

# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

Fostering Stewardship, Community &  
Inspiration for Learning

**2003**

An enclosed courtyard approximately 20'x75' connects the new addition with the existing Springhurst building, funded by the **Dobbs Ferry School District**



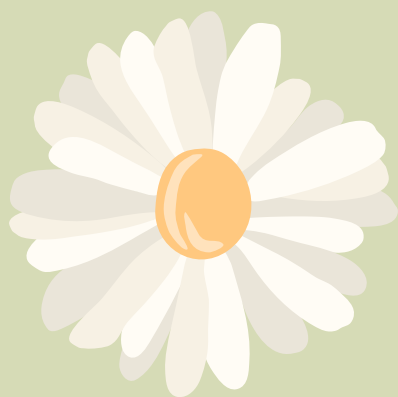
**2004**

**The Vision:** Transform the courtyard into an educational space that is utilized as an extension of the traditional classroom, providing endless possibilities for creativity, interaction, observation and instruction

Speech Pathologist, **Barbara Miglio** takes the lead as the Outdoor Classroom Facilitator, acting as a liaison to the administration and initiating grant writing to move the project forward

**Original stakeholders:**

Barbara Miglio, Tricia Zarro, Tara Galati, Dorothy Dunn-Brosnahan, Susan Segall, Celia Catania and Sara Cashen



**2005**

**Steering Committee:** Barbara Miglio, Tara Galati, Mary Gallagher, Patricia Young, Ellyce Cavanaugh, Jessica Bauer, Jamie Block, Christina Bochicchio, Doug DiStefano, Patty Duane, Patti Giuliano, Winnie Madden, Rosemary Donovan, Sara Cashen, Dorothy Dunn, Lisa Doty and Doug Berry

"Starting From Scratch" School Garden Workshop at **Stone Barns** and conference from the **National Wildlife Federation-Creating Schoolyard Habitats** attended by select faculty members

**The Dobbs Ferry School Foundation** awards initial grant to fund the Outdoor Classroom, including a landscape architect, landscape designer and mini grants for teachers to participate

**The Dobbs Ferry School Foundation** extends the grant to conduct site visits at thirteen Westchester county schools with operational outdoor classrooms and fund teacher initiatives

**Beverly Isis**, landscape designer uses student, staff and community ideas to guide the vision for the Outdoor Classroom

A presentation of the Outdoor Classroom's growth plan is shared with the **Dobbs Ferry Board of Education** and subsequently, the community

**2006**

**The Dobbs Ferry School Foundation** awards a phase two grant to cover the implementation plan

**Eberlin & Eberlin Landscape Architectural Design Services** and **Con-Tech Construction** conduct the site clean up, grading and drainage, pavement, concrete sitting wall and stage



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

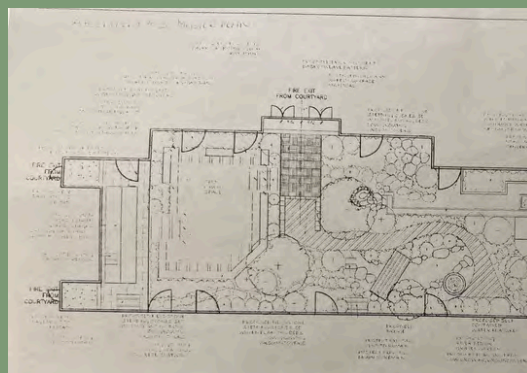
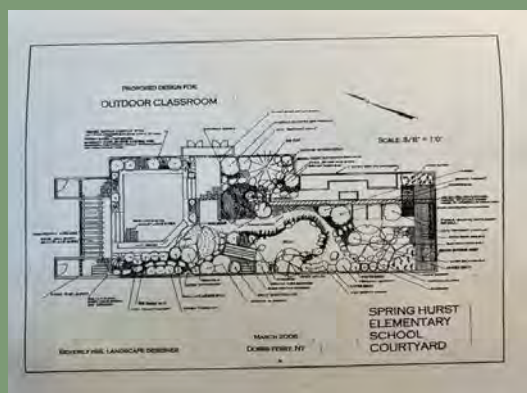
## Design & Development

