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New Rochelle Students Plant Spruce Trees Donated by City

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (October 9, 2018) – Across the City School District of New Rochelle, students and teachers are planting seedlings that will, in the coming years, grow into Colorado blue spruce trees.

About 100 of the seedlings came to the schools from the City of New Rochelle, which had distributed more of them at its recent annual Street Fair downtown. Over time, the *Picea pungens* that are planted and tended to will grow into full-bodied conifers with a silvery blue-green look.

“These trees offer endless opportunities for our students to learn the science of growing trees, while also learning about responsibility and patience in activities with real-life rewards they will see for themselves over time,” said Interim Superintendent Dr. Magda Parvey. “We are incredibly thankful to the City of New Rochelle for this wonderful gift.”

In Isaac E. Young Middle School, general school aide Herbert Wiley and the eighth-graders in his Greenhouse Club set the future trees in troughs in a skylighted greenhouse room, joining the company of the cacti, geraniums, a fig tree, a spider fern and other greenery. Several more of the trees have been planted in two-gallon buckets in the Columbus Elementary School science laboratory.

The Albert Leonard Middle School PTA's beautification committee is working with the faculty to determine the best use of the trees at that school. Jefferson Elementary School students in Patricia Tavera's first-grade bilingual class planted the trees in the back schoolyard, helped by fifth-graders.

“First-grade students are studying trees, so this was a perfect opportunity for them to get real-life experience in a hands-on activity,” said English as a New Language teacher Lucia Brea at Jefferson.

Two second-grade classes at Trinity Elementary School filled planters with the nascent trees.

“This experience aligned wonderfully with our second-grade science standards,” said Trinity teacher Camilla Rende. “Students developed and researched the idea that plants are alive and face challenges every bit as dramatic as those of animals. They will continue to grow their curiosity of plants and learn more about the nurturing of plants, observing their stages of growth and survival.”

More of the seedlings were planted by pre-kindergarten students at Henry Barnard Early Childhood Center.

“Through this authentic experience, children learned about the importance of trees in our ecosystem,” said Kathleen Connolly, the coordinator of Amy's Greenhouse at Barnard. “This shared opportunity was a catalyst for classes to write about their activity together.”

The Barnard teachers will have their students care for the trees and make observations to expand their connections to various academic and social concepts.

“By tending to the trees, they will explore what it means to nurture and care for other things in the world and be part of a greater learning community,” Connolly said.

About the City School District of New Rochelle

With nearly 11,000 students in 10 schools, the City School District of New Rochelle, through an active partnership amongst community, parents, staff and students, provides a high-quality and challenging education for every child, in a safe, nurturing environment that embraces rich diversity and drives success.

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