

June 19, 2009

Make Way for Edible Gardens

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the General Mills Corp, the Rye Y can now add gardening to its list of ways to promote good health among schoolchildren. The Y will use the funds to implement an edible gardens pilot program at three schools in the Rye, Rye Neck, Harrison and Mamaroneck school districts. The pilot is one initiative of the Activate America coalition to promote long-term healthy living among school children through increased physical activity and nutrition education.



Growing edible school gardens is a burgeoning movement across the country. From seed to table, a garden provides a fresh way to teach lessons in math or science but more directly, provides opportunities for tasting fruits and vegetables, maybe for the first time. Another bonus is the physical activity that planting, weeding and harvesting can provide.

The Rye Y will select three pilot schools through a grant application process. Each winning school will receive \$3,000 to develop an edible garden, which will then act as a learning laboratory for other schools to visit. Greenwich Hospital has generously agreed to provide the three winning schools with a registered nutritionist and cook to demonstrate in the classroom how to transform the harvest into delicious soups and salads.

Furthermore, the Y plans to develop a “How To Guide” outlining key lessons learned from the pilot gardens. “We hope that by sharing information about how to grow an edible garden, we’ll encourage other schools to do the same. It’s a fun way to teach about healthy eating and to get kids active,” says Gregg Howells, Executive Director of the Y. Other committee members include: Chris Cohan, landscape architect; Dinah Howland, former Rye Y Board president; Donna Gaudioso-Zeale of Greenwich Hospital; Jami Patterson, a registered dietician with Stamford Hospital, Jane Grant of Rye; Joan Babcock of Daniel Warren School, Kendall Egan, Rye City BOE; Kim Larsen of Larchmont; Kim Potter, nurse at Osborn School; Lisa Urban, Milton Wellness Committee and Toby Miller of the Westchester County Dept. of Health’s Fit Kids program. Helen Gates of the Rye Y chairs the committee which was formed in January.

Selection of the three pilot schools will be announced on June 23 with fall 2009 as the intended launch date for the pilot garden program.