



Green Schools Green Futures

A Conference on Environmental Initiatives in Schools

SPEAKER BIOS

OPENING REMARKS

Ella Apfaltrer

Ella is a 5th grade student at Mamaroneck Avenue Elementary School (MAS). She plans to grow up and become a marine biologist but in the meantime, she enjoys playing her guitar, swimming, and drawing. While in the 4th grade, Ella initiated a composting program at her school. As a 5th grader and with a lot of help from her enthusiastic friends, the "compost club" evolved into the re-launching at MAS of the Green Tigers, an environmental club that had been active around the MUFSD over the past ten years. In addition to overseeing the daily composting by all the 4th and 5th graders at MAS, the Green Tigers are also pursuing other green objectives at their school and within the community.

Nola Coady

Nola is in the 5th grade at Mamaroneck Avenue School, and also is an active soccer/ basketball/lacrosse player and dedicated cellist/percussionist. Her love for her favorite animal the turtle inspired her to enter the Town of Mamaroneck's art contest for their reusable bag program, since banning plastic bags would help turtles and other sea animals. She was excited to win the contest, and to work with her friends in the MAS Green Tigers club to support the Town's plastic bag ban by collecting signatures for a petition and by spreading the word. She also enjoys gardening at home and at school and helping to support MAS's composting journey.

GARDENS

Amy Benerofe - Moderator

E-mail: ournewwaygarden@gmail.com

Amy is a graduate of Stanford University and is currently enrolled in the Masters of Teaching (Biology) program at Manhattanville College, having completed the Advanced Certificate in Education for Sustainability. She has 20 years' experience teaching and directing programs in the New York metropolitan area with students of all ages and abilities in schools and after school programs. She is founder and president of Our New Way Garden Inc, which in 2012 incorporated as a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Through Our New Way Garden, Amy has created gardens and educational garden programs in six locations throughout Westchester County. Our New Way Garden Inc has a three-pronged mission of equitable food production and distribution, education and environmental stewardship.

Allison Silverman – Panelist

E-mail: asilverman@portchesterschools.org

Allison has been teaching Family and Consumer Science at Port Chester Middle School for 12 years. Her curriculum focus is in the areas of interpersonal relationships, leadership, community connections, resource management, entrepreneurship, global citizenship, sustainability, food production, nutrition, meal preparation, and cultural foods. Allison is the coordinator of the Port Chester Middle School Giving Garden, which harvests approximately 1,000 pounds of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables each year which is distributed to local families in need.

Allison received a BA in Art Education from SUNY New Paltz, and her Master's Degree in Instructional Technology from NYIT. She is a certified Health Chef and graduate of the Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts. She lives in Westchester County, with her husband, who is a Kindergarten teacher in a bilingual school, almost 10-year-old son and five-year-old daughter.

Betty Comerford – Panelist

E-mail: BComerford@mamkschools.org

Betty is a Family and Consumer Science teacher at Hommocks Middle School in Larchmont, New York. She teaches 6th and 7th grades and incorporates her garden and greenhouse into the curriculum. When she started teaching at the Hommocks in 2008, she saw a need to get students interested in learning where their food came from. She is passionate about involving students in all stages of gardening; including planning, planting, growing, harvesting, cooking and eating the produce they grow.

Growing up on a farm in Illinois, Betty learned from her grandmother, a passionate gardener who taught her all about gardening, preserving and canning produce from the garden and fruit orchard. Prior to teaching, Betty worked in test kitchens for eight years at Unilever BestFoods and Black & Decker Small Appliances, testing cooking products and developing recipes. She also spent 10 years as a Vice President in Account Management at DMB&B Advertising in New York. She has a B.S. and M.S. in Home Economics Education from the University of Illinois and an MBA from the University of Virginia. She is on the board of the New York Women's Culinary Alliance in New York City. She loves cooking, baking, gardening and taking long walks with her golden retriever.

Lucy Berkoff – Panelist

E-mail: lucyboinay@gmail.com

Lucy grew up in Washington, DC, where her mother taught garden education as the librarian at the local elementary school. While still in high school, Lucy started a garden center at her local hardware store. After college, she worked with gardeners all over the country as a manager at Smith & Hawken.

Lucy returned to teaching kids about gardening when her own children entered the Rye Public Schools. She is currently in her fourth year of leading the Midland Green Team, where she has supported recycling efforts that led to town wide composting, and helped students establish a successful pollinator garden. Over the past 12 years, Lucy has also been involved with the Rye Nature Center, the Midland PTO, and Resurrection Parish. She was active in redesigning the landscape at the Church of the Resurrection, including the new playground and parking area. She is an avid gardener, has a popular Instagram Gardening Blog, *Lucy's Garden Life*, and runs a small garden design business of the same name.

