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FREDERICK DOUGLASS ACADEMY STUDENTS' RESEARCH FINDS THREAT TO HARLEM RIVER ORGANISMS

Student research and tours of new "eco-friendly" Harlem River Park will be presented on Saturday, May 22, from 11 am to 2 pm

Students from the Frederick Douglass Academy, who have been collecting samples from the nearby Harlem River Park, have found that the Harlem River's water chemistry conditions threaten the environment for fish and other marine life.

"The most notable conclusion is that during the summer the dissolved oxygen levels in river fall below federal Environmental Protection Agency standards, putting at risk the organisms that live there," said Mauricio Gonzales, the Frederick Douglass Academy teacher who has used Harlem River Park and the river as a laboratory for teaching students marine biology and research.

The students will present their results and demonstrate their research findings for the community and invited guests, including research scientists, members of the Harlem River Park Task Force and representatives of the board of the Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC) on Saturday, May 22, from 11 am to 2 pm. Members of the Task Force will also be providing tours of the park, including the new, 13-block portion that was formally opened in a [ribbon cutting ceremony](#) on April 28th. Saturday's event is open to both the press and the public.

"The research provided by Mauricio Gonzales and his students have helped us understand the complexities of the environment," said Harlem River Park Task Force Director Thomas H. Lunke. "It also shows us how designing a waterfront park with the community can lead us beyond the shoreline to solutions that will improve our overall health and well-being," said Lunke, Harlem CDC's Director of Planning.

Working with the Harlem River Park Task Force, which includes the Frederick Douglass Academy and the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, the Parks Department design includes innovative approaches to bring the community to the water's edge in a mutually beneficial ecological manner called [Designing The Edge](#). With the construction of Phases II and III of the park, the City is ever closer to creating a continuous esplanade around Manhattan.

The Harlem River lies at the point where the western Long Island Sound joins the tidal estuaries—the East and lower Hudson Rivers and Upper New York Harbor—that are critical to the New York City marine ecosystem, said research scientist Ray Sambrotto of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, who has been supporting Gonzalez in his work. “The Harlem River is right at the center, so it should be important,” Sambrotto said.

Harlem Community Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, serves the greater Harlem community through planning and implementing a range of community development and revitalization initiatives for restoring Upper Manhattan as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. For more information on Harlem CDC and its role in the Harlem River Park Task Force, please visit http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning_hr_park.htm

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