

# **The West Side Community Garden**

**Upper West Side of Manhattan**

**New York City, NY**



# PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name West Side Community Garden Location bet. 89/90th Sts; Amsterdam/Colum.Aves.

Owner West Side Community Garden, Inc.

Project Use(s) public flower park and vegetable growing area

Project Size 17,800 sq. ft. Total Development Cost \$250,000

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) \$72,100

Date Initiated begun in 1976; formally instituted in 1987 Percent Completed by December 1, 2010 100%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates \_\_\_\_\_

**Application submitted by:**

Name Sandra G. Owen Title Board Member

Organization West Side Community Garden, Inc.

Address 525 West End Avenue City/State/Zip New York, NY 10024

Telephone ( 212 ) 787.2344 Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail sowen43@aol.com Weekend Contact Number (for notification): \_\_\_\_\_

**Perspective Sheets:**

Organization	Name	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	<u>Gale A. Brewer, New York City Councilwoman</u>	<u>212.873.0282</u>

Architect/Designer \_\_\_\_\_

Developer Jerome Kretchmer, JB Associates 212.465.8448

Professional Consultant Andy Stone, New York City Director, Trust for Public Land 2121.677.7171

Community Group Sally Goodgold, former Chair of Community Board 7 212.570.6609

Other Suzanne Davis, advocate and formerly with the JM Kaplan Foundation 212.582.0101

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Mailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine Announcement           | <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Selection Committee member | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Organization | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Previous RBA entrant | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Notice                       |   |
|  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bruner/Loeb Forum                   |   |

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Signature  Date December 10, 2010

# PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name West Side Community Garden

Address 89/90th Sts. Amsterdam/Columbus Aves. City/State/ZIP New York, NY 10025

1. Give a brief overview of the project.

The West Side Community Garden, Inc (WSCG), an active force in the community, began with a loosely-knit group of West Siders who set forth to combat the spread of urban blight in their neighborhood, back in 1976. They removed tons of accumulated debris from a demolished urban renewal site between 89th and 90th Streets and Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues. On this unpromising rubble, with the assistance of a \$64,000 Community Development Block Grant, they created a garden of flower and vegetable plots.

When the City selected developers to construct housing on the site, the Community Planning Board, The Trust for Public Land and other open-space advocates, along with local politicians, joined with WSCG to forge a coalition to save some portion of the garden as open space. Eventually, a compromise was struck with the developer to award nearly 18,000 square feet in perpetuity for a combination vegetable garden and flower park. The Garden received a small planning and design grant but funding for the entire project fell to the Garden's membership.

The Garden's design took shape during a series of meetings in the early 1980's, the membership agreeing that the permanent garden should be more than just another city vegetable garden; they also wanted a flower park to raise new and usual flowers and they wanted it to be open to the entire community. They planned grassy walks that were safe for toddlers; benches for neighbors, including seniors, to sit with friends and a sheltered, flowered amphitheater designed to continue and enhance the existing vibrant arts program and provide a safe, inviting space for parents to picnic with their children. +

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

The West Side Community Garden is unique in New York City as it is a PUBLIC area, open to the community to utilize and enjoy. From the first crocus, the Garden is used by the neighborhood for quiet meditation, as a safe and beautiful place to bring small children, residents from a nearby Senior Housing Center may be found there on most days and its flower displays host wedding parties for photographs. The Garden is a natural gathering place for the neighborhood, which is amplified by Garden-sponsored activities listed below.

The amphitheater hosts summer events that include an arts and crafts festival, an annual benefit party, potluck picnics, greening days, "plant-ins", and open lectures on ecology and other environmental matters. Over the years, the Garden has featured concerts by the students of the Mannes School of Music and early music ensembles, art shows, story-telling, poetry readings and theatrical productions, including Shakespeare for children. Five hundred children each year have the opportunity to work with a Garden coordinator (a licensed teacher) who works with local elementary school teachers to blend classroom instruction with hands-on work, giving the children the opportunity to plant, tend, harvest and eat vegetables fresh from the garden.

Among the Garden's many awards and prizes are: the 1991 Phillips N. Winslow Landscape Design Award given by the New York City Parks Council; "The Pocket Guide to Great American Public Spaces" lists the WSCG right up there with the Golden Gate Bridge and other wonders; the American Star Award for "outstanding work in reversing urban blight", from the America the Beautiful Fund in Washington, D.C.; Renew America issued WSCG a Certificate of Environmental Achievement in 1996, 1997 and 1998; WSCG has received the Molly Parnis "Dress up Your Neighborhood" award every year since 1992; it is listed in "101 Best Places to Visit", and finally, as New York's own "good housekeeping seal of approval", the Garden is on the itinerary of the tour buses which ferry visitors to New York throughout the City.

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The underlying values of the Garden, developed at its inception are:

- 1) Inclusion: that the Garden be accessible and usable by all, senior citizens to toddlers, able or physically-challenged;
- 2) Diversity: that all garden activities be available to and welcoming of all races, ages and cultures;
- 3) Conservation: that the operation of the Garden and the teaching within it be grounded in the principles of sustainable ecology and the virtues of recycling;
- 4) Hands-on education: that the Garden be available to teachers and school children to provide an opportunity for experiential education in ecological science, integrating the children's garden experience into classroom curricula such as math, science, language arts and social studies.
- 5) Quality of life: that the Garden be a place of beauty and respite for everyone in a city with a dearth of open spaces within communities. The trade-off with the developer in preserving the Garden was to accept only half of the original space the garden encompassed in return for permanent status.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project?

The Garden is located in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, a densely-populated area of the city. The neighborhood residents are a mix of Caucasian, African-American and Latino. Many schools and senior residences are also part of our community.

The beauty and utility of the Garden has engendered immense pride throughout the West Side community, which is evident in the tremendous volunteer response in maintaining the Garden and participating in its on-going operation. Hundreds of volunteers throughout the year gather to plant bulbs for the magnificent spring tulip display for which WSCG is justly famous, to care for communal sections of the garden, to raise supporting funds and to staff events.

It is a resource for elementary school teachers and children, gardening-starved city dwellers, a welcome surprise to visitors to New York; it has brought together people of many races, cultures and ages for a common good; it has energized local and state elected officials, involved local community groups and businesses and has served as a model for other entities wishing to improve their communities in this fashion. Indeed, Garden members have provided technical assistance to many such groups over the years, extending the scope of the Garden far beyond its own community. Its multi-faceted program of events and activities is a constant resource for lovers of the arts, neighborhood parents, and senior citizens, for whom the Garden is particularly accessible

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The Garden began with a group of committed West Side residents in 1976. They removed tons of debris from a demolished urban renewal site and created a garden of flower and vegetable plots. As the economy improved and developers began to plan housing for the site, the Garden participants enlisted the assistance of the local community board, The Trust for Public Land, local politicians and open-space advocates to open a dialogue with the City and the developer, whereby some portion of the site could be maintained as open space. Through a series of hearings at Community Board 7 on the advantages of a garden in this densely-populated west side area, a compromise was agreed upon, with the developer awarding nearly 18,000 square feet, and New York City granting a deed in perpetuity for a combination vegetable garden and flower park. The Garden received a \$5,000 New York State Association of the Arts' Award to design the new garden. Funding of the project fell to the Garden's members.

