



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Naomi Leach, Marketing and PR Coordinator
Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education
Tel. 215.482.7300 x 118
naomi@schuylkillcenter.org

First-Ever Delaware Valley Green Schools Symposium

Focus on Cost Savings, Linking Facilities with Curriculum, Underserved Schools, and More

Teacher, Administrator, TED Speaker Stephen Ritz to Present Keynote Address



PHILADELPHIA (July 9, 2013) Teachers, school administrators, natural resource professionals and architects from the five-county metropolitan region will gather later this month to share experiences and expertise on school greening efforts that can improve student achievement and health, save money and protect the environment.

The Delaware Valley Green Schools Symposium, set for Tuesday, July 23 at Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education (SCEE) in Philadelphia, will cover practical considerations for administrators—such as the full life-cycle cost savings associated with many green systems—as well as strategies for integrating green technologies into curricula. The Schuylkill Center is presenting the symposium in partnership with the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators and the Delaware Valley Green Building Council, with funding provided by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

“The Philadelphia area boasts a healthy community of schools working on physical and programmatic greening projects,” says Schuylkill Center Director of Education Gail Farmer, “but too many other schools are only vaguely aware of regional greening initiatives. Our goal with this symposium is to bring together a community of teachers, facilities staff and administrators to share real-world knowledge and insights into greening options and lay the pathway for more schools to take the plunge into greener systems.”

Evidence is mounting that “green” schools are not only good for the environment, but for students and the school community as well. Green classrooms provide a healthier learning environment, while green initiatives such as green roofs or school-wide composting programs provide unique opportunities for experiential learning across the curriculum, boosting student engagement and academic achievement.

At the symposium, representatives from regional LEED-certified and Green Ribbon schools will share their expertise in energy, recycling, recycled materials, water conservation, and strategies for outdoor learning. In addition, the symposium will allow education professionals to network with the rich community of green architects and designers currently operating in the Delaware Valley.

Focus on underserved populations

“In organizing and marketing this event, we’re reaching out to teachers and administrators at school districts throughout the Delaware Valley,” says Farmer, “but we’re making a special effort to bring in schools from under-served communities.” Low-income school districts are also, typically, underserved in terms of green initiatives and outdoor learning. “We hope that through this symposium, these schools can develop a support network to help them with green initiatives.”

The symposium’s keynote speaker, Stephen Ritz, has gained national attention for his work bringing “green” into under-served city schools. Through Ritz’s *Green Bronx Machine* initiative, students in the poorest congressional district in America build green walls and roofs for high-end clients and operate farmers’ markets in food deserts, becoming active participants in the new green economy. Ritz’s inspiring work has been featured at several TEDx conferences and on NBC’s TODAY Show. (<http://greenbronxmachine.com/>)

For a conference schedule and more details, visit <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/programs/forteachers/professional.html>.

What: Delaware Valley Green Schools Symposium

When: Tuesday, July 23, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Cost: FREE; funding provided by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (<http://www.cbf.org/>)

Where: Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

8480 Hagy's Mill Road

Philadelphia, PA 19128

About the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education (SCEE) was founded in 1965 as the nation’s first urban environmental education organization. Its 365-acre sanctuary serves as a living laboratory to foster appreciation, deepen understanding, and encourage stewardship of the environment. SCEE reaches over 15,000 Philadelphia-area residents each year with an array of educational programs, including standards-based programs for schoolchildren, continuing education for teachers, and a full calendar of events for the public. SCEE is also home to a wildlife rehabilitation clinic, an innovative environmental art program and a native plant nursery. In 2010 SCEE signed conservation easements with Natural Lands Trust, protecting in perpetuity the largest privately-owned piece of land within the Philadelphia city limits. To learn more, visit schuylkillcenter.org.

Image: Stephen Ritz, www.greenbronxmachine.com

###