of Transportation, which owns most of the sites. When Mr. Stern was reappointed Parks Commissioner by Mayor Giuliani in 1994, Greenstreets was reintroduced and the Mayor provided \$1 million from the City's annual capital budget. Since then 191 small parks have been created and over 1,770 more have been identified for beautification. Eventually, the combined acreage of Greenstreets will equal that of Baisley Pond Park in Queens or twice that of East River Park in Manhattan.

One unusual Greenstreets site with a long history of community involvement is the "Time Landscape" garden, at the northeast corner of LaGuardia Place and West Houston Street, in Manhattan. (Manhattan has relatively fewer Greenstreets sites, compared to the other boroughs, because the rectilinear street grid allows fewer opportunities for odd lots.) In 1978, landscape artist Alan Sonfist planted the plot with native trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers and other plants, in order to reproduce the forest that once covered what is now Greenwich Village. Last month, Parks brought this unusual corner into the Greenstreets program.

Most Greenstreets sites take two days, not two decades, to create. Under the program, private contractors bid on contracts for multiple sites, each of which costs about \$10,000 to do. Once a site is chosen, a Parks landscape architect will create a design for the mini-park. Then the contractor brings in a backhoe and digs up the site, lays down topsoil, and plants trees and shrubs (at least six feet from the curb to protect them from traffic). Trees, like lindens and locusts, and shrubs, such as black-

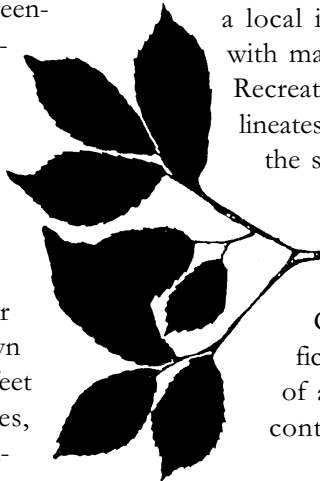
berry, are specifically chosen for their hardiness. Though the process is short, attention is paid to the specifics of each individual site and no two of these parklets are alike.

Contractors are required to replace or remove dying or vandalized plants, but to ensure ongoing maintenance communities must get involved. Parks' planners take this into account when choosing Greenstreets sites. When identifying sites to be beautified, Parks' planners look first for sites where local community groups may be able to help in maintenance. They also look for sites that are already in good condition (with good curbs and sidewalks) and that are highly visible in strong business areas or communities.

Ann Bittenwieser, of the Alliance for Downtown New York, a Business Improvement District in lower Manhattan, worked with Greenstreets and D.O.T. to design and install planters in a traffic island across from the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. "South Ferry Plaza [the Greenstreets site] has made a big difference to the area, which is chaotic with construction." The Alliance continues to be involved with the site, regularly cleaning, weeding and watering it.

Across the city, other groups like the Alliance for Downtown New York are greening their neighborhoods by taking care of Greenstreets sites. Ultimately, for the greening effects of the Greenstreets program to be permanent, each site needs a local individual, business or community group to help with maintenance. Tim Marshall, a consultant to Parks & Recreation who has designed most of the mini-parks, delineates three levels of maintenance: 1) keeping an eye on the site and letting Parks know if there are problems, 2) cleaning, and 3) weeding. Groups can get involved on any or all of the different levels.

If you would like to help maintain a local Greenstreets site in your neighborhood -- or if a traffic island near your home, office or business is in need of a spruce up -- call Greenstreets at 718-760-6794, or contact your borough Outreach Coordinator.



DISCOVERING THE BRONX RIVER

The Bronx River flows through the heart of the Bronx, weaving its way through neighborhoods, parks, cultural institutions, and industrial areas. Peel back the layers of streets, highways, and bridges and discover the treasure which lies within.

Partnerships for Parks recently teamed up with Urban Resources Partnership (an organization made up of six Federal and one State agencies) to convene the first Bronx River Working Group meeting, which now consists of over 25 community organizations, non-profits, and government agencies, including Bronx River Restoration, which has been helping the river for over two decades. The Working Group's goal is to encourage local groups, communities, and residents to discover the Bronx River.

We encourage *you* to discover the Bronx River. Take part in canoe rides, river walks, and urban hiking tours. Become a Riverkeeper or participate in a Bronx River festival or *It's My River!* clean up (all sponsored by Bronx River Restoration). Other upcoming events include the West Farms Bronx River Garden Festival (May 16), and the Bronx Riverfest (June 13).

For information on how to get involved with the Bronx River call Jenny Hoffner, Bronx River Coordinator, at 718-430-4648.

PICTURE YOUR PARK

Last summer the **Jackson Heights (Queens) Beautification Group/Friends of Travers Park** sponsored a photography class and exhibition in their park. First, Travers Park volunteer and professional photographer Sue Larson gave a class for neighborhood children, age 13 and older. Then each of the eight participating children was given a disposable camera and sent out to photograph their park. Friends group member Celeste Balducci Chapin says of the children's work, "The diversity of the views were wonderful. They included shots of the older Russian gentlemen playing chess, shadow and light studies, people of all ages and ethnic groups."

