



Unearthing the Past/Building the Future

Background:

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance (VCPA) is proud to introduce "Unearthing the Past/Building the Future," an interdisciplinary education program aimed at fostering historical, environmental, and social awareness among Bronx middle and high school students.

Program Highlights:

Historical Context: Explores the legacy of enslaved people in shaping Van Cortlandt Park, emphasizing the intersection of history, environment, and social justice.

Daylighting Tibbetts Brook: Examines New York City's largest green infrastructure project and its impact on flood mitigation, environmental resilience, and community accessibility.

Food Justice: Engages students in discussions about ancestral crops, traditional recipes, and the racial and class disparities in our local food system, promoting awareness and action towards food equity.

Community Stewardship: Empowers students to become active participants in the preservation and enhancement of their local environment and community.

3 Day Program Overview:

Day 1

Location: Classroom

In Lesson #1, students explore the historical context of Van Cortlandt Park, delving into its origins as a plantation, the roles of historical figures like the Van Cortlandts and enslaved individuals, the impact of colonization, and the history of Tibbetts Brook within the park, while engaging in interactive activities and reflective exercises to deepen their understanding and connection to the material.

Day 2 - Option A (Daylighting)

Location: Van Cortlandt Park

In Lesson #2A, students investigate the historical significance and environmental impact of daylighting Tibbetts Brook within Van Cortlandt Park, engaging in experiential learning activities and discussions to understand the importance of community advocacy in shaping the local ecosystem.

Day 2 - Option B (Food Justice)

Location: Van Cortlandt Park

In Lesson #2B, students will tour and actively participate in hands-on activities in the park's garden, exploring Indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, and colonial farming practices represented in different garden beds, followed by a reflection on the observed differences and sustainability implications.

Day 3

Location: Classroom

In Lesson #3, students explore how an understanding of nature's resilience can inspire advocacy and proactive engagement in addressing present-day environmental challenges. Through examination of historical policies and connections to current issues, we articulate the importance of civic engagement, and further explore community resiliency.

For more information or to register your class, please contact:

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