

# YONKERS RISING

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## Yonkers Students & GWHV Honored in Washington, D.C.



Yonkers students and Groundwork Hudson Valley volunteers Alivia Acosta, Nathan Martinez and Kira Lopez in Washington, D.C.

Groundwork was recognized last week in Washington, D.C., where Executive Director Rick Magder, Deputy Director Curt Collier and three Yonkers High School students accepted the Partners in Conservation Award from Interior Secretary Sally Jewell on behalf of all of the Groundwork trusts across the

country.

The award honors Groundwork's outstanding contribution to conservation nationwide through community engagement and cooperation with local, state and federal partners.

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Curt Collier of Groundwork Hudson Valley with Groundwork volunteers from Yonkers and across the country, who were honored in Washington, D.C.

## Area Students

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"We are truly honored to have been selected by the National Park Service for the work we have done over the last decade to transform the lives of young people in their own communities and on public lands," said Magder. "We are incredibly proud of our staff at Groundwork Trusts across the country, the partners we have in the National Park Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the young people we reach and mentor to become the conservation leaders of tomorrow."

The Yonkers teens representing Groundwork's youth programs included Green Team member Alivia Acosta, a senior at Lincoln High School; Farm Team member and Yonkers High School sophomore Kira Lopez; and Riverside High School senior Nathan Martinez, who worked for Groundwork's Green Team and Farm Team this summer, and was then selected to travel to Yellowstone in August with Groundwork's Green Corps.

Groundwork Hudson Valley is one of 19 trusts in the Groundwork USA network nation-wide, and representatives of a number of these trusts were on hand for the Partners in Conservation Award.

"You are all here because you have found that common ground, with each other and with us, to help move our conservation

legacy in this country forward in a way that's sustainable for the people that come after us," said Jewell.

Acosta, Lopez and Martinez met Jewell, as well as National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, and then were treated to a VIP tour of the Department of Interior building, with its impressive collection of original artwork. Later, the group toured the Smithsonian Museum.

This is the second time in six months that Groundwork has received national attention. The Groundwork network was among

30 organizations across the country invited in September to the White House to participate in President Obama's Youth Jobs Champions of Change Initiative, which recognizes those who have heeded the president's call to help develop the discipline and skills associated with employment for our nation's youth.

In 2013, Groundwork Hudson Valley employed 37 teens in its Green Team, Farm Team, Wilderness Stewards and Science Barge programs.

In addition to creating jobs, Groundwork

Hudson Valley provides a variety of programs to make Yonkers communities more livable and sustainable, including Our Folks, which helps older adults age in place; the Community Garden Network; the Saw Mill River Daylighting and additional river parks being created upstream; Free-A-Tree, which preserves the health of the Saw Mill River by organizing volunteers to cut invasive vines each month; and Get Fresh Yonkers Farmers Market, a weekly market that makes local, affordable produce available to urban residents.

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