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Howe's Brooklyn

By Sam Howe & Friends

From Dilapidated Lot to 'Secret Garden'

AVID BIRDER, gardener and Bushwick resident **Sean-Michael Fleming** serves as steward of the Woodbine Street Garden in Bushwick. Projects there this spring have included rearranging and adding beds to



International student from Korea Se La Lim volunteered her time on Saturday to revitalize a Bushwick abandoned lot.

Photo by Irvin Kelly

maximize sunlight, adding a composting area and installing a winding path to the 2,500 sq. ft. garden. In addition to this, Fleming has been tending to another Bushwick space that needed quite a bit more help: an abandoned lot nicknamed the "Secret Garden."

Through EcoStation: Bushwick!, a program Fleming founded to foster environmental awareness, he is using his knowledge of plant life to oversee "wildlife restoration" of the Secret Garden. On Saturday, June 14, he joined a group of Fulbright Scholars, international students and Acorn High School for Social Justice students, who had been organized by the non-profit One to World, and to spruce up the grungy lot on the corner of Linden Street and Broadway.

The Bushwick teenagers and international students, including some from China, Romania, Korea and Iraq, donned work boots and gardening gloves without a complaint in the 90 degree day to clear invasive plants, rusted wires and bottles to create walkways and space for a new shed to

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store gardening equipment. The trash and debris filled an industrial sized-dumpster.

"It was simply amazing to work side by side with local high school students toward one common goal—restoring a beautiful outdoor space and learning how to be environmentally sensitive. It is surprising the impact that volunteer, communal work has on people," said One to World volunteer **Beatriz Fiestas** from Spain.

Half of the newly restored urban garden will grow produce to be sold at a local farmers' market, and the other portion will serve as an outdoor classroom for an innovative, hands-on science curriculum for Acorn High School students. This is the start of a long-term partnership between the high school and One to World; once funding is procured, Fulbright Scholars will lead after school programs in the outdoor classroom. One to World, previously known as Metro International, is recognized by the U.S. Department of State as the official coordinator of enrichment programs for Fulbright grantees to the NYC area.

When not stirring up soil, Fleming works as a writer, illustrator, freelance graphic, web and lighting designer and chef. And as his web site says, "And yes, I also sing and dance." Visit his web site at www.sean-michael.net to see his work.

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ONE TO WORLD

Formerly Metro International