

REDUCE & REUSE



Citywide Winner
Elementary Division

Brooklyn New School
PS 146

2015 GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

This certificate is awarded with the sincere appreciation and esteem of a grateful Department and City in recognition of your school's efforts to help make New York City shine.



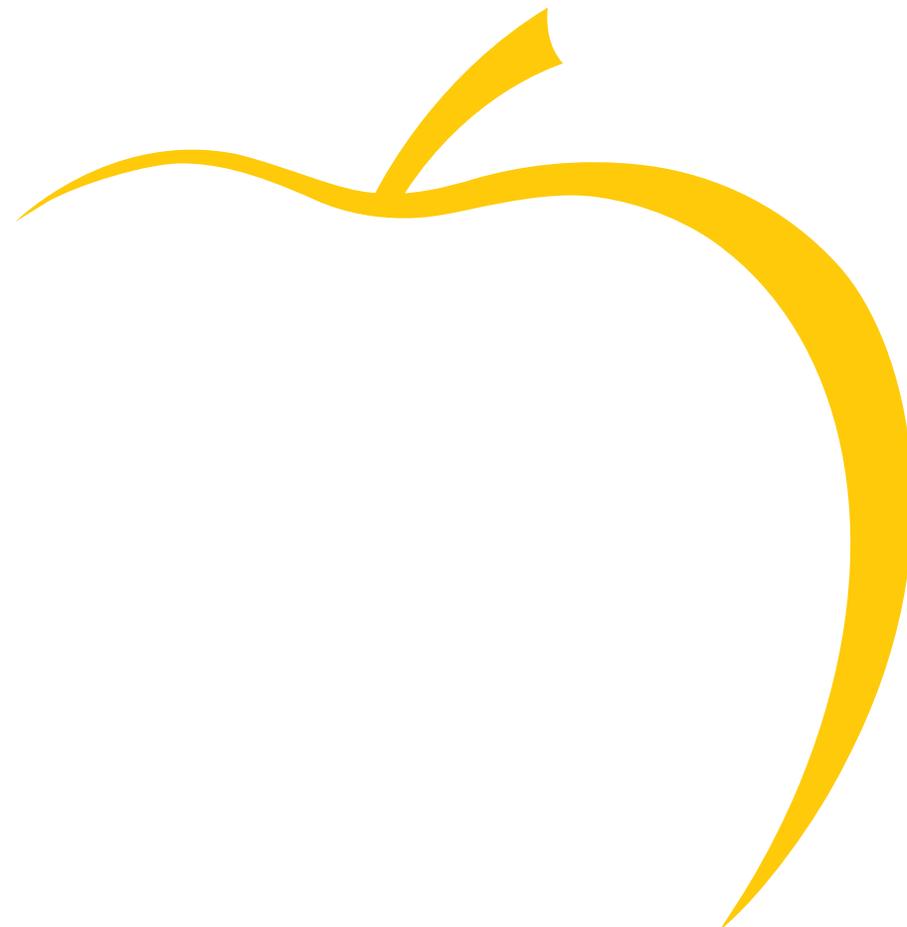
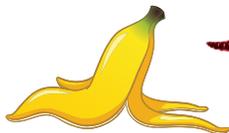
City of New York
Department of Sanitation
Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability
nyc.gov/recycle



NYC Compost Project

GOLDEN SHOVEL

MASTER SCHOOL COMPOSTER



2015 GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

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NYC
Recycles

City of New York
Department of Sanitation
Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability
nyc.gov/recycle

Created and funded since 1993 by the NYC Department of Sanitation, NYC Compost Project provides compost outreach and education to NYC residents, community groups, and landscapers in all five boroughs.

NYC
Composts

2015 Golden Apple Awards Contest Entry Judging Info

(This sheet prepared for judges' use by DSNY BWPRR)



ID Info: 15027
School: Brooklyn New School PS 146
Grade Division: LM
Borough: K

Info Confirmed:

Golden Shovel Award contestant
(for borough Master School Composter)

School Population: total # 664

TrashMasters! Reduce & Reuse Challenge

RR Core	# Participating
0	664

The BNS Studio: For Teachers, For Students, For REUSERS

Received: 5/1/2015

Brooklyn New School parents, teachers, and students created a reuse center known as the Green Studio, which is utilized as a work space, specifically for projects involving reusable and natural materials. The Studio houses donated materials to support classroom work, and is equipped to host whole classes for workshops or projects. The entire school has access to the Green Studio, and the fifth grade Green Club meets there to plan and implement future sustainable projects for the school and neighborhood

Weblink www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/pdf/golden-apple-awards/entries/GA15_RR_LM_K_K146_BNS_entry.pdf

