

**P.S. 41M**  
**THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SCHOOL**  
116 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011



**CONTACT:** Vicki Sando, 917-846-5169 -or- Christopher Hayes, 917-617-3588  
**DATE:** March 2, 2010  
**TIME:** 9:30 a.m.  
**LOCATION:** Public School 41, 116 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC, NY 10011, 212-675-2756

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Greenroof Environmental Literacy Laboratory Takes Root in Greenwich Village**  
*NYC Public School Students Host Design Unveiling Event for Environmental Education Facility*

March 2, 2010 – 9:30 AM

**SPEAKERS INCLUDE**

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer  
City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn  
Jonathan F. P. Rose, Jonathan Rose Companies

A first-of-its-kind NYC Public School Greenroof Environmental Literacy Laboratory (GELL) is scheduled to begin construction in Greenwich Village at PS41 in the spring of 2010. As a K-5 elementary school, PS41's goal is to create a learning laboratory that raises environmental literacy and enhances students' awareness of the stewardship role they play in the health of the planet. In addition to ecological study, GELL will incorporate tactile, non-abstract lessons in chemistry, biology and mathematics, as well as nutrition and aesthetics. By integrating this model green space learning facility into PS41's lesson plans—and offering hands-on educational opportunities in farm-to-table agriculture, urban sustainability and environmental stewardship—GELL will serve as a prototype educational facility designed to enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education.

“Our students love our gardening program and they learn things in ways that are difficult to teach in class,” said PS41 Principal Kelly Shannon. “But the backyard's only so big. GELL will solve that problem and benefit the entire city.” Located in one of New York City's high-density, low open-space neighborhoods, GELL's 15,000 sq. ft. observational learning environment is destined to become one of the City's largest municipal green roofs atop a NYC public school. Providing a habitat for birds, bats, butterflies and other insects, GELL's environmental benefits include improved air quality and a reduction in the City's carbon footprint, heat stamp effect and sewage-storm water runoff.

Despite its name, Greenwich Village does not have a lot of green. “Kids today think vegetables come out of shrink wrap packages instead of the ground,” said Vicki Sando, GELL’s Founder who began PS41’s gardening program in the spring of 2003. “For city kids to understand farm-to-table agriculture and the natural world, they need to get their hands in the dirt. That’s what GELL will do...magnificently.”

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn are underwriting roof renovations, under the direction of the NYC School Construction Authority. NYS Senator Tom Duane, the PS41 PTA, the ERM Foundation and others are funding costs associated with GELL’s greenroof elements—including installation of a state-of-the-art green sedum tray system. Jonathan Rose Companies, a leading green urban development firm, serves as owner’s representative for GELL, providing visionary project management expertise and oversight. Murphy Burnham and Buttrick Architects and Silman Associates Structural Engineers of New York are providing architectural and engineering services. Additional support has been provided by Futurehood, Organic Valley, Whole Foods Market, the Immaculate Baking Company and the National Gardening Association. After a four year fundraising campaign, what began as a dream is now becoming a reality.

“When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 1970,” said Christopher Hayes, a PS41 alum, parent and Director of Communications and Development for GELL, “I wrote an article for the school newspaper on the first Earth Day celebration in Washington Square Park. Flash forward 40 years and we’re planting a 12,000 sq. ft. garden on top of my old school. It makes me believe in Flower Power all over again!”

Funds raised since 2006 will underwrite the project’s infrastructure renovations. To plant the entire roof, the PS41 PTA needs to raise another \$150,000-200,000. Donations can be made by clicking the “DONATE” button at [www.ps41.org](http://www.ps41.org) and checking the box for “GELL.” Corporate, institutional and individual donors can contact PS41 at 212-675-2756, or by email at [GELL@ps41.org](mailto:GELL@ps41.org).

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**ABOUT PS41:** PS41’s collaborative learning community is dedicated to providing the highest quality education to each of our students. Located in the heart of historic Greenwich Village, the school reflects the rich cultural diversity of the neighborhood and incorporates the dynamic resources of the community into our studies. The building and curriculum are vibrant testimony to the creative pulse of the community. Central to our mission is a shared belief that each child brings to our school a unique set of abilities and talents. Our highly dedicated faculty work together in a nurturing environment for all students. Equally central to our mission is the teaching of important community values. Thus, we encourage children to celebrate diversity, to respect each other and to value honest, hard work. We recognize a supportive environment as one that also includes clear expectations and academic rigor. PS41 is dedicated to teaching a standards-based curriculum in a supportive environment to ensure that all students achieve their highest potential and go on to a lifelong quest of learning and achievement.

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