



NPS-RTCA FELLOW BLOG

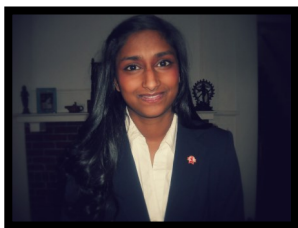


Blog #2: Groundwork Lawrence (MA)



February 2015

Hi! My name is Rani Jacobson and I am the newest Fellow at the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (NPS-RTCA) program at the Boston office. I am funded through Conservation Legacy and working a lot with the NPS as well as Groundwork USA (GW). Throughout the next year, I will be blogging about all the interesting experiences I get and amazing work NPS and GW is doing!



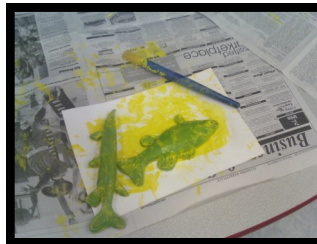
Special points of interest:

- GW Lawrence was awarded "Non-Profit of the Year: Celebration of Excellence" by Enterprise Bank for 2014
- For more info about Groundwork Lawrence visit: www.groundworklawrence.org
- For more info about the Rivers, Trails and Community Assistance Program visit: www.nps.gov/rtca

I recently finished up my third week as a National Park Service Fellow and I love my new position here in the Boston office! I have already visited several Groundwork Trusts and I have learned a lot about communications and the type of work Groundwork does with NPS.

This week I braved the cold and the traffic to visit Groundwork Lawrence. The offices were located in the one of the beautiful old industrial buildings alongside the canal. The building itself was redeveloped on the interior with wood floors, open spaces and arching windows. Lawrence is built along the Merrimack and Spicket Rivers; it was one of the first industrial cities in the US.

The majority of my time at GWL was spent talking to their staff about their roles and how the organization itself works in the community. I was able to talk to Brad Buschur about one of their longest running projects: the Ferrous Site. The City of Lawrence and GWL have been working over the last 15 years to acquire the land from its owners. Through an investment by the former governor, Deval Patrick, the project was awarded 2.75 million dollars to redevelop the existing land. GWL plans on finishing the project in



Fish artwork made by pre-kindergarteners at an elementary school in Lawrence during an enrichment class run by Groundwork Lawrence.

June. After my short visit this month, I hope to go to the ribbon cutting to see the end product!

I also spent a lot of time talking social media with Sabrina Briggio, GWL's Volunteer Outreach Coordinator. As a part of my fellowship, I will be handling a lot of communications work. It was a great chance to get updated on all different types of social media, how they work, and which types of social media work best with different types of audiences, especially from someone who was so knowledgeable. She also creates her own graphics and manages about 10 different social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Check out her work on any of Groundwork Lawrence's pages, if you get the chance! GWL is definitely a great role model in using social media to promote non-profits!

I was fortunate enough to pack in a trip with GWL's Education Team to the local elementary school, where Pre-K children learn about the environment. The topic of the day was: fish! Through two projects the kids learned about the different types of fish and by the end of the class could even pick out the difference between a pike (the long skinny one) and a sunfish (the fat one) by creating an art project with replicas. The youth also learned how to fish using makeshift poles with magnets and paper fish with paperclips. They absolutely loved it!

Watching how engaged the kids were was definitely a selling point on how effective Groundwork's curriculum is in Lawrence! Great job GWL!



Pre-kindergarteners learning how to fish in Lawrence, based on GWL curriculum.

