



NEW YORK CITY GOES WILD

The City University of New York and Nurture New York's Nature Create Strategic Alliance to Promote Awareness of Urban Ecology

The nation's largest urban university and a unique foundation created by a legendary mediator are pooling their talents and resources to promote awareness of the importance of nurturing the nature of New York City. Chancellor Matthew Goldstein of The City University of New York, and Theodore W. Kheel, President of Nurture New York's Nature, announced the formation of a Strategic Alliance to sponsor research, academic courses, student activities, field trips, events, public awareness campaigns, and a wide variety of other programs that encourage New Yorkers to explore and care for the city in which they live.

The University has also created a permanent Institute To Nurture New York's Nature. It will be located at Queens College and will serve and draw resources from all nineteen campuses and CUNY's 400,000 students and over 6,000 faculty members. Kheel has awarded a grant of \$1 million in four annual installments through NNYN to help fund the programs of the

Strategic Alliance approved by the Executive Committee of representatives of both NNYN and CUNY.

"Fifty years ago," said Ted Kheel, "less than one-third of the population lived in urban areas; by 2007, more than one half of the earth's people will be living in cities with populations of a million or more. Clearly, the human relationship with cities has changed and there is an increased demand for awareness and stewardship of these places in which most of us live. This alliance of NNYN and CUNY's Institute To Nurture New York's Nature will improve our relationship with the city upon which we depend for our health and happiness."



Ted Kheel

Ted Kheel's journey leading to the creation of the Strategic Alliance with City University is a New York story every step of the way. He was born in New York City, and for more than half a century resolved some of New York's thorniest labor disputes and literally wrote the book on conflict resolution. Subway strikes? Newspaper strikes? Shipping and Waterfront strikes?



Even football strikes? He settled them and hundreds of others. The New York Times declared him to be "the most influential peacemaker in New York City in the last half century." And in 1992, while attending the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development -- the Earth Summit -- in Rio de Janeiro, Kheel was struck with the realization that the greatest challenge humanity faces is the resolution of the conflict between the demand that we protect the environment and the concurrent demand for continued economic development for the growing population.

During the Rio conference, Kheel founded the non-profit Earth Pledge to encourage sustainability as a resolution of the conflict between environmental protection and development. In 1994, Leslie Hoffman joined Kheel as the executive director and, today, Earth Pledge initiatives include Green Roofs, Farm-to-Table and Waste=Fuel, all of which promote the balance of human and natural systems. In February, Earth Pledge plans to present Verdopolis: The Future Green City to explore the opportunities for creating more sustainable, green approaches to our food, transportation, energy, fashion, and building. Another of Ted Kheel's creations, the Carriage House Center on Global Issues, provides a meeting place and slate of activities to further promote sustainable development.

Nurture New York's Nature

A decade after the Earth Summit, Ted Kheel saw yet another opportunity to encourage ecological awareness and stewardship in New York when he assisted the artists, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, in obtaining permission for them to create and display their Gates Project in Central Park for sixteen days in February of 2005. Consisting of 7,500 "gates" 16 feet in height, placed about 15 feet apart over twenty-three miles of concrete walkways in Central Park, this massive work of public art, paid for in its entirety by the artists, will attract world-wide attention and bring countless visitors to the City.

As an additional gift to the City, the artists, with knowledge of Kheel's interest in the environment, agreed to give a foundation of his choice an exclusive, worldwide royalty-free license to use their intellectual property rights in The Gates to raise funds on products and events commemorating and memorializing The Gates. All net proceeds will be used to "create awareness of the importance of nurturing New York's nature to the health and well-being of the city's inhabitants and to support the arts for their power to advance that goal." This unlikely confluence of art and ecology resulted in the formation of the not-for-profit Nurture New York's Nature, Inc. (a name dreamed up by design giant Milton Glaser of "I ♥ New York" fame) with Ted Kheel as its president and Jake Kheel is its Project Director.

To supplement the gift from Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Kheel used his considerable powers of persuasion to also enlist the participation of Deutsche Bank; the law firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, LLP; and Verizon. The Center for Environmental Research and Conservation, a consortium of Columbia University, the American Museum of Natural History, New York Botanical Garden, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Wildlife Trust, is also supporting NNYN. Additional contributions have been made by Tiffany and Company; Bosch Home Appliances; Oscar de la Renta and Century Furniture; and Con Ed.



As part of its mission, NNYN seeks to create awareness of the contributions that other organizations are making to the nurturing of New York's nature, and it is from this desire to build such relationships that the idea for the Strategic Alliance with CUNY arose.

The City University of New York

The largest urban university in America traces its beginnings to the founding in 1847 of the Free Academy, which later became The City College. Now, with nineteen campus-

es, over 400,000 students and 6,200 full-time faculty, The City University of New York is an independent and integrated system of higher education built on the assumption that the university will continue to maintain and expand its commitment to academic excellence and to the provision of equal access and opportunity for students, faculty and staff from all ethnic and racial groups and from both sexes.

CUNY offers post-secondary learning opportunities at every level from certificate courses to the Ph.D. in a single integrated system with approximately 1,400 academic pro-



grams, more than 200 majors leading to associate and baccalaureate degrees, and more than 100 graduate degree majors. More than 80% of CUNY's senior college faculty hold the highest degrees in their fields, such as Ph.D.'s, J.D.'s M.D.'s and M.F.A.'s, and the full-time teaching faculty of over 5,800 include world-renowned experts in virtually every field of human endeavor.

The CUNY student body represents the rich treasure of diversity that characterizes New York City, with an undergraduate ethnic profile of 31% Black; 29% White; 26% Hispanic; 14% Asian; and 0.1% American Indian. More than 60% of its undergraduates are females, 43% were born outside the United States mainland, and 62% attended New York City public schools.