### 2004 - 2007

**In-Kind Contributions:** Dee Dunn, Hettie Jordan Villanova, Summer Design Institute at Cooper Hewitt Design Museum, Dobbs Ferry PTSA, Susan Segall, Elizabeth Martin, Jamie Block, Groundworks Yonkers and The Girl Scouts of America

**Barbara Miglio** and **Ellyce Cavanaugh** begin “Green Team” meetings to expose the the Outdoor Classroom to faculty members

### Proposed Designs



### 2007 - 2008

**Project Development Quest Grant** "Making It Grow" is awarded, providing garden tools, raised garden beds and seeds

**Captain Planet Foundation** grant awarded for construction of additional raised garden beds, a compost tumbler and vermi-compost materials

**Springhurst Ecology Club** begins under the leadership of **Ellyce Cavanaugh**. 40 students participate to become the first stewards of the Outdoor Classroom

The first **Harvest Soup Day** takes place, serving vegetable soup to K-5 students during lunch periods

### 2009

**Debra Borwick** and **Sara Sellitti** maintain the Outdoor Classroom and begin expanding the Green Team to support its growth

The 2nd Annual **Harvest Soup Day** takes place, and the first ever **Salad Day**, serving organic greens to 669 students

**Dobbs Ferry PTSA** members contribute time and ingredients for both events

Fundraising for the garden is established through reusable water bottle and plant sales



**Sara Sellitti** introduces a schedule for seasonal garden tastings and creates a system for classrooms to participate. **The Outdoor Classroom** quickly becomes a living laboratory



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## Artistic Expression

### 2010

**Haifa Bint-Kadi**, artist In residence, designs two mosaics depicting Dobbs Ferry and the Hudson River on the Outdoor Classroom wall. First and second grade students assemble the tiles with the support of **Dobbs Ferry PTSA**



### 2013

Artists in residence **Jennifer Levine** and **Scott Massarsky** paint the retaining wall with fourth and fifth grade **Ecology Club** students led by **Ellyce Cavanaugh**

PAGE 6 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE, FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2013

### Dobbs Ferry

#### Happenings

The **Cub Scouts** hold an open enrollment Kite Day at Waterfront Park tomorrow (May 11), 2-4:30 p.m. for families with boys in grades K-5. Kites, snacks, and drinks provided free.

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The **Dobbs Ferry Woman's Club**, 54 Clinton Ave., hosts an attic sale tomorrow (May 11), 10 a.m.-3 p.m., with baked goods, café, household items, watercolor pictures, and more treasures. The club's "2013 Beaux Art Show" is next Friday, May 17, and Saturday, May 18, 3-5 p.m. Reception on Sunday, May 19, noon-3 p.m.

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The **architectural review board** meets Monday, May 13, at 8 p.m. in village hall.

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**Voter registration** on Monday, May 13, 3:30-7:30 p.m. in the high school gym for the school board election on Tuesday, May 21.

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The **village board** meets Tuesday, May 14, at 6:30 p.m. in village hall.

Springhurst students sing atop the wall painted with the mural.

## School wall blooms with visions of peace

**By Colleen Michele Jones**

Students in Springhurst's Ecology Club could be seen laughing in the sun last week as they transformed a cement retaining wall in the elementary school's courtyard into a brightly colored mural.

The fourth- and fifth-graders took turns on different sections of the wall-turned-can-

vas on Thursday, May 2, adding their own creations — butterflies, trees, animals, rainbows — around a curling green vine, painted by professional artists, that wound its way across the entire surface.

"I love painting — you get to be really creative," said fifth-grader Nina Palfi, pointing out the turquoise bear she had worked on earlier.

Her classmate, Lauren Demitrovic, said she didn't mind getting a little dirty in the process and that it was a fun way to spend some time on a beautiful May afternoon.

