

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
24 W 61st Street
NY, NY 10023

Dear New York City Department of Parks and Recreation,

I am writing this letter in support of our school garden being established at 544 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn Block 3137, Lots 1, 11, 6, 9. I believe that a garden for would be a terrific asset to our community and especially to the nearby elementary school that I work at located at 18 Beaver Street. We could essentially treat the garden area as an outside classroom, a place where learning, experimenting, and fun happen. Having a garden on our same block would be especially convenient. I am also proud to be a Bushwick resident for the last 4 years, living on Wyckoff Avenue.

During the past two years at our school, we have been using a small 10ft in diameter plot of soil in our schoolyard planting flowers and vegetables, but we have outgrown this land. With more space to grow plants, many more of our students would be able to benefit from the joy of learning to raise a garden.

I work at a District 75 school within PS120 working with special needs students. These students would especially benefit from a garden because taking care of a garden inherently improves the students' social and emotional skills. They learn to be responsible and considerate to the plants and to cooperate with their peers. The garden affords them a space of tranquility and relaxation and helps them to practice self-control.

It is great to explore through virtual reality in the classroom, but we also need to balance it out with exploring the outdoors and nature. Are our students learning to be independent problem solvers if they can use heart, minds, and hands by building something using their own creativity? Are they getting a sense of systems at large? Gardening will give them this sense of the world around them while at the same time building life-long civic values such as hard work, discipline, cooperation and self-awareness.

A garden would also afford our students as well as community members an opportunity to plan, create, and care for our environment. Having a well publicized public meeting at our community board would allow our parents and community members (even kids!) to give their input on the design and creation of the park.

It is with great pleasure that I support this park and its use as a garden project for our students and community members. I thank you on behalf of our students and appreciate your support. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Tony Canty