



GROUNDWORK LAWRENCE GREEN TEAM FY08 Newsletter II

Groundwork Lawrence is a non-profit organization working to create sustainable environmental change through community-based partnerships. Groundwork Lawrence is an affiliate of Groundwork USA. The **Green Team** program offers part-time, paid positions for high school students from Lawrence to help lead local environmental initiatives, conduct environmental research, and participate in hands-on improvement projects throughout the City of Lawrence. The program is intended to promote the protection and restoration of critical ecological systems and natural resources in Lawrence by engaging teens in advocacy and service-learning efforts focused on the community's waterways, parks and open spaces. In addition, financial literacy and career development skills are integrated into educational workshops. The program has dual goals - to prepare Lawrence's youth for a lifetime of environmental leadership, and to develop community capacity to improve the physical environment. The Green Team is a year-long program. Welcome to second newsletter, we hope you enjoy reading about our service projects, trips and education.



Education

Mass Audubon

In November the Green Team prepared to a presentation to Massachusetts Audubon Society. In groups we covered ideas for the future, recalled things from the past, and organized where we were in the present. We worked on slideshows to display our past, present and future to better present them. Our “past” group spoke about our experiences growing as a team. They talked about service days, our team trips and our experiences with other Green Teams. The “present” group talked about how we are being activists in our community. Lastly the “future” group talked about what we wanted to do as a group. The presentation was a success, and our audience was amazed of the work we done.



An Inconvenient Truth

This mind blowing documentary by Al Gore summed up our summer of environmental advocacy. After attending the Bioneers by the Bay conference we felt as if we were not alone in our efforts. An Inconvenient Truth showed us that the message we carry with us is already around the world. The message of taking action and responsibility to take care of the world we live in is embedded in our minds and this documentary just proves that we have a reason to stand up for our beliefs.

Reviviendo Gateway Initiative and Washington Mills

Ms. O’Brien met with us about Lawrence’s Reviviendo Gateway Initiative. She explained that the Reviviendo Gateway Initiative was not a typical urban revitalization plan; instead it was an engine for change that was driven by the vision and values of the people who lived, worked and invested in the city. The RGI project pre-dated the State’s 40R legislation and was one of the first smart growth efforts in the state. After reviewing the history of the project we took a tour of Washington Mills, a project that

directly benefited from RGI. This session was timely because GWL's annual Glow Gala fundraiser was being hosted by Washington Mills and we were volunteering at the event. As part of the event, each of us was asked to create a lantern for the silent auction. The Green Team manned the raffle and balloon table and by the end of the night we raised an astounding amount of \$700.

MIT @ Lawrence

On December 1st two students from MIT came to meet with us. They requested our assistance on a report about Predatory Lending, issues with poverty and flood plains. The graduate students needed feedback from people who live in the areas of their study. This day was very productive day as we all put together our experiences with poverty, flooding and other housing issues.

Soot Patrol with Clean Water Action

October 13, 2007 Danielle from Clean Water Action came to speak to us. She told us that keeping the environment is not only about recycling it is also about keeping the air clean. We learned that diesel trucks are a major factor in air pollution. Too many trucks passing through a certain area emit so much diesel that asthma rates continue to go up. We also learned that diesel pollutes our air more and more each day. The amount of trucks that pass through Lawrence at any given time beats the amount of diesel emitting trucks driving on the highway. In order for us to better understand what the issue with diesel was we watched a video of students from the Esperanza school completing a survey of diesel vehicles passing in a well known area, Essex Street. We had already been told about the hazards of diesel from another environmental youth group Ace, but we got a more in depth explanation when we went on a soot patrol ourselves. Our eyes were definitely opened. To prevent the diesel fuel from continuing to pollute our air we learned about retrofits. This simple solution only requires a filter to be placed on each truck. We love tackling new projects and fighting for retrofits seemed to be a great new idea.

Safe Cosmetics

This day was very eye opening and a little heartbreaking. Each of us had to bring one of our personal care products and check the chemical properties. Amazingly, we found out that each of our products contained a harmful chemical that could eventually cause cancer. As we took a moment to take all this in we also started to think of ways we could inform others of the potential dangers everyday products may cause us. After all the research, we started to discuss different ways to substitute our personal health products for more natural and health beneficial ones.

Community Events



Den Rock Clean-Up

On the 29th of September, the Green Team met up at Den Rock Park. The following day we were leading a hike for the Essex National Heritage Area's annual Trails and Sails weekend. We had to get the place ready; after all we were the hosts. That Saturday we brought all the supplies needed to clean up. We started off by cleaning up the entrance, like if we were cleaning our homes, we swept it. We pulled out weeds so it wouldn't look overgrown. After we were done with the entrance, we took a walk through Den Rock. We went in with rakes and loppers to clean up the trails. We lopped down branches that could have interfered w doing the tour. While doing this, we'd stop occasionally to put up bird houses that we had painted in the International Biodiversity day event. By the time we were done with Den Rock, it looked ready for a great hike!

