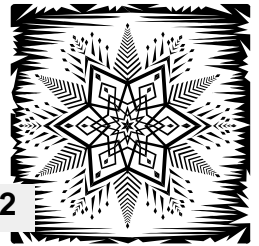


The Earth Crew Report

A Youth Project of West Harlem Environmental ACTION, Inc.

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Volume 1 Issue 2



Earth Crew begin Audit of Uptown Area



In November of 1996, The Earth Crew began it's now famous Industrial and Commercial Sites Audit.

The goal of the Industrial and Commercial Sites Audit is to identify possible polluters within the Northern Manhattan or Uptown community such as dry cleaners, auto repair shops, and manufacturing factories. Dry cleaners are of particular interest because of the toxic and possibly carcinogenic chemical called Perchloroethylene, that is used to clean the clothing. Once these possible polluters have been identified, WE ACT will conduct outreach to these businesses in order to inform them of the possible negative health impacts on the surrounding community residents that irresponsible business practices can have.

In the beginning, practice sessions were held in order to determine how best to proceed with collecting the data from the block-by-block survey of possible polluters in Northern Manhattan. After many unsuccessful attempts to refine the data collection tool, WE ACT



Carlos Jusino, Johanna Holguin, and Joselito Melendez conducting the Industrial and Commercial Sites Audit in West Harlem.

The data will be input into a GIS so that a map of the possible polluters in the community will be generated.

contacted and met with Mitchell Silver, from the Manhattan Borough Presidents Uptown Office, to ask about a similar survey that was done by the Borough President's Office. Mr. Silver was very helpful in determining the changes that needed to be made to the data collection tool in order to make the Audit a suc-

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Internet Access a key to information from around the World



The Internet has become a proven source of information from around the world on an almost infinite number of subjects, ranging from Astronomy to Zoology, everything in between, and everything beyond.

The Earth Crew discovered this fact after WE ACT re-established it's link to the Internet via the International Education and Resource Network (I*EARN) project. I*EARN is a youth conference and communication project with thousands of participants from around the world. The goal is to work

on a group project or participate in an Internet conference with young people from around the world.

Mostly the Earth Crew have only browsed in on the conferences and have only used the Internet as a source of information for various school projects or papers or to learn more about social change movements around the country. Thanks to the Institute for Global Communications (IGC), our internet service provider, and their homepage, WE ACT provides links to these groups and conferences around the country. ☑

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Conflict Resolution Workshop enjoyed by the Crew

Because of the great rapport that Dr. Jaqui Valentine developed with the Earth Crew while conducting her Public Speaking Workshop, she was invited back to hold a two day Conflict Resolution Workshop with the Earth Crew.

Dr. Valentine discussed the different styles that one can use to handle a conflict in a non-violent manner. The styles that one can use are: the *Compromising Style*, the *Collaborative Style*, the *Competitive Style*, the *Avoidant Style*, and the *Accommodative Style*.



Joselito Melendez and Nikki Alfred role-playing a conflict while Dr. Valentine supervises.

(“Audit” continued from page 1)

cess. Once the data is collected, it will be given to Dr. Patrick Kinney from the Columbia School of Public Health, so that it can be input into a GIS (Geographic Information System), so that a map of the possible polluters in the community can be generated. This map will help to demonstrate the inequitable concentration of environmentally hazardous sites in communities of color in Northern Manhattan. ☑



“I think that the best style to use in a conflict is the Compromising style because both parties get some of what they want.”

-Nina Rojas, Earth Crew Intern

According to Dr. Valentine, the *Compromising Style* is an approach that allows a person to give up a little bit of what he/she wants to get the rest of what he/she wants, and the other parties in the conflict do the same. This style is good to use when you want to reach a solution quickly because of time constraints or when you can settle for a short term solution or temporary gain.

The *Collaborative Style* is an approach that allows a person to be actively involved in working out a conflict by asserting what you want, while still trying to cooperate with the other person in the conflict. This style is good to use when the issues are very important to both or all parties and are clear about what it is that you want.