- NYC Organics Collection**
- GrowNYC**
- MFTA**
- NYRP Rose**
- NYC Compost Project**

Prior Year Entries:
13:RR-HM

Current Entries
15:RR

School Contact Information:

Phone: 718-923-4750
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Brooklyn 11231
Block&Lot: 3003690001
DOE Location: K146
DOE Bldg: K142

Contest Coordinator: Barbara Taragan
Coord Phone (if different):
Coordinator Email: barbara@bns146.org
Principal: Anna Allanbrook
Principal Email: anna@bns146.org
Sustainability Coord: Johanna Esteras

REQUIRED for Super Recyclers only:

Custodian: Emmanuel Torres
Custodian's Phone: 718-852-8643
Custodian's Email: ck142@schools.nyc.gov

BWPRR Comments (may not be relevant to judging)

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cell: 718-522-2334
Anna Allanbrook <aallanb@schools.nyc.gov>
Stacey VanLenten, parent volunteer, helped write entry.
<STACEYVL@MAC.COM>

2015 GOLDEN APPLE - Reduce & Reuse Project

Brooklyn New School, P.S. 146
610 Henry Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218

Contest Coordinator: Science Specialist Barbara Taragan

Sustainability Coordinator: Johanna Esterás

Principal: Anna Allanbrook

**The BNS Studio:
For Teachers, For Students, For REUSERS**



Who We Are - Introduction

Brooklyn New School, P.S. 146 (BNS) is a PreK - Grade 5 elementary school in the Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn. We have a diverse student body from all over Brooklyn, because our lottery-based admission process is open to any child residing in the borough.

At BNS, social studies and science have always been at the core of the school's interdisciplinary inquiry-based curriculum. It is this approach to teaching and learning that supports students to think independently and to find answers to their questions. And now in 2015, it is this approach that we use to prepare our children to become informed citizens who can understand ever more complex environmental concerns. Issues of both local and global sustainability now guide every aspect of our curriculum.

We teach big ideas related to real life problems, such as flooding, climate change, and the decreasing supplies of fossil fuels, through hands-on investigations and experiential learning. Our children go on field trips that are integral to our science/social studies/sustainability curriculum. We know that these experiences are as basic to instruction as pencils, papers, and notebooks. Our greening efforts as adults and as children extend beyond our school building to our families, other schools, greening programs throughout the city, and to the steps of city hall with our city councilmembers.

At BNS, we work to nurture a love for nature, a hope for change, and an understanding that it is the citizen's responsibility to build a sustainable future. This is why our school has a garden, this is why our children learn to compost and recycle, and this is why we connect all of our studies to issues of sustainability, whether it is our four-year-olds learning about themselves, our seven-year-olds exploring how to get water from the mountains to the city, or our ten-year-olds harvesting the three sisters garden. And this is why our school was recognized with a runner-up award in the 2013 Golden Apple Contest.

Our Waste Prevention & Reuse Project

What We Did & What We Do

At BNS, our sustainability coordinator, science specialist, and all classroom teachers work together to reduce waste by reusing materials for student projects in the classroom and during school events. Instead of showcasing a few "reuse projects" throughout the year, we see reusing and repurposing material as an integral part of our daily routines, as a foundation of the culture of our school and our curriculum. By reusing materials at our events and in the classrooms we practice our values as a community, and we celebrate, share, and promote these values through our green blog, called "[Ecorama](#)." Ecorama is also the name of our end-of-year all-day sustainability event that we have at school every June, where children become the teachers and present their work to the community at large.

BNS teachers have been collecting, requesting, and storing found materials for their classroom projects for many years, but space has always been an issue. Projects need room to breathe, and found materials are hard to organize. A few years ago an idea emerged from a group of parents who "discovered" and set out to reclaim and refurbish a basement level room — Room 106A. Over time the room had become a filthy storage space, a dumping ground for old desks,

outdated computers, and so on. There was a lot of work to be done in the room itself and not a small amount of red tape that had to be cut through in order to even get permission to use the room for another purpose (old habits die hard!) But with the help of our principal and a lot of convincing and cajoling of the custodian, this room was ultimately, little by little, transformed by parents, teachers and children. After all the cleaning and repairs were done, the room became, for a time, a wood-working studio and a place to store tools. But when a new sustainability coordinator, Johanna, was hired, she worked with Barbara the science specialist to flesh out a vision for the room that had previously been just a dream. The proposal (attached below) was approved by the principal and sent to the staff, and Barbara and Johanna gave teachers and administrators tours of the space to get them excited about what the room could become.

