



WHEDCo Campers Flex Their Green Thumbs

August 12, 2008— This summer, after learning about the importance of native plants and pollinators to the ecosystem of the Bronx, WHEDCo’s summer campers created a beautiful, safe environment for butterflies and bees in WHEDCo’s own backyard.

Teaming up with the New York City based Green Guerillas, an organization dedicated to creating community gardens, and local volunteers WHEDCo campers cultivated two new garden beds at Urban Horizons. Specifically designed to provide butterfly habitats, one bed was planted with native host plants for the caterpillars that kindergarten, first and second grade classes at WHEDCo’s partner school, PS/MS 218, will raise into butterflies.

Terence Downing, a Youth Tiller from Green Guerillas, shares his green knowledge with a WHEDCo Camper.

Another bed was planted with flowering plants native to New York— including dwarf sunflowers, common milkweed and mountain mint— to attract bees and butterflies, jumpstart pollination, and collect data about native bee populations.

According to WHEDCo’s Education Coordinator, Anne Black, the lack of native pollination gardens in New York City presents a real threat to the ecosystem. “Because of the high use of pesticides, habitat loss, and factors that we don’t understand yet, our native bee populations are in crisis,” said Black. “By planting permanent gardens here at Urban Horizons, WHEDCo is not only working to understand and protect our native pollinators but we are creating a more beautiful and “greener” Bronx.”

As part of the Great Pollinator Project, a national project of the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation and the New York City Department of Parks’ Greenbelt Native Plant Center, which donated 144 flowering plants to WHEDCo’s gardens, students at PS/MS 218 will have the opportunity to participate in data collection and reporting in a long-term study of bee pollination patterns. In coming years, WHEDCo students will continue to care for and study the gardens, adding vital research to both local and national discussion of native pollinators.

“WHEDCo believes all families deserve a beautiful, healthy and safe environment and we are thrilled that our summer campers care enough about protecting the environment and adding beauty to the Bronx that they are creating and maintaining these magnificent gardens,” explained **Nancy Biberman**, WHEDCo’s president.

WHEDCo’s After school students will be starting a Conservation Club this fall to continue education, advocacy and implementation of green initiatives at P.S. 218.



WHEDCo’s Education Coordinator Anne Black and WHEDCo summer campers work together to plant one of two new garden beds next to PS/MS 218.