The *Competitive Style* is usually used by someone who isn't interested in cooperating with the other person, and is only interested in getting his/her own way in an assertive and forceful manner. This style is good to use when you have the authority to make the decision and it seems to be the one best way or when a decision needs to be made quickly, such as in an emergency situation.

The *Avoidant Style* is one where a person doesn't assert his/herself, doesn't cooperate, or avoids the conflict entirely. This style is good to use when tensions are too high, and you feel you need to cool down or when there's danger in trying to deal with the situation, or you're trying to buy more time to get more information.

The *Accommodative Style* allows a

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Earth Crew Learn how to Speak in Public and in Front of their Peers

Under the direction of Dr. Jaqui Valentine, interns in the Earth Crew Project participated in a four day public speaking Workshop, that was intended to give the Earth Crew the necessary skills to be able to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas in a public setting.

Dr. Valentine developed an excellent rapport with the Earth Crew, which allowed them to really develop under her tutelage. Dr. Valentine was amazed by the improvements she saw by day four as compared to day one.

Dr. Valentine discussed many topics on how to deliver a speech in Public. For example, she discussed formats for impromptu presentations where one can



Nina Rojas delivering her extemporaneous speech to Dr. Jaqui Valentine and the rest of the Earth Crew.

discuss the past, present and the future in order to get their point across. Or one can discuss the problem, possible solutions, pros and cons, and the Best possible solution.

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LIBRARIES FOR THE FUTURE:

Mapping Your Information Environment



In the summer of 1996, at the behest of West Harlem Environmental ACTION, Inc. (WE ACT), the EPA began monitoring air quality in northern Manhattan to determine whether or not the pollution exceed federal standards. Unfortunately, the EPA placed its eight air-monitoring on lampposts, at an average height of about twelve feet, well above the air most pedestrians breathe. Therefore, as a check on the EPA study, another monitoring effort was initiated. U n -



The Earth Crew with Sarah Feldstein from Libraries for the Future, learning how to map their Information Environment.

"There seemed to be a dearth of community-specific information on asthma and air pollution in the local branch libraries."

der the direction of Dr. Patrick Kinney, of the Columbia School of Public Health, and Dr. Mary Northridge, of the

Harlem Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Peggy Shepard, WE ACT's Executive Director, the study was set up to measure street-level air quality and to determine the number of diesel-burning trucks and buses, cars and pedestrians passing by the monitors.

To gather data for this air quality study, the Earth Crew spent five eight -

hour days, at four of the EPA sites, conducting traffic counts and wearing personal air monitors designed to measure the level of particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter (PM10). PM10 is the main ingredient in the sooty exhaust from diesel-burning trucks and buses, and can become embedded in a person's lungs, causing asthma, emphysema, bronchitis and other respiratory illnesses.

When the Earth Crew completed their monitoring, they needed to put the information in context and to make it accessible to residents. With Sarah Feldstein from Libraries for the Future, the Earth Crew assessed their information envi-

ronment and concluded that the community had very little non-commercial information.

Visits to local branch libraries in Harlem, for gathering information on asthma rates and levels of air pollution in New York City and Harlem, revealed that although there was general information on asthma and air pollution, there seemed to be a dearth of community-specific information on the impact and correlation between these two issues.

Looking for more extensive public information, the Earth Crew toured the Region II EPA Library. Karen Schneider, the head EPA librarian, gave an introductory workshop on environmental information on the World Wide Web. An EPA staffer had prepared a large color map and series of graphs detailing information about air quality and income levels in New York City. Ms. Schneider pointed out that while the EPA library is open to the public, much of the information available there can also be access through Earth Crew's local public library via inter-library loan, the Internet, and free EPA publications.

As a result of the library explorations, the Earth Crew plans to work with the local public library in order to contribute their own information and bringing in EPA library resources in order to increase public access to air qual-

(Continued on page 7 see "Library")

MNN Video Camera Training:

Earth Crew goal to be on Cable T.V.



The Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) is Manhattan's Public Access cable station, which trains the interested public on how to handle a SVHS camcorder, how to produce and edit a show, and allows residents of Manhattan, or members of community based organizations in Manhattan to air their show on Cable TV.

Onorio Perez, Community Outreach Educator at MNN, came to WE ACT and conducted a two day training workshop for the Earth Crew. The



City-As-School Intern, Dwayne Drew being supervised by MNN's Onorio Perez

workshop introduced the Earth Crew to the many different, but important, parts of a SVHS camcorder, such as the viewfinder, lens focus, zoom button, and record trigger. Onorio explained to the Earth Crew the importance of

white Balancing, which measures the color temperature for the lighting situation.

(Continued on page 7 see "Video")

Wildlife, Trees, & Snow in Ithaca, NY

On Super Bowl Sunday, the Earth Crew was not sitting around the television set, watching the Super Bowl, like almost everyone else.

Instead, we were hiking through wilderness trails, looking at various animal tracks in the snow, and learning how to differentiate between different species of indigenous trees at Buttermilk Falls State Park in Ithaca, NY.

The Earth Crew left the chilly city of New York behind to travel to an even chillier surrounding, but at least one that was more beautiful and natural. The trip to Buttermilk Falls took about three and a half hours to make and was worth the trip to Ithaca.

In Ithaca, the Earth Crew met David Werrier, of the Cornell University Cooperative Center. David was waiting for us to arrive so that he may take us on our nature walk, which was sponsored by the Cayuga Nature Center, also in Ithaca, NY.

David took us to the State Park immediately upon our arrival. He explained to us that since we were a little late in arriving, we would not be able to



The Earth Crew in Ithaca, NY with David Werrier

"On Super Bowl Sunday . . . we were hiking through wilderness trails, looking at animal tracks and different species of trees."

give the full tour but, he promised to make it enjoyable.

At first, David showed us some of the trees that are indigenous to the area. He pointed out to us the difference between a regular Pine Tree and a White

Pine Tree. The difference is in the cone that the white pine drops to the ground. The white pine tree has a cone that sprouts out five thin fingerlike leaves. David also showed us a Hemlock Tree, which he referred to as a bitter, because of the fact that when you chewed and tasted a piece of it, it tasted bitter. The Witch Hazel tree has some medicinal effects according to David Werrier. He also showed us some deciduous shrubs which contained pretty, but poisonous berries.

The Earth Crew kept noticing animal tracks in the snow and asked David what kinds of animals were native to this area of New York State. David mentioned that the Fox was a common animal, along with the Squirrel and its cousin the Flying Squirrel, both being quite numerous in the area. He also mentioned that there are many Owls and who Beavers frequented the area.

David carefully walked us on to a frozen river to demonstrate the demolition and construction skills of Beavers. He showed us a pretty cool Beaver Dam, and the remains of a tree that had been cut down by an enterprising resident of the river. The river area itself is in what is called a flood plain because of the fact that millions of years ago, when the glaciers from the Ice Age were melting, they gouged out wide tracks of mountainous land, leaving valleys that were prone to flooding from time to time. He demonstrated this to us by pointing out the different meandering path carved by the river due to erosion. The other interesting aspect of the river is that because it does flood every once in a while, it brings nutrient rich soil from the sediment on the bottom of the river, and spreads it out over the flooded area.

Overall, the trip was a success in that the Earth Crew enjoyed the learning experience, as well as the scenic setting of the park with its trees, wildlife, waterfall, and river. ☑

EARTH CREW TRIP:

Latino Youth Conference in Albany

Once WE ACT received an Agenda for a Latino Youth Conference in the Capital building in Albany, NY, we immediately planned a trip up to Albany so that the Earth Crew could observe the major event occurring on the Sunday of that weekend, which was to be a mock State Assembly, with the pre-selected Latino youths acting as a representatives of their State Assemblyperson. The young assemblypersons were to argue for or against the Bill before them. In this case the Bill was one that proposed to make English the official language of New York State.