With the help of developers, a Community Development Block Grant, grants from the J.M. Kaplan and Vincent Astor Foundations, as well as contributions from the Greenacre, Scherman and Mertz-Gilmore Foundations, McGraw-Hill and "The New York Times", together with donations from neighborhood banks, businesses, local citizens, and a loan from The Trust for Public Land, close to \$300,000 was raised to reconstruct the garden.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The developers (Jerome Kretchmer and Assoc.), had the responsibility to: prepare the working drawings; to contribute \$100,000 toward the reconstruction; to install fences on three sides, utilities to the site and sidewalks outside the Garden; to approve finished contract work for payment and pay real estate taxes on the land until transfer to WSCG (worth approximately \$25,000). Support totaling \$54,300 came from the JM Kaplan Fund, the Vincent Astor Foundation, Charles Hayden Foundation, Scherman Foundation, Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, New York Times Foundation, McGraw Hill Foundation, Goldome Bank Foundation, Chase Manhattan Bank, Stryker's Bay, Manufacturer's Hanover Bank and the Horticultural Society. The Community Block Grant for the original interim site totaled \$30,000.

Additional funds came from local business support, grass-roots fund-raising, private donors and garden members. The Trust for Public Land loan (at 0% interest) was in the amount of \$28,000. The NYS Council for the Arts grant for design costs was \$5,000; the Greenacre Fund contributed \$7,500 for an administrator to partially oversee the redevelopment of the garden. A rough per square foot cost of the re-construction would be approximately \$16.85 per square foot.

Over the intervening years, several maintenance projects have been conducted, including the re-structuring of the flower park in 2003, to stabilize the foundations of that portion of the Garden, improve drainage and replace containment structures for the individual flower beds.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

To the best of our knowledge, the WSCG is unique in the City. Other community gardens are generally closed to all but members and consist mostly of either individual plots for cultivation or those in combination with small communal areas. At its inception, WSCG was not only intended for the entire community, it was designed PURPOSEFULLY to embrace the entire community, through its paths, seating, congregating areas and daily accessibility to all, which it has faithfully maintained over the intervening decades. It has been recognized for its uniqueness through many awards and citations and has been a sought-out advisor for other fledgling community spaces. One of the issues of modern urban life is the lack of welcoming places for neighborhood residents to gather informally - at their own pace - to build community. The Garden has done this spectacularly, with regular senior visitors interacting with parents or care-takers with young children, visitors being drawn in to the Garden's membership by their awe at what has been accomplished, people of various economic strata (still a hallmark of this area), ages and differing cultures working together in a need to experience the earth and the out-of-doors. Elderly members bring their grandchildren to help them plant and teach them the knowledge of earlier times - knowledge that many urban children never encounter. Many, if not most, of New York's neighborhoods are a polyglot mix of new and old citizens, old and young in age and diverse in culture. WSCG is, and continues to be, a model for bringing those differences together - not artificially, but by a common desire to be a part of the natural world and to enjoy creating beauty through that world for the enjoyment of others. WSCG's model can most definitely be replicated in other areas and we have been instrumental in helping other groups develop a more inviting design.

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# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or who represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Sally Goodgold Title Former Chair of Community Board # 7  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone ( 212 ) 570.6609  
Address 250 West 87th Street City/State/ZIP New York, NY 10024  
Fax (212) 327-0922 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature X Sally Goodgold Date December 9/10

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

I have been involved with this incredible project from its earliest stages. As Vice-Chair (later, Chair) of the Community Board in which it is located, I was a member of the team that shaped the West Side Urban Renewal Area Plan. The Board wrote the the project guidelines, advertised for site developers and screened the responders. It was an exhaustive process; there were public hearings lasting into the wee hours of the night. The Board struggled to pick between competing interests. The spectacular work of the Garden leaders, then interaction between differing ethnic groups, the community outreach and the resulting special relationships that grew, like the Garden, itself, convinced all of us that this project deserved our backing. The years since then have proven us right.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Two questions were at issue in the Community Board's earliest debates about the Garden Project. Could the Garden sustain itself over the years? In an area where housing (moderately priced) was desperately needed, should space be set aside for this project? The answer to the first question is apparent. The Project has grown more inclusive over the years and has become a citi-wide (if not, national) model of inter-group relations and public-private government partnership.

The answer to the second question is equally obvious. The Garden has become a community amenity of inestimable value. The spirit of the community itself was engendered by this space. It became the "highest and best return on the land".

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The Community Garden has both filled a vital community need, and, in itself, has created a very special kind of neighborhood. The West Side Urban Renewal Area was created without any substantial open space. It is axiomatic to good planning that "open space ratio" between cement and open (preferably green space) is needed for a community to flourish. This project provided for that need and exceeded opportunity for both active and passive uses.

However, and even more important, the Community Garden has become a focal point for the "glorious mosaic" of the area's ethnic and socio-economic groups who work, play relax, attend concerts, meetings and parties and just get to know one another within its borders. Everyone is an equal in the Community Garden. There is no Black or White way to grow a flower or vegetable. There is no rich or poor way to smell the roses. In a city packed with people, here is a neighborhood which can draw serenity and unity from this space. It is worth an award to help insure the continuity of this project? Is it worth the award for both substance and symbol - substantively, it will be put to the best possible use; symbolically, it will declare to one and all a message about how communities can co-exist and thrive.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

Looking back, I would say that, given the circumstances and resources at our disposal, we could not have done anything differently than we did. It was a generic process, driven by the Garden's founders' fierce desire to succeed at this enterprise and the hurdles faced.

To anyone contemplating a similar project, I would suggest studying this one. I'd ask them to spend several months attending Garden meetings and activities, de-briefing gardeners, talking to developers and interviewing neighbors. The Morandum of Understanding developed by the Garden has already served as a model; I would suggest that it be used by any new garden group as a template.

Last of all, I would simply ask the founders of a similar project to examine ours through all four seasons in order to understand its year-round benefit to the community. Of course, once they had seen it when all 10,000 tulips have burst into bloom, they might be so dazzled that they might want to go ahead immediately. Who could blame them?

GALE A. BREWER  
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6  
MANHATTAN

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December 10, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my support for the West Side Community Garden's application for the 2011 Rudy Bruner Award Public Agency Perspective.

**What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency.**

The City Council has the ability to allocate expense funds to the West Side Community Garden for programming, gardening and other activities. Since 2002, when I was elected, I have allocated \$27,000, and my predecessors also provided city money for this beautiful oasis. In addition, I encourage private funders to allocate money to the garden. I meet with local banks, businesses and corporations on a regular basis, and the garden is one of the neighborhood non-profits that I suggest be funded.

Today, neighborhood residents, gardeners and elected officials attend the numerous annual events sponsored by the garden. No place in our community is as beautiful or accessible. Truly, the garden is a gem and enjoyed by all. Residents from nearby housing developments as well as the brownstones sit together and share conversations, meals, and arts performances. Students from local schools learn about the planting process for flowers and vegetables. The garden gate is always open and thus, there is not a "them and us" atmosphere; the space is welcoming and unique. As a Council Member, I recommend it for funding and gatherings.