"CUNY's diversity reflects the blend of inhabitants of the city itself," said Kheel, "and that makes it the perfect place to kindle fascination for the nature of New York. It's all about public awareness and student awareness because these students are the future leaders of New York."

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein noted the new institute will draw upon the distinguished faculty and resources of the entire University. "Scholars and researchers at our campuses are doing important work in understanding urban environmental systems," he said. "We are proud to be able to partner with Nurture New York's Nature and Ted Kheel in ways

that will benefit New York City's environment and urban environments throughout the world."

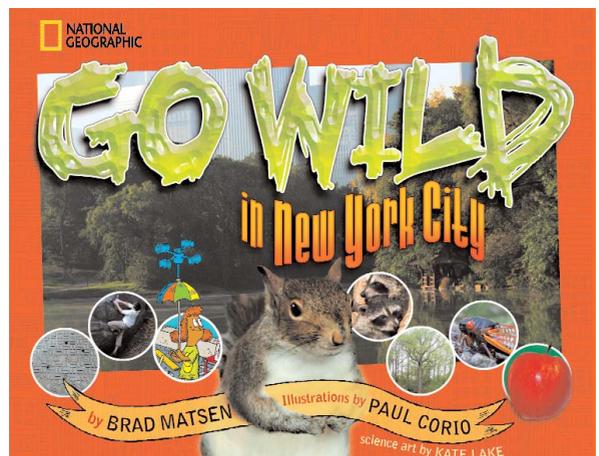
The Institute To Nurture New York's Nature is conducting a nationwide search for a director. "Much of what the institute will do is outreach," said Queens College President James Muyskens, adding that it will do everything from hosting public events to creating websites and sponsoring lectures. "It will be used to teach elementary and secondary-school teachers to teach students about the environment, and it will help children become aware of how important our natural resources are. It also will work with policy-makers and government officials on planning."

Already, the synergy between the CUNY and NNYN is producing results.

Take a Class, Read a Book, Go Wild . . .

In the autumn of 2004, City University and NNYN joined forces in creating a popular course on the nature of New York City inspired by the research of David Rosane, a naturalist who was engaged two years ago by NNYN to write a book on the nature of New York based on his research on the city's ecology. The course is open to CUNY students and the general public, and in addition to a series of lectures by experts on the city's natural history, features an internet site to encourage exploration of New York's nature. Rosane, who has now been retained by CUNY as an adjunct professor, is leading weekly field trips into the wilds of New York City, and working on his book, *The Nature of New York*.

Another book commissioned by NNYN, *Go Wild in New York City*, by Brad Matsen, will be published by National Geographic Children's Books in January 2005 with a generous sponsorship from Verizon. It reveals the hidden wilderness of the urban environment for kids of all ages in order to encourage involvement and strengthen the understanding that the cities in which we live require our stewardship as never before. How wild is New York City? Well, you can ride a



subway car through giant cracks in the earth, watch monarch butterflies floating among skyscrapers on their annual trip from Mexico to Canada, drink mountain rain water piped a hundred miles through some of the world's biggest tunnels, and spy on horseshoe crabs (that showed up on earth before dinosaurs) crawl up to lay their eggs on city beaches every June. And that's just for starters.

A third book in the works from NNYN is *A Doctor/s Guide to Environment and Health* by famed oncologist Dr. Mitchell Gaynor. In a fascinating, accessible volume rich in references, Gaynor examines the alarming escalation of health crises such as breast cancer, asthma, learning disabilities, heart disease and autism, and the links to the environment in these and other diseases. He uses the results of his research to underline the mounting evidence that links environmental exposures -- whether from tobacco smoke, air pollution, ozone depletion, arsenic in drinking water, or pesticides on our lawns -- to increasing incidences of disease and debilitation throughout America.

And Coming Soon. . .

Under the new Strategic Alliance, the City University of New York and Nurture New York's Nature will:

- Review and refine the course on New York's nature offered in the fall of 2004, and plan for its inclusion in the curriculum again in the spring of 2005 and future academic terms;
- Expand and improve the website, Exploring the Nature of New York, now serving as an adjunct to the course to allow the city's inhabitants and visitors to learn about the unique nature of New York;
- Convert the course for delivery online to students and the general public;



- Expand the course as an offering to CUNY graduate students; and the modification of the course for delivery to New York City High School Students through the CUNY College Now program;
- Develop other courses related to the nature of New York to conform to the special interests of CUNY's nineteen colleges;
- Develop campus-based events including a competition of digital imaging by students of New York's nature with winners shown on the web site;

- Sponsor conferences, symposia, and meetings on topics related to nurturing New York's Nature;
- Develop educational and public awareness materials concerning the Nature of New York City, the effective management of our environment, and the movement of society towards the model of sustainable development;
- Work with policy makers and government officials on issues related to nurturing New York's Nature;
- Create opportunities for students to gain experience through internships and work-study assignments;
- Administer and seek additional funding for the faculty Program for Environmental/Ecological Research (PEER) program created by CUNY with support from NNYN;
- Bring together CUNY faculty and, when appropriate, faculty from other institutions, to submit collaborative grant proposals in areas relevant to nurturing New York's Nature;
- Expand the program already underway to encourage research by faculty members on subjects related to the nurturing of New York's nature.

Please join us . . .

Nurture New York's Nature, www.nnyn.org

Earth Pledge, www.earthpledge.org

The Carriage House Center, www.carriagehousecenter.org

The City University of New York at www.cuny.edu/research

The Nature of New York course, www.cs.gc.cuny.edu/~nature/