Now, Room 106A is a dedicated “Green Studio,” where materials such as juice pouches, corks, wood scraps, and old puzzle pieces are stored and organized, waiting for their second or third lives in the hands of children. The “Studio” is an oasis in our big old school building, a beautiful storage and work room for lots of activities throughout the year, especially ones that make a mess. Cutting wood, sifting soil for worm composting, paper making, water-logged floating and sinking experiments, clay work, recycled paper decoupage — all of these and more take place easily in our very own messy space. And beyond the work space, the Studio is a warehouse of goods that are available to any teacher any time. The “T” key, which all teachers have, lets the staff and their students in the door for anytime access to any materials they need for any project they are doing in their classroom. Newspaper for papier maché? Check. Paper towel rolls for marble runs? Check. Twigs for birds’ nests? Check. Boxes or bottles for organizing your classroom materials? It’s all in the Studio!



Project Planning & Objectives

Before the Studio, BNS had a “big blue bin” method for collecting reusable materials for school projects. The big blue bin would sit outside the main office and we would send an announcement to parents through our parent coordinator requesting that they should please send in the “item of the month.” It might be old newspaper or dry beans, bottle caps or branches, depending on what projects were happening in the building to support the curriculum. Because of this practice, families at BNS were accustomed to collecting plastic bottles or yogurt cups or cardboard at home and then sending in the materials to be reused at school. Now when a certain item is needed we still send a note in the PTA newsletter asking families to send in specific things, but instead of putting the things in the bin, they drop off materials at the Green Studio!

Our reuse objective is always to save the planet. But in the smallest way possible, creating and using the Studio is about cultivating a culture of mindfulness around waste and looking at objects and materials creatively in order to see them in new ways, and giving them new life. The way that sustainability is interwoven into the science and social studies curriculum at BNS makes it easy to achieve this objective, since in every grade there are multiple uses and needs for reusable materials in their projects. Our school is also very open and dependent upon parent volunteers to help with projects, so the parents see and use firsthand how the Studio’s reusable materials are put to use.

Once the teachers had been on a tour of the space, Johanna and Barbara could offer ideas for how the materials and or the workspace could be used in ways that directly enhanced or connected to the curriculum. Pre-K students use donated wood scraps as props to tell their own stories and then glue the pieces together to make wonderful sculptures. Kindergarteners love coming to the Studio to use materials as part of their study of the ocean, examining what sinks or floats, and using juice pouches as sails on their boats. In their social studies unit, first graders study how a community deals with its waste and the importance of recycling and reusing; then they make the informative signs that go over the recycling bins in our hallways. First graders also repurpose lots of recyclables to make toys that demonstrate the laws of physics — balance and motion. Second graders use lots of found materials to make their islands and bridges in connection with their NYC study. Third graders, as part of their China study, learn all about paper. In the Studio, they make recycled paper and realize how much water and energy (theirs) goes into reusing paper fibers. Fourth grade studies the laws of energy by using found materials to make wind-up toys, and they also come to the Studio for natural materials to support their Lenape study projects. Fifth graders use the resources in the room to build their projects for both their study of the Maya and their holocaust memorial projects, which studies bullying and what it means to be an upstander. All of these curricular connections are exemplified in the projects shared below.

Student Involvement

For many years, the BNS fifth grade students have had the privilege of forming and participating in clubs that meet during last period on Fridays. Last year, a group chose to form a Green Club, and they wrote their own “Eco-code,” calling it “Brooklyn New School’s New Sustainable Society.” The code states: “At the Brooklyn New School we want to escalate on the idea of making our school green. We are recycling, composting and gardening; we are also trying our best to save energy by turning off lights. We would like children to stop littering on school

grounds and we are planting more plants inside the school building. We want to improve our recycling program and see what we can do about lunch trays. We want to be the greenest school that we can be by having everyone help out with our green environment.” These are not the words of teachers or parents, but rather the ideas of kids, expressed so well because of the education that has enabled them to make meaning of the most significant issue of their generation.

Not surprisingly, the fifth grade Green Club meets in the Studio and often helps to organize new materials that have made their way there or to do inventory to see what materials we could use more of and need to request. The Green Club is also responsible for helping build and paint new covers for our large hallway recycling containers. Green Club students helped in a number of ways to apply for and win a Green Flag Award from the National Wildlife Federation’s Eco-Schools USA; this is the highest recognition a school can receive in this national sustainability recognition program. Read about our efforts [here](#).

The Green Club has also been very interested in educational outreach, whether to other classes at their school or to the city at large. One of the Green Club’s first initiatives was in September, when they lead a small group of our fifth graders to join 100 middle school and high school students at City Hall, where they asked city councilmembers to support a 10-cent fee on plastic bags. “Plastic bags cost way too much money,” one BNS student explained to reporters, “They cost New York City \$10 million just to bring to the landfill.” These kids understand and are able to articulate the current issues of sustainability because he has been studying them since he started kindergarten. They first lean on adult communities for support but then later become the young agents of positive environmental impact.