**How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?**

The West Side Community Garden is meant to be a place where people from different backgrounds can come together, grow vegetables and to socialize with one another. This garden has achieved these goals, but has also grown to include neighborhood residents and workers, who gather at official functions, or just come to sit and read. The board members of the garden are creative and tireless, constantly meeting on programming and infrastructure, planning for events, and producing a newsletter that comes out on a regular basis.

**Describe the project's impact on your city.**

This project has provided a garden for the city that promotes and instills a sense of community in the lives of so many. People of all ages are involved – I meet many teens and seniors who feel that the garden is a part of their lives. What is most impressive is that people return year after year for the potlucks, tulip planting, and the musical and theatrical events. An annual reception honors those who have contributed to the garden in a variety of ways. The garden benefits those who walk by and those who live in our neighborhood and is the model for a neighborhood 'green' institution.

**Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?**

The garden exists on Urban Renewal land, and is the result of elected city officials, community board members and neighborhood gardeners supporting the creation of moving a community garden to this location because originally the space was slated for housing. The West Side Community Garden would not have been possible without the combined support of both the city and private funders.

**What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?**

After long and tiresome negotiations, the space was conceived and built with public and private funds, but at the time of its inception, I don't think that anyone realized the garden's potential to achieve its goals and reach beyond them. The garden has become such a beautiful and special place for everyone. This tremendous success is due to the hard work of many board members and friends of the garden. The garden is a collaborative achievement between the public and private sectors, the neighborhood and elected officials, agencies and residents.

I wholeheartedly support these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gale Brewer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gale" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Brewer".

Gale A. Brewer

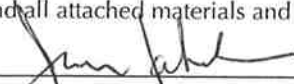
# DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Jerome Kretchmer	Title	President
Organization	KB Companies, Inc	Telephone ( 212 )	465-8448
Address	350 Fifth Avenue - Suite 6900	City/State/ZIP	NY, NY 10118
Fax ( 212 )	239-8828	E-mail	jkretchmer@aol.com

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Signature		Date	December 7, 2010
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1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

As developers, my partner Joe Wasserman and I made the decision to set aside part of our site for a community garden. Our intention with the entire development was to build a project that would fit into and enhance the neighborhood. This was the key to our decision to incorporate the interim community garden into our plans. We were an integral part of the planning process with the Garden, the Community Board and the Trust for Public Land. My partner and I took on the responsibility of funding half the costs, facilitated the design, and supervised the construction

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

As one could expect in any project of this magnitude, there was considerable give and take during the planning process. However, once the garden was designed, things proceeded very smoothly. There were surprisingly few changes in the completed garden from the original architectural drawings. Our trade-off to the loss of housing units was additional amenities for the residents of our project. More importantly, as residents of the community, we had the satisfaction of creating both affordable housing and a beautiful community garden permanent garden.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

We were aware of the importance of properly funding the project from the very beginning, which is why we made a commitment to contribute half the money for the project. We convinced our bank- also our development partner- to put up half the money for our share of the contribution. The early funding decision from us was important for the Garden's fund-raising efforts, both to show potential donors that we were strongly committed, and the probability was high that the permanent Garden would actually be built.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project?

I don't mean to be flip, but there are no unsuccessful aspects to the project. It is almost 25 years old and to the best of my knowledge no one has ever said a negative word about the West Side Community Garden. It serves every purpose such a facility could. It is a place of respite summer and winter for those who walk through or sit there. It provides gardening plots for both vegetables and flowers for those who are interested in gardening. It is a place for neighborhood school children to learn about nature. Perhaps most important, it is 365 days a year, a beautiful small park in the middle of two residential blocks on the west side of Manhattan.

# PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project providing services other than physical design or planning (e.g., legal services).

Name	Andy Stone	Title	Director, NYC Program
Organization	The Trust for Public Land	Telephone	( 212 ) 677.7171
Address	666 Broadway, 9th floor	City/State/ZIP	New York, NY 10012
Fax	( 212 ) 353.2052	E-mail	andy.stone@tpl.org

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Signature  Date 12/2/10

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

My organization played a key role as an intermediary between Columbus Townhouses (the developers of the adjacent housing), and West Side Community Garden, Inc. (WSCG) in developing agreements for conveyance of the garden to WSCG and for sharing of costs involved in capital improvements to the site.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

From my perspective as a professional in the open space field and a former resident of the neighborhood, I believe that the garden addresses vital community development needs in a dense neighborhood. As much as any community open space I know, it provides an opportunity for a diverse array of people to come together on equal terms - both as users of the space and most importantly, as stewards of the space. It also provides a rare opportunity for local schoolchildren to have a direct experience in growing their own food.

## PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

Professionals involved with open space could learn from this project:

- a. How open space can be provided which meets the needs of both an adjacent housing developer and a community stewardship group;
- b. How transfer of fee title ownership over a community open space can be successfully accomplished;
- c. How a community park/garden, entirely managed by volunteers, can successfully maintain dawn to dusk public access;
- d. How a community open space group can operate programs and offer activities to increase local use and involvement, and how such a group can forge effective relationships with local schools and houses of worship.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of this project is that it provides a remarkably beautiful, welcoming open space, woven into fabric of the neighborhood. Also remarkably, in a city whose staffed parks department provides only low maintenance, hard surface community spaces, this high maintenance oasis is entirely run by volunteers.

The least successful aspect of the project, as I see it, is the lack of a regular ongoing revenue stream for basic maintenance, repairs and future improvements, necessitating constant fund-raising by member volunteers.

# OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Name	Suzanne Davis	Title	Former Executive Director
Organization	The J. M. Kaplan Fund	Telephone ( 212 )	582-0101
Address	62 West 62nd Street - #26A	City/State/ZIP	New York, NY 10023
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Signature  Date 12/2/2010

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I was Executive Director of The J. M. Kaplan Fund, a foundation known for its support of New York City beautification projects and specifically of community gardens. The Kaplan Fund was one of the original funders of the West Side Community Garden.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

I live on the Upper West Side and can attest to the strong feeling of community pride that the Garden fosters. There is tremendous participation from west side neighbors, who plant and tend the Garden. They grow flowers and vegetables there - and have concerts and other programming in this wonderful setting. I attended their annual Tulip festival and party last summer, and there was tremendous turnout. The Gardeners were pleased to show off their work - the others came to show their appreciation by purchasing tickets to help sustain the Garden. Local merchants - like Zabars - donated food. Others contributed their own potluck dishes or volunteered their services performing classical music. It was fantastic - one of those settings and events that make New York so special. I was thrilled to be there and to see that what the Kaplan Fund had launched some 30? years ago was still a thriving success.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

I was not involved in the compromises, but I believe that Sally Goodgold was the major force who negotiated with developer Jerry Kretchmer. In fact, both of them attended that celebration in the summer of 2009 and on that occasion reprised the story, whose details I now cannot remember. I do recall that establishing the Garden was a model example of a compromise between competing neighborhood goals.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects are there for the eye to see. The gorgeous garden, the strong local support, the delightful programs and concerts set in the garden.

