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## **Two Brooklyn Residents Singled Out for Environmental Leadership *Honorees Receive Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowships***

New York, NY, November 19, 2009—Two Brooklyn environmental advocates are the recipients of a national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential to help shape a brighter environmental future.

Ajamu Brown of Bedford Stuyvesant and Irene Shen of Clinton Hill are two of 40 individuals nationwide selected as 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellows. The *TogetherGreen* Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For his fellowship, Brown will work with local youth at the Magnolia Tree Earth Center to develop a community toolkit to educate residents, businesses and decision makers about the locations of sustainable living activities in his Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. Brown's Green Map will highlight Bedford-Stuyvesant's green assets, including environmentally responsible businesses, restaurants that use local foods, Farmers Markets, green learning centers and programs, community gardens, including key sites within the community's largest and oldest green space, anchored by the Magnolia Tree Earth Center, Herbert Von King Park and the Hattie Carthan Community Garden.

Brown is one of the lead organizers of the Brooklyn Food Coalition, a grassroots partnership of individuals and groups striving to achieve a just and sustainable food system and an advisor on green projects for the Board of the historic Magnolia Tree Earth Center of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, NY. He is also an Outreach Coordinator for New York State's Center for Development of Human Services.

Shen will use her fellowship to expand the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment's current sustainable agriculture program by developing an energy conservation component entitled "Saving Energy: Your Food Next Door." By growing food organically and transporting it on foot, students will demonstrate a hands-on way to participate in energy conservation. Through the class, students will create a school-wide campaign to help their peers also make the connection between food and energy conservation.

Shen currently serves as the partnership director at the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE), a public high school serving young people of color who live in under-

resourced and overdeveloped parts of Brooklyn, New York. At BASE, she founded a sustainable agriculture program to provide students, with the opportunity to reunite with nature through working the soil, planting crops, and understanding community food systems and the politics and history of growing food.

“Ajamu and Irene are the kind of people who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “Each of our *TogetherGreen* Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come.”

“This *TogetherGreen* fellowship will help me reach my personal goals of making a difference in the community; directly impact the lives and career choices of dozens of young people; and educate the entire Bedford Stuyvesant community, at large, about the green resources already established to encourage their participation in developing New York City’s sustainable future,” said Brown.

“Food justice and environmental conservation go hand-in-hand, but often that link goes unrecognized. This project, “Saving Energy: Your Food Next Door,” highlights and reinforces that connection. Through a partnership with SchoolFood, we serve the vegetables that we grow organically and locally at our school. We conserve energy by production without chemicals and transportation on foot. The *TogetherGreen* fellowship provides an opportunity for all of our students at BASE to understand the connection between eating healthy both for themselves and for the environment,” said Shen.

Brown has been affiliated with Center for Development of Human Services since 2008, and Shen has been affiliated with the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment since 2007. Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon’s far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Brown received his Masters degree in urban/environmental policy and planning from Tufts University and his Bachelor’s degree in speech communication from Ithaca College. Shen received her Masters degree in group work from the Hunter College School of Social Work and her Bachelors degree in biology at Columbia University

A distinguished advisory committee- composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning-selected the fellowship beneficiaries from a competitive pool of scores of highly qualified individuals. Qualified applicants must have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy, or environmental issues, as demonstrated through current and past work experience, academic studies related to conservation, and/or volunteer work. Candidates must have a passion for conservation, the desire to learn and grow, and demonstrate a proven ability in reaching previously unengaged audiences.

"We must engage the best and brightest leaders representing the broadest and most diverse communities in this country to solve our ever more complex conservation challenges," said Diane Wood, President, National Environmental Education Foundation. "*TogetherGreen* is a creative program that uncovers such leaders, nurtures their talents, supports their dedication to conservation and holds them up to inspire others to follow."

A complete list of the 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellows can be found at [www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows](http://www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows).

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#### **About *TogetherGreen***

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. To date, 80 environmental leaders-half from within Audubon and half from outside organizations-have received *TogetherGreen* Fellowships to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit [www.togethergreen.org](http://www.togethergreen.org).

#### **About Audubon**

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. Visit Audubon online at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

#### **About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit [www.toyota.com/community](http://www.toyota.com/community).