Trails & Sails – Den Rock Hike



On September 30, 2007 from 9:00 – 12:00 we hosted the Trails and Sails hike at Den Rock Park. We started the morning with by introducing ourselves to hikers as they arrived. Our guest speaker was Tennis Lily, Chair of Lawrence's Conservation Commission. Tennis led the hike and shared facts about the park's history and ecology. The purpose of that day was to inform others about Den Rock Park, Lawrence's hidden jewel. We had over 30 attendees and it was a great experience. We even discovered a new beaver dam!

EPA World Water Monitoring Day



The EPA World Water Monitoring Day took place on October 18, 2007. Groundwork Lawrence, Green Team, and students from the Lawrence High school met on the Shawsheen River in Lawrence to have the event. The volunteers that were present that day performed various types of testing water quality experiments like pH, and turbidity. They also took the temperature of the water. We took a look at microinvertebrates that are indicators of good quality of water. During this event we got to meet representatives from the

Environmental Protection Agency and had a chance to learn of the many things they do to protect the environment.

Glow Gala



On December 6, 2007 Groundwork Lawrence hosted their annual GLOW Gala, where people from the community come to take a look at the artistic abilities of numerous of unknown artists. The “eco-art” work on display was to be action off in a silent auction. The theme of the Glow Gala this year was light and nature. The artwork that was on display consisted of lanterns with recycled items and nature materials, paintings, and Papier Mache portraits. The lantern shown was created by Jesenia and is titled “Fashionista” and it represents her love of fashion combined with her love for the environment. The Green Team participated in the auction also. The Green Team was in charge of the raffle tables where we tried to sell as many balloons and raffle tickets as possible. The night was a success, all the balloons were sold and many of the raffle tickets were sold too. The

outcome of the night was great, GWL raised over \$31,000 and it was a great experience.

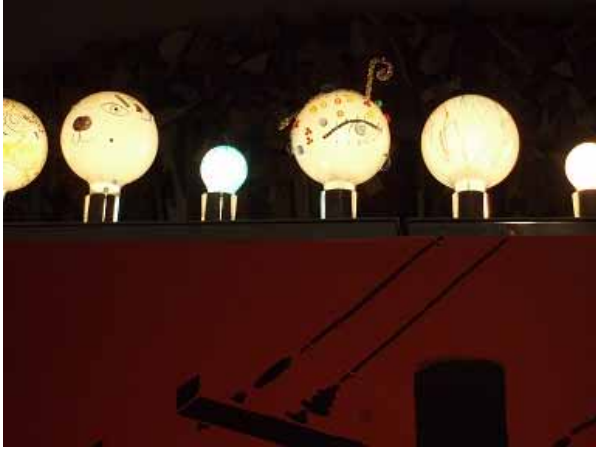
Trips

Bioneers by the Bay:

Bioneers by the Bay is a regional conference that takes place every year. This year it was held at UMass Dartmouth. It consisted of public speakers, authors and business gurus such as Van Jones, Rha Goddess, J Love, Richard Louv, and many other public representatives whom share the same interests on the changes of the world. Due to receiving scholarships, the Lawrence Green Team and Roxbury's ACE (another youth environmental community based program) were able to



attend the conference. Our stay lasted three days and two nights and we were a part of a new community full of all different kinds of personalities and personas that gathered together for the same reasons. A few reasons were our awareness of our environmental surroundings, addressing Global Concerns, AIDS, and poverty in our and other countries. Our days consisted of sleeping at a church, listening to lectures, and socializing with different members of various organizations. We attended various workshops dealing with using our resources, and making the world a better place. We also attended an open mic where all the youth that attended the convention were able to express themselves through different talents. At the end of our trip, we took away more than just the facts given to us; we took the experiences of getting to know people we've never met, and learning something from each and every event that occurred.



Revolving Museum

We visited The Revolving Museum in Lowell, for inspiration for our Glow Gala lanterns. The exhibit, *Electrifying!: The Art of Light and Illumination* contained dynamic light-art works created by over 100 youth and artists. The artwork we saw consisted of pieces such as lanterns, sculptures, and an electrical room full of diverse art pieces. The exhibit was a great inspiration for our own lantern making. It was definitely something new and innovative for all to experience.