The project, created with the help of New Jersey artists Jennifer Levine and Scott Massarsky, was part of a district-funded artist-in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

Dobbs Ferry PTSA & School Foundation Support



2009-2014

**In-Kind Contributions:** Celia Catania, Joanie Dinowitz, Debra Borwick, Mary McNamara, Lara Nasser Shuraida, Sara Sellitti, , The Viggiano Family, Lyndsey Schiff, Linda Davidson, Beth Maas, Carol Kearns, Bruce Paquette, Kim Hord, The Boy Scouts of America, Nancy Delmerico and Abby Connett



## Kiode & Edith Winthrop Teacher Center Grants

Four teachers participate in "Growing School Gardens" to teach health, wellness and sustainability, co-sponsored by **Stone Barns** and **BOCES Center for Environmental Education**. Three participate at **Manhattanville College Summer Institute**, co-sponsored by **CELF Summer Institute** and **Shelburne Farms** in Vermont

**In-Kind Contributions:** Molly Dempsey, Teresa Williams-Ameen, Farhad Ameen, David Lyons, Daniel Nelson, Robert DiFiore, Nancy Broccoli, Middle School Ecology Club led by Claudia Ducic, the Dobbs Ferry PTSA Wellness Committee and The Dobbs Ferry Garden Club

**The Dobbs Ferry School Foundation** awards a grant for organic soil, picnic tables, umbrellas and wheelbarrows to continue the growth and increase student participation





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

It Takes A Village



2015

A budget line is created by the **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** for environmental learning under President **Mary McNamara**, providing opportunities for all students to participate. The first chair of the Dobbs Ferry PTSA Green Team is established, to expand the reach of the Outdoor Classroom and Garden

The **Dobbs Ferry School Foundation** awards a grant for a garden irrigation system and grow lights, offering an extension of the growing season to increase student participation and classroom connections by starting seeds

The **Edith Winthrop Teacher Center** awards a grant "From Soil to Seed to Plant" to begin the first K-3 introduction to compost making by providing materials

The **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** supports a further expansion of the irrigation system, making the garden more efficient



**In-Kind Contributions:** Nancy Hartnett, Barbara Miglio, Lisa Callahan, Molly Dempsey, Michelle Jaeger, Patti Hartnett, Brooke Bass, Julie Fischer, Sue Galloway, Beth Suhocki, The Dobbs Ferry Garden Club, Carol Kearns, Jerry Foley and Celia Baldwin



2014-2018

**Elizabeth Pinkava** and **Currier Todd** advise the Springhurst Ecology Club





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## COMPOST KIDS

### 2015 Compost Kids Curriculum launches under Doug Berry, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

**COMPOST KIDS** helps students understand what it means to close the loop on their own food cycle. By learning to divert a valuable resource such as food waste from landfills, students learn stewardship, hands-on methods of waste reduction, and sustainable gardening in the **Outdoor Classroom**

#### Lessons on Waste Reduction

The lessons teach the fundamentals of composting and soil care as they relate to growing food in a sustainable way. Lessons complement the existing science and social studies units of study for each grade and connects hands-on learning to the Springhurst curriculum and Common Core State Standards. This program provides opportunities for young scientists to do research in a living environment within their own school garden. Students gain the understanding that we don't feed our plants, but instead, we feed the soil to grow healthy food



#### 2016

**Barbara Miglio** and **Sara Sellitti** partner with **Pamela Davis**, an instructor for Teacher Professional Development at **New York Botanical Gardens**, and Master Composter with **NYC Compost Project**, to present six hands-on lessons. The **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** funds the pilot program in Kindergarten, 1st and 3rd grade classrooms

**Compost Kids** is presented to the Dobbs Ferry Board of Education by **Barbara Miglio**, **Julia Drake** and **Sara Sellitti**, and offers a new way to look at food waste and recycling in a school setting

#### 2017 LoHud

#### "Circle of Composting Life in Full Swing at Springhurst"

<https://www.dfsd.org/cms/lib/NY02214206/Centricity/Domain/75/SpringhurstComposting-LohudArticle.pdf>



"**Compost kids** is a program that I have participated in for years. It is one of my favorites because it instantly connects my students to the needs of our planet. The program helps them take responsibility for the waste they make through hands-on activities. It is so fun to watch them get dirty and ask lots of questions about the composting process, worm bins and growing food."