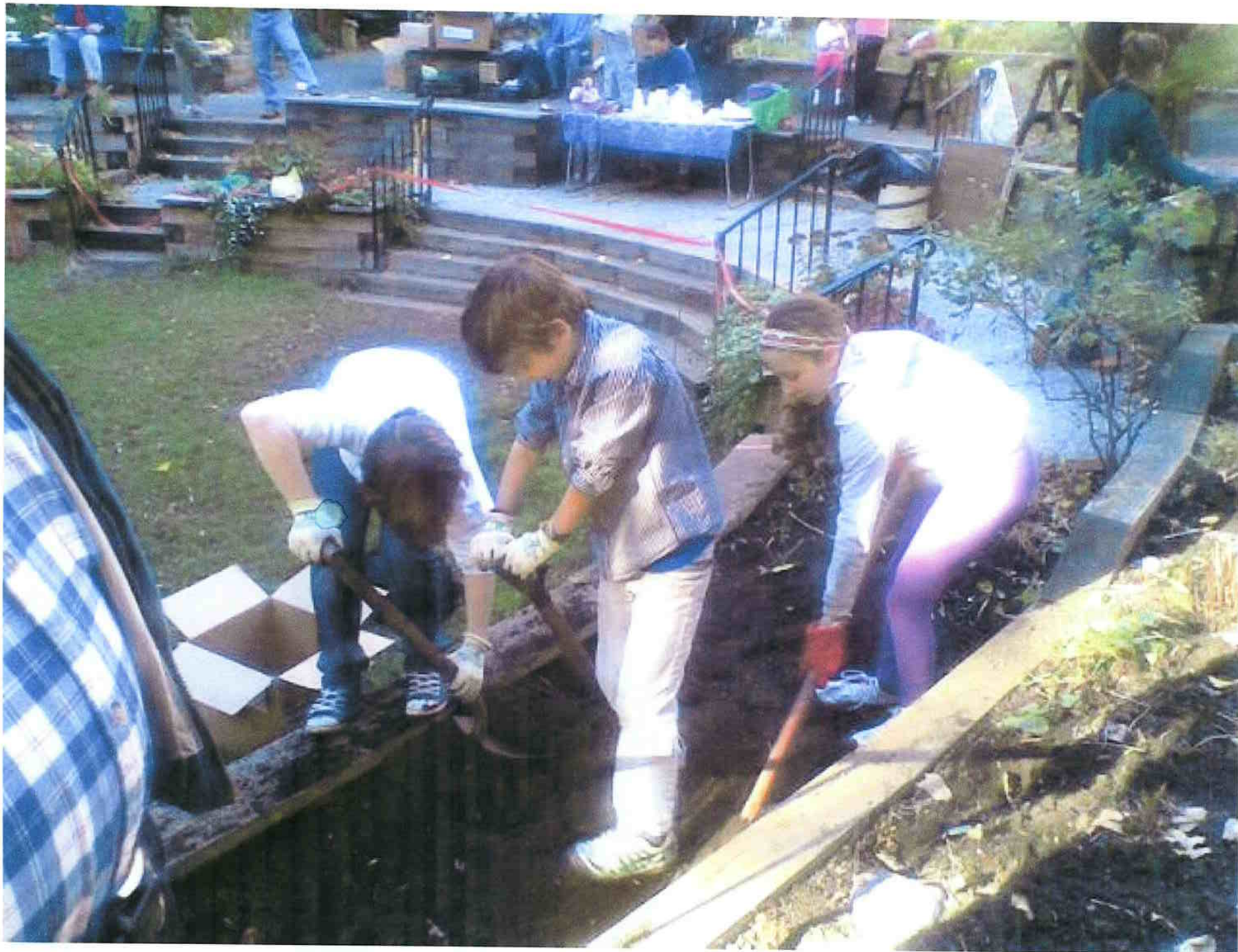
The problem for the Garden is that because of their tiny budget, they obviously cannot afford a professional fundraiser and so depend upon volunteer efforts. From my own exposure to them in the past few years, I see that they all work very hard - but we know that it's tough to raise money, especially in this current climate. A grant from the Rudy Bruner Foundation would give them a HUGE boost and probably would attract other funders. I used to be on the Board of the AIA Foundation (my husband Rolf Ohlhausen was one of the Founders of the Center for Architecture) and I am quite familiar with the Bruner grants. I honestly believe that a grant to the West Side Community Garden would be well in keeping with the objectives of the Bruner grants and would have made Rudy Bruner proud - just as the J.M. Kaplan family is proud today of this garden that we helped to launch some three decades ago.