Pinkham Notch:

The Green Team was given a free Y.O.P Trip for our hard work throughout the year. To our surprise the trip chosen was a ski trip. We spent two days and a night in a lodge where we learned how to snowshoe and ski. The first day we went snowshoeing along a few trails in the woods. That same day we took a little hike to a waterfall nearby. Later that night, the group had a few activities and enjoyed dinner as a whole. The second day we learned how to ski from a tour guide given to us by Kristen, a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club. After we all started getting the hang of it she took us on a trail where we spent the day. Everyone got off to a rough start but eventually we all succeeded in what most of us saw as an unattainable goal.



All About Us!



My name is **Gyna** and I am 17 and a member of the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team. I attend Lawrence High School of Health and Human Services, and am currently a junior. I was born in the Dominican Republic but have been living here in Lawrence since 1992. Since I was young I have always had been involved in the community. During my eighth grade year, one of the requirements to graduate was to complete fifty hours of community service. As part of my service I participated in Biodiversity Day, a service day hosted by GWL's Green Team. It was from about this point that I actually became an active member of Lawrence.

My freshman year in Lawrence High School I had Rebecca Veilluex as my Biology teacher. She informed the class about the Spicket River clean-up. I woke up that Saturday morning and got ready to volunteer. It felt great to give back to the community had given so much to me. I volunteered my sophomore year also. It was during my sophomore year that I found out about Groundwork Lawrence. She came into my Chemistry class and talked about job opportunities at Groundwork Lawrence, either to apply for the Youth Corps or the Green Team. The Youth Corps seemed interesting but I did not like the hours and the fact that it was only for the summer. It was the Green Team that caught my attention. To me it seemed like it was more involved with the environment. I decided to apply for the Green Team because I wanted to make a change in Lawrence.

When they called me to go in for an interview I was so happy but very nervous, I really wanted the job. They asked me why I wanted to be a member of the Green Team, and I responded "I want to be a member of the Green Team because I wanted to give back to my community." Also I told them about the time there was a flood in May 2006 and how it bothered me so much that once the water level went back to normal, how much trash there was. I don't ever want to see that sight again. That incident really opened my eyes and I wanted to do something about it. Being part of the Lawrence Green Team helps me accomplish this. The Green Team means so much to me and I am so happy I was able to join. It makes me feel like I am doing what my purpose is in life.



My name is **Yevette**. I am currently 17 years old and a junior at the Humanities and Leadership development high school at the Lawrence High School Campus. I have been involved with the Lawrence Green team for almost a year. I was previously involved with the biodiversity club at my school in which Rebecca Veilleux was in charge. I have always tried to be involved throughout middle school and the beginning of my high school years. I have always been a participant when it came to the community and making a difference.

Being in the Green Team is something that I appreciate greatly. I've learned many things about my own community and my surroundings. I've learned to care for global warming and learned better ways to live my life. This program has opened opportunities that will be very useful in college. I went into the program realizing how much was going to be offered to us. Being a part of the Green Team is something that gives me the privilege to do things that I know my family members were not able to do in the past. The main reason why I joined the Green Team was because I knew it would be good for college due to all of the community service hours. Through being in the Green Team I able to meet people and develop friendships that I thought I would never have. Now that I am part of the Green Team I feel I have changed my actions towards certain things and have become wiser with certain decisions I have made.



My name is **Wanny** and I am 16 years of age. At the moment I'm attending the Performing and Fine Arts School on the Lawrence Campus as a junior. My time as part of the Green Team has definitely had its impact on me. It has opened my mind to be more aware of my surroundings. I truly take it all in and realize that there is so much more going on in this world aside from Lawrence or even my personal life. I've had the chances of a life time because of the Green Team so for that I'm thankful. It's not every day a kid in Lawrence gets to hike up a mountain or go camping so I'm glad organizations like this exist to make it happen. Aside from my job at Groundwork I work in another non-profit that goes by the name of Movement City in the new Our House building on Newbury Street (a program of Lawrence CommunityWorks). All these encounters have all taught me something new and have given me a chance to achieve making me just a little bit stronger.