Just this month Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams presented BNS with a special citation in recognition of our work Reducing and Reusing Waste. Because we were winners of the 2013

Golden Apple Award, we were invited to show others how we take "trash" and resparkle it. The fifth grade Green Club was there, ready to accept the honors and share their work.

Here are a couple of students working on recovering an ugly chair. You can see cork boards they made hanging in the background. These are for teachers to put on their classroom doors – just write a note or announcement and pin it up!



Promotion

The Ecorama blog began as just a page on our school's website where we could share with families what was going on in science and what environmentally minded projects kids were doing. Run by BNS's science teacher, the Ecorama blog documents many projects and field trips and keeps parents up to date by using social media. But now we see the blog as a running record of our school's sustainability program for any school, anywhere, to get inspiration. By putting students' projects on the blog, BNS is scaling its impact, showing other communities how to interact with the world as an environmental steward and mindful companion. Feel free to take a [look](#).

Our PTA Newsletter has a Green section that also keeps parents up-to-date on events and projects and also reminds them to visit the Ecorama blog for all the details.

On special occasions, our principal, Anna, will devote all or part of her weekly letter to families to sustainability work at the school. Last May, she wrote a whole letter about a meeting our school hosted with sustainability coordinators from all over the city. You can read her letter, attached.

Ecorama, our all-day sustainability fair that takes place every year in June, is another way that we share our projects and practices with the entire school community. Families are invited to

attend, and each grade gets a chance to present a project and also to see their older and younger peers' projects and learn from student presenters.

At right you'll see 5th graders serving nachos they made in solar ovens, which they also made!

These photos show more lessons in sustainability from Ecorama. A boy waters plants through a system of tubing that the 4th graders put together to demonstrate how water travels from reservoirs upstate to our city faucets. A third grader is harvesting lettuces planted by her class, and adults will grill the lettuce with bread for a healthy snack! This 4th grader is getting exercise while he pedals the bike that powers the blender to make fruit smoothies on a hot June day.



Collaboration

BNS is fortunate to have partnerships with several local establishments and a farm in the Rockaways, where we can share our surplus materials and also accept donations. Here are just a few of the ways we reuse these donations:

Wood scraps and boards from a local artist cooperative, The Gowanus Studio, become story sculptures for kindergarteners. They are working in the Studio!



Stumptown Coffee in Red Hook gives us all their burlap coffee bags, and we reuse them so many ways. Here they are as planters to beautify the chin link fence in the school yard!



We get corks from several restaurants run by parents, and also from Le Petit Cafe right around the corner.



We are also very lucky to have a cooperative relationship with Edgemere Farm in the Rockaways, where children can visit, and we can share reusable materials and tips on how to be more sustainable. Notice the kids watering crops with old soda containers and tin cans that we shared with the farmer.

And, of course, we keep lots of good cans and containers from Beverly, the head chef in our very own school cafeteria! The cafeteria staff are always very generous with their trash. You might have noticed some cans on their sides in the cover photo, hard at work storing materials

in the Studio. Cans also making nice homes in the bug hotel that we built from donated wood pallets, cardboard stuffing, pods, sticks, straw, shells, whatever we could find.



Educational components

Of primary importance in our work is the fostering of self-reflection on instruction and the integration of science, sustainability and social studies. This approach is aligned with the Common Core emphasis on deep understanding of expository text. Time is provided for the science and sustainability coaches to meet with teachers, create units of study, review & modify plans, analyze work, & revise curriculum. This allows for science to be taught across disciplines while also developing in students the mindset of scientists.

In every grade there are multiple examples of reusing materials for projects related to the curriculum. Take a look at what kids (and parents and teachers) come to the Green Studio to do and to make with the reusable abundance it provides:

KINDERGARTEN

SINK OR FLOAT... then build a BOAT!

Kindergarteners at BNS are not too young to understand the concept of mass. Give them a tub of water and some found or gathered materials like corks, plastic caps, or rocks and they can figure it out for themselves. In the Studio, things can get wet and nobody cares.

After experimenting with floats and sinks, the kids will have a boat show.

