

# YONKERS RISING

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## Senator Gillibrand Comes to Yonkers With \$190k Grant for Groundwork



Photo by Greg Baldwin

Sheikh Uddin (at podium) speaking at the event, while (l to r) Groundwork Executive Director Rick Magder, Council President Chuck Lesnick, Councilman Mike Sabatino, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky look on

By Dan Murphy

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand paid a visit to Yonkers on Monday and, after touring the Science Barge on the Hudson River, announced \$190,000 in federal funding for Groundwork Hudson Valley to help youth work at local farmers markets and on the Science Barge, exposing students to organic farming, business and employment skills, while also providing affordable fresh produce to Yonkers residents. The investment came through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Community Food Project.

"This is an important, long-term investment into our local community here in Yonkers," said Gillibrand, the first New York Senator to serve on the Agriculture Committee in

nearly 40 years. "Groundwork Hudson Valley has created a public-private partnership that works. Get Fresh Yonkers will increase local access to healthy and affordable food and teach job skills to our youth about agricultural production, marketing and distribution."

Groundwork Executive Director Rick Magder said, "Groundwork is thrilled to have Senator Gillibrand announce this highly competitive national grant award that will provide youth, seniors and parents with real options for obtaining fresh, healthy, and affordable food in our community. Get Fresh Yonkers will help our collective efforts to revitalize downtown Yonkers with new parks, markets and attractions, including the Saw Mill River

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Photo by Greg Baldwin

Groundwork Executive Director Rick Magder thanks Senator Gillibrand for the funding



Photo by Greg Baldwin

State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand share a happy moment on the science barge



Photo by Jennifer Sloan

L to r: Alivia Acosta, Isr'a Abdo, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Nataly Erostico and Troy Parish



Photo by Jennifer Sloan

Gillibrand aboard the Science Barge

### Senator Gillibrand Continued from Page 1

daylighting and the Science Barge."

Groundwork Hudson Valley is one of 20 Groundwork non-profits across the nation, opened in Yonkers 12 years ago with funding from the EPA and the National Park Service.

Groundwork will use this investment to help staff their farmers market with Yonkers youth as paid employees of Groundwork's Green Team. Green Team members also spend part of the week working at the Science Barge, the well-known Yonkers attraction and hydroponic farm owned by Groundwork, where crops are grown and harvested and donated to local shelters.

Students participating in this program will be taught valuable business skills while having access to healthy, affordable produce. The farmers involved in the Saw Mill Farmers Market discount the produce they sell to Groundwork and mentor the Green Team youth on how to acquire and manage an organic farm.

One member of the Groundwork HV Green Team that spoke at the press conference on the Science Barge with Gillibrand was 17-year-old Sheikh Uddin of Yonkers High School. Sheikh was chosen for Groundwork's summer Green Team program, a highly competitive seven-week urban conservation leadership program, which he completed this summer. He was also one of 15 students in the Science Barge internship program and one of four students to represent Groundwork Hudson Valley at Yellowstone National Park

in August in a special youth conservation program of the National Park Service.

The federal funding and local matching funds will be used to:

- Significantly expand the Saw Mill Farmers Market in downtown Yonkers, staffed by the Green Team and Groundwork's Environmental Food Team, a group of senior citizens who get together each week to learn about the history of food and advocate for healthy eating in Yonkers.
- Double the size of the Yonkers Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program from 40 to 80 shares;
- Increase the number of community garden beds through the Yonkers Community Garden initiative;
- Train community garden members in state-of-the-art growing techniques to enhance food production;
- Establish the Yonkers Youth Farm Team, involving 20 young people from local high schools who will get paid to work on local farms during the summer, help sell the food they grow at the farmers market, help run the CSA program and learn first-hand what farm managers think about and find fulfilling about their careers; and
- Create a new training program for young adults to prepare them for working in the growing field of hydroponic farming — the training will take place on the Science Barge with the goal to place graduates with partners in New York and for them to work in a new 10,000 square-foot greenhouse (called Teutonia Farm) that is planned for a rooftop above a major new downtown development.



Science Barge Educator Jennifer Sloan with Gillibrand on the Science Barge