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The Villager

# Green roof plan takes root with P.S. 41 students

By amNY

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**By Kristin Edwards**

Children at P.S. 41 laughed and jumped about excitedly as they shook their cream-filled jars that would soon be butter during the Earth Day celebration at P.S. 41, on Fri., April 27.

The celebration served as the kickoff event to the school's participation in the Adopt a School Garden Program under which it hopes to install a green roof. The event was also an opportunity to introduce the project's newest sponsors.

Last week, The Villager first reported that the W. 11th St. school has proposed a plan for a 22,000-square-foot green roof. The green roof will be sponsored in part by the National Gardening Association, which selected the school for its Adopt a School Program.

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The green roof project is part of a plan that is being called GELL (Green-roof Environmental Literacy Laboratory). The students will use the green roof in their science studies and math studies. The green roof design calls for a separate section of the roof for each grade, with each using the garden to enhance their grade-level-specific curriculum.

During the kickoff event, the school unveiled its proposal to parents, some students and the rest of their sponsors. Mayor Michael Bloomberg had been invited but was unable to attend.

Members of the organizations co-sponsoring the event also spoke to the crowd about their involvement in the project, and they ran various tables at which the students could learn about gardening, agriculture and dairy products.

David Bruce, an organic farmer for Organic Valley Farms, ran the butter-making station and distributed string cheese to the students.



Richard S. Thorsen, Polytech University vice president of development and university affairs, spoke of the importance of the green roof plan.

“Fifty percent of people in the world live in an urban environment,” he said. “Man and works of man are part of nature. They can’t destroy nature, they must reinforce nature.”

Among other organizations getting involved in the program is Remember Me Rose Gardens, which has been planting rose bushes in remembrance of the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

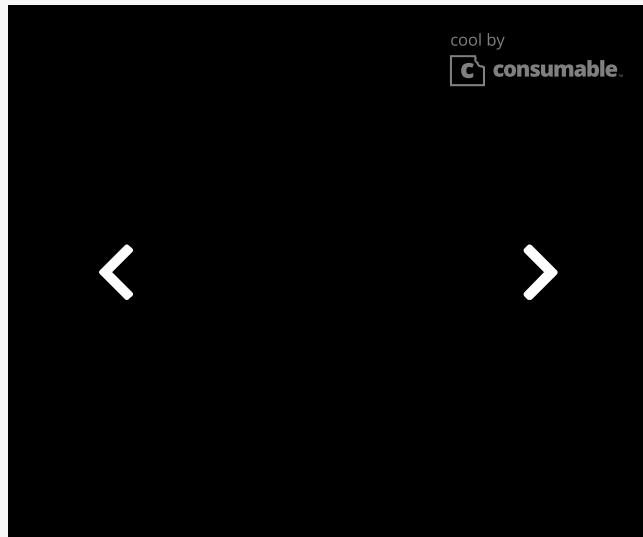
A date for starting construction of the green roof has not been decided, but it's hoped it can begin this summer. Though the project has some sponsors, funds still must be raised before it can begin. Additionally, the school still needs to find a contractor to build the green roof.

Students expressed enthusiasm for the activities at the kickoff and for the green-roof garden itself. For children who might not have been old enough to understand the benefits of the green roof, there were other ways to learn about nature and the environment at the celebration.

Les Dames d'Escoffier, a women's culinary institute, had the children play a game identifying different vegetables and fruits and guessing which season they grow in. Then the students got to make a sandwich of cream cheese and edible flowers. The Lower East Side Ecology Center had a table teaching kids about bugs and insects, while at the next booth, children identified plant seeds.

Fifth-graders Matteo Pavon and Alex Erovart enjoyed the butter-making station and cornhusk doll station. The boys said that they were happy about the new green roof because they would be "more environmentally friendly." However, they expressed disappointment that they would no longer be in the school by the

time it was complete.



Jayne Thompson, a second-grader, also enjoyed the cornhusk doll-making booth. On the other hand, she described the cream cheese-and-flowers sandwich she made at the Les Dames d'Escoffier booth as just "so-so."

"I really want to see the garden," she said.