Before we get into whether or not



The Latino Youth Conference Mock Assembly in Albany, NY.

that Bill was passed into Law by the young assemblypersons, let's talk about the tour of the Capital building that the Earth Crew went on before sitting in the gallery of the State Assembly Chamber to observe the mock assembly.

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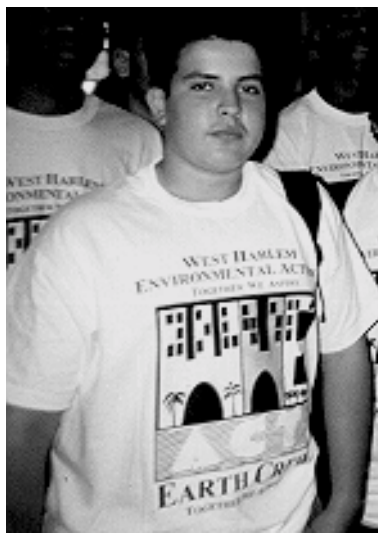
EARTH CREW INTERVIEW:

Angel Valerio - Life after Earth Crew



When one works with young people at WE ACT, he or she may often wonder what happens to some of the graduates of the Earth Crew program, and whether the experience at WE ACT has made any significant difference in the life of that particular young person.

Recently, I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing Angel Va-



Angel Valerio in his Earth Crew Days

lerio, a former Earth Crew member and soon to be high school graduate. Angel is a 17 year old senior at A. Philip Randolph High School in Harlem. Angel is of Dominican descent, but was born and raised in New York City. He is the oldest of two sons and seems to be a considerate young man, who made himself available for the impromptu interview at the last minute. Overall, Angel's experience in the Earth Crew pro-

"Being in the Earth Crew was a good experience, especially for those who feel that they have nothing to do for themselves or the community." -Angel Valerio

gram seems to have been a positive one which has left a lasting impression on the way he relates to his urban environment.

LAB: How long were you with the Earth Crew?

AV: A little over one year. In fact it was for 14 months exactly.

LAB: During the 14 months that

you were with the Earth Crew, what stands out as the most exciting thing that you accomplished or participated in?

AV: Visiting the White House during our trip to Washington D.C. was the most exciting. It was exciting because I had never been there before, and learning the history of all of the different rooms was cool.

LAB: During that time, what project did you feel was beneficial to the community? Why?

AV: Participating in the Fire Hydrant survey was probably the most beneficial because of the importance of fire hydrants to the community. The survey made sure that the hydrants were in working order by checking that all of the bolts were there, that the caps were on, and whether or not it looked old and rusted.

LAB: Why did you leave the Earth Crew program?

AV: It was a volunteer group at that time and I enjoyed it a lot. But, I needed to earn more money than the \$40.00 stipend every two weeks, so I took a job at McDonald's, which would allow me to earn more money during the school year and summer.

LAB: Hindsight being 20/20. Did you make the right choice?

AV: I had to leave the Earth Crew because I'm graduating from high school and my little brother is graduating from the eighth grade. So I needed to make more money so that I could take care of things related to my senior year, like college applications, senior ring, prom, and senior dues. That would allow my parents to pay for the things that my little brother needs for his graduation, and not worry about me.

LAB: Do you know where you will attend college in the fall?

AV: Yes. I will be attending New York City Technical College in Brooklyn. I plan on studying Electrical Engineering Technology and getting a Bachelor's degree in that field.

LAB: Do you feel more aware of the environment after being in Earth Crew?

AV: Most Definitely. I'm more aware of people not knowing what's

(Continued on page 7 see "Angel")

First Earth Crew College Scholarship given to Carlos Jusino



Rewards for years of Community service are usually not given out as often as we would like, especially when it comes to recognizing the contributions of a young person.

WE ACT has made an organizational decision to continue to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the young people that walk through our doors. All of them contribute in varying degrees to the success of the community based projects that WE ACT proposes. Primarily because some of the projects are proposed by the young people themselves. However, some young people go out of their way to perform and participate at a level that far exceeds that of those around them.



