

FINAL REPORT
FOREST SERVICE GRANT NO. NA-94-0331

Period covered by this report: October 1, 1993 through January 1, 1996

Issued to: New York City Street Tree Consortium, Inc./ Trees New York

Address: 51 Chambers Street, Suite 1412A, New York, NY 10007

Project Name: Young Citizen Pruners for Today & Tomorrow

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Date of Award: October 1, 1993.

Grant Modifications: No-cost extension from original expiration date of December 31, 1995 to new expiration date of December 31, 1996.

Date of Expiration: December 31, 1996.

Funding: Federal Share: \$100,000 plus **Grantee Share:** \$100,000 = Total Project: \$200,000

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Project abstract (as defined by initial proposal and contract):

The NYC metropolitan region faces a long term tree crisis. Active citizen education and participation in tree care and its management is the only realistic way the region can hope to combat this crisis. The Young Citizen Pruners for Today and Tomorrow Program motivates, educates, trains and integrates youth into educational and volunteer programs for continuity to ensure future tree care.

The YCPTT program is a two-pronged approach dealing with the primary and secondary education arenas, and is designed to educate children and then integrate them into TNY's programs and community self-help efforts. The two program components are (1) Interactive field curriculum for young children ("The Great Cookie Lesson") and (2) The Young Citizen Pruner Program which combines a NYC Board of Education approved science curriculum with lifetime skills training.

The project ultimately precipitates community empowerment and self-help using trees as the vehicle to address a wide range of issues that includes environmental and economic viability, an awareness of "cause and effect", and basic maintenance and skills training which guarantee tree management, continuity and health

Project Objectives:

TNY (in cooperation with others) proposed to expand its young citizen pruner program, along with its early education component, and integrate the youth program with its well-established Citizen Pruner Volunteer Tree Care Program. The Young Citizen Pruners for Today and Tomorrow was phase one of a planned youth program to be developed over a period of time. Generally, the YCPTT project served to expand and integrate environmental/ forestry/science education and training into a comprehensive, effective, volunteer-based urban forestry management network through technical expertise and active citizen participation.

It is felt that young citizen pruners will have a profound impact on their communities regardless of size. The TNY program focuses on under-represented youth and their communities (this does not eliminate other youth populations). It is a unique program for the following reasons: (1) it is an integral part of the participatory schools' curriculum providing academic credit; (2) provides official/legal recognition of the training with the issuance of the Young Citizen Pruners' Certificate by the NYC DPR as well as self-esteem and achievement; (3) provides the *modus operandi* for integration within community volunteer activities while providing lifetime skills. The intent is to meet present and future urban forestry challenges through mainstream school-based programs in the secondary schools.

Objectives met successfully to date:

The "Great Cookie Lesson" project component was offered to classes ranging from kindergarten to 6th grade. Two day care facilities and 25 schools and a total of 1032 children participated in three boroughs. In addition, an intermediate program which advances the cookie curriculum combined with a modified young citizen pruner curriculum was developed for middle schools (piloted at IS 195 7th grade).

As of June 30, 1996, 983 Young Citizen Pruners have been trained successfully through school, after school and summer programs. The program and curriculum has become a required component of the 9th grade curriculum at the HS for Environmental Studies. It has become a permanent elective at the Louis Brandeis HS and at Hostos HS.

In addition, the YCP training program has become a part of settlement houses and community centers youth programs including the Henry Street Settlement House, West Harlem Action Coalition, and at the Community League of W. 159th Street shortly. The Henry Street kids are maintaining trees (200+ street trees) TNY planted through a large private foundation grant on the Lower East Side.

As a result of the training, TNY was able to facilitate internships for 10th graders (which provide additional academic credit and experience) through adult citizen Pruner groups. Furthermore, several Brandeis High School and Hostos High School Young Citizen Pruners received summer job offers from the private sector and from the NYC DPR based on their TNT YCP training.

TNY is beginning to make its planned third component for youth a reality: job training for youth and young adults. Most of the youth involved in our projects are labeled "at risk". The academics, the imbued sense of cooperation, self-worth and community responsibility all contribute to a productive, desirable member of the community. Building on this foundation, TNY has begun to introduce the notion that working with trees can translate into a better life and economic future by offering career paths as well as providing welcomed benefits to their communities. In 1995 TNY developed an intensive program for the City Volunteer Corps based on the Young Citizen Pruner curriculum and program.

TNY has made its Young Citizen Pruner and Great Cookie curriculums available nationally. These programs are suitable regardless of location and are packaged thusly: (1) Manuals; (2) plus visuals; (3) plus technical support.

How will this project increase the knowledge we have about urban forestry? How will the public benefit?
It teaches the importance of trees and forestry to an important segment of our population who hitherto had not been aware of trees other than that they existed. The youth learn that trees are the living component of a community's infrastructure and that this essential component requires maintenance just like bridges and roads. They learn that the the lack of care and concern leads to dire consequences for all the community on a variety of levels. They are imbued with the sense that tree care skills allow them to have direct, immediate impact on the well-being of their communities.

The public benefits in a number of ways that includes: it gains knowledgeable responsible citizens with valued skills and a community spirit; and is assured the continued long term care and concern for its trees.

What specific quantifiable results will be produced?

The youth who participate in the program are required to pass an exam in order to pass and receive certification. In several of the sections, participants are also required to take part in tree maintenance projects. The care given and the the ensuing condition of the sites are certainly quantifiable. School and community support is also quite tangible.

How will the results be disseminated to the public?

Project results are disseminated to the public in a variety of ways:

- TNY's newsletter, *Tree Talk*;
- TNY's web site <http://gramercy.ios.com/~treesny> changing to <http://www.treesny.org>;
- school newsletters;
- school recommendations;
- community board and city government recognition;
- media recognition;
- 7th National Urban and Community Forestry Conference NYC participation and et al.
- "How-To" Manual slated to be published in 1997.

If a no-cost time extension has been requested for this project, why is (was) it needed?

it was as for as a precautionary measure. I was not sure whether my reports would be received by the December 31, 1995 deadline. However, I believe that in fact, they were, and that the grant and required reports were completed in time.

List the active partners (key individuals or organizations) involved in the project to -date:

In 1996 TNY has continued to "partner" with HS for Environmental Studies, Brandeis HS, Hostos HS, Brooklyn School for Global Studies, IS 195, Henry Street Settlement House, West Harlem Action Coalition, NYS DEC, NYC DPR, NYC Board of Education, Enterprise Foundation, Community League of West 159th Street, and to a lesser extent with CENYC and Bronx Green-Up (advisory roles).

Comments considered of importance but not covered above:

The youth programs are continuing unabated and are a permanent component of TNY's program offerings. It is evelving and giving rises to a job training component. The program has given impotance to a resource kids take for granted or forget while offering avenues for community self-help, personal skills and self-worth, and economic and career potential.

This report was prepared by: Barbara Eber-Schmid

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Date: 7/19/96