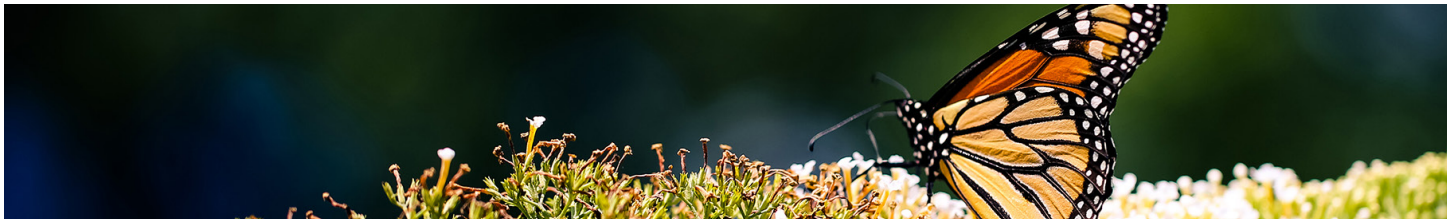




# YOUTH GREEN CORPS | TEACHER GUIDE

## YOUTH HELP RECLAIM PITTSBURGH: MODULE 1






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Youth Green Corps is based on a partnership between Community Works and GTECH Strategies. This program gives 20 high school males the opportunity to lead and participate in environmental initiatives in Pittsburgh’s Hilltop neighborhoods. Lessons will be applied through hands-on learning as the students work to reclaim one of the Hilltop’s vacant lots.

Vacant land causes a long list of issues, including a decreased tax-base for the surrounding neighborhood, public health concerns, social isolation, and environmental hazards. In particular, vacant land has become a legacy of Pittsburgh’s economic shift that places a great deal of burden on the City. Within the City, vacant land is not only an economic challenge, but also a geographical one. These properties are highly dispersed, vary in size, and differ in title status. As such, the challenge facing the City of Pittsburgh and its residents often rests in finding viable interim uses, preserving future opportunities, and crafting long-term solutions all while streamlining these processes for interested individuals and groups.

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE


 3 modules, one school year each


 24 sessions per module, 2 hrs each


 2 Community Events

Youth Green Corps gives students the opportunity to experience the process of reclaiming a vacant lot first hand. The program will begin with a technical analysis of vacant land, followed by an investigation into the community and history of the neighborhood. The students will work with professional designers to create a space that responds to the needs and interest of residents and incorporates what was learned in their analysis of the land itself. They will have opportunities to have in-depth conversations with professionals in related careers, and representatives of higher education. The students will practice public speaking and have an opportunity to present their idea to the community. Finally, the students will build out their idea on a vacant lot and plan for a celebration of the transformation. This program entrusts the students with creativity and gives them the tools to be thoughtful and innovative in their approach.

### MODULES

 Module 1: Community Engagement

 Module 2: Stormwater Management

 Module 3: Food Security

The Youth Green Corps curriculum contains three distinct modules covering topics relevant to land reclamation, including community engagement, stormwater management, and food security. This module focuses on the community’s involvement in the process of reclaiming land.

If people are products of their environment, then changing an unjust environment requires equipping and empowering people. Empowerment generates energy. Energy enables action. Action begets action. Fusing tangible, incremental actions with an inclusive process that connects people to opportunity fuels an upward spiral of community health. Experts can bring technical know-how to a community project, but real change only happens when power is distributed to the community. This module will challenge students to step up and take action for their community while developing their own personal and professional abilities within it.



# YOUTH GREEN CORPS SCHEDULE

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

SESSION 2: VACANT LOT ASSESSMENT

SESSION 3: SOIL TESTING

SESSION 4: FOR THE COMMUNITY

SESSION 5: INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

SESSION 6: DESIGN YOUR LOT

SESSION 7: DESIGN CHARETTE

SESSION 8: PUBLIC PRESENTATION 101

SESSION 9: PROFESSIONAL CAREER DAY

SESSION 10: FIELD TRIP

SESSION 11: PREPARE PERSONAL PRESENTATIONS

SESSION 12: PERSONAL PRESENTATIONS

SESSION 13: PREPARE PRESENTATION TO COMMUNITY

## **COMMUNITY PRESENTATION**

SESSION 14: UNIVERSITY DAY

SESSION 15: VOLUNTEER COORDINATION AND TOOL SAFETY

SESSION 16: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 17: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 18: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 19: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 20: PLAN A CELEBRATION