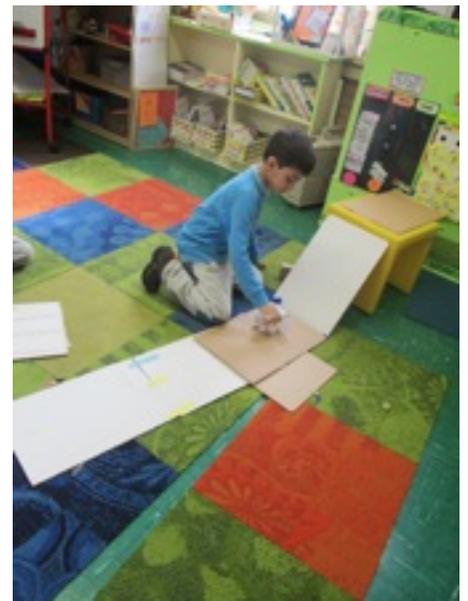
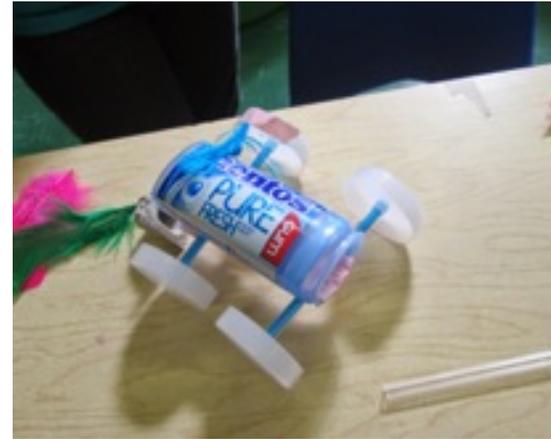


Below, we see one kindergartener's creation — a juice pouch and tin foil scrap are repurposed as sails, which are attached to the boat by reusing juice pouch straws.



AUTO SHOW

Kindergarteners experiment with laws of motion on land as well when they study axles and wheels and make their own vehicles. See how many repurposed materials you can find in the examples below:



FOR THE BIRDS

Kindergarten physics is serious business. Their annual bird study involves designing and creating bird houses to protect the new friends they've met in their work. Boxes were saved from snack time and came from home so that the children had plenty of reusable material to work with.

In the middle photo you can also see on the wall behind the birdhouse, some bird sculptures that the kindergarteners made from repurposed cardboard and felt scraps.



FIRST GRADE

THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION

All first graders at BNS create marble in the beginning of the year as part of a unit studying gravity. This year we decided to have the kids work on individual marble mazes in addition to their group work on marble runs. We sent word to parents to collect and send in clementine boxes, which lots of parents buy with their clementines and don't know what to do with afterward. With the boxes as their base, the kids designed the mazes with wood and felt scraps, old puzzle pieces, corks, and bottle caps. Amazing.



In another elementary physics lesson, some first graders spend time in the Studio repurposing spools, dowels, and cup tops to make balance toys.



SECOND GRADE

IF WE CAN MAKE IT THERE...

All second graders study NYC, but do they all build islands and bridges and collect the materials they need from a Green Studio? A large lettuce clamshell container cut in half makes the perfect base for 2nd graders' island projects. Notice the decorative grass, pebbles, and connect cubes salvaged and collected from the Studio:



THIRD GRADE

MAKING HAY OR MAKING PAPER?

BNS third graders learn early on in their annual study of China that the Chinese made the first paper. They also know about paper recycling, since it is mandatory practice at school. But what did they think of the process of reusing old paper and making it into new? Can the act of recycling paper themselves help these students change their focus from *recycling* the paper they use to *reducing* their use of paper in the first place? Let's look at the process:

FIRST, old newspaper is torn into tiny bits.



THEN, they made pulp by shaking the paper with water. "Shake, shake!"



NEXT, they used a deckle and mold to pull sheets of paper.



The kids notice that the process takes a lot of work and time. They also notice it takes SO MUCH WATER to recycle. As the students worked, they started thinking about how much water it took to make the recycled paper, and all the energy it took to make paper at all. They are now on their way to being more thoughtful and conservative users of paper.

FOURTH GRADE

ELASTIC ENERGY!

Reusing and repurposing aren't only for little ones. BNS fourth graders were engaged this year in a project that explored energy storage and release. They created wind-up toys using rubber bands, cups, coffee lids, and toilet paper rolls — and then they sent them down the hall to test their power.



learner about their efforts to take care of the watershed and prevent further water pollution. There has been a lot of talk about the best ways to redesign the Gowanus Canal so that it doesn't get so contaminated by CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) after a storm. The 4th grade students used the Studio to find materials and create their own redesigns of the canal.



(Notice the compost area and solar roof on one building.) Everything but the tape is reusable material and was found in the Studio - fabric, cardboard, plastic game pieces, and straw.

