

Youth Eco-'Cuse Explorers: Growing Food

Wednesday July 24, 2013 by Dhiki

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This year's Youth Eco-'Cuse Explorers (YECE) are digging in the dirt and learning about food security and urban agriculture. As a part of a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's environmental justice grant, explorers are getting firsthand experience in cultivating their own crops in the city.

At the start of the program, explorers, ages 11-14, worked alongside educator Amy Samuels and nutrition educator, Kathy Dischner, to learn how to make healthy meal choices. The youth learned to prepare and cook a meal composed of quesadillas, apple salad, and fresh smoothies. It was delicious!

During our April session, the youth began exploring the Midland Community garden where they will be planting. Before any plants could be put in the ground or the raised beds, we need to first see if the soil is healthy. We employed easy techniques, such as the ribbon test and pH tests to test the health of the soil. After the research component, the kids began planning and planting their garden in May. We planted kale, collards, squash, cucumbers, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, herbs, and flower. Over the next few months, the youth will tend to their plants and watch their hard work take sprout.

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