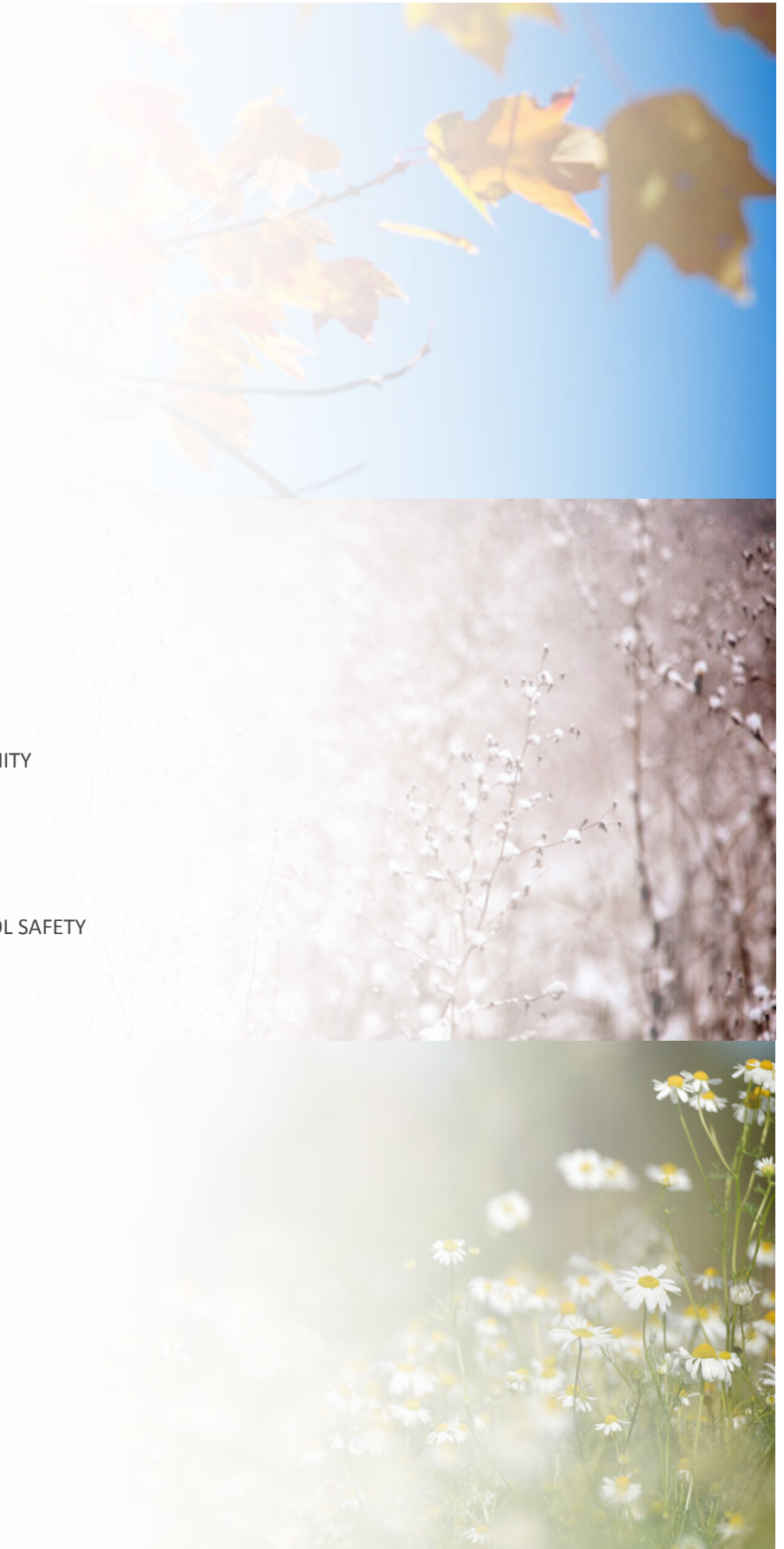
SESSION 21: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 22: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 23: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 24: IMPLEMENTATION

## **COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**



## SESSION STRUCTURE



### PREPARATION

Read through the curriculum, particularly the presentation and materials sections, before beginning the program. Most sessions will require preparation several weeks in advance because many involve inviting external guest speakers.



### MATERIALS

This section will list all materials that will be required for the program. All paper materials and presentations can be found in the project folder. Several classes will require additional materials or tools.



