

Green Festival Inspires 25,000 in NYC

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Saturday and Sunday saw 25,000 attend the inaugural [Green Festival](#) at the Javits Center on Manhattan's West Side. In Saturday's sunshine and Sunday's dreary rain, people from the five boroughs and beyond came to learn about a sustainable economy, ecological balance, and social justice.

Exhibitors gave away samples of granola bars, chocolate, energy drinks and even kale chips. Others displayed fair trade textiles and crafts from India, Africa and the kilns of rural Mexico. Occupy Wall Street supporters printed designs on sweatshop-free t-shirts and students from [Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation](#) demonstrated how Life Straw can provide clean drinking water to developing countries while raising money for schools. Everything from sustainable dog beds to party plates and bamboo charcoal odor absorbers was on display (and for sale!) at this past weekend's "party with a purpose."

Green Festival gave attendees an opportunity to not only try new green products, but also the chance to learn something new about their city and their world. PETA helped passers by visualize the amount of water used to produce a pound of meat by having a volunteer shower in a portable booth. [Mercy for Animals](#) paid attendees a dollar to watch a 4 minute video about the poultry industry.

Speakers on the 6 stages addressed topics from green initiatives in

schools to fracking to public transit. [Concrete Green](#) explained how a Bronx business is producing solar energy systems in an effort to simultaneously stimulate new industry that generates safe, local jobs and offer neighborhood residents with access to green energy sources that will reduce their energy bills. [Steve Ritz](#) of [Green Bronx Machine](#) outlined how entire communities can be fed healthy, organic, sustainable vegetables from the produce grown in a vertical classroom farm.

At an event partially sponsored by Ford, [Projjal Dutta](#), MTA Director of Sustainability, presented his case that there is no such thing as a ‘green’ car, and argued that all other green activities/products showcased at the festival became moot if you drive to get them. He commended attendees for arriving by public transit, by foot and even by cab and spoke about the even greener initiatives taken by the MTA, including the street redesign of 1st Avenue along the Select Bus Service route and the station construction of the new 2nd Ave subway line optimized for less energy use in braking and accelerating.

Attendees were presented with an extensive array of both new and familiar ways to approach green living, whether through what they do and don’t buy or how they approach every day tasks.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the festival was seeing that the experts themselves were impressively open to learning something new. Speakers attended each other’s presentations and exhibitors visited each other’s booths as they snacked on food from the vegetarian café. The conversations happening in the “streets” of the Green Festival booths reflected investment experts learning about bamboo textiles and community organizers learning about shoe insoles made with vegetable glycerin. This weekend, the most knowledgeable in all green fields had the opportunity to spontaneously connect to plot future collaborations, and the energy was tangible.

This weekend's Green Festival demonstrated that creativity will in fact be the single factor that bolsters us through any impending climate or economic crisis. Having so much of the creative forces that will lead such changes all together under one industrial roof was decidedly inspiring.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/green-festival-inspires-25-000>