



Groundwork Lawrence Green Team

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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** is a year-long program that offers part-time, paid positions for high school students from Lawrence to help learn about and lead local environmental and healthy community initiatives, conduct research, and participate in hands-on improvement projects throughout the City of Lawrence. The program is intended to promote the protection and restoration of Lawrence's critical ecological systems, natural resources, and public health by engaging teens in advocacy and service-learning efforts focused on the community's parks, gardens, waterways, and vacant open spaces. The Green Team program has dual goals - to prepare Lawrence's youth for a lifetime of environmental and healthy community leadership, and to invest in our community's future and capacity to improve its physical environment. Welcome to the third newsletter, we hope you enjoy reading about our service projects, trips and education. Welcome to the third Groundwork Green Team newsletter.



Environmental Expo



On February 16, 2008 at 60 Island Street the Green Team, along with partners from Clean Water Action, held an Environmental Expo to inform the community about everyday things that harm our health such as diesel vehicles, cosmetics, and cleaning product and the importance of recycling and reducing trash. At the event Green Team members worked in groups of two or three and focused on a certain topic. Each group informed expo attendees about the harms and dangers associated with their topic. We also gave

demonstrations on how certain things can harm us and gave out samples of organic, home-made alternatives to take home. The diesel and asthma presentation explained how diesel affects people with asthma and how it plays a large role in health issues. The cosmetics presentation informed others on the truth about how the items you use to stay clean and healthy actually contain ingredients that could make you sick. The recycling and trash presentation gave people tips on how to recycle properly and how recycling can benefit our community. The cleaning products presentation informed attendees on options for using healthier, non-toxic cleaning products.

The Green Team held this expo because we felt that a big part of the community was not informed about the dangers that we live with in our everyday lives. We wanted to informed people about how they could remove these dangers or reduce them. The outcome of the event was better than expected because many people from our community attended. Also we felt that the attendees left with a greater awareness of these important issues. Looking back on the expo, we feel that we did accomplish something great and made a difference. We would also like to give special thanks to Jim's Kabob, Piasan's Pizza, North End Deli, Café Azteca, Pavel Payano, Mike Fiato, Clean Water Action, the Capoeira dancers, and Munro Graphics for their help and support for our event.



Bodegas and Community Food Survey



On a rainy morning on March 15, 2008, the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team surveyed a total of nine local bodegas (corner stores) along South Union, Lawrence. and Broadway streets. The objective of these surveys was to figure out what variety of fruits and vegetables were available for sale and their costs, as well as from where they were sourced and

grown. Most of the fruits and vegetables were not grown in the Lawrence area and we concluded that they didn't receive produce from locally-based farmers. Most bodegas did not have clearly priced items and lacked variety. Some of the employees lacked knowledge in both the items for sale and their prices. This survey helped stress the need for increasing the variety and healthiness of food available in the community, and the need for more locally-grown foods to be made available at bodegas in Lawrence.

Walking Audits

On a cold February day the Green Team went on a little mission. Our mission was to find out how the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossing signal lights were in Lawrence. We walked from 60 Island Street to the South Common Park and stopped on the corner of South Union and Market streets. We split up into three groups. Group One walked on Market and Osgood streets to observe conditions. Group Two walked to South Union and Salem streets to observe its conditions as well, and both groups met up at the intersection of Osgood and Salem streets. Group Three tested the pedestrian crossing signal lights.

After meeting up again and discussing our findings, we all came to the conclusion that Lawrence needs to improve the conditions of its sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossing signal lights so that pedestrians can feel and be safer. This walking audit was the first step in the process of building a case for the importance of making pedestrian-friendly improvements in the City. Green Team will continue to conduct walking audits, recording results that will eventually be presented to the City Council.



Trip to AMC's Highland Center

The Green Team spent an amazing weekend at the Appalachian Mountain Club's (AMC) Highland Center at Crawford Notch located in New Hampshire over the winter. We learned that AMC's Crawford Notch location was a "Green Building" which means that it reduces the use of natural resources as it operates so that we save energy, water, and materials. AMC used green construction techniques that are also energy efficient. The interpretive information boards used to educate visitors were made from both recycled plastic and wood chips. Everything used to make this "Green Building" was safe for the environment even the paint which had low Volatile Organic Compounds. Also AMC used recycled steel beams and reclaimed timber framing to build its wood fired heating system. Solar panels were another impressive feature of the building.