**-Christina Bochicchio, Kindergarten Teacher**





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## COMPOST KIDS

**Braeden Cohen**, an Organic Waste Recycling Specialist and **Cornell Cooperative Extension** Master Composter Educator, conducts an audit of all waste generated at Springhurst for one week, and proposes a design for a facility size compost system to handle food scraps from the cafeteria and kitchen



The **Dobbs Ferry School District** supports a new infrastructure for recycling and composting on-site, becoming the first school in Westchester County with an aerobic compost system on a facility-size scale



Architect, **Liz Van Der Zandt** creates the first sketch. Architect, **Steve Sudak**, generates a rendering of the proposed educational space with a carport and solar panel component



Head Custodian **Robert DiFiore** and **Angel Centano** construct the compost system using Urban Farm Plans [Compost Knox](#) and [O2 Compost](#) system plans



**Will Hord, Eagle Scout, Class of 2020**, designs a counter weight system, an engraved patio, and constructs a fence using wood pallets, defining the educational space, advised by **Barbara Miglio** and **Sara Sellitti**





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## Springhurst Recycles & Composts



The **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** awards an Insta Grant to **Barbara Miglio** and **Sara Sellitti** for an in-school assembly to deliver recycling and composting demonstrations, presented by **The Greenburgh Nature Center's Sustainability Team**



A **Slow Food Grant** is awarded for custodial infrastructure supplies to support recycling

**Math Olympiad**, led by **Josh Rosen**, analyzes the data from the waste audit and presents to the stakeholders



**Dobbs Ferry PTSA** members provide additional support and train students on NYS recycling laws in the cafeteria and at school-community events



The first food donations are collected in the lunchroom to divert wasted food from the landfill. Food is delivered to several local food pantries by **Barbara Miglio**, **Sequoia Jarrin** and **Sara Sellitti**



**Aramark**, the school district's food service provider transitions to compostable paper products in the lunchroom, and begins reducing single-use plastics

The **Dobbs Ferry School District** contracts [CRP Sanitation](#) to haul bulk organic material to [Sustainable Materials Management](#) in Cortland Manor



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## A Place For Exploration & Curiosity



"The simple act of caring for plants and animals gives children a foundation for understanding the principles of birth, growth, maturation, death, cooperation, competition, and patience. In our garden, children experience these lessons through a hands-on approach that is rich and inclusive to varied learning abilities."

-Emily Mandel, Special Education Teacher



"I loved my time at the Springhurst garden as a senior intern. I found it so meaningful to be a part of it again, and to see how involved the current students are with it."

-Ella Bernheimer, Class of 2022





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

A Place For All

"**SPRING Community Partners** and **Springhurst Summer Academy** program includes the tremendous, impromptu opportunity presented by the summer work that continues in the Springhurst Garden, long after salad day is cleaned up and before soup day is on the radar. As the hallways were being used by the Summer Academy classes, Sara Sellitti, Garden Coordinator extraordinaire, welcomes each grade level and offers to host class sessions for the students to get their hands dirty, help, and learn about tending the garden. The kids are thrilled and enjoy being outdoors, working together, making observations, and asking questions. This adds to the exploration of different project-based learning styles that Summer Academy offers."

-Robin Larkins, Executive Director of **SPRING Community Partners**

"One of the many gifts of the **Outdoor Classroom** include opportunities to learn from nature's classroom about growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables, attending school special events like Soup Day and Salad Day, the simplicity of reading a book with the sun on our face and the grass underneath us...all are unique and priceless gifts that this outdoor learning space gives to the students of Springhurst. This outdoor learning space is an additional tool in my teacher toolbox that I can use to engage students and excite them about learning."

