

# East New York Farms: Youth Participation in Community Development and Urban Agriculture<sup>1</sup>

**Yvonne Hung**

*Department of Environmental Psychology  
City University of New York*

Citation: Hung, Yvonne. "East New York Farms: Youth Participation in Community Development and Urban Agriculture." *Children, Youth and Environments* 14(1), 2004: 56-85.

---

## [Comment on This Article](#)

### **Abstract**

*The East New York Farms! (ENY Farms!) project is a community development venture in Brooklyn, New York. Besides providing the community with fresh affordable produce, encouraging local economic development, and preserving safe public spaces, the project also engages local youth in community development. Semi-structured interviews with 18 of the 25 youth interns at ENY Farms! elucidate themes and patterns regarding their sense of self, perceptions of their neighborhood, and the role of youth in the community. The interns' experiences contribute insights that may assist the development and realization of future projects, and reveal the integral role that youth can play as agents of change in building sustainable communities.*

**Keywords:** [community youth development](#), [youth development](#), [urban agriculture](#), [community development](#), [placemaking](#).

**Article Contents**

Introduction ..... 58  
Community Youth Development ..... 58  
Community Building in the Context of Food Security and Urban Agriculture 60  
    Farmers’ Markets ..... 61  
    Community Gardens ..... 62  
Context ..... 63  
    Setting ..... 63  
East New York Farms! ..... 64  
ENY Farms! Youth Intern Program ..... 65  
Method ..... 68  
Procedures ..... 68  
    Analysis ..... 69  
    Results ..... 70  
    Concepts of Self ..... 70  
    Concepts of Neighborhood ..... 73  
    Role of Youth in Community ..... 74  
Discussion ..... 75  
Conclusion ..... 77  
Limitations and Future Research ..... 77  
Endnotes ..... 78  
References ..... 79  
Appendix ..... 83

## Introduction

I became interested in the role of youth in community development as a result of working at United Community Centers, Inc. in East New York, Brooklyn. I joined their staff in the fall of 2001 as a member of an evaluation team assessing the efficacy of their HIV prevention workshops. In the process of learning more about the area that United Community Centers served, I was introduced to the East New York Farms! (ENY Farms!) project. I immediately became intrigued with the project's incorporation of youth, the seeming improbability of farming on abandoned garbage-strewn lots, and the weekly practice of hosting a farmers' market.

On my first visit to the farmers' market, I spoke with one of the vendors: a Caribbean-American woman in her late 60s who characterized her reason for participating as "I am helping my village." It was a powerful and evocative statement. She had grown up in a rural environment that promoted the value of eating the food you grow and sharing amongst your neighbors. She was glad to see others in her neighborhood working under a similar philosophy of community sharing. After visiting the community gardens and farmers' market, and having informal encounters with the youth and other vendors, I began to think about how my experience with the people and places affected how I viewed East New York. I began to formulate my own questions about the experience of others.

The introduction of a farmers' market into the neighborhood could impact both how the residents of the community see themselves and how they believe others perceive their community. Also, ENY Farms! presents to young people a chance to take part in urban agriculture, possibly strengthening their connection with green space and nature, as well as introducing the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and teamwork. I was also interested in whether participation in community development influences the youth interns' conceptualizations of

- (a) their sense of self,
- (b) their neighborhood, and
- (c) the role of youth in the community.

## Community Youth Development

Studying youth in context emphasizes how they develop and negotiate their identity in various environments. Specifically, one can observe how youth react in, and importantly, "act on" their environment. The approach taken in this research is consistent with the "transactional" theme in environmental psychology, which suggests that researchers take into account the effect of the environment on people, as well as the reciprocal effect people have on shaping their settings (Stokols 1978).

"Community youth development" is a strength-based (i.e., not rooted in negative stereotypes) and holistic approach to examining the role of support systems (i.e., family, school, community-based organizations) in youths' lives and how youth can help shape those support systems. By addressing the whole person within their context, the community youth development approach can help to identify and

expand the various forms of support (e.g., social, economic, intergenerational) necessary for healthy youth development (Cahill 1997; Irby et al. 2001).