Although not everyone on the Green Team was able to attend the over-night trip, those who were there participated in multiple team-building activities. These activities made the Green Team stronger, and made us forget about our differences and work as a team. We learned to listen to one another and take each other's suggestions into consideration. There was not one disagreement that weekend. We all felt this trip was both fun and a great learning experience.

State House Lobbying Day

This year Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 2008. All around the world many events were held to celebrate our planet. On this day, Green Team members were presented with an opportunity to take part in a special Earth Day event. We had the chance to go down to the Statehouse in Boston and participate in the "Youth Lobbying Day" for *An Act to Protect Public Health and Air Quality from Harmful Diesel Emissions*, bill numbers SB-2338 and HB-732. This bill was proposed because Massachusetts is the fifth worst state in the country that suffers from the harmful health effects caused by diesel pollution. The most affected cities are the ones surrounding Boston, like Lawrence.

As Green Team members, we felt that this was a very important event to attend because it affected us as well. We live in a city that is full of diesel pollution that is affecting our health, as well as the health of our families and friends. In Lawrence we are surrounded by many highways including Route 495, Route 114, and Route 28. As a result, many company trucks pass by Lawrence and pollute our air. It is unfair that the residents of Lawrence and many other cities with similar issues have to suffer at the cost of companies making money. We wanted our Representatives and Senator to hear our voices on this issue so that they, too, can support the “Diesel Pollution Solution” Bill.



At the Statehouse some of us had the chance to talk to members of Senate President Murray’s office, while others went lobbying inside the Statehouse to speak with other representatives and their staff to inform them about the Diesel Bill. We also had the chance to talk to Senator Hart, who was the one that originally proposed the Diesel Pollution bill. At the end of the day we had gained lobbying skills and advocacy skills and also the chance to be video-taped by Fox 25 News. All in all, this was a great experience because none of us had done this before in our lives.

Tufts Urban Environmental Policy & Planning (UEP) - Van Jones

After spending the first part of Earth Day at the Statehouse, the Lawrence Green Team attended two informational Urban Environmental Policy & Planning (UEP) sessions featuring Van Jones at Tufts University in honor of the UEP Department’s 35th Anniversary. The first session of the day was a bit smaller and more personal. During this session Van Jones spoke about experiences that helped keep him dedicated to what he believes in. Two Green Team members spoke to him briefly about what steps youth can take to follow through



with his message and they presented him a Groundwork Lawrence fleece vest as a gift of appreciation for his efforts. Van Jones spoke to us with appreciation for our efforts to better our environment and community. The second session of the day was with a much larger, community-wide event but Van Jones still made the Green Team feel extra special. He spoke about his beginnings and how he became an advocate for green jobs. He responded to questions with positive answers and a down to earth attitude. We wondered how a person could remain positive and speak such hopeful words that motivated people to make a difference. We also wondered if he ever wanted to give up when things looked difficult. We let him know he brought hope to us and he told us that we had brought hope to him. He described our generation as being the leaders and the ones who needed to step up and prevent our children from giving up. He was truly an inspiration to all of us.



Earth Day Clean-Up

During April school vacation, we and many volunteers from different companies such as New Balance and other local high schools participated in Groundwork Lawrence's Annual Earth Day City Wide Clean-Up. To begin our day the volunteers gathered at Dr. Nina

Scarito Park. Rose Gonzalez, Groundwork Lawrence's Program Manager assigned us the areas in Lawrence volunteers were responsible for cleaning-up. The group divided up into smaller teams around Newbury St. and Misserville Park and off we went to pick-up trash. The Green Team came up with a good idea: to separate the trash into recyclable and non-recyclable trash which was an important small step towards improving our environment. After spending a good amount of time working hard in the hot sun, the Green Team and the other volunteers gathered for a debrief of the accomplishments we had made that day. We ended the day with a tasty well deserved lunch that was donated by Whole Foods. After our lunch break, we felt it would be best to donate the rest of the food to a local shelter. Our day's contributions definitely made an impact on the city and citizens living in Lawrence. Let's just say we felt we were one step closer to completing our mission of improving our environment.