One such young person is Carlos Jusino. Carlos has demonstrated a true dedication to WE ACT, The Earth Crew, and the Environmental Justice Movement by working with us for over two years.

Carlos is the Peer Supervisor of the Earth Crew and has consistently proven his leadership abilities and desire to work with the Earth Crew, even while managing to be very successful in his first year at Lehman College in the Bronx.

It is because of this commitment to excellence, both in school and in helping the community, that WE ACT has proudly made Carlos Jusino the first recipient of the Earth Crew College

National Beach Clean-up Day: Salt Marsh Cleaned at Inwood Hill Park

September 21, 1996 was National Beach Clean-up Day. The Earth Crew volunteered to help clean-up the Salt Marsh at Inwood Hill Park in Northern Manhattan.

The Earth Crew met with Maria Posada, from the Inwood Hill Ecology Center, who was coordinating the volunteer event.

The Crew met with the larger group of volunteers and discussed the benefits of volunteerism to the Northern Manhattan community.

Ms. Posada, then gave the Earth Crew a quick tour of the Ecology center before sending them out to clean up our assigned area of the Salt Marsh. A Salt Marsh is grassland over which salt water flows at intervals.

Our assignment was to get into the Marsh and pick up the garbage, using the special equipment that was given to us by Ms. Posada, and tally the numbers of different types of garbage that we pull out of the Marsh. For example, a volunteer had to keep track of the total



From Left: LaKisha Crawford, Jorge Londoño, and Nina Rojas removing trash from the Salt Marsh at Inwood Hill Park

"The Earth Crew made a real difference in the Clean-up of the Inwood Hill Park Salt Marsh. Thank You for your time and Energy." -Maria Posada

number of glass and plastic bottles, metal cans, plastic and paper bags and

can packaging six-rings, pieces of newspapers, cigarette butts, metal and any other odd items that might be discovered. In our assigned area, we found many plastic items, and even a steel 50-gallon drum garbage can in the marsh.

The Crew worked long and hard on cleaning up our area of the salt marsh. We gathered over 500 pieces of trash in an area that was probably 40 feet long by 25 feet wide. Needless to say, we were very proud of our accomplishment and the job that was done in the Marsh. Ms. Posada was very grateful to the Earth Crew for helping out with the clean-up process at Inwood Hill Park. We were supposed to be given certificates, but as of yet have not received them in the mail.

The Earth Crew enjoyed the work because it helped to beautify an area in the park that was a real eyesore in the community. WE ACT plans to continue volunteering our time and energy to help make Northern Manhattan Parks as beautiful as any in the city. ☒

"Insurrection: Holding History" - A Play to Remember

Every once in a while, the Earth Crew go to see an educational play. "Insurrection: Holding History" was one such play that was not only educational but extremely enjoyable and a little surprising.

"Insurrection" was put on at the Joseph Papp Public Theater in the Village. The play was about the Nat Turner Rebellion, where Black slaves in the South rebelled against their White masters and went on a killing spree in order to demonstrate that they were no longer going to be dominated by their "owners".

The play focused on the relationship that a young African American

scholar had with his immobile and speechless grandfather, with whom he could communicate telepathically via this special bond they shared. The grandson found out that his grandfather had been there for the Nat Turner Rebellion and was a piece of living history which could help him with his Thesis paper via trip back in time to that actual rebellion.

Along the way through this revisionist trip into history, the grandson discovers that the events as reported in scholarly texts proved not to be as correct as once believed, and allowed him to tell his grandfather about his homosexuality.

The scene where two male actors kissed surprised everyone, especially the Earth Crew. When they had an opportunity to meet the actors, after the show, they asked many questions to the stars of the show about the play and about what it feels like to kiss someone of the same sex. The actors replied that it's part of the job of being an actor. If you're playing a gay character and he/she kisses someone, then that's what you have to do regardless of your sexual orientation.

