



"ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FRESH TO PRINT"

The Jersey Tomato Press

MONTCLAIR | WEST ESSEX | NUTLEY | PARAMUS

Outdoor Classroom in Nutley for Essex County Kids to focus on science and Environment



Posted 7/20/16

BIRTH OF A GREAT IDEA

The idea for the classroom originated after the nearby Bloomfield School District developed a similar outdoor learning facility in Clark's Pond in 2012. Science teachers from the Nutley School District presented the idea to the Nutley Educational Foundation and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, and gained permission from Essex County to utilize the space.

To understand and learn about the environment, and the science behind it, you need to get outside and study it.

Now, for the first time, Essex County is launching a robust and hands-on outdoor classroom for children located at one of its pristine parks that dot this leafy, green county.

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. joined with representatives from the Nutley Educational Foundation and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission to announce plans to create an outdoor classroom in Essex County Yanticaw Park on Tuesday, July 19th. The learning facility is located in close proximity to Nutley High School along the Third River and would be utilized to inspire students in the middle and high schools to learn about science and the environment.

"Our parks are extraordinary natural resources that residents depend on for recreation and respite. But they also have great potential as education resources and provide endless opportunities to raise awareness about the environment and teach appreciation for nature," DiVincenzo said. "We applaud the Nutley

Educational Foundation and Passaic Valley for bringing us this idea to create another opportunity for young people to enjoy the outdoors and our open spaces," he added.

"The Nutley Educational Foundation is thrilled to be partnering with PVSC and Essex County to create this extraordinary space for both the Nutley School District and the entire community. This project speaks directly to our mission and is what NEF strives to do," NEF President Lorraine Kucinski said. "We'd like to thank our dedicated science professionals Mr. Kent Bania and Mrs. Lynn Zazzali along with John H. Walker Middle School Principal Mrs. Tracy Egan for spearheading this initiative and helping it come to fruition," she added.

"This is such an exciting opportunity for our students and teachers, and extends learning beyond the four walls of the classroom," Nutley Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lynn Glazer said.

"The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission is proud to partner with the Nutley Educational Foundation and the County of Essex to provide what will be a beautiful outdoor classroom and amphitheater in Essex County Yanticaw Park," Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Chairman Thomas Tucci, Jr. said. "We hope that Nutley school children and residents of Essex County will be able to enjoy this unique learning environment for years to come," he added

The idea for the classroom originated after the nearby Bloomfield School District developed a similar outdoor learning facility in Clark's Pond in 2012. Science teachers from the Nutley School District presented the idea to the Nutley Educational Foundation and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, and gained permission from Essex County to utilize the space.

The outdoor classroom consists of three tiers of seating, approximately 30 feet in width, to be built into the natural slope of the park. There would be enough seating to accommodate about 30 students. A podium of reclaimed wood would be installed in front of the stadium seating. Students would be looking toward the Third River when sitting in the outdoor classroom. Overgrown brush in the area will be removed and new landscaping and additional trees will be planted.

"This project is an example of different agencies working together and pooling resources for the benefit of our students and educators," Assemblyman Ralph Caputo said.

"This is a tremendous project to get children outside," Freeholder Vice President Brendan Gill said. Freeholder Patricia Sebold, a retired teacher, said she would have jumped at the opportunity to bring her students outside. "This is a great vision when it comes to innovative education opportunities," Freeholder Leonard Luciano said.

Nutley Mayor Joe Scarpelli thanked the County, NEF and PVSC for partnering together. "It will be exciting to see students learning outside in the fresh air," he added. School Board President Charles Kucinski called the classroom "a wonderful opportunity for Nutley" and a "great addition."

The Nutley Educational Foundation raised about \$3,600 to purchase the supplies to create the classroom. The PVSC will provide the labor to construct the facility.