The pictures were developed at local photography store which gave the group a discount on both the cameras and processing; then the prints were mounted on the park house wall. The Friends then created a display board showing the best of the photos which was displayed in local banks and stores

Photography programs and exhibits like this one are a great way to involve people in their park. The kids loved taking the pictures and people like seeing the things they do in the park. You might consider putting on such a program; if you want more information, call Alyssa Weiss at 212-360-8166.

www.nycparks.org: Parks on the Web

The *Leaflet* is now on-line! These days, when you visit Parks & Recreation's website you can read the latest issue of this publication. Also new this month: a list of the dog runs in the City, information about the City's first dog playground in Van Cortlandt Park, a new page of Historic House events, a list of Bocce Court locations and, on the For Kids page, information about Parks "Learn To" programs.

LIFEGUARD JOBS

Parks & Recreation is still looking for lifeguards to staff its pools and beaches for summer 1998. If you're eligible -- able to swim, over 16 years old, in good health and with acceptable eyesight -- the agency will send you to **Lifeguard School** and, after successful completion, will guarantee you a job. Summer jobs start at \$8.64 per hour. For more information, call the Lifeguard School at 212-830-7880.

FREE SPORTS CLINICS

Parks & Recreation is offering free clinics in soccer, golf, basketball, and other sports, and sponsoring tryouts for the Youth Games. For information, call 212-360-8211.

RESOURCE PACKETS AVAILABLE

For free resource packets on Establishing a Friends of the Park Group, Making Your Park Safer, Building Alliances, Planning Successful Events, or Fundraising for Parks Groups, call Alyssa Weiss at 212-360-8166.

GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE

July 1: City Parks Foundation Quarterly Grants Program. Grants for community groups that support their parks and playgrounds. 212-360-8102.

HELPFUL NUMBERS

<i>Partnerships for Parks</i>	212-360-1310
To volunteer or to join your local parks group:	212-360-1357
For recorded information about special events:	888-NY-PARKS
To report graffiti, vandalism, or crime:	800-201-PARK

Parks on the Web: www.nycparks.org

Partnerships for Parks works to increase community support for parks throughout New York City. Founded in 1995 as a joint initiative of the City Parks Foundation and Parks & Recreation, *Partnerships* strengthens groups that care for local parks, links these groups so they are stronger collectively, and promotes citywide appreciation of our parks.

Tim Tompkins, Director

This issue of the Leaflet was written by Bodi (Sunlight) Luse.



CITY PARKS FOUNDATION



City of New York
Parks & Recreation

Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mayor
Henry J. Stern, Commissioner

NEWS FROM THE BOROUGHES:

APRIL PARTNERS OF THE MONTH

On April 27, at a luncheon with Commissioner Stern, April's Parks Partners of the Month were announced and celebrated. The activities of these community leaders are good examples of the many exciting things going on in New York City's parks!

Bronx: The **Garden Club of City Island**, led by **Jennie Varian**, is a fixture in the City Island community. Recently they raised \$14,000 to help restore the historic promenade at Bridge Park. Jennie has worked to reach out to the community of City Island through clean-ups and plantings in the parks.

Brooklyn: **Chip "Buffalo" Cafiero** is a founding member of the **Bay Ridge Parks and Waterfront Council (BRPWC)**. Chip, along with many other dedicated members of the BRPWC, has helped beautify Shore Road and Owl's Head Park, eliciting the volunteer support of people in and out of the community.

Manhattan: **Skip "Broadway" Blumberg**, a neighbor of City Hall Park, has taken a very small group and turned it into a thriving community organization. Since its inception, **the Friends of City Hall Park** have organized several successful clean-up and planting projects, enlisting support from Home Depot, Fleet Bank, Pace University and the Girl Scouts.

Queens: **Joe "The Phantom" Aiello** is the Park Warden of the newly renovated Glendale Playground, and he plays an active role in the safety and cleanliness of the entire Glendale area. His civic involvement with the **Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol** and the **Glendale Kiwanis** have enriched his contribution to "his parks."

Staten Island: The **1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry, New York Army National Guard** have dedicated themselves to service, including helping parks! An example of their leadership and respect for Parks and open spaces their clean-up of **Mariner's Marsh**, where the 101st Cavalry removed sixty cars from the area in one day.

Gardens: **Alfreda Shem-Yehudah** has been the driving force behind the **Back to Eden Garden** in Brooklyn since 1994. In that short time, the lot has been utterly transformed from a rat-infested eyesore to a community treasure. With the help of her grandson Kaison, age 3, she has created a safe, nurturing environment for neighbors and local kids in an otherwise neglected corner of Brownsville.

"I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty, which will protect the beauty of our natural environment, which will preserve the great old American houses and squares and parks of our national past and which will build handsome and balanced cities for our future."
--John F. Kennedy, October 26, 1963

ATTENTION: FOR ADDRESS CORRECTIONS CALL 212-360-1357.

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