-Patricia Zarro, 1st Grade Teacher



**Barbara Miglio** and **Sara Sellitti** launch the Compost Keepers Program, providing leadership roles and peer to peer support for recycling and waste reduction

Student Government, led by **Donna Misrok**, delivers additional peer to peer support to K-3 classrooms





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## Harvest Soup Day

Hover over the photo to play video



Hover over the photo to play video



Soup Day, supported by The **Dobbs Ferry PTSA**, has become an integral part of the Springhurst community that celebrates the collaboration of students, staff, families and the Outdoor Classroom and Garden

### 2022 & 2023 Dobbs Ferry School District Soup Day Videos

<https://dfsd.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/ViewVideo.aspx?id=f49f4130-11a5-40be-9a03-af410107cdeb7r>  
paragraph text

<https://dfsd.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/ViewVideo.aspx?id=f1efca77-db93-4727-ae66-b0a6010a25d6&query=soup%20day>



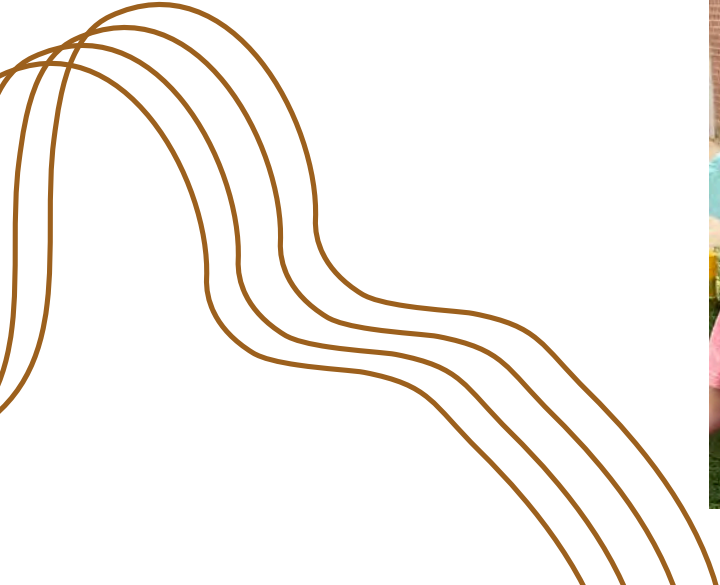


# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## Salad Day



Supported annually by the **Dobbs Ferry PTSA**, salad and other garden offerings are served to 703 students and 140 faculty and staff members in 2023





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## K-12th Grade Stewardship



2019

**Mario Viggiano, Eagle Scout, Class of 2019**, designs and constructs a watering can station, outdoor bulletin board and a numbering system for the raised garden beds, advised by **Sara Sellitti**



"I loved spending time with younger students caring for the garden and bringing what I learned back home to teach my mom."

**-Rachel Masterson, IB CAS  
Student, Class of 2022**



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## Coordination

### 2018

After twenty years of teaching in Dobbs Ferry, **Barbara Miglio** retires from Springhurst

**Sara Sellitti** co-coordinates the Outdoor Classroom with **Dr. Lauren Dwyer**, keeping the vision of the Outdoor Classroom moving forward



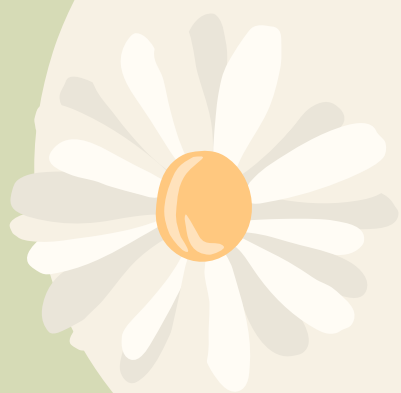
**Teresa Williams-Ameen** volunteers her time to reorganize the perennial garden within the **Outdoor Classroom**

**The Girl Scouts** participate in a Spirit Day to transform the main entrance of the school's landscape and continue to nurture the Outdoor Classroom and Garden

### 2021

**Sara Sellitti** becomes the Outdoor Classroom Coordinator for the **Dobbs Ferry School District** and oversees **Compost Kids**

**The Outdoor Classroom and Garden** is maintained during an unprecedented school closure, and produce is delivered to the **Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry** at the **South Presbyterian Church** on a weekly basis for the duration of the pandemic



**Sara Sellitti** launches **Food Recovery Wednesdays**. Unused food from the Springhurst cafeteria and garden produce, as well as food from the Middle/High School is transported to the **South Presbyterian Church** food pantry by a network of **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** and **SPRING Community Partner** volunteers on a weekly basis

**K-12 Food Rescue** is used as a data tracking tool to measure the donated food from the garden, cafeteria and kitchen

**Click the link to open a new tab and listen to the podcast**



"The collected food items from the school cafeterias have been a vital part of our food rescue program at the food pantry. We are happy to be able to help reduce waste while also providing healthy snacks to our clients. The fresh produce from the school garden is such a welcome treat. We love to tell the clients where the vegetables came from and who the farmers were!"