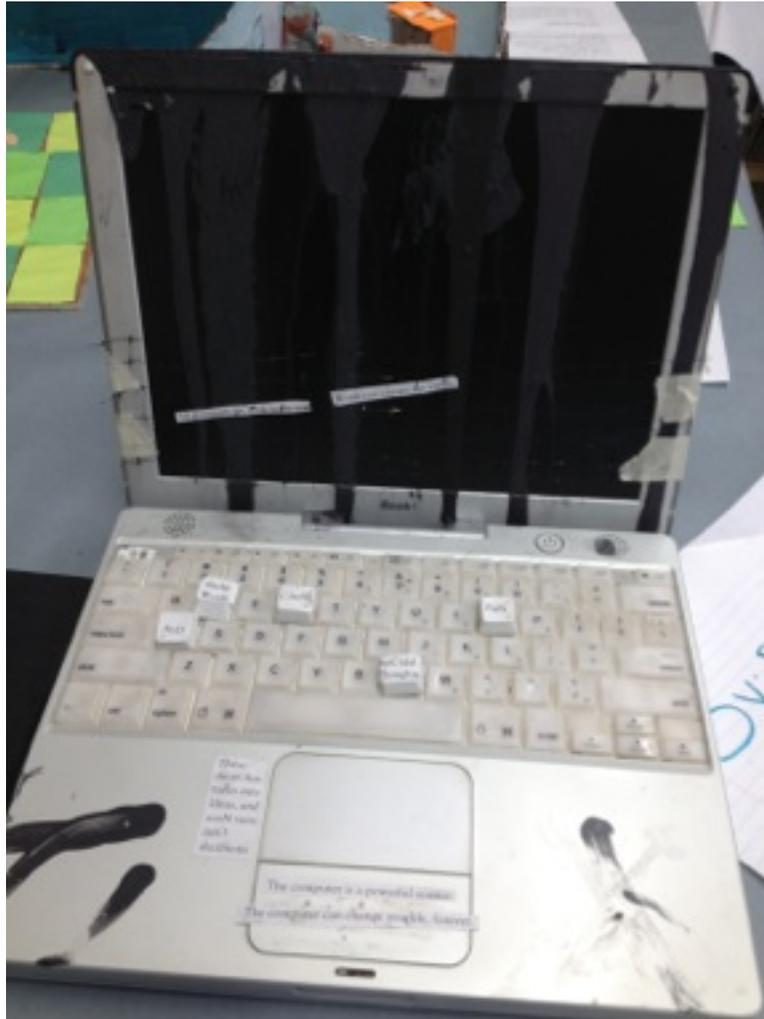
FIFTH GRADE

ART OF THE UNEXPECTED

Fifth graders use the resources in the Studio to build their projects for their Maya museum, the culmination of a study unit on Maya culture, history, food, architecture, language, and customs. Here is a 5th grade project depicting the Mayan religious belief in a 3-tiered life cycle: the heavens, the earth world, and the underworld. The girls came to the Studio to gather reusable materials such as cardboard, pebbles, straw, and string.



In the Spring, fifth graders study the Holocaust and create memorial projects. Many projects explore the problem of bullying in a modern context, with the focus on studying what it mean to be an “upstander” as opposed to a bystander. While it’s true that the Studio has lots of natural materials on hand, we also collect old machines and electronics, which are fun to take apart and have many potentially useful parts for reuse projects. One fifth grader took an old donated laptop and made an artistic project exploring the dark realities of cyber-bullying:



And finally...

The next project is not part of our regular curriculum but instead shows an example of how reusing materials in our everyday work at school has infused a sense of possibility and encouraged innovative thinking in our students after they leave the classroom. The lessons our kids learn about reusing and repurposing at school extend to their lives outside.

For years, BNS 3rd grade teachers have been showing students the color of light by giving them purchased diffraction glasses. And for years, students have been asking where they can buy a pair. This year, one inventive student went home and built his own pair with an old CD...



Project Analysis

What worked?

What's most successful about having the Green Studio to support all of the reuse efforts at our school is that teachers, paras, intervention specialists, student teachers, visiting educators, and parent volunteers all know it is there and really use the Studio. Projects happen more organically and more often when the makers have access to one organized space where they can get whatever material or tool they need to make a project successful. Reusing material that would otherwise be trashed or recycled inspires creativity in addition to helping reduce waste.

What didn't work?

The biggest challenge with maintaining the Studio is keeping track of what gets used so it can be replaced or returned for the next user. Inventory takes a lot of time. We plan to implement a more thorough check-out system so that we can keep track of high-use materials and make sure we get more when we need them.