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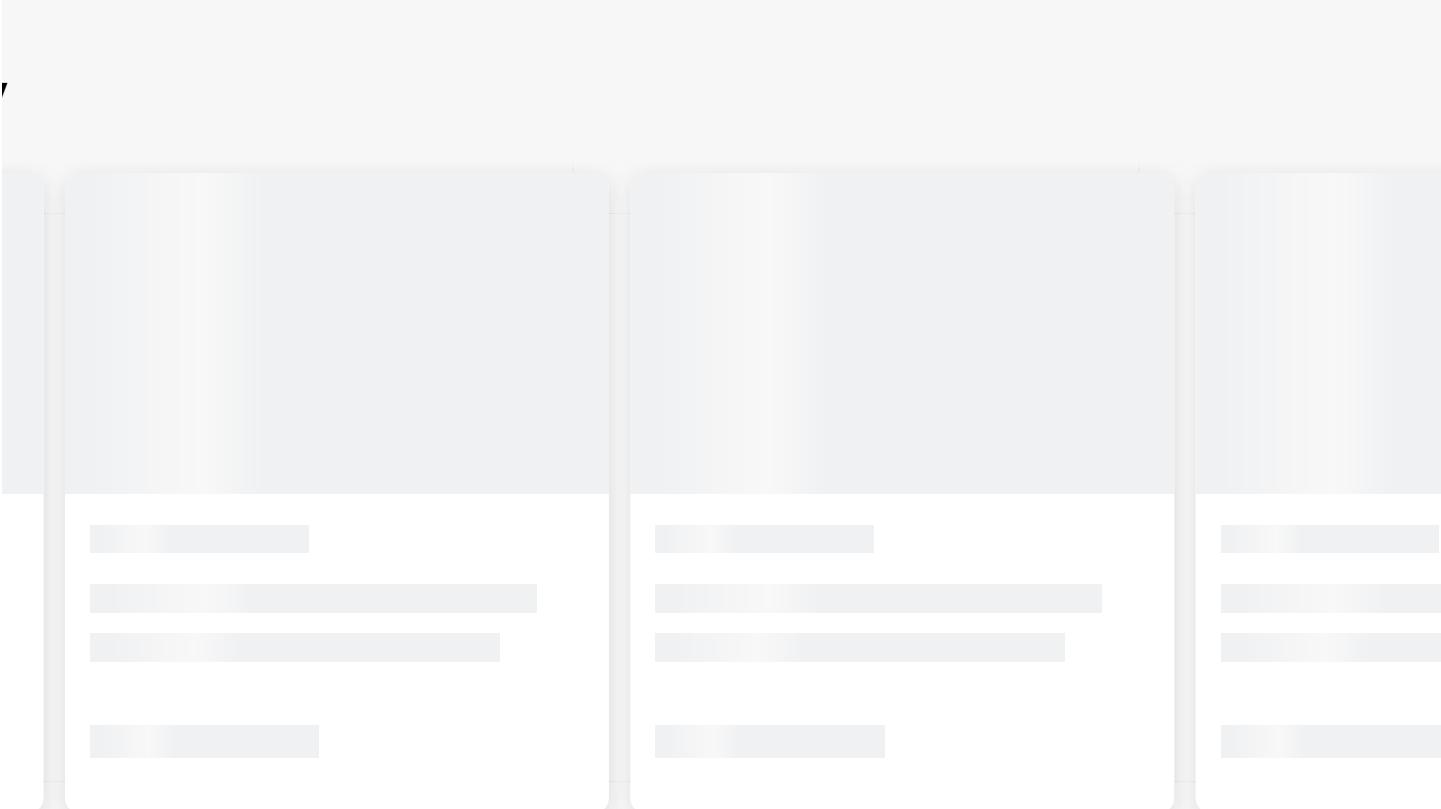
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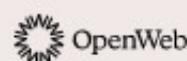


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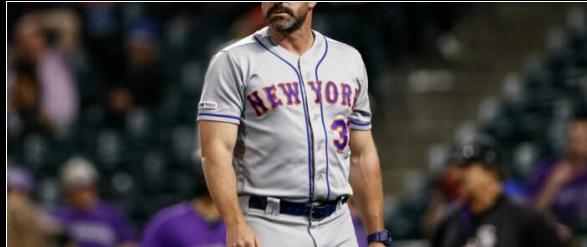
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