Community-based programs provide an important potential setting for youth development (Heath and McLaughlin 1993; Villarruel and Lerner 1994; Hart et al. 1997). According to Hart et al. (1997), organizations can support children's developing sense of competence and identity construction, and facilitate mixed-age interactions. Drawing from various developmental theories (e.g., psychodynamic, social-psychological, feminist), these authors argue that for children aged eight to 12, the social context serves as a platform from which they develop a sense of competence, independence, and self-worth. For adolescents older than 12 years, the social context allows for the consolidation and differentiation of their self-identities.

These community settings may also allow for more flexibility in style and agenda, as well as inclusion of multiple voices and leaders than, for instance, the local school (McLaughlin and Irby 1994; Villarruel and Lerner 1994). Heath (1994) observed positive impacts on inner-city youth who took part in community-based programs for more than one season: they reported greater self-control, self-respect, and ability to avoid criminal activities, as well as broader hopes and expectations for their future after participating in youth programs. She also found that certain programmatic qualities, such as offering a wide range of youth-driven activities and emphasizing individual and group responsibility and learning skills, contributed to sustained youth involvement.

In their summary of five youth surveys commissioned by national organizations, Irby et al. learned that early involvement tends "to lead to lifelong action and to renewed commitments to school and work" (Irby et al. 2001, 49). For example, one of the five surveys gathered in-home personal interviews with a sample of 1007 teenagers between 12 and 17 years old and found that 68.7 percent of youth who had engaged in some form of civic or community involvement (i.e., youth group, student government) when they were younger were currently volunteering. This is far greater than the 20.4 percent volunteering rate of those who were not involved as children (Irby et al. 2001).

In the Youth in Decision Making study, Zeldin et al. (2000) found that youth participation can also have positive outcomes for adults. The authors interviewed youth and adults from 15 organizations across the country. The impact of having direct, meaningful experience with youth resulted in changes in adult attitudes about youth beyond the immediate situation. Burgess (2000) also argues adults may be spurred to take action if they perceive young people as engaged in community civic activity.

*Community* youth development is distinguished from youth development by drawing attention to individual outcomes as well as community outcomes (Irby et al. 2001). Community-based organizations benefit both youth and the community by providing youth with safe places to develop greater independence, as well as their sense of community identity, social competence and social responsibility. These in turn foster community development by creating an iterative process wherein youth are a part of producing and reproducing these social and physical environments. The process of community youth development reveals that "through

authentic youth participation, youth development can be a vehicle for social justice" (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster 2001, 37).

Children's democratic and civic participation was one of the central tenets established at the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>2</sup> One strategy to foster this participation is to involve children in community planning and development. According to the results of the Growing Up in Cities Project, among the ingredients for sustainable cities and towns is the inclusion of all members of a community in its decision-making processes (Chawla 2001). Sutton and Kemp (2002) have also examined the impact of youth participating with adults in designing a community setting (charrettes). The authors discovered that bringing youth voices into public decision-making through the design process heightened their social and environmental awareness while helping them gain a sense of control over their surroundings (Sutton and Kemp 2002).

Although critics have argued that community youth development does not make social justice goals and power differential and structural change explicit enough (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002; Ginwright and James 2002), when youth participate by addressing or changing circumstances within their broader environment, they benefit by seeing that their actions have "re-actions." We need careful assessment and empirical research on how the framework of community youth development lines up with opportunities for youth to imagine and realize themselves not as token participators but as "agents of community change."

### **Community Building in the Context of Food Security and Urban Agriculture**

Community food security includes factors within a community's food system that affect access such as the availability, cost and quality of food required for a healthy life (Hall 1994). Concerns about food security are most salient for residents of low-income areas for several reasons. First, these neighborhoods may have limited access to mainstream food retail options such as full-service supermarkets (Cottrell and Franklin 1995; Fisher et al. 2001; Shaffer 2002). There are typically three times as many supermarkets per capita in upper and middle-income neighborhoods as there are in low-income neighborhoods (Cottrell and Franklin 1995). Further, the existing markets in low-income areas are often smaller, with less selection and lower quality. A recent study of the food system in Detroit revealed that in three low-income zip codes, only 18 percent of stores selling food sold a minimal "healthy food basket" from which one could produce balanced meals (Pothukuchi 2001). Finally, residents of low-income areas may also be more dependent on public transport, making traveling to markets outside their neighborhood more difficult (Clifton and Handy 2001; Morland et al. 2002).