Applicability to Other Schools

Securing a dedicated space to store bottles, cans, bulky or messy items is a challenge, we admit, but any school can do this work. Starting small can spark interest among students, other teachers, parents and administrators. A dedicated shelf in each classroom, reusing old furniture for storage, collecting boxes for organizing materials and just getting kids to be mindful of the little things — the caps on their lunch squeezies, plastic forks, tin foil. All these things can be rinsed and reused rather than just thrown in a waste or recycling can. Also, be patient. Mindfulness is a state of being as well as a way of acting, and habits don't change overnight. The more a classroom reduces and reuses waste materials, the more the students will go home

and teach their parents and then one day teach their children. The cycle begins with one person and then goes from there.

Measuring Success

The best way we can measure success is by hearing feedback from those who use the Studio and by observers outside our school building. The following letter exemplifies how an attitude of reducing and reusing that begins at school trickles down to kids' homes. One parent writes:

"I have been meaning to pass on a conversation we had in our house right before the break.

As I was cleaning up and clearing out some old leftovers in the fridge (you know, the ones you don't really dare open because they have been in the back there for longer than you really remember) I decided to toss a couple of plastic take-out containers. Lucia saw me get ready to throw them out and ran over. "Wait, Daddy! Those can be recycled and I can bring them in for our beautiful things shelf!" I explained, without much success, that I was avoiding opening them – let alone washing them – because I knew they had spoiled food in them. She insisted that I really needed to wash them so she could bring them in the next day. I pointed out that we had done a great job of sending lots of stuff in and it would be okay if we threw out recyclables just this once.

She got very still and looked at me for several seconds. Finally, she said to me with kind of disappointed tone, "You just don't get it, Daddy. This is about saving the planet."

Soooo.... Duly shamed for putting the world at risk, I opened up the disgusting leftovers, washed the containers, and Lucia brought them in the next day. If you have any questions about whether Lucia is getting core concepts in this unit, please feel free to put them to rest. She's getting it."

And a parent from outside our school sends in this comment on one of our Ecorama blog posts:

"Your team is an inspiration to other schools. Keep up the amazing work." - Michelle, P.S. 58

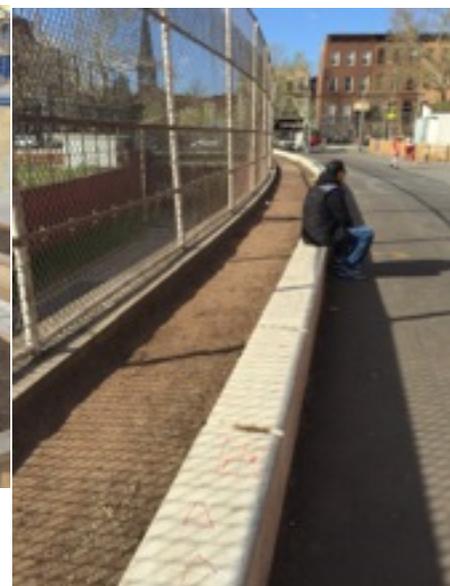
This feedback is invaluable proof that something we've done is right.

Future Plans

As robust as our recycling and reusing system is, there are many jobs left to do and there never seems to be enough money in our budget to do them. Outdoor recycling bins are surprisingly expensive but necessary for appropriate disposal of all waste. We spend a lot of time in our school yards, eating and hosting events. Outdoor bins would help us improve our recycling program.

Another area of improvement that has been on the back burner for a while is to install new water fountains in our cafeteria, the kind that make bottle refilling easy and quantifiable. New fountains that are cold, have good pressure, and promote reusable bottle refilling will go a long way to help reduce the number of cups that children take at lunch to get cold water from the water machine because the fountains are so poor.

Lastly, our widely recognized compost system is in need of rebuilding due to school yard construction that was happening all year. During the construction, we lost access to the compost shed, and some of the compost bin bases, built with reused wood pallets and framing, began rotting and had to be broken down to avoid attracting pests. Rebuilding the compost collection to its former glory and also populating all the new plant beds that we have as a result of the new years design are big priorities for our school and would benefit greatly from the winning funds.



**Science Sustainability Studio (Room 106A) (Matt's Room)
A PROPOSAL**

Dear Teachers,

With Matt's departure as our sustainability coordinator for the past 7 years, we are sad to see him go but also want to present a vision for this room moving forward, as inspired by Matt...

We envision:

- A project room, "take a break" room, a place for the muckiest work.
- A Reggio-inspired "atelier" or studio with small groups or even a whole class of young students (PreK to 1st could fit) to be used by teachers, paras, student teachers, visiting experts and consultants, and parent volunteers...by signing up much the way we use the computer lab.
- Buddy grades can split up and send half the classes down to do a project together, while the other half reads...Perhaps a para can take that K student with the revved up motor to walk to the STUDIO to check out some bugs or make a wood sculpture.

