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The New York Botanical Garden Celebrates Its Newly Renovated Everett Children's Adventure Garden in Ribbon Cutting with NYBG Leaders, Government Officials, and Project Donors



The newly renovated Everett Children's Adventure Garden was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 2, 2025. Shown are (left to right): New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Capital Projects Manager David Bryant; New York State Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo; NYBG Chief Executive Officer and the William C. Steere Sr. President Jennifer Bernstein; NYBG Chair of the Board of Trustees J. Barclay Collins II; NYBG Chair of the Education Committee Kate Solomon; New York State Assemblymember John Zaccaro, Jr.; and New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz. (NYBG Photo)

Bronx, NY—The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) celebrated the reopening of the newly renovated Everett Children's Adventure Garden with a ribbon-cutting ceremony today that featured NYBG leaders, government officials, and project donors. The \$8.5 million renovation project was the first update to the 12-acre landscape since it was created in 1998 as a dedicated, safe, and fun space for kids and families to explore.

The Children's Adventure Garden encourages young visitors and their caregivers to investigate nature through immersive outdoor environments and changing seasonal

activities. Families can actively engage in science practices and nature study while exploring a series of lush settings, including a pond, woodland, meadow, and rock outcrops.

Joining NYBG Chair of the Board of Trustees J. Barclay Collins II, Education Committee Chair Kate Solomon, and Chief Executive Officer and the William C. Steere Sr. President Jennifer Bernstein for the ceremony were New York State Assemblymembers Jeffrey Dinowitz and John Zaccaro, Jr., New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo, and New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz, among other distinguished guests.

Begun in 2023, the physical renovation enhanced the outdoor landscape and indoor facilities to reflect current science education pedagogy, specifically regarding STEM and environmental education. In addition, this project ensures the Everett Children's Adventure Garden can continue to accommodate the large audiences it serves—more than 175,000 kids and adults annually, including 18,000 Pre-K through 5th grade students who participate in field trips at the site.

“It is my thrill to celebrate the opening of the reimagined and restored Everett Children's Education Garden, said J. Barclay Collins II, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the New York Botanical Garden. “This project that we conceived and worked on was many years in the making, with the philanthropy and support of our government officials and our wonderful staff, and I think the combination of exploration, learning, imagination, and fun is just wonderful for the children of our community and of the City of New York. I hope it will inspire them throughout their lives to be protectors of the planet that gives us all life. Maybe some of them will become gardeners, maybe some will even become plant scientists, and, hopefully, all of them will enjoy nature and the many beauties that surround us here in New York and across the country.”

“We are so grateful to the government officials, our Trustees, and everyone who has helped to make this project possible,” said Jennifer Bernstein, CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President of the New York Botanical Garden. “The Everett Children's Adventure Garden is a 9-acre landscape that features a pond, woodland, meadow, and rock outcrops all teeming with plant and animal life, offering a perfect opportunity for children to explore nature and science concepts. This renovation ensures that visitors will find more hands-on learning and fun in this very special site. I am very excited to once again welcome the children and families of our city into this fun, exciting new space.”

“I'm really excited because the renovation brings a fresh energy to a space that's already so beloved,” said Kate Solomon, Chair of the Education Committee of the Board of Trustees of NYBG. “The new features make the garden even more interactive and accessible for kids of

all ages. It's a real investment in the next generation's relationship with nature. I hope it inspires curiosity, wonder, and maybe even future scientists or conservationists.”

In 2012, the New York Botanical Garden engaged Randi Korn & Associates to undertake a formal evaluation of the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden’s outdoor exhibits. Based on this study and after conversations with stakeholders, NYBG established several project goals: enhance and renovate the landscape and buildings; develop age-appropriate exhibit concepts; enrich learning stations; and improve circulation, way-finding, and visibility.