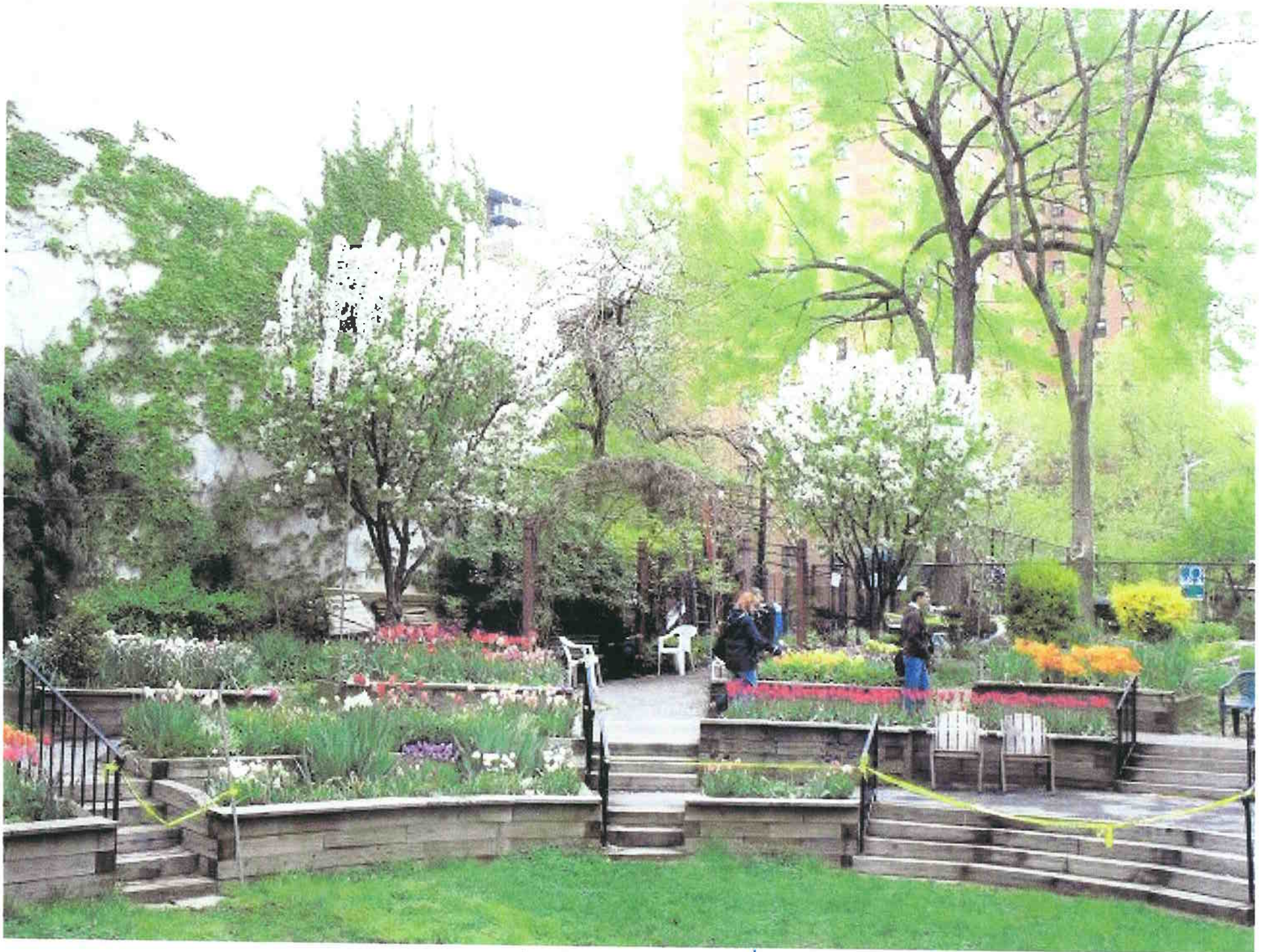
**Top, planting tulips in November.**



**Bottom, tulips in bloom in May.**



Children helping at 2010 Tulip bulb plant-in



Results!





**School children of all ages from toddlers to high school, make use of the West Side Community Garden.**





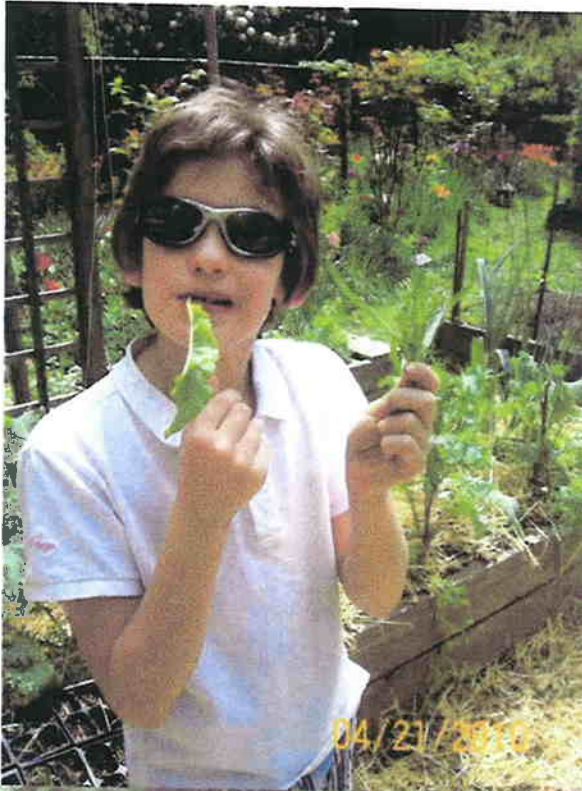
a mature leek  
 taller than me!  
 plants need H<sub>2</sub>O  
 reach for it  
 Eureka, harvest





filling seed tray  
 herb sniffing  
 flower surprise  
 onion bulblets  
 watching bees  
 how to harvest  
*love being here!*





nibble sorrel  
watering well  
onion discovery  
tree seedling gifts  
ripe raspberries





filling seed tray  
 herb sniffing  
 flower surprise  
 onion bulblets  
 watching bees  
 how to harvest  
*love being here!*





**Designed as handicapped accessible, the Garden is a sweet haven for senior citizens all through the summer.**



**Summer Events in the Amphitheater**  
**Top left, NY String Orchestra**  
**Top right, literary reading**  
**Center, Shakespeare's Midsummer Night**  
**Dream performance**  
**Bottom, Brass quartet from Mannes**  
**School of Music**





**Members of the West Side Community Garden, and their children, at work in their vegetable plots in mid-summer.**



89<sup>th</sup> Street

Amphitheater  
& flower  
plots

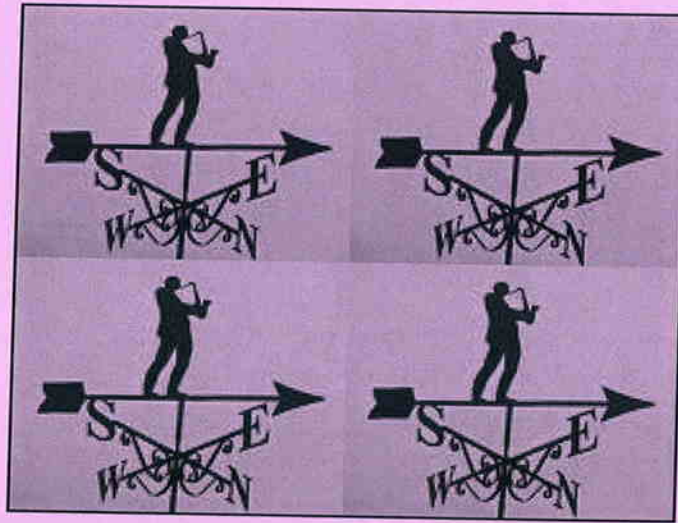
Vegetable  
garden

Children's  
Plots



90<sup>th</sup> Street

# *Summer Concert Series:* *"Music in a Garden"*



Sundays in June & July

Featured Artists:

Sweet Plantain (Latin Classical String Quartet)

Mary Chemeley & Dave Nadal (Flute/Guitar Duo)

Tom Theis and friends (Viola da Gamba, Bassoon, Portative Organ)

Bill Saxton (Jazz Quintet)

Geoff Burke (Jazz Quartet)

Community Sing-A-long

6pm

West Side Community Garden

Entrance on 89th street or 90th street

between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenue.

All are welcome. Free Admission

For concert information, please contact 212-866-2204 (evening).

[www.westsidcommunitygarden.org](http://www.westsidcommunitygarden.org)

This project is made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

# Boutonnieres in the City's Lapel

By SETH KUGEL

**T**HERE'S something about stumbling upon a manicured garden hidden somewhere in Manhattan. With the city raging just beyond the hedges, you claim a piece of bench or spot of grass and relax, let the perfume of flowers and a bumblebee or two drift over you with the breeze. It's a stillness visitors rarely expect to find in the city (and one that New Yorkers with small apartments and roommates otherwise find only by locking themselves in the bathroom).

It's more about peace than quiet: the gardens are still, after all, in Manhattan, and taxi horns, squealing brakes and sirens find their way in. In a way, though, that aural versus visual dissonance makes the pleasure even greater. You're so close, and yet so far (but in a good way).

Nowhere is this more true than on a bench on a sunny, breezy day in the Jefferson Market Garden in the West Village, a patch of land far too elegant to be labeled a patch of land. On the former site of a women's detention center, the garden has a pathway that encircles an egg-shaped central green, and it sprouts mini-paths leading into the manicured wild. Flowers and flowering bushes dot the way; other splotches of color are provided by the yellow taxis occasionally visible from a gap in the greenery.

One problem here is you can't sit on the grass, and there are only six two-person benches strategically placed in nooks throughout. So on a nice day, you have next to no chance of getting a seat, kind of making it the Momofuku Ko of New York gardens. Still, you can stroll and admire the wacky pairs of characters that fate has put together on the benches: young white hipster on a Mac next to the elderly black woman with a cane; the gray-bearded intellectual next to the text-messaging office worker.