Overall the Earth Crew immensely enjoyed the show and the experience of meeting the actors after the show. It really gave the experience a personal touch. ☒



MTA Buses on corner of 132nd Street and 12th Ave. waiting to enter the Manhattanville Bus Depot.

(“Library” continued from page 3)
ity information.

WE ACT hopes to use the results from the study, public meetings, and information campaigns to convince the MTA to convert its fleet of diesel-burning buses to cleaner burning fuels, such as natural gas, thereby cutting down one major source of air pollution in Harlem as well as in New York City as a whole. ☑



(“Public” continued from page 2)

The Earth Crew were assigned to write a speech and deliver it to the rest of the Earth Crew. Through practice and role plays, the Earth Crews skills advanced greatly, but none of them advanced as much as one particular Earth Crew intern, Nina Rojas. She progressed from being someone with so many “crutches” to lean on, such as twisting her hands, shuffling her feet, saying “Uhhhhh” and “ahhhh” too many times, and not looking at her audience, to delivering an effective and clear speech about why she came to the Earth Crew program, which was applauded loudly by all. ☑

(“Angel” continued from page 5)

going on in the community’s environment, such as Lead in the drinking water and diesel bus pollution. WE ACT was important because they constantly mailed flyers and brochures to community residents in order to make them more aware of what’s going on in their neighborhoods. Being in the Earth Crew was a good experience, especially for those who feel that they have nothing to do for themselves or the community. You meet new people and you learn about topics that you really didn’t think about before. It makes you think about things in a different way. ☑

(“Conflict” continued from page 2)

person to work cooperatively with the other person without trying to assert your own concerns, thereby conceding to the desires of the other person(s) involved in the conflict.

The Earth Crew studied these styles and weighed the pro’s and con’s of each style before participating in mandatory role plays, so that they could practice what they learned. They were given a conflict scenario and were told by Dr. Valentine to choose the style that they felt would be most appropriate to handle the given situation. The given situations varied from a simple argument, between a couple, over which movie to see to much deeper conflicts that dealt with relationship issues that could have ended that given relationship. The young men were put into situations where they were arguing with each other and even arguing with groups of people.

After putting all of the different styles to use in various situations, the Earth Crew decided that the best style to use was the Compromising Style because both parties get some of what they want, making it a win-win situation, because the emphasis is on the fact that both parties can’t get what they want so they work out something that both parties can live with. ☑

(“Video” Continued from page 3)

He also explained how to correctly load the camera on to a tripod, which would then allow a person to take steady shots or conduct an interview with the ability to Pan (move side to side) and Tilt (move up and down) to best follow the subject. Onorio explained that the shot composition is also very important. For example, a persons image should be composed so that the head is in the upper third part of the picture frame.

This workshop was the first part of the process. The next workshop will train the Earth Crew on how to use the editing equipment at MNN, and how to produce a show to be aired on MNN. ☑

(“Albany” continued from page 4)

The tour was really educational in the sense that the tour guide explained the history of the building, it’s many intriguing rooms and it’s two main meeting chambers, the State Senate Chamber and the State Assembly Chamber. One of the most interesting sites on the tour was the “Stairwell of a Thousand Faces”, which contained the faces of many of the prominent politicians and military leaders of the time and also included the nameless faces of the masons that built many of the structures in the building. The Earth Crew was also taken to the Governor’s ceremonial office, and was allowed to sit behind the Governor’s ceremonial desk.

As for the mock assembly, it was a great experience because we were able to learn some parliamentary procedure from observing the young assemblypersons enthusiastically argue for their cause on the floor of the Assembly. The assembly began with an introductory speech by Bronx Borough President, Fernando Ferrer, who spoke of the divisive, discriminatory, anti-immigrant, and racist ideology behind such a proposed Bill.

The result of the Assembly was that the Bill was defeated by a wide margin, to raucous applause by a majority of the young assemblypersons, and a large portion of the people gathered in the gallery to observe the proceedings. Once again demonstrating that young people sometimes do know better than their “adult” counterparts. ☑



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