Food insecurity is also exacerbated by economic concerns. In a classic study, David Caplovitz (1967) investigated how low-income consumers often had higher costs of living, including higher food prices. A more recent report on the Madison/Dane County food system similarly reported that food cost more in low-income areas than in middle-income areas (University of Wisconsin 1997)

In the 1980s and 1990s, policymakers in the UK introduced the concept of the "food desert"<sup>3</sup> and the "disadvantaged customer."<sup>4</sup> Although these attempts to

characterize the area and the consumer link economic and physical constraints, critics have argued that the concepts emerged anecdotally, have been defined imprecisely, and suffer from a lack of empirical evidence (Cummins and McIntyre 2002; Wrigley 2002).<sup>5</sup>

The focus on regional and local food systems includes the process by which food is produced and distributed. Urban agriculture (i.e., agriculture practiced within or surrounding the boundaries of cities) exists in many low-income countries such as Cuba and Tanzania, as well as in high-income countries like Germany and Canada (UNDP 1996). Urban agriculture contributes to community development and food security by promoting the capacity of urban green space (private residential or public land) to produce food and providing communities with access to nutritious and fresh produce (Brown 2002). Urban agriculture can also reduce environmental pollution and loss of nutritional value in the transport and storage of food by keeping the production and distribution loop within the local region (Brown 2002).

### **Farmers' Markets**

The distribution mode of urban agriculture may take place in the context of farmers' markets. These are markets in public spaces that include vendors (of food and sometimes crafts) who meet at the same location regularly in order to attract shoppers, preserve farming in the region, and support local and regional entrepreneurs. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, between 1994 and 2000, the number of farmers' markets in the U.S. grew 63 percent with sales now exceeding \$1 billion a year. According to former Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, "Farmers' markets are critical to the success of American agriculture, allowing small farmers to...keep a larger share of the consumer dollar" ("Farmers Markets" 2001).

The typical farmers' market has been characterized by liveliness and a certain measure of "controlled disorder" (Gesser 1995, 5). Farmers' markets can be seen as ephemeral space "where people come to play, where the conventions of retailing are suspended, and where the participants come to engage in and produce theatre, performance, spectacle, and laughter" (Gregson and Crewe quoted in Holloway and Kneafsey 2000, 300).

The farmers' market occupies a specific context within the process of urban agriculture, which does not deny the convenience and utility of the supermarket, but provides an alternative place to buy produce and convene in a more social manner that is safe and friendly. The lack of interaction in a supermarket can be attributed to its architectural layout, low density and social organization. By contrast, in a farmers' market, one enters into a space that possesses a convivial atmosphere- people chatting, sampling various produce, brushing elbows, sharing recipes, squeezing past tables of brightly colored vegetables and fruit, etc. This is markedly different than what you would find in a supermarket that perhaps dazzles with its overstocked shelves and aisles of food, yet lacks a personal touch.

In a study of the behavioral ecology of farmers' markets and supermarkets, Sommer et al. (1981) found that, although there were a similar number of perfunctory interactions in both places, there were a greater number of social and informational exchanges at the farmers' market. The same study examined the potential for social interactions in terms of whether people arrived alone or in

groups– they found that more than three-quarters of all supermarket shoppers arrived alone, whereas at the farmers' market, more than three-quarters of all customers arrived in groups.

### **Community Gardens**

Community gardens can also serve as settings for community building. According to Ferris et al. (2001),

*What distinguishes a community garden from a private garden is the fact that it is in some sense a public garden in terms of ownership, access, and degree of democratic control.*

Community gardens may be owned by entities such as a municipality, an institution, a community group, or a land trust. They are typically plots of land, subdivided among different users, which help to improve air quality, hydrology, soil quality, and provide opportunities for social interaction, education, play and access to nature (Francis 1984).

In 1997, research by Ferris et al. (2001) in the San Francisco Bay Area produced a loose classification of community gardens, including: leisure gardens, child and school gardens, entrepreneurial gardens, crime diversion gardens, work and training gardens, healing and therapy gardens, neighborhood pocket parks, ecological restoration gardens, and demonstration gardens. These categories are not mutually exclusive (i.e., one garden can combine more than one function). Although they are essentially gardens shared by a group of individuals, community gardens have been shown to help retain community open space, promote a sense of community and encourage environmentally friendly behavior (Francis 1984).