Carolyn Ramsey – Panelist

E-mail: violingarden@gmail.com

In her role as Master Gardener Volunteer for Cornell Cooperative Extension, Carolyn Ramsey brings more than 25 years of gardening leadership, including seed starting, plant propagation, sustainability, composting, square foot gardening, and classroom education. Carolyn has played in gardens, tiny and huge in Japan, Europe and on both the east and west coasts and has an appreciation for the unique beauty and function different environments offer. Carolyn has been a catalyst of growth and expansion in community gardens and school gardens in Westchester County for more than a decade. A board member of the Pleasantville Garden Club since 2009, Carolyn believes anyone can develop a green thumb and she loves helping new gardeners and homeowners take the plunge and get started! Carolyn's special interests include Designing for Habitat, Growing Unusual Heirloom Vegetables, Foodscaping, and teaching her four children how to be hands-on, loving stewards of our earth.

Toby Adams - Panelist

E-mail: tadams@nybg.org

Toby is responsible for the site management, daily operations, programming, budgeting, long range planning, and supervision of staff and volunteers at the New York Botanical Gardens Edible Academy. He joined the Garden as a Science Education Intern at the GreenSchool in 2001. Hired in 2002, Toby has

served as Coordinator of the Everett Children's Adventure Garden and Manager of the Family Garden. He became Director of the Edible Academy in 2012. Toby has played a key role in developing the new campus and helping to design new garden configurations, program concepts, and staffing structures. He collaborated with NYBG's Professional Learning staff to develop and implement three teacher institutes on school gardening. He has also executed several grants with local partner organizations to promote garden and nutrition education.

Toby has presented at numerous local and national conferences dedicated to youth and garden-based education and is involved in NYC area advisory panels focused on promoting health and wellness, garden-based education, and food education. In his free time, Toby can be found watching soccer or riding a surfboard. He earned a B.S. in Biology from SUNY Geneseo.

ZERO WASTE

Melissa Grieco - Moderator

E-mail: melbrown68@hotmail.com

Melissa first became interested in environmental issues several decades ago after writing a middle school term paper about acid rain. She is a former co-chair of the Environmental Advocacy Group of Rye, current Chair of the Rye Sustainability Committee, and also serves on the Rye Garden Club Conservation Commission and City of Rye Conservation Commission/Advisory Council. Melissa has contributed to many of Rye's municipal waste reduction initiatives including the city's Reusable Bag legislation, Food Scrap Recycling pilot program, and Rye Sustainability Committee's 'Sound Shore Last Straw' campaign. Melissa is an avid athlete and competes in Ironman triathlons and marathons. She lives in Rye with her husband and rescue dog.

Tammy Thornton – Panelist

E-mail: tammythornton1112@gmail.com

Tammy lives with her husband and two children in Wilton, CT. She is an active volunteer at her children's elementary school where she implements the Zero Waste Schools program, a board member of Wilton Go Green, and chair of the Zero Waste Schools Coalition. Tammy previously taught 7th grade biology when she was living in Massachusetts. She currently works remotely for the Massachusetts-based environmental non-profit Project Green Schools as Director of Content and Membership Development and locally as a teacher for Rad Lab, which brings hands-on science fun to student in-house and after school programs.

Anna McDonald - Panelist

Email: lcbmcdonald@gmail.com (Lisa: Anna's mom)

Anna is a 9th grader at Mamaroneck High School. This year, she is encouraging a zero waste initiative at Chatsworth Elementary School. Throughout this month, she has given presentations to Chatsworth students about composting and packing more sustainable lunches. As part of this effort, the lunchroom trash is weighed before and after implementation of the waste-free measures, and plastic cutlery in the cafeteria has been replaced with a biodegradable alternative. Anna is a finalist for Bedford 2020's Greenlight Award and has received initial funding from the Bedford2020 to implement these changes. Anna's next goal is to help institute a waste free lunch day at every school in the district as an annual challenge for the students.

Kerry Linderoff – Panelist

E-mail: kerry_linderoff@ryecountryday.org

Kerry is the Director of Sustainability at Rye Country Day School in Rye, NY, where she also teaches AP Environmental Science, Marine Ecology, and Life Science. Kerry strives to bring environmental awareness to the RCDS community, reduce the ecological footprint of the campus, and integrate sustainability throughout the PreK-12 curriculum. Under her leadership, RCDS has implemented a single-stream recycling program and a zero waste dining hall, both of which have reduced the overall waste on campus tremendously. Kerry holds a BA with a double major in Environmental Science and Anthropology from Connecticut College and a MA in Science Education from Columbia University Teachers College. Kerry is a member of the Green Schools, Green Futures conference planning committee.

