

Winnie Medrano

Groundwork Lawrence Green Team

2009 Lowell Youth Summit Essay Contest

Third Place Winner

Based on my experience with the National Park Service and Green Team I will continue to make a difference by participating in more green activities. Not only while part of Groundwork Lawrence Green Team but also outside of it. I will also try to teach people how important it is to keep our communities clean. How good it makes people feel when they go outside to their backyards and smell clean air rather than polluted air. There are lots of people that care about their communities but they never take action and try to help out, or maybe change the way they treat their own community.

I always wanted to work for an organization that helps keep their community clean, that cares about gardening, changing places and about being Green. I started working for Groundwork Lawrence green team this summer and it has changed the way I view things around me. It has taught me how I can live more practical, how to eat healthier food, how to maintain not only my community but other places around me. Green Team has been a really good opportunity to learn new things I wouldn't have tried on my own. I've learned how to tell plants from each one another, and how to make healthier meals.

One of my favorite experiences would have to be the camping trip we did in the state of Vermont. I've been camping before but this was much different. We were away from technology for three days, and maybe it would have bothered me but it didn't. I felt at peace and I got to admire the beauty of the scenery around me. On our service day we had to clean a trail in The Marsh Billings National Park. I remember how it felt being up there. The work was hard but it was worth it. The smell of pine trees was unbelievable, how good it felt when the rain started falling, how nice it was to hike up the mountain to watch the town below us. For me it felt magical, it was absolutely beautiful.

Being part of Green Team has changed me in the way I am outside of work. Whenever I see garbage on the ground I immediately pick it up, I don't like to see anybody littering. Making sure the parks in our community stay clean is also part of my commitment to Groundwork. It gets me mad when people trash our parks. It takes hard work to pick them up and when people don't appreciate them it defeats the purpose. We've been working on parks around our community one of them has a garden. We got the chance to work on a farm which was really nice. It was a lot of hard, but it was worth it.

There is one thing that I would like to do, get people that live in my community to understand how important it is to take care of your community, to get involved and how good it makes you feel when you're doing something that will not only benefit you but also everyone else around you. Perhaps we can create some forum, a meeting or "expo" to show the community the work we've been doing and ways they could get involved. It doesn't take much to make change happen if you have the dedication to take action.