The city's community gardens are everywhere, and Weekend in New York has mentioned a few in past columns. All have their charms, but many of those charms are more rustic than manicured. But leave it to the Upper West Side to create an onslaught of flowers in an elegant setting and hide it on a side street where you'd never find it if you didn't know it was there.

Tulip season is the true mind-blowing time of year, and you just missed it. (Note in BlackBerry: Sunday, April 19, 2009: "Lazy afternoon, West Side Community Garden.") But there will be a lot more blooming into the summer: lilies, impatiens, zinnias, black-eyed Susans,

sweet Williams, and so forth. And in a slight advantage over the other gardens, traffic noise is largely replaced with the happy screams of kids in two neighboring playgrounds.

City-run gardens are not exempt from being beautiful and hidden, by any means. In Central Park, try the Shakespeare Garden, dedicated to him whose works are performed on a nearby stage. The garden is nestled into a slope behind the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, and you won't automatically stumble upon it on any of the regular routes through the park. It's a charmer of winding pathways bordered by rustic fences and occasional benches. Among the flowers are plaques adorned with Shakespearean quotes about nature. (For example, "Where the bee sucks, there suck I. In the cowslip's bell I lie." Not overly inspiring, but it beats "Keep off the grass!")

Wagner Park is an unsung spot near Battery Park that owes at least as much of its beauty to its views (Statue of Liberty, the surprisingly imposing New Jersey skyline) as to its design. But it is

attractive and has a few charming garden areas designed by the landscape painter and garden designer Lynden B. Miller. The one just southeast of Gigino restaurant has brilliant views of the Statue of Liberty and some flowers to boot, making it a restful spot to escape the tourist mayhem. Sometimes, though, the tourist mayhem does seep in, in the form of a foreign visitor stalking an "exotic" squirrel with his point-and-shoot camera as if he were a leopard stalking his prey in the Masai Mara.

Then there are the truly hidden gardens: those that are hidden behind an admissions cost. Take, for instance, the backyard garden at the Merchant House, a row house that belonged to a merchant family for a century and is now preserved as a museum with the original furniture. Though the back garden is not original, it was modeled after a 19th-century garden, including only plants that were available at the time.

## WHERE DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

**Jefferson Market Garden**, Greenwich Avenue between West 10th Street and Sixth Avenue; [www.jeffersonmarketgarden.org](http://www.jeffersonmarketgarden.org).

**West Side Community Garden**, West 89th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues; [www.westsidcommunitygarden.org](http://www.westsidcommunitygarden.org).

**Shakespeare Garden**, between 79th and 80th Streets on the west side of the park; [www.centralparknyc.org/shakespearegarden](http://www.centralparknyc.org/shakespearegarden).

**Robert F. Wagner Park**, off Battery Place; [www.bpcparks.org/](http://www.bpcparks.org/).

**Merchant's House Museum**, 29 East Fourth Street, between Lafayette Street and Bowery; (212) 777-1089; [www.merchantshouse.com](http://www.merchantshouse.com). Museum admission \$8; events: \$40 for the tea and \$25 for Garden Amusements.

**The Frick Collection**, 1 East 70th Street, at Fifth Avenue, (212) 288-0700; [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org); admission \$15.



Jefferson Market Garden, in the West Village, is on the former site of a women's detention center.

SUZANNE D'ACHILLO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

NY Times  
5/25/08



THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL

*designates as a*

MILLENNIUM GREEN PROJECT

***West Side Community Garden***

*In recognition of efforts to bring the community together around the national theme,*

*“Honor the Past—Imagine the Future,”*

*by planting a millennium tree, garden, or grove that promotes and creates*

*a healthier environment and more livable community.*

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*

III  
**Internal Revenue Service**

Department of the Treasury

Rec'd 7/2/98

District  
Director

10 MetroTech Center  
625 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

Date: JUN 22 1998

West Side Community Garden  
c/o Blanche Hodges  
65 West 90th Street  
New York, NY 10024-1504

Person to Contact:  
Patricia Holub  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(718) 488-2333  
EIN: 13-3993092

Dear Sir or Madam:

Reference is made to your request for verification of the tax exempt status of West Side Community Garden.

A determination or ruling letter issued to an organization granting exemption under the Internal Revenue Code remains in effect until the tax exempt status has been terminated, revoked or modified.

Our records indicate that exemption was granted as shown below.

Sincerely yours,

*Patricia Holub*

Patricia Holub  
Manager, Customer  
Service Unit

Name of Organization: West Side Community Garden

Date of Exemption Letter: April 1985

Exemption granted pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Foundation Classification (if applicable): Not a private foundation as you are an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code.

*How did it happen that 17,500 square feet became a community garden in the heart of Manhattan's Upper West Side?*

In the fervor of New York City's 1970s urban renewal, half of the block facing Columbus Avenue between 89th and 90th Streets (Site 35) was razed to make way for new buildings. But the money dried up and the site became a heap of abandoned automobiles.

By the time real estate developers were ready to build on Site 35, the space had been transformed into a verdant garden in a spontaneous response by local residents to clean up a dangerous area in their midst.

With construction imminent, the community was assisted in efforts to save this open space by Community Board 7 and the Trust for Public Land. In the words of the late Doris Rosenblum, director of the community board at the time:

"Our first priority was to save open space for this dense residential neighborhood. We worked to convince the developers that it was in their best interest to set aside space for a garden."

Developer Jerome Kretchmer states:

"Our intention was to build a project that would enhance the neighborhood. But imagine our reaction as businessmen to the idea of including a community garden on the site. The most difficult decision to make was to do it. But once we saw this as the best way to add to the neighborhood, the rest was easy. We were an integral part of the planning, funded half the cost, facilitated the design, and supervised construction."

Further financing for the project was a group effort by a dedicated fund-raising committee of gardeners and the Trust for Public Land.

The West Side Community Garden was chosen winner of the 1991 Phillips N. Winslow Landscape Design Award by The Parks Council, an advocate for New York City's parks and open spaces.

*The Pocket Guide to Great American Public Spaces*, 1996, includes WSCG right along with the Golden Gate Bridge and other wonders.

For "outstanding work in reversing urban blight," WSCG received an American Star Award from the America the Beautiful Fund, Washington, DC, in 1996.

Renew America issued a Certificate of Environmental Achievement to WSCG in 1996, 1997, and 1998.

This garden has received the Molly Parnis Dress up Your Neighborhood award every year since 1992.

#### MAJOR BENEFACTORS

ABC

THE ADCO FOUNDATION

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL FUND

THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE OF NEW YORK (MOLLY PARNIS)

CITY PARKS FOUNDATION

CITY BANK

COLUMBIA TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATES

COLUMBIA TOWNHOUSE #2

CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY OF NEW YORK, INC.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE FUND FOR CREATIVE COMMUNITIES/NYC

THE GREENACRE FOUNDATION

CHARLES W. HAYDEN FOUNDATION

J. M. KAPLAN FUND, INC.

THE HUDSON RIVER FOUNDATION

JOYCE MERTZ-GILMORE FOUNDATION

MCGRAW-HILL FOUNDATION, INC.

MERRILL LYNCH

NEW YORK TIMES FOUNDATION

THE PHILANTHROPIC COLLABORATIVE

THE RUDIN FOUNDATION

SITE 35 DEVELOPMENT FUND

SCHERMAN FOUNDATION

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

VINCENT ASTOR FOUNDATION

*Garden benches were purchased with donations from foundations, banks, and private citizens.*

*A blaze of spring tulips*

*A rock garden of unexpected delights*

## You are invited to visit the beautiful West Side Community Garden

*Magnolias blooming by the gate*

*Summer roses on garden fences*

*Dahlias under a harvest moon*

*Christmas lights on new-fallen snow*



The West Side Community Garden is open every day of the year, weather permitting. Entrances are on 89th and 90th Streets between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues.



Pedestrians are known to halt at the open wrought-iron gates in the middle of the block on West 89th Street—between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues—and exclaim, "Where did this come from. What *is* this?" They have just discovered the West Side Community Garden, a patch of green (or red and yellow and ochre or pink and blue, depending on the season).

✿ The present-day facility, opened to the public in June 1988, has matured from an "interim" garden of urban-renewal days into an important community resource, serving a large Upper West Side neighborhood, visitors from all over the city and the world, and children from both public and private schools.

✿ While the growing of flowers is the primary activity, special events include neighborhood picnics, poetry readings, concerts, theater productions, and an arts and crafts festival.

✿ The environmental impact of this garden is substantial, providing a children's outreach program in local schools and an urban garden website. WSCG has revitalized the neighborhood, uniting diverse cultural groups in their efforts to preserve this verdant space.

✿ WSCG is a volunteer organization with an elected board of directors. Volunteers plant, water, weed, clean up, raise funds for maintenance and supplies, coordinate school programs, and do what needs to be done. There is no paid staff. Dues-paying members receive the monthly Newsletter.



*November bulb planting is cold, hard work, but the spring payoff is glorious*



*A perfect setting for a performance of Shakespeare's Much Ado about Nothing*



*Catching some rays on a summer afternoon*



*Hey! This carrot came right out of the ground!*



*Ugh!! That's a worm in the teacher's hand*



*Youngsters admire artists' work at an arts and crafts show*



*Putting in a new tree is heavy work*



*In February, summer seedlings thrive in the greenhouse*



*Mannes College brass quartet in concert*

*Neighborhood goblins in the Garden on Hallowe'en Eve*



*Gardeners and friends join in a community potluck picnic*



*WSCG is working hard to establish an endowment fund to provide a stable source of annual income that will supplement its grass-roots fund-raising efforts.*

*Your generous support will help keep this garden an open space forever.*

*Yes, I want to join the effort. Enclosed is my check for:*

\$10  \$25  \$50  \$100

*I'm wild about the Garden. Here is \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Make tax-deductible checks payable to West Side Community Garden and mail to:  
West Side Community Garden, PO Box 20301, Park West Financial Station, New York, NY 10025-9992*

*"This Garden, this metaphor for paradise, was born of the labor and love of a neighborhood. . . . It has brought together rich and poor, landlord and tenant, elected officials and constituents. . . . Gardens know no difference between people. The spirit of the West Side community will live within this garden's green and leafy borders for all time."*

*SALLY GOODGOLD  
Former president, New York City Club*

## West Side Community Garden

WSCG is a volunteer organization with an elected board of directors. Volunteers plant, water, weed, clean up, raise funds for maintenance and supplies, coordinate school programs, and do stuff what needs to be done.

There is no paid staff.

Dues-paying members receive the monthly Newsletter.

WSCG Board Members are:

Jackie Bukowski - President

Awilda Bernard

Mary Ann Brun

Linda Cardona

Michael Estwanik

Blanche Hodges

Veronica Humphreys

David Kupsky

Michael Modlock

Sandy Owen

Lisa Sarajian

Mira Stulman

Thomas Thies

Thank you to our volunteer board members and all our volunteers who work tirelessly to keep the garden a treasure of the community.

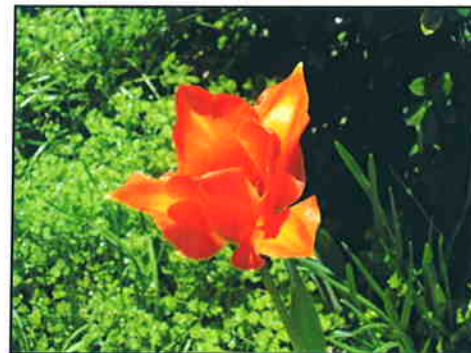
West Side Community Garden is open every day of the year, weather permitting.

For more information or to become a volunteer please visit our website at:

[www.westsidecommunitygarden.org](http://www.westsidecommunitygarden.org)

Designed by Harlan Jackson Creative 2010

## West Side Community Garden Annual Tulip Festival



Photography by Alison Yobage

Celebrate Spring on the Upper West Side!

We are celebrating our  
22nd year of tulips in bloom.  
See more than thirty varieties of tulips,  
in a kaleidoscope of colors and variations.

Saturday, April 24, 2010

Sunday, April 25, 2010

1-4pm

West Side Community Garden

Entrance on 89th street or 90th street  
between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenue.

## West Side Community Garden: Serving the community since 1973.

In the fervor of New York City's 1970's urban renewal, half of the block facing Columbus Avenue between 89th and 90th Streets (Site 35) was razed to make way for new buildings. But before plans could begin, the money dried up and the site became a heap of abandoned automobiles.

In a spontaneous response by local residents to clean up a dangerous area and to save open space for the neighborhood, Site 35 was transformed into a verdant garden before real estate developers could be ready to build.

With construction imminent, local residents sought assistance in efforts by Community Board 7. Further financing for the project was a group effort by a dedicated fund-raising committee of gardeners and the Trust for Public Land.

After 15 years of community effort, the present-day facility opened to the public in June 1988.

The WSCG has matured from an "interim" garden of urban-renewal days into an important community resource, serving a large Upper West Side neighborhood, visitors from all over the city and the world, and children from both public and private schools.

While the growing of veggies and flowers is the primary activity, special events include neighborhood picnics, poetry readings, concerts, theater productions, and an arts and crafts festival.

Over the course of 10 days,  
volunteers planted over 12,000 tulips  
in November during our annual  
Community Tulip "plant-in".

