

Non-Profit Partnership Builds Gardens for Preschoolers

Build with Purpose and YMCA partner on Healthy Futures Initiative

Metuchen, NJ (May 2014) Build with Purpose, is excited to announce a partnership with the YMCA of Metuchen Edison Woodbridge and South Amboy to build gardens at area YMCA child care sites. The gardens are part of the YMCA's *Healthy Futures Initiative*, which is focused on building awareness for children and their families about the benefits of healthy nutrition and physical activity. The *Healthy Futures Initiative* is funded through a grant from the Stop & Shop Family Foundation.

The partnership with the YMCA grew out of Build with Purpose's *Garden State Schools Initiative (GSSI)* which was launched in 2010 in response to the national childhood obesity epidemic and the inadequate access to healthy foods in low-income urban areas. In addition to building school and community gardens, GSSI helps schools connect with community food programs. Since 2010, Build with Purpose has facilitated dozens of gardens at schools throughout the state, impacting thousands of students.



Through the partnership with the YMCA, Build with Purpose is working to build gardens at about a dozen YMCA child care sites during the spring and fall. Over the past few weeks, gardens were installed at four YMCA preschools, including sites in Metuchen, Avenel, Colonia and Perth Amboy. Last week, preschoolers at the four sites participated by planting a variety of vegetables, including tomatoes, basil, squash and peppers, in their new garden beds. While Build with Purpose is coordinating and facilitating the garden program, the gardens are designed and constructed by City Green, a nonprofit that builds urban school gardens and develops related curriculum and professional development. Build with Purpose has previously worked with City Green through the GSSI program.

In addition to the gardens at the YMCA sites, Build with Purpose will be implementing other components of the *Healthy Futures Initiative* including a micro-grant for area public schools to build or enhance existing school gardens.

For more information regarding this program or Build with Purpose please call Christina Oztan at 732 635-1000 extension 155.

About Build with Purpose

Build with Purpose is a nonprofit community development organization that uses real estate to foster social change. Build with Purpose's mission is to build sustainable organizations and healthy, vibrant communities. Build with Purpose has facilitated over \$150 million in real estate development financing for more than 30 community organizations over the course of its first ten years and has an established track record directly developing real estate, managing real estate projects for other nonprofits and bringing a variety of community real estate assets back to life. These projects have positively impacted over 8,000 people and helped to make the surrounding communities healthier and more vibrant. For more information about Build with Purpose go to www.bwpurpose.org.