Gardening

Since the Groundwork Green Team started in 2002, our group was the first to ever have grown fresh food. We had a space in the Brook Street community garden (located at a city owned park and managed by Groundwork Lawrence) and went through all the steps from planning our garden beds, to seeding, weeding, and watering. We learned about square foot gardening and created a chart to help us organize our garden beds. We heard it was important for the space to have a variety of vegetables and flowers to encourage the bee population, which is important for pollination. We prepared a plot where we mapped out sections for flowers, tomatoes, squash, lemon cucumbers, broccoli, basil, and many other plants that would benefit the garden beds.



We were also part of the garden opening with other community gardeners. During this event, we formed an assembly line where we helped each other transfer compost from its delivery location to the community garden site and then added compost to our beds, and planted seeds and seedlings. Two out of the 17 garden beds at this site are devoted to our Green Team. It was nice to meet other community gardeners during this opening and we were really excited about growing food. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful day planting fruits and vegetables and getting to know each other better.

The Stevens-Coolidge Estate



On a beautiful spring day we made a trip to a garden in North Andover. The Stevens Coolidge Estate is a property managed by The Trustees of Reservations. It was formerly a farm known as Ashdale Farm owned by the Coolidge Family. The Stevens-Coolidge Estate had allowed Groundwork Lawrence to use their greenhouse to start plants for their community gardens. Here the Green Team was given a tour of the reservation and a tour of the greenhouse. We took a look at the gardens and a look at where the farm use to be and where the old barn still stood. Chris Ward, our tour guide, spoke to us and gave us a little history about the property. Later in the day we worked on the French Garden and planted some flowers. We worked on four beds altogether. To end the day we did a relaxing exercise where we visualized what we had seen and learned that day on the tour and working on the gardens. It was an awesome trip with a beautiful view.

Kite Training

“If the wind is in your face you’re in the wrong place,” Archie Stewart told us before we went outside to fly kites. During the kite-building training we learned about the different parts of a kite, such as the spine and spreader, which makes the skeleton of the kite. There is also a tail to provide balance. We were each given a kite of our own and we learned how to assemble it. He then taught us how to put two kites together and have a double-kite. He also told us the story of the kite and how it originated. Archie asked us “Do you know why I don’t run when I fly a kite?” “No,” we replied. And he answered “Because I’m smart.” He told us this because when you are flying a kite you don’t need to run in order to catch wind. And off we went to fly our kites.



Kite Festival

On June 7, 2008, a sunny and humid day, was Groundwork Lawrence's annual kite festival. With our new kite-making skills, we helped hundreds of families and their children make kites to fly in Pemberton Park. Many of the youth came to enjoy the free horse rides, cotton candy, food, and the ever popular dunk tank, which was hosted by Family Services, Inc. Face paintings were also provided by Green Team member Sabrina Dorsainvil. Beekeepers from the Essex County Beekeeping Association were also invited and showed little kids how the bees make honey and other fun bee facts. Volunteers from Northern Essex Community College (NECCO) also came and helped youngsters make their own kites. Some of the volunteers found it difficult at times to teach the youth because they didn't always follow directions, but overall the experience was positive. There were also free trolley rides providing tours throughout the city sharing knowledge of Lawrence's history.



Lawrence History Center

The Lawrence History Center, also known as Immigrant City Archives, opened its doors to us on May 17th. In return, we helped clean their courtyard area for their upcoming event celebrating 30 years of history and recipients of the Eartha Dengler Award, the founder of the Lawrence History Center who was born in Germany. She started the center after World War II when she moved to Lawrence. She started writing down immigrants' stories and recording their experiences, which led to the creation of the immigrant archives. During the trip we sat and spoke about what we knew about the past of Lawrence and then we received a tour of the building. We learned about how Lawrence was formed from pieces of neighboring Methuen and

Andover, and that many immigrants came here because they were not judged. Many places in the building had been kept in their original state, such as the blacksmith room. It was interesting to see the progression of the city's development of streets, as well as the maps and blueprints illustrating it. The blueprints determined where each and every brick was to be located in the city. This was a great experience that allowed us to explore more of Lawrence and understand its importance in history.