The renovation has allowed for new nature exploration and authentic science learning opportunities, ensuring that the Children’s Adventure Garden continues to serve as a welcoming and engaging environment that meets today’s outdoor learning standards and visitor expectations. Using the existing topography, along with new signage and enhanced plantings, the redesigned Children’s Garden features nature-based investigations in varied local ecosystems. The renovation also improves access to the wetland through a boardwalk and viewing platforms and creates a dedicated nature space for toddlers and their caretakers. Both of the existing activity center buildings on the site received facelifts and repairs, as well as upgrades to their lighting and circulation, and a new family restroom is accessible to all visitors.

The City of New York, from the Mayor and City Council, provided \$4 million for the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden renovation through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The State of New York, through the leadership of the New York State Assembly, provided \$2 million for the project.

“In the heart of the one of the world’s densest urban environments, the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden offers young New Yorkers and their families an opportunity to connect with, explore, and develop an appreciation for the natural world and our relationship to it” said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo. “The city was proud to invest \$4 million in this remarkable renovation of the Children’s Adventure Garden, ensuring that the tens of thousands of young people who visit it each year have access to high quality STEAM education as they experience this one-of-a-kind green space.”

New York State Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz said, “These renovations to the Children’s Adventure Garden expand the positive reach that the Garden has on the families and children that come to visit. The education programs are run by the Children’s Garden and impact thousands of students a year. The scientific engagement that students experience here allows them to learn outside the classroom and explore new approaches to scientific understanding. As Chair of the Bronx Assembly Delegation, I am honored to support this amazing institution and watch as people connect with nature right here in the beautiful Bronx. The Children’s Garden and other interactive outdoor spaces that the Garden provides

to the community are invaluable and we will continue to find funding to improve and conserve these spaces.”

“When the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden first opened in 1998, it was the most ambitious education project in the country,” said New York State Assemblymember John Zaccaro, Jr. (AD-80). “It’s long-awaited reopening at the New York Botanical Garden means that children from near and far will again have access to a state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor facility geared towards exploration. It’s an incredible day for the Bronx and an invaluable gift for every little explorer out there.”

New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz said, “I am excited and proud to support the opening of the newly renovated Everett Children’s Adventure Garden. I applaud the New York Botanical Garden for continuing to provide both accessibility and educational programming to all students and families, especially here in District 15, where more exposure to STEM-based education is essential.”

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, guests enjoyed the newly renovated Everett Children’s Adventure Garden with tours and hands-on activities, guided by NYBG’s talented staff and a corps of energetic teen educators, called Explainers. The explainer Program is an innovative tiered internship that enriches teenagers’ science knowledge, while helping them gain practical work experience, develop problem-solving and interpersonal skills, make connections with adults and peers, and assume leadership roles within their community.

About The New York Botanical Garden

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has been a connective hub among people, plants, and the shared planet since 1891. For nearly 135 years, NYBG has been rooted in the cultural fabric of New York City, in the heart of the Bronx, its greenest borough. NYBG has invited millions of visitors to make the Garden a part of their lives, exploring the joy, beauty, and respite of nature. NYBG’s 250 acres are home to renowned exhibitions, immersive botanical experiences, art and music, and events with some of the most influential figures in plant and fungal science, horticulture, and the humanities. NYBG is also a steward of globally significant research collections, from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library collection to the plant and fungal specimens in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the largest such collection in the Western Hemisphere.

The plant people of NYBG—dedicated horticulturists, enthusiastic educators, and scientific adventurers—are committed to helping nature thrive so that humanity can thrive. They believe in their ability to make things better, teaching tens of thousands of kids and families each year about the importance of safeguarding the environment and healthy eating. Expert scientists work across the city, the nation, and the globe to document the plants and fungi of

the world—and find actionable, nature-based solutions to the planet’s dual climate and biodiversity crises. With eyes always looking forward, they train the next generation of botanists, gardeners, landscape designers, and environmental stewards, ensuring a green future for all. At NYBG, it’s nature—or nowhere.

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The New York Botanical Garden is located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458. For more information, visit nybg.org.

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden’s general operating funds is provided by the New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

Media Contacts: Nick Leshi, nleshi@nybg.org
Melinda Manning, mmanning@nybg.org