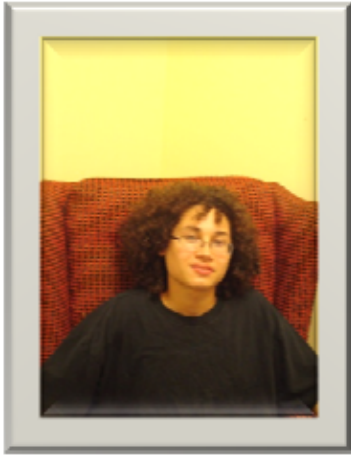
My name is **Jennifer** and I am 16 years old. I am now currently attending the Humanities and Leadership Development School at Lawrence High School as a sophomore. I've been a part of the Green Team now for almost 3 years. Being a Green Team member has not only broadened my horizons into looking at different aspects of life and environment but has also helped me to grow as a person mentally. Throughout the year, I have gained confidence in being more sociable and interact with unknown people. I've been able to share about past experiences and future ideas without dealing with my shyness and noticed that my ideas can be a big contribution. For example, the Green Team was given an opportunity to share about our experience throughout the summer while working Green Team. As usual, I was so nervous and shy to

talk in front of a crowd and scared I would embarrass myself. I eventually got over my nerves and talked in front of the crowd with my self-confidence. I am so proud of joining the Green Team which has given me the opportunity to overcome many of my weaknesses and develop a stronger me.



My name is **Sabrina** and I am 17 years old. I am currently a senior at Greater Lawrence Technical School and will be graduating in about five months. I was born in Boston and have only lived in Lawrence for about the last five years. I had stumbled upon the application for Green Team and to me it's been a dream comes true. Although many changes have happened in my life I feel that Green Team has been a factor in teaching me to make the best of situations. I have always enjoyed making myself useful and Green Team had given me an opportunity to do so. I would have never expected to be able to help the community hands on but I know I have always wanted to. I tend to be soft spoken but when tested I overcome my fears of public speaking. Not only have I overcome my fears from the past I have made goals for the

future. After high school I plan to attend art school and eventually take classes in Environmental Studies. One day I plan to make a giant mural depicting the times I had with Green Team, my struggles, my joys, and what we as a worldwide community need to do to come together and make a change. Being a member of Green Team has definitely has had an impact on me and I won't hesitate to apply for something like this again.



My name is **Christopher** and I am 15 years old. I am a sophomore at the Greater Lawrence Technical School. I am enrolled in the Culinary Arts department. I am an honors student. My future plans are to go to college at North Shore Community College and major in Culinary Arts. With that I hope to become a Pastry Chef. Pastry Chefs basically are master bakers and add finishing details. It was towards the end of my freshman year when my Biology teacher, Ms. Pierce had advised me to apply for a job at Groundwork Lawrence. I took it into consideration, and eventually applied. I am now a part of the 07-08 Green Team. The Green Team has helped me a lot since I joined. It helped me overcome my fear of public speaking.



My name is **Wilnely** and I am 17 years old and I am a junior in the Humanities and Leadership Development School at Lawrence High School. I was born and raised in Lawrence. Things have changed in Lawrence since I was a little girl in positive and negative ways. This is probably the reason why I want to make a change Lawrence. Some of the things I am passionate about are helping others and the environment. Now that I am older I have realized that. When I got into high school I started hearing a lot of talk of how Global Warming is affecting us and its affects to the earth. Since then I started getting into finding ways I can help the environment. Throughout high school I volunteered in many activities that helped make Lawrence a better place for everyone. Just a couple months ago I became a Green Team member because I wanted to make a difference. I think that was one of the best decisions I ever made. I have had so many great experiences with Green Team that are unforgettable. Being a Green Team member has giving me a chance to learn more about the environment while experiencing the outdoors. In a few years I am going to college and I am planning to major in something to do with math and the environment.



My name is **Sacha** and I'm 16 years old. I am a junior at the Greater Lawrence Technical High school. I am currently studying Biotechnology in the advanced science department. My future plans are to go to college and extend my education in biotech. The reason I joined the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team was because my Biotechnology teacher Mrs. Bartch insisted for me to join. After I was accepted into the Green Team I realized that I was actually interested and that with all the information I learned about my community I realized that I wanted to be one of those people who actually made a difference.




My name is **David** and I'm 15 years old. I am a freshman at Lawrence High School. When I grow up I want to be a mechanic. I joined the Green Team because it was my first job where I could make a difference in my city. It also helps because I was making money and making a difference. This is why I joined the Green Team.



Hey, what's up, my name is **Jesenia**. I'm 16 years old and currently attending the Business, Management &, Finance school at Lawrence High School. I have major dreams of becoming a couture fashion designer. I've been part of the Green Team for about a year now and I must say it's been a life changing experience. I love making a difference in my community, but the best part is seeing everyone else enjoying it too. Our motto is "it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle" and I can say we really do live up to that. Before Green Team I was so unaware of all the problems that we have in society but now we are turning those problems into solutions. I'm very happy that I got this job because it's really a job like no other. I also work at another non-profit organization called Movement City. I work in the fashion department with kids who want to learn more about fashion. One day I plan to do an entire collection based on my experiences with the

Green Team and have a major fashion show and invite every environmental activist. Like they say, "Green is the new black!"

Love , Jesenia Lopez