**-Gretchen Skaags, Co-Director Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry**





# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden Extension Projects

## 2018-2019 Compost Days

The Girl Scouts, (led by **Meagan Baizan** and **Smita Abraham**) and K-12 students and families work with **Sara Sellitti** to empty the facility compost bins and transport the fertilizer to the Outdoor Classroom and Garden. A partnership develops between the students, community and the school's facilities department

## 2021 Jr. Green Team

The former Ecology Club is rebranded as **Jr. Green Team**, an after-school club for environmentally conscious 4th and 5th graders, led by **Sara Sellitti**. These students become the new stewards of the Outdoor Classroom

## 2022 Recycling & Compost Relaunch

A week long program led by **Pam Miner** formerly of **The Greenburgh Nature Center Sustainability Team** gets Springhurst students back on track with recycling and waste reduction after a hiatus following the pandemic



**Black gold**  
Sharon Van Engen and her 8-year-old son, Tighe, sift compost outside Springhurst Elementary School on Sunday, Aug. 20, in preparation for the new school year. The school uses four large bins to turn cafeteria waste into compost for its garden.

**Dobbs Ferry School District**  
Independent Thinkers Change Worlds

**"Inside Edition" on Education**

**Kindness Counts**

The Dobbs Ferry School District is reintroducing its zero waste program at Springhurst Elementary School for grades K-5, and Kindergarten students are the first to participate in COMPOST KIDS this month. Students are learning about why recycling and composting are important for keeping the earth healthy, and will be reviewing how to sort their lunch waste at the cafeteria waste stations. The program is being led by Pam Miner, previously with the Greenburgh Nature Center Sustainability Team, and Sara Sellitti, a Dobbs Ferry parent and Springhurst's Outdoor Classroom Coordinator.

The students will participate in a hands-on demonstration of what materials goes where, and will also learn what foods can be donated. Correctly separating and recycling both cafeteria-provided lunch items and lunch packed from home will be covered in the review.

Springhurst has been a school leader in zero waste since 2016 by continuously increasing recycling efforts, recovering food for donation and properly diverting food scraps from landfills. The diverted food is turned into compost, which fertilizes the soil in the school's organic vegetable garden. Through recycling/composting education and with support from home, we can empower our youngest citizens to reduce the alarming amount of wasted resources going to the landfill and our oceans.

Please contact Sara Sellitti at [sellitti@dfs.d.org](mailto:sellitti@dfs.d.org) if you have questions about the District's recycling/composting program.

## 2023 Waste Audit

A comprehensive food waste audit is conducted by the **Jr. Green Team** and families. Comparisons to the 2016 audit are made public, highlighting a reduction in weekly lunchroom waste by 447 pounds, and 18.89 pounds per grade level lunch period

PAGE 6 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE, FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2023

**Dobbs Ferry Happenings**

The League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns meets Saturday, April 8, at 10 a.m. at the Hastings Public Library, 7 Maple Ave. To participate by Zoom, email [lwc@rivertowns.org](mailto:lwc@rivertowns.org) for the link.

"Dance for a Difference" on Saturdays through April 29, 9:30-10:20 a.m. in the Ponica Center at The Masters School, 49 Clinton Ave. Try what you wish for Zumba dance fitness classes, and proceeds, minus the studio rental and insurance fees, will be donated to a different nonprofit organization each week. RSVP by emailing [lauras@lebel@gmail.com](mailto:lauras@lebel@gmail.com).

The Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) offers volunteers the opportunity to remove invasive vegetation at the Fahring Preserve on April 9, May 7, and May 14, and to refurbish trails at Chauncy Park on April 23 and 30, all from 10 a.m.-noon. Sign up at [everbrite.com](http://everbrite.com) by searching for "Dobbs Ferry."

Parent Vanessa Beoney (right) helps members of the Junior Green Team weigh material on March 14.

**Recycling reduces food waste at Springhurst**

By Kris DiLorenzo

Springhurst Elementary School has been losing weight since 2016. The school recently completed a food waste audit, evaluating the success of the recycling efforts spearheaded by the Junior Green Team, an after-school club comprising 14 fourth- and fifth-grade students. During a total of seven days in February and March, school staff and students spent 10 minutes at lunchtime guiding their peers on the right way to dispose of organics (food scraps and compostable paper products), plastic recyclables, liquids, and trash in bins dedicated to each category of materials. Food scraps and paper went into compostable bags while recycling items were collected in clear bags to make sorting easier. Daily collections were weighed; the schools' custodial staff sorted and collected the appropriate school dumpsters. The Village collects the trash (non-recyclables) and pays the County approximately \$25 per ton to process the materials, but pays nothing for recyclables; in 2020 the County collected \$3.5 million from selling recyclables. CRP Sanitation, a waste management services company in Cortlandt, collects the school's recyclables. Weighing the bulging bags was no

**Food waste**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

easy feat. Sara Sellitti, advisor to the Junior Green Team, and also Springhurst's Outdoor Classroom/Garden coordinator, said weigh-ins were conducted "using a luggage scale and a lot of hands."

The students tracked the weights and tallied their data, which revealed that in seven days, the school collected 46.3 pounds of trash destined for landfills, 71.345 pounds of organics, 126.8 pounds of liquid, and 102.3 pounds of plastic, for a total of 989 pounds. An average of 7.71 pounds of trash was collected per each grade's lunch period.

In 2016, the school's first year of collecting materials, the total was 1,436 pounds, an average 26.6 pounds of trash per grade lunch period.

The 2010 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) solid waste management plan, "Sustainable Materials Management Strategy for New York State — Beyond Waste," set 0% pounds as its 2030 zero waste target. The goals are to maximize waste reduction, recycling, and resource recovery and reduce waste sent to landfills and municipal waste combustors.

On April 17-18, during the school's Earth Day celebration, this year's final results, broken down by grade, will be posted on a display board.

Sellitti enumerated some reasons why the total amount collected this year had reduced since 2016: "Use of compostable products by the school district, educating students and staff, implementing Compost Keepers in the lunchroom — peer to peer support on waste sorting, Food Recovery Wednesdays, diverting unopened food from the trash to the [Dobbs Ferry] Food Pantry, and holding refresher events like Recycle Mania, to keep students engaged."

She noted that Recycle Mania garnered a lot of parent and community support. "In one week in November, we had a friendly competition to see who did the best: the first grade won. I'm hoping to do it again before the end of the school year, because I think it's these kinds of educational events that keep the kids going."

For Recycle Mania, during each grade's lunch period the PTSA (Parent-Teacher-Student Association) and community members judged each grade on their recycling accuracy. The contest winner was entitled to choose the lunch menu for one day in December.

Food Recovery Wednesdays came about after Sellitti started a sign-up sheet for the PTSA and other community members to pick up and transport food recovered from the lunchroom.

"Food Recovery Wednesdays formalized and grew substantially during the pandemic," Sellitti noted. "Each Wednesday morning the food is brought to the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry by a fleet of rotating volunteers who give their time to keep good food out of the landfills and to support local giving."

## 2019 Cabbage Contest

Sara Sellitti secures cabbage seedlings from [Bonnie Plants](#) and distributes to students in third grade. Nine year old **Keric Roach** wins the national cabbage contest by growing the largest cabbage in New York State. Springhurst holds an assembly to honor Keric and his award-winning vegetable

## 9-year-old grows award-winning vegetable

Heather Clark Rockland/Westchester Journal News  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Forget the great pumpkin — it's time for the great cabbage.