Moreover, several studies from environmental psychology have shown that access to nature can impact on both mental and physical recovery. For example, Kuo and colleagues found that access to nature has many restorative aspects for urban public housing residents, including easing mental fatigue. This in turn reduces aggressive behavior, supports the ability to mentally cope with the challenges of poverty, and encourages social interaction (Coley and Kuo 2001; Kuo 2001; Kuo and Sullivan 2001). In a similar vein, the work of Ulrich and colleagues in the hospital rooms of patients recovering from gall bladder surgery showed that the 23 patients whose windows had a view of the sky and trees recovered faster than the 23 patients whose windows overlooked a brick wall (Ulrich et al. 1991).

Francis (1984) found that gardens that are built and maintained by community residents have special benefits. "The spaces provide opportunities for neighborhood residents to develop and control part of their neighborhood, an advantage not afforded by traditional parks" (Francis 1984, 45). Participating in the construction of their own environment gives people a sense of control, and elevates the meaning and awareness of that place (Sanoff 2000).

The settings in which urban agriculture takes place (i.e., gardens, farmers markets, community gardens, and local farms) are contexts in which the potential benefits of the community youth development approach might be realized. Increasing access and cultivating a sense of connection to the natural world are aspects of youth development that are being explored in community youth farm and garden projects

across the United States (Wasecha and Ness 1998; Andrews 2001). Along with health and economic advantages, community gardens and farmers' markets can encourage social and interpersonal interaction, which contributes to a personal sense of community (Sommer, Herrick, and Sommer 1981; Sommer 1998). These settings provide a significant physical, economic, and educational resource to build and maintain sustainable communities.

ENY Farms! uses the specific characteristics and qualities of neighborhood resources (community gardens, the local farmers market, community-based agencies) to foster a connection between nature, food, the community and local youth. By cultivating small-scale farming in local community gardens to support a weekly farmers' market as a venue for selling fresh locally grown produce, the ENY Farms! project was also working to retain and strengthen the local economy.

Certain values or lifestyles are attached to the act of shopping at a farmers' market (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000) or in a similar environment such as a co-op (Sommer 1998). For example, Union Square in New York City is a hybrid of both economic development/local agriculture support and the cachet of purchasing from a market setting that caters to people who can afford to spend more for quality specialty/organic foods. It is unclear at this point whether the ENY Farmers' Market has such "cultural capital" attached to it; the setting and clientele between the two differ widely.

## **Context**

### **Setting**

East New York is the area occupied by Brooklyn Community District #5, a community of a little over 170,000 people in a 5.6 square mile area located in the eastern part of Brooklyn near Kennedy Airport. The 2000 Census reported that 86 percent of its residents are African-American and Hispanic, 30 percent are under 18, and almost 30 percent live below the poverty line. In 1993, the New York City record for the highest number of homicides in a neighborhood was broken by the 75th precinct located in East New York with 126 in one year.

According to a 1996 planning studio report by the Pratt Institute (Hevesi 2001), between 1970 to the 1980s, parts of the neighborhood lost 25 percent of their building stock and became characterized by vacant lots (one-sixth of total land was vacant lots, half of them city-owned). Since 1990, a large amount of the available vacant land has been redeveloped for affordable housing. However, the former neighborhood retail strips have not re-opened for business. The loss in building stock made it possible for community residents to adopt about 90 plots of vacant land and establish them as community gardens (Winston 1995; Thabit 2003). The 1996 Pratt Institute planning report identified only two small supermarkets in the central area of East New York along with smaller bodegas which do not carry as much fresh produce. It also found that along a 54-block long Pitkin Avenue retail strip, local food stores captured only 50 percent of the produce expenditures by area residents (Pratt Institute Planning Studio 1996). Residents were instead purchasing their produce at the weekly farmers' market.



**East New York Farms!**

In 1995, a coalition of five agencies- United Community Centers, Genesis Homes, Local Development Corporation of East New York, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) and Cornell University Cooperative Extension- came together to form the East New York (ENY) Planning Group. The goal of the ENY Planning Group was to collaborate on a participatory community planning process.

The ENY Planning Group organized a series of workshops to understand the needs and priorities of the East New York resident attendees. The workshop attendees stated that they wanted job and economic development, increased safety in the neighborhood, better education, and recreational facilities.

