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## **National Grant Funds Paid Environmental Internships for Local New York City Students**

### **Funds Support Getting Low-Income Students “Out of the City” and into Nature**

One of 48 *TogetherGreen* national innovation grants will help students get out of the city and into natural spaces, where they will be introduced to the conservation-related skill sets and careers they may never have had the opportunity to experience. Audubon New York, The Nature Conservancy, and Prospect Park Alliance will team up to supplement environmental education in the classroom with increasingly empowering summer opportunities for Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE) students throughout their formative high school years. For the second year in a row, Audubon New York has won a *TogetherGreen* grant to continue to enrich NY-area students’ academic performance, environmental awareness, and action.

The \$80,000 grant will support stays at Audubon camps and paid internships at Audubon and The Nature Conservancy preserves, so that students can gain a working knowledge of and an appreciation for wild spaces. The two- and four-week long internships will also have real conservation value, as the students restore native plants and shellfish, eradicate invasive plant species, and monitor wildlife in ecologically-important habitats. Overall, students who do not have the access, support system or connections to these places will be able to take part in ongoing environmental exploration and opportunities—and become a more environmentally literate and concerned citizenry.

“Direct experiences with the outdoors are vitally important to student’s awareness and appreciation of nature,” said Pam Musk, Audubon New York Director of Centers and Education. “By participating in conservation work, students not only learn about conservation, but build a stewardship ethic that will hopefully inspire them to study conservation related majors in college and eventually work in environmental careers.”

Through sustained environmental education and hands-on outdoor experiences, New York City teens will learn just how interconnected nature and human health and well being are. Those benefits will continue to grow as program-trained educators pass along the lessons to future classes. This *TogetherGreen* project will focus on low income students who may lack contact with nature and environmental education.

“We are so excited to partner with Audubon to help nurture the next generation of environmental leaders,” said Brigitte Griswold, Director of Urban Youth Programs for The Nature Conservancy. “This partnership will demonstrate how two of the world’s largest conservation organizations can come together with the shared goal of helping urban youth experience the wild world of nature that sustains us all.”

The Audubon New York innovation grant is part of \$1.1 million awarded by the *TogetherGreen* initiative this year. Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. Grantees were selected from scores of applicants across America. Funds were

awarded to Audubon organizations that demonstrated exceptional innovation in working with other groups on projects that will produce tangible benefits for environmental quality.

“It is critical that we narrow the divide between young people and the natural world and hopefully these enriching experiences will help NYC-area teens create a long-lasting connection to the great outdoors,” added *TogetherGreen* Project Manager Judy Braus.

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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. Nearly 90 projects totaling more than \$2.5 million dollars have received Innovation Grants 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. To learn more, visit [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).