At the same time, it can be...

- A storage room—our own Materials for the Arts. Need some twigs or other natural materials to make a bird's nest? Go to the Studio.
- A place for 5th grade club(s): How does a kids' green club/ service club sound?
- Intervention teachers...need to do something noisy or messy to teach a concept or provide a language experience? Consider the Studio.

What will be in it?

- Natural materials, such as sticks, branches, leaves, acorns
- Clay
- Work benches and wood-working tools
- Wood
- Found objects such as buttons, corks, lids, juice pouches, puzzle pieces from incomplete puzzles, ready to be used there or signed out
- Appliances or small machines to dissect along with necessary tools
- Animals and plants to borrow for classrooms or to be observed right there
- Flower pots and seeds and soil
- Everything needed for recycling and composting efforts will be stored there for easy access, including worm bins and instructions for interested teachers
- Any surplus "stuff" that staff and families wish to donate

Need ideas for projects?

Teacher and student books will be kept there. As well as ideas for resparkle crafts such as magnetic wallets made from juice pouches.

ALSO, a big amazing loom is there!

And running water!!!

We have begun to put materials in the space as a snapshot. All we need is you and your ideas to expand the vision and to make it work!

Johanna and Barbara

Weekly Letter 5/22/14
Posted on May 27
Dear Families:

Yesterday, Brooklyn New School hosted the EcoSchools Sustainability Gathering. Many thanks to Johanna and Barbara for showing our visitors our work around sustainability. Our guests included teachers, administrators, parents, and community based organizations, all of whom were interested in rethinking curriculum in light of a changing world in relation to the environment and climate.

As we walked around, I was struck by how rich the BNS eco curriculum is and how significantly it had improved over the past ten years. Our visitors saw our planters and lots of crops including some delicious lettuce. They saw our composting system, our water catchment setup, and our EcoCasita. They learned how we recycle and compost at lunchtime and they visited our green space on the ground floor. Our visitors admired the artwork, including the third grade drawings of bamboo and the fourth grade redesigns of the Gowanus.

They asked questions, lots of them. Most of these questions related to how this was all possible. We realized as we answered that it was possible because of all of us, because of Barbara, Johanna and Ann, because of the teachers, because of the parents, and of course, because of the kids and their enthusiasm and interest.

As the visitors walked around the schoolyard, the children in afterschool watched. Some of them came over to tell our guests what we do, including the how and the why. Jazee, for example, explained that the bamboo drawings had been done through the close observation of the bamboo plant and because of Ann's teaching of techniques such as crosshatching. It was just another day at BNS.

All for now,
Anna

Quotes of the Week:

When Nancy's third grade student, Jazee Handfield, saw our visitors in the big yard, she came over and asked, "What's up with the paparazzi?"

When the visitors were here yesterday afternoon, a couple of Kindergarteners & Pre-Kindergartners wandered over to Monique and asked, "Who are those people?" She told them, "Visitors of Johanna & Barbara." As they walked away, one of them wondered aloud, "Do they know not to dig in the boxes?"

COMPOSTING AT BROOKLYN NEW SCHOOL

As you can see from the photos and letter just above, our school's outdoor composting center and cafeteria collection system are a citywide model for in-house organics collection. Last May our sustainability coordinator and science specialist hosted school sustainability coordinators from all over NYC to learn about what we've built at 610 Henry Street. Because we have an extensive garden of raised beds and lots of tree pits to care for, we are able to process and use all of the compost we make from our cafeteria waste. This is the main reason we have not pushed to be a part of the DSNY organics collection program.



Begun around eight years ago, the composting center has grown over the years. Our original sustainability coordinator is a certified master composter and continues to consult at the BNS site, but our current sustainability coordinator is an expert in her own right, has trained numerous parents and children in the art of composting, and continues to hold workshops and demonstrations for schools around the city since our school is a both a DSNY Certified Compost Demo site and also a Brooklyn Botanic Garden Greenbridge site. The composting work shed houses a rainwater collection system connected to the roof, a solar and wind-powered light, and all the tools necessary for keeping things neat and organized.

We collect and process all organic waste from the school cafeteria and also from classrooms. Fifth grade student leaders do community service shifts at lunchtime to help the younger children understand our sorting and collections system. Photos speak louder than words:



Below is our custom-built wooden tray stacking tower. It's been requested by nearly everyone who has visited our site. We wish we had the time and resources to build one for every school.



And here is one classroom's compost collection activity.



We teach indoor worm composting in the Studio. Children can make their own bin for a classroom or to use at home.