In order to address some of these needs and in consideration of what could be supported by the community's physical landscape and other assets, the ENY Planning Group decided to embark on East New York Farms! with the following goals:

- use small-scale farming on scattered vacant lots or community gardens to grow and harvest fresh produce;
- establish and maintain a weekly farmers' market in the neighborhood;
- offer youth interns a chance to learn about horticulture and agriculture while developing business and job skills;
- improve the environment of East New York and balance the community's physical development and open space needs.

Over the course of five years, the ENY Planning Group built relationships with gardeners, obtained private funding, and assembled community and political support. The coalition has received support from individuals and agencies as diverse as the Hitachi Foundation, Project Green Thumb, Heifer International, members of Congress, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Department of Justice "Weed and Seed" program. The partnership with local community gardeners was buoyed by the offer of support in the form of labor and technical assistance. Youth interns would be paid a stipend to help participating community gardeners to assist in all parts of the food production. Staff from Cornell University Cooperative Extension would conduct workshops on urban agriculture, basic business skills, and marketing for farmers' markets. The project would also fund an overall ENY Farms! Coordinator and a Farmers' Market Coordinator. Against the unfavorable political climate for preservation of community gardens in the late 1990s, ENY Farms! has assisted in the preservation of critical open space by helping to establish a network of 20 community gardens and helped to prevent several local community gardens from being auctioned off.<sup>6</sup>

The organizing agencies of ENY Farms! thought it was important to increase the availability of healthy food choices for the residents. The ENY Farmers' Market runs every Saturday from June through November and offers low cost freshly harvested fruits and vegetables, arts and crafts, ethnic foods, and occasionally live entertainment and health fairs. An element that has further increased residents' access to healthy food is the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for low-income seniors as well as pregnant women and postpartum mothers who receive Women

Infants and Children (WIC) assistance, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). With the introduction of Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons, ENY market attendance in its second season (2000) increased, and the ratio of purchases with coupons to cash was 8:1.

In 2004, ENY Farms! entered its sixth season. The ENY Farmers' Market features produce from three or four upstate farmers and 23 ENY urban gardeners. The market's gross income was approximately \$77,000 in 2002 and approximately \$83,000 in 2003. Upstate farmers earned the bulk of the profit.<sup>7</sup> Over the course of four years (1999-2003), the participating gardeners have received over 120 hours of classroom and on-site horticulture training. Furthermore, the ENY Farmers' Market serves as the pick-up site for East New York's first Community Supported Agriculture Program (CSA). Through an agreement with a participating market farmer, the program allows residents to buy shares (at subsidized costs if residents qualify) to receive 21 weeks of fresh vegetables and fruits sufficient to feed a family of four (Figure 1).

### **ENY Farms! Youth Intern Program**

The ENY Farms! Youth Intern program is housed and coordinated at United Community Centers. The agency was started by public housing residents in 1959 to address issues related to children and youth, environmental justice, and health concerns, and has provided a range of social and cultural activities (e.g., citizenship classes, HIV/AIDS prevention workshops, day care, after school programs). The agency also publishes *The Link*, a bimonthly newspaper distributed to over 12,000 neighborhood households.

United Community Centers has always emphasized democratic values in its work with youth. These are values related to working with one's hands, taking on social responsibility in a way that increases freedom, struggling for a better society, and appreciating the differences and similarities when working with people who are a different ethnicity, race or gender (Eisenberg 2001). Although United Community Centers does not necessarily use the language of community youth development in its theory of change, as an analytical tool, this approach can offer useful insights into the nature of a successful program.

For the last five years, the Youth Intern program has offered seven month internships to approximately 25 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 16. Neighborhood youth are required to send in a résumé along with a letter stating their interest in the program. Since its second season, the program has received from 60 to 75 applications every year. The ENY Farms! Coordinator sets interviews with all the applicants. Approximately 20 to 25 youth interns are selected each year, and they attend the intern program from May to November. In previous years, approximately six to nine of the selected youth would be returning summer interns. In 2004, the returning interns applied for specific jobs with greater responsibility and higher pay.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1. ENY Farms! Farmers' Market**

The youth interns work in the United Community Centers Community Garden, as well as neighboring gardens in East New York (16 gardens in all for the 2004 season). Tasks in the spring include turning over beds, watering, weeding, shoveling, planting, harvesting, composting, and building a pond in the United Community Centