

**Beczak Environmental Education Center**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Permaculture Workshop and Lecture in Yonkers  
Saturday, March 6**

*Learn to create a backyard that is diverse, resilient, productive  
and beautiful by understanding nature's principles and patterns.*

**Yonkers, NY, February 22, 2010. Permaculture in Your Backyard Workshop and Lecture with Monica Ibacache of Green Phoenix Permaculture.** Learn simple steps to creating a backyard that is diverse, resilient, productive and beautiful while saving money and resources. The workshop is Saturday, March 6; 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, \$30, reservation required. The lecture is Saturday, March 6; 7:00 PM, \$5. Information at dsukup@beczak.org / (914) 377-1900 ext. 13. Beczak Environmental Education Center, 35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701. www.beczak.org

**Permaculture in Your Backyard** introduces methods and resources that help create a self-renewing, bountiful landscape that works in harmony with nature. “Rather than trying to master your yard with energy-using mowers, chemical fertilizers and constant weeding and watering, permaculture shows you how to create a garden that lets nature do most of the work,” says Monica Ibacache of **Permaculture in Your Backyard**. “I’m passionate about growing my own food! The high vitality and quality of my produce compared to what I was buying in the grocery store changed my life.”

Monica Ibacache is a permaculture designer and educator who empowers others to reconnect to the earth through Green Phoenix Permaculture, a non profit education organization with a demonstration site in High Falls, NY, and projects in and around New York City.

Permaculture, meaning “permanent agriculture” was founded in the 1970s by Australian ecologists Bill Mollison and David Holmgren and has taken root in communities worldwide. It is a holistic, ecological design system that focuses on the interconnectedness between parts to create a healthy, sustainable and resilient whole. Its guiding principles are to care for the earth, care for people and share the surplus.

**Permaculture in Your Backyard Workshop** (\$30 program fee, prior registration required) is a five-hour program with videos and hands-on components that introduce the concept of permaculture and how to use its principles in daily life. Topics include where our food and water comes from, how houseplants grow fresh air, waste as a resource, property design with site analysis in Beczak's park, and the how-tos of edible landscaping. Participants are encouraged to bring questions about their garden and home. The workshop also includes a permaculture resource guide, potting a plant for home, and complimentary admission to the evening presentation. Bring a bag lunch.

The **Permaculture In your Backyard** evening presentation (\$5 admission) spotlights what permaculture looks like in an urban/suburban setting: organic gardening, ecological lawn care, indoor and outdoor composting, rain water harvesting, and how to grow fresh air with houseplants.

### **LOCAL INTEREST IN PERMACULTURE**

Monica Ibacache's upcoming work at Beczak Environmental Education Center is, fittingly, a story of organic growth.

In summer 2009, Dobbs Ferry resident Alex Orlowski attended a three-week Permaculture Design Certification course at the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Ranch in the Catskills. Monica Ibacache was one of the teachers. Orlowski's friend, Lenore Lelah, also a Dobbs Ferry resident, works at Beczak Environmental Education Center. "I caught Alex's enthusiasm and wanted to learn more myself," says Lelah. "I called Monica and invited her to Beczak."

"I grew up in France and there was a working farm on my grandparent's property," reflects Orlowski. "I remember the smell of milk and the taste of fresh tomatoes and strawberries. Today, here, the quality and pleasure of eating has disappeared. And I don't have a farm here in Dobbs Ferry, I have a shady, small property."

"Permaculture helped me realize resources I do have. I now grow mushrooms in my basement and began sheet mulching some vegetable beds. I walk along the aqueduct all the time, and I began to collect the wild nettle and Porcini mushrooms I saw. Permaculture is about being resilient and implementing traditional knowledge in a 21st century way."

Permaculture is much more than gardening, enthuses Robert Hothan, an energy manager and Yonkers resident. Hothan attended a three week Permaculture Design course in New Mexico last summer. "One of the premises of permaculture is that each element should perform several functions. For instance, a government agency approached me about installing solar panels. They wanted them to be placed in a field. I suggested that they use them as a shading system as well; putting them over parked cars or a walkway. That's a stacked function. Instead of trying to create more, I figure out ways of using less.

### **RIVERTALKS SATURDAY EVENING LECTURE SERIES**

**Permaculture in Your Backyard** is part of **RiverTalks** Saturday Evening Lecture Series at Beczak Environmental Education Center. The Spring 2010 schedule features:

**April 10: Hudson River Oyster Gardening**

NYC's oysters once supplied the world. Katie Mosher-Smith, Coordinator of the NY/NJ Baykeeper Oyster Program, tells you why they disappeared, why they are important and what Baykeeper is doing about it.

**May 8: Rising Waters**

Mark Lowrey of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation shares the startling new results of the Sea Level Rise Task Force and its impact on Hudson River communities. "It's even worse than we thought."

**June 12: NYC's John J. Harvey Historic Fireboat**

Fireboat engineer and author Jessica DuLong tells stories of adventure and self-discovery aboard NYC's historic fireboat, including pumping water to fight blazes at Ground Zero. Join the book release party for DuLong's memoir, *My River Chronicles*, and take a free ride on the John J. Harvey docked in Yonkers.

**ABOUT BECZAK ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER**

Beczak Environmental Education Center is a non-profit organization that presents exhibits and programs for all ages to raise environmental awareness and to encourage informed stewardship of rivers. They celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation calls Beczak's rehabilitated property an "environmental recovery success story." Located on the banks of the Hudson in the City of Yonkers, at River Mile 18, this spacious interpretive center is an adaptive reuse of the former social club for Habirshaw Cable & Wire Co. Its two-acre park features a welcoming riverfront lawn, an easily accessible tidal marsh and a beach used for river exploration and seining.

Beczak educators work with approximately 20,000 children and families each year through in-school river education programs, field trips at its riverfront center and after school environmental clubs. Public programs include *River Explorers* and *Fish Tales* for children, *RiverTalks* lectures and *Urban H<sub>2</sub>O* concerts for adults, *Lunchtime Learning* for seniors, *Summer Adventures* camp, and professional development for educators.

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