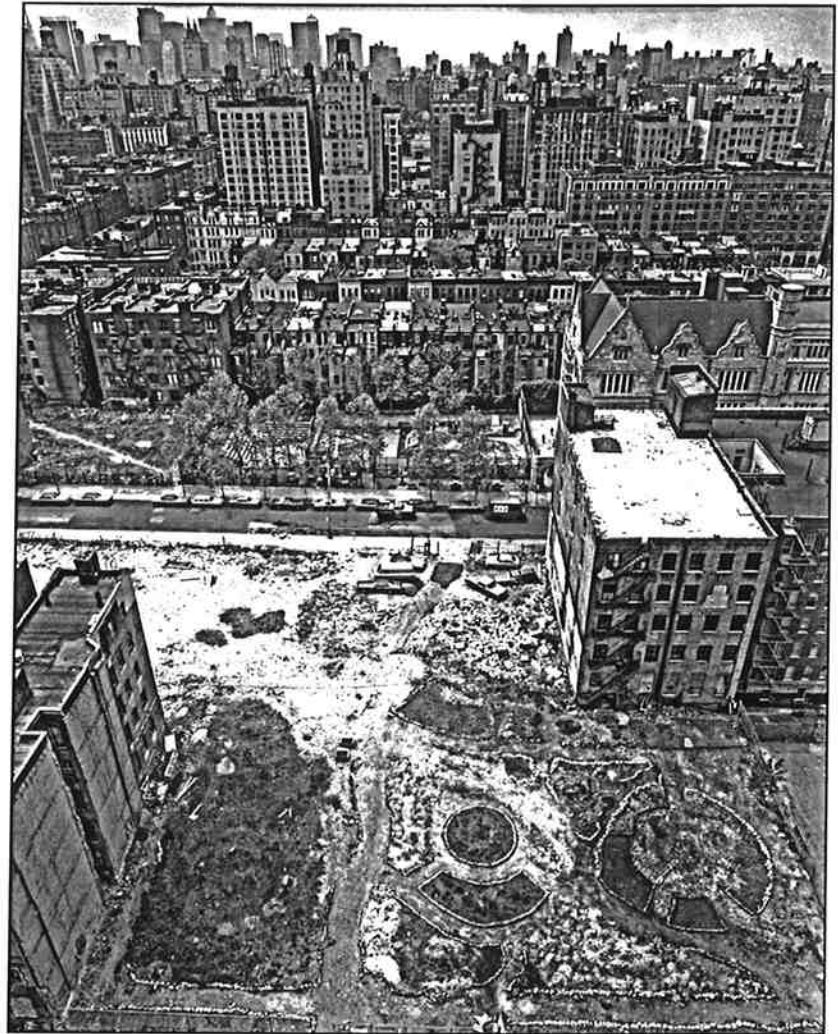
Tulip varieties were selected by garden  
members as early as the end of summer  
2009, with bulbs hailing from local growers.

The colors, varieties and combinations  
reflect the spirit and the energy of both  
the volunteers and the community.

We hope you will enjoy the kaleidoscope  
of colors in the garden this Spring

Thanks goes out to all our volunteers  
and the WSCG Flower Committee.

## "Urban Blight/Sign of Life"



Photography by Jane Grundy

West 89th Street, Spring 1976.

*Site 35, the location of the West Side Community Garden, in 1976.  
Photograph taken by long-time WSCG photographer and archivist.*

# WSCG Featured Tulips in 2010

## Tulip Groups and their Trademark Characteristics



Single Early (single flowers, goblet shaped) (E)

Single Late (tall, single with big egg shaped flowers) (L)



Double Early (large double bloom) (E)

Double Late (double petals) (L)

Darwin (tall with large flowers) (M-L)



Fringed (single petals, fine fringed edge) (L)

Heirlooms (antique bulbs)



Lily-Flowered (pointed petals) (L)



Parrot (no two alike, petals like bird's feathers) (L)

Rembrandt (flamed, bi-colored patterns) (L)



Triumph (cone shaped at base, with uprond, single flower) (M-L)



Tulipa Kaufmanniana (single, waterlily like flowers; small with maroon speckled foliage) (L)



Tulipa Greigii (short stem, with spotted leaves) (M-L)

Tulipa Species (small, founded in East Turkey, Caucasus Republics and Central Asia Republics).

Bloom Times

(E)=Early Spring (M)=Mid Spring (M-L)=Mid-Late

(L)=Late Spring

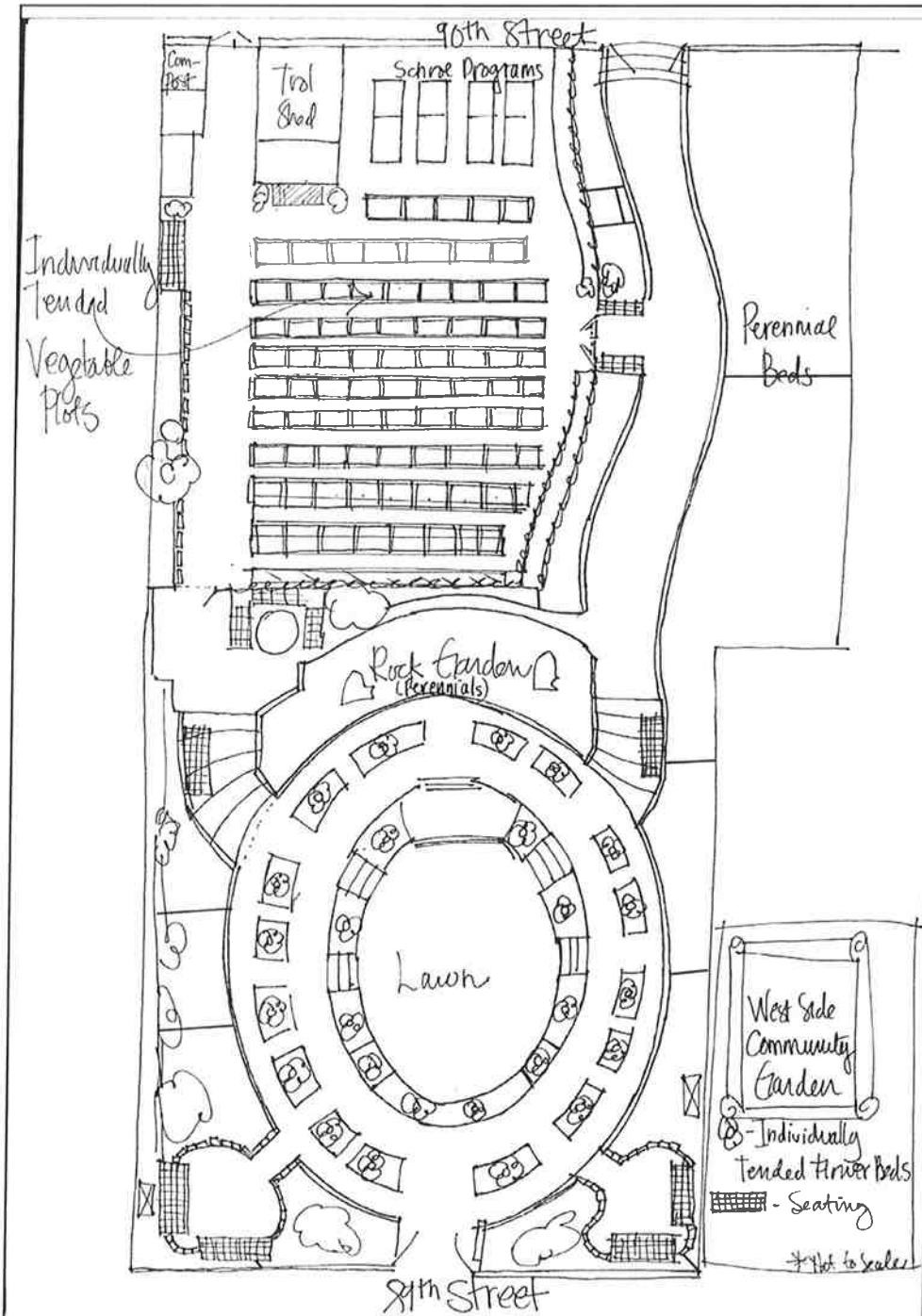


Illustration by Veronica Humphreys