

The GroundBreaker

BREAKING NEWS FROM GROUNDWORK BRIDGEPORT

SUMMER 2004 EDITION

Entrepreneurial Self Sufficiency Program

There are good people who are less fortunate in life. This is where the beacons of the Entrepreneurial Self-Sufficiency Program shine. This is designed to train and launch graduates into their own landscaping business. The program's goals are to develop both the job/business skills and work ethic of the individual. Upon completion, our graduates will be certified as Landscape Maintenance Technicians and we will coach them for three years as they develop their own businesses.

The Inner-City Foundation has promised to match up to \$20,000 raised by Groundwork Bridgeport. Earth Technologies Inc. has contributed \$5000 to the match. The program needs both cash and in-kind, donations of tools and landscaping materials, used trucks and work gloves to meet the Inner City match grant. Anyone wishing to donate to this worthy program may contact Richard Tiani at Groundwork: Bridgeport. The office can be contacted at (203) 332-1721. E-mail: groundworkbpt@sbcglobal.net. □

Celebrity Breakfast

This fundraiser held by Groundwork Bridgeport took place on March 15. Complete Environmental Testing and Leggette, Brashears & Graham Inc sponsored the event.

The speakers at the fundraiser include John Fabrizi, mayor of Bridgeport. Mayor Fabrizi gave an overview of the contributions that Groundwork Bridgeport has made to the city and presented Richard Tiani, Executive Director, with a \$5000 check to initiate the Vacant Lot Regeneration study that Groundwork is performing for the city. Mr. Fabrizi then gave a warm and friendly introduction to John DeStefano, mayor of New Haven. Mr. DeStefano spoke about the similarities between the two cities, their strong commercial heritages and how urban beautification is helping both cities to regenerate themselves.

The awardees of the event included: Phyllis Machledt of Sacred Heart University. Ms. Machledt is the director of the Service Learning and Volunteer Programs. She has done an extraordinary job in matching SHU volunteers with the needs of non-profit organizations. Gus Serra from General Electric is Manager of Communications and Community Relations. He also received an award. Gus was a driving force in the establishment of the program Butterflies Are Teachers (BAT) program in local Bridgeport schools. BAT is a program, which uses the life cycle of the butterfly to teach science math and ecology to elementary school students. Scott Jamison is the owner of Oliver Nurseries in Fairfield. He too received an award for his continuous, generous donations of plant material to Groundwork Bridgeport. Oomer Syed also received an awarded for his dedication and diligent work for the past three years with Groundwork Bridgeport. □

Vacant Lot Regeneration

East End of Bridgeport will soon be getting more attention from Groundwork Bridgeport. In addition to Caribbean garden that we helped build at the YMCA Taylor Center and the clean up of Revere Street Groundwork will soon start a new program to determine the best community use of several vacant lots in the East End. A meeting was held with community leaders to start to identify what the communities needs are for recreation.

The Vacant Lot Regeneration Program's mission is to develop a database of the vacant lots in the East End and an actionable strategy for the city of what should be done with lots in this area.

With grants from the National Parks and Services as well as the City of Bridgeport, this program is in progress and volunteers that are at least sixteen years old are needed. There is new computer software called City Scan, which will be used to record field data and up load it to the Groundwork computers. The project is scheduled for completion by November. □



Groundwork Bridgeport
515 Washington Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Park City Spring Sweep

Groundwork Bridgeport was busy this spring with our semi-annual citywide clean up and beautification. With help from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield Prep and University, Housatonic Community College, Harding H.S. and over a dozen neighborhood groups one hundred and ninety volunteers worked at fifty four public recreational areas. The volunteers planted flowers, shrubs, removed tons of trash and built four butterfly gardens at city schools. The Park City Spring Sweep volunteers also worked at the Thomas Merton Center, Homes For The Brave, the YMCA and Center for Women and Families.

Have a project idea or interested in volunteering? Student interns welcome too! Call our office @ 203-332-1721 today. □

Up Coming Events

This summer has started off to be very busy with projects lined up with the Service For Peace organization, Walters Memorial Church, Bridgeport Elderly Housing Association, Boys and Girls Club-B J Brown memorial, fourteen city parks, and playgrounds, Summer BAT gardens, East End Vacant Lot Regeneration program and recruitment for the Entrepreneurial Self Sufficiency program

There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer your time or to support us with financially or with in-kind assistance.