Nine-year-old Keric Roach from Dobbs Ferry has won the National Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program for New York state, thanks to the giant cabbage he grew.

The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program sends participating third-grade classrooms free "O.S. Cross, or 'oversized,' cabbage plants." The program hopes to inspire children to love vegetable gardening. According to Bonnie Plants, over 1 million third-graders participated this year.

Roach's cabbage weighed in at 8 pounds, 13 ounces and measured about 4 feet in width. After being randomly selected by the New York state Agriculture Department out of over 32,000 participating students, Roach was awarded a \$1,000 savings bond to be used for education.

He said it felt "amazing" to win, adding, "I hugged my mom and thanked her for all her advice."

The program has sparked the young athlete and musician to add "gardener" to his repertoire. According to his mom, Ilona, Roach read all about growing cabbages and "carefully tended to his plant daily."

Roach said the most exciting part of growing the cabbage was the harvesting.

What did he do with the giant cabbage? Eat it, of course.



Nine-year-old Keric Roach and his National Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program's winning cabbage for New York state. COURTESY OF GREEN EARTH MEDIA GROUP

enjoyed coleslaw and stir-fried vegetables the best."

Roach's top tips for growing the biggest and best cabbage are to give it space to grow and supply everything it needs, including sunlight, water and good soil.

"I have a brother, Keaton, in second grade and he is looking forward to growing his own Bonnie cabbage next year," Roach said.

His school will be holding a special assembly where



# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden Extension Projects

## 2020-2023 Habitat Restoration

**Tricia Zarro** and **Sara Sellitti** receive native shrubs and trees from the [NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Trees for Tribes Program](#), and organize the first phase of a habitat restoration. This collective effort rejuvenates the landscape by the Beacon Hill stairs, creating a habitat for pollinators and wildlife for students to explore

**Participants:** 2021 Kindergarten, 2022 First Grade, 2022 Janet Foresti's Fourth Grade Class, High School IB CAS, senior internship students, the 2023 Girl Scouts of America, Sue Galloway, Haven Colgate, Sustainable Dobbs and Elisa Zazzera



## 2021-2022 Pumpkin Smash Pilot

**Victoria Coren, Melinda Canary** and **Emily Mandel's students** smash pumpkins in the Outdoor Classroom. Students learn that food is not trash and pumpkins can be recycled to provide fertilizer for the garden



## 2022-2023 Earth Day

**Sara Sellitti** creates the first school-wide Earth Day Celebration. The **Dobbs Ferry PTSA** supports the event which connects the work in the Outdoor Classroom and Compost Kids for every K-5 student, through the theme of respect for the Earth



## 2022 & 2023 DFSD Earth Day Videos

<https://www.dfsd.org/Page/2943>

<https://dfsdfhosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=7c8f3a2c-1fd8-42b1-8723-afeb01711eac&query=salad%20day>

## 2022-2023 Sensory Garden Design

A pollinator garden is established with native plants offering opportunities for social emotional learning. The Outdoor Classroom is designated as a [Pollinator Pathway](#) and Monarch Way Station through [Monarch Watch](#), a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program based at the University of Kansas that focuses on the preservation of the monarch butterfly, an endangered species



**In-Kind Contributions:** Molly Dempsey, Lily Collins, Sue Galloway, The Girl Scouts of America and Gabrielle Tjaden







# Springhurst Elementary Outdoor Classroom & Garden

## To Be Continued...

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"Salad Day is a beloved tradition that is the product of an enormous amount of love, dedication, hard work and learning. Salad Day is also an incredible example of 'full circle' learning with children engaged in every step of the process: composting, planting seeds in the soil they have created, harvesting, and coming together as a community to eat and enjoy the fruits of their labor. The full school community supports this event and is needed in order to make it happen. Numerous parents/guardians/staff/students and community come together throughout the various stages of Salad Day preparation and execution, donating their time and energy in various ways that support sustainable and healthy living. The result is a special culminating moment to come together as one community to celebrate and enjoy. It's a one-of-a-kind experience that is a highlight of the Springhurst program!"

**-Dr. Julia Drake, Principal Springhurst Elementary**