### TEACHER RESOURCES

This section will supply helpful articles or websites to visit to learn more about the session topic. If you are unable to access a link, or need additional information, contact GTECH Strategies.

412-361-2099

[info@gtechstrategies.org](mailto:info@gtechstrategies.org)



### PRESENTATION

This section displays information about each slide in the presentation. If no information is given except for the slide title, the content should be self-explanatory. If additional information is given, this is a cue for you to ask the students a question or expand beyond the content on the screen.

If you are not able to answer a question from the students, you can request that the students spend some time doing research. This will also give you an opportunity to look into the question on your own.



### ACTIVITY

The activities range from panel discussions with guest speakers to hands-on vacant lot analysis. Activities may require more in-depth and in-advance planning from leaders.

Though not mentioned in each session page, every session can begin with the Mini Marketplace or New & Good. The Mini Marketplace is an opportunity for the students to view the Youth Green Corps as a micro-community. During this time, students may make an offering or an ask of the class. For example, one student may be wanting to learn how to cook, while another student would like to give away a pair of shoes that they don't want anymore. Each student gets to share one or two things, to which any other student could reply. This exchange demonstrates the collaborative sharing of a strong community. New & Good is an opportunity for the students to talk briefly about one thing that is new and good in their lives. This encourages the students to get to know each other and celebrate the positive in their lives together. Mini Marketplace and New & Good can be used interchangeably to kick off each session.

# SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT



## PREPARATION

- Review resources
- Review slides and activity
- Prepare materials
- Get chaperones for scavenger hunt if needed



## MATERIALS

- Presentation: Youth Green Corps Session 1
- Scavenger Hunt Checklist (5 copies)



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Background information on vacant land: [www.lotstolove.org/about/](http://www.lotstolove.org/about/)  
Explore [www.lotstolove.org](http://www.lotstolove.org) to get a sense for the process of reclaiming vacant land.



## PRESENTATION

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: What are we doing

Slide 3: What's the issue

Give introduction to the issue of vacant land. Ask students to discuss what they think about vacant land and their experiences with it.

Slide 4: Why are we doing this?

Ask students to discuss benefits and issues that could come out of reclaiming vacant land. Ask them to think about the word "reclaim" and what it means for them.

Slide 5: What will you learn?

Ask students what part they are most interested in learning about.

Slide 6: What do we expect of you?

Slide 7: Schedule of courses

Run through schedule and ask students if they have questions.

Slide 8: Scavenger Hunt

Count off 4 groups. Explain rules (5 points for being the first group back. 1 point for each item found. Students must write the address or street name where each item was found). Make sure each student has an emergency phone number to contact if they get lost and a time to return by. Hand out the scavenger hunt form.

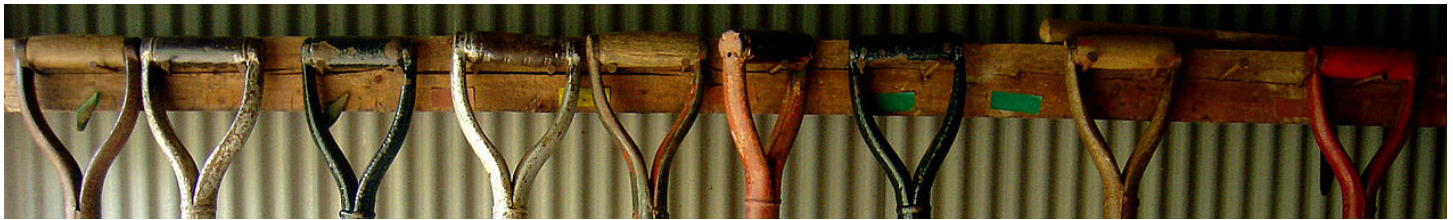


## ACTIVITY

**Scavenger hunt:** The students will go on a scavenger hunt of the neighborhood. The goal is to get the students to notice the details of their neighborhood. It's a chance for them to notice both the good and the bad, and to practice good observation skills. If safety is a concern, send a chaperon with each group, or have the students stay within a certain distance of home base.

To access the full curriculum, please [contact us](#).





This curriculum was created by GTECH Strategies  
for Community Works of Pittsburgh's Hilltop neighborhoods



GTECH's mission is to cultivate the unrealized potential  
of people and places to improve the economic, social,  
and environmental health of our communities

