



## **NY AG, Schools Chancellor, UFT Launch Greenpoint Eco-Schools Program \$1.75 Million Grant Will Provide Four Brooklyn Schools with Staff, Training and Tools for Success**

11-18-2015 // Linda Argueta

Today, the New York State Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman, joined NYC Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña, United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew, and National Wildlife Federation President and CEO Collin O'Mara to celebrate the launch of the National Wildlife Federation's new Brooklyn-based program, Greenpoint Eco-Schools.

The Greenpoint Eco-Schools program is a comprehensive environmental education program that aims to develop a well-educated and empowered generation of student and community environmental leaders. Participating schools include PS 31, PS 34, PS 110, and M.S. 126.

"Greenpoint Eco-Schools will provide thousands of Greenpoint students, teachers, and parents with the resources and training to create a more sustainable environment," said **Attorney General Schneiderman**. "By voting to implement this groundbreaking program, Greenpoint's families chose to invest in the future of their community. We are creating the next generation of environmental stewards out of one of the worst industrial disasters in our city's history."

Greenpoint Eco-Schools was funded by a \$1.75 million award from the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF), a competitive grant program created by the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Environmental Conservation with monies obtained through a settlement with ExxonMobil over its Greenpoint oil spill. The

Eco-Schools program was one of six projects selected by Greenpoint residents in 2014 to receive GCEF grants of greater than \$25,000.

Through the awarded grant, each school will be staffed with a full-time "Sustainability Coach" who will directly work with students, staff and parents to implement a range of environmental projects that will enhance academic achievement in science, technology, engineering and math, while simultaneously connecting students and staff to the Greenpoint community. Serving a total of 1,800 students, more than 200 staff members and thousands of family and community members, the Greenpoint Eco-Schools program and an aligned After School Club that begins in January 2016 will create a true legacy of sustainability.

"The National Wildlife Federation's Greenpoint Eco-Schools program, in collaboration with strong partners, will improve students' education achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math, while making a real difference in the day to day lives of the entire Greenpoint community," stated **Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation**. "Sustainability Coaches from the National Wildlife Federation will work directly with students and teachers on hands-on projects, from designing green spaces and planting trees to understanding water quality issues in Newtown Creek. This will help remediate Greenpoint's natural resources and help students become critical thinkers and problem solvers, in Greenpoint and beyond."

The Greenpoint Eco-Schools program aims to produce tangible and measureable environmental benefits within schools and throughout the community. Guided by the National Wildlife Federation's **Eco-Schools USA** framework and "Pathways to Sustainability," each school will reduce waste by 25 percent per year, energy use by 10 percent and water use by 5 percent. Schools will also work to improve indoor air quality, increase or enhance the amount of green space on the school grounds, and plan school and community action projects.

"Teaching our teachers and students about the environment and the impact of conservation, waste, pollution, sustainability and energy in their community is an important part of our vision for STEM education in our schools. Programs like this will help our students use their critical thinking skills to develop a sense of responsibility about the environment and help them to become citizens who will support a healthy and safe city and country," said **Carmen Fariña, NYC Schools Chancellor**.

City agency partners, including NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY), School Construction Authority (SCA), Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), NYC DOE Division of School Facilities (DSF), NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), NYC DOE's School Food, and Grow NYC have matched this grant with \$10 million in energy and water efficiency upgrades for schools, including new boilers for heating, improved lighting, new low-flow toilets, zero waste programs, staff and student trainings, and other improvements for Greenpoint schools. On October 13, all four Greenpoint schools began participating in organics collection, a DSNY program in which food waste is collected daily and sent to processing facilities. Through the organics program, schools reduced their cafeteria waste by over 75 percent in just one month.

"Schools are a central part of the community. So when it comes to taking steps towards improving the community the first place to initiate that change is inside the schools," said **United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew**. "The UFT is excited to be a partner in this endeavor and help raise awareness about sustainable communities."

Program partners such as the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELFL), are providing professional development for teachers, while *The Greenpoint Gazette* newspaper is providing a weekly column to the program. These partners will deliver education support for staff, as well as meaningful opportunities to communicate with the Greenpoint community. Change My World Now (CMWN) is developing a safe sustainability-themed social media platform for students. The results and successes of the program will be shared between schools through student-led summits and action projects.

To date, with matching contributions of grantees, the **Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund** has invested \$37.5 million in projects addressing the environmental improvement priorities of the Greenpoint community. More information on GCEF can be found at [www.GCEFund.org](http://www.GCEFund.org).

<https://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/News-by-Topic/Get-Outside/2015/11-18-15-NY-AG-Schools-Chancellor-UFT-Launch-Greenpoint-Eco-Schools-Program.aspx>