Karen Khor – Panelist

Email: khortan@mac.com

Karen is a resident of Larchmont who has a background in city and environmental planning. Her involvement with local zero waste efforts began with St. Augustine's Church Care for Creation Committee, where she organized Zero Waste events. Karen is a member of the Town of Mamaroneck's Sustainability Collaborative, through which she helped plan and implement the Town's food waste recycling program. She also serves on the Hommocks Middle School's PTA Sustainability Committee, where she helped bring food waste recycling to the school's lunchroom and helped spread these practices to other schools in the Mamaroneck school district.

TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY

Pam Miner - Moderator

Email: pminer@greenburghnaturecenter.org

Pam grew up in Rye, went to Tufts University undergrad and received her MBA from Stern School of Business. She started her career in international business development, finding overseas markets for US manufacturers. Shifting tracks to follow her passion for environmental sustainability, Pam joined the Greenburgh Nature Center five years ago and works on the Sustainability Team in various capacities, including grant writing, curriculum development, marketing, and as an educator. She has been closely involved with Zero Waste schools programming, teaching K-12th graders, faculty, administrators, and parents about the hows and whys of going zero waste. She has also worked on developing and delivering STEM-based renewable programs for 3rd -8th graders that incorporate hands-on learning and science projects. She is looking forward to sharing ideas and information about teaching sustainability to our future leaders.

Amanda Sackey - Panelist

E-mail: Amanda_Sackey@ryecountryday.org

Amanda has been an environmental educator for over 20 years. She began her career as a nonpoint source and groundwater specialist working for the Virgin Islands Division of Environmental Protection. She then moved on to teaching middle and high school science at The Good Hope School in St. Croix, U.S.V.I. There she ran the school's annual Intel Affiliated Science Fair, and showcased student research in St. Croix's annual Agricultural and Food Fair. In 2013, Amanda moved to Rye, NY and since then has been teaching middle school science at Rye Country Day School.

Amanda holds a BA with a double major in Geology and Dance from Hamilton College. Currently, she is working on her Masters in Biology at Manhattanville College School of Education. She also has an Advanced Certificate in Education for Sustainability from Manhattanville.

Jeanne-Marie Castiello - Panelist

E-mail: jmcastiello@gmail.com

Jeanne-Marie holds a degree in Political Science from Columbia University and a J.D. in the field of Environmental Law. She currently teaches sixth grade social studies at Scarsdale Middle School. Her professional interests focus on teaching sustainability through the use of civic education. At Scarsdale Middle School she has been involved in creating curriculum that exposes students to both environmental and humanitarian issues. Currently, she is working on developing a new sustainability curriculum as a member of the Scarsdale School Districts Sustainability Committee.

Jeanne-Marie also serves as a member of the Scarsdale Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). As part of the CAC she has helped to write the Scarsdale Tree Code, is working on amending the Scarsdale Code on Solar Energy, and has helped develop the Scarsdale Food Scraps and Recycling program. Moreover, she is dedicated to helping the Village of Scarsdale incorporate more environmentally sound energy practices. Jeanne-Marie's philosophy is maximize the resources you have today so there is abundance for many tomorrow.

A.J. Johnson - Panelist

E-mail: AJJohnson@ryenaturecenter.org

A.J., Friends of Rye Nature Center's Director of Strategic Initiatives, has nearly a decade of experience in the environmental education field. Since joining FRNC, his focus has been on outreach and volunteer programming, forming new community partnerships, and overseeing the conservation of FRNC's 47-acre preserve. Prior to his work with FRNC he was employed by Westchester County's conservation division and New York State Parks in various roles, with a primary focus on education. A.J. holds a BS in Biology with a concentration in Environmental Biology/Ecology from Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania where his research focused on aquatic ecotoxicology and mycological symbiosis. A.J. continues to promote environmental education and awareness to as many people as possible while helping FRNC further its impact within communities near and far.

John Borchert - Panelist

E-mail: Borchert.john@ryeschools.org

John, a Life Science Educator, came to Rye Middle School in 1988. He earned a BS degree in Environmental Science from Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Science, as well as an MAT in Science Education from Manhattanville College. Eight years ago, after attending the Summer Institute hosted by CELF (Childrens' Environmental Literacy Foundation), John created an elective class on sustainability called RMS A.L.I.V.E. (Always Looking Into Vital Ecology). The students in this class oversee the school's recycling programs and constantly explore opportunities to increase environmental awareness throughout the school. Students also plant, maintain, and harvest the school garden which is supported by the returnable water bottles collected by the students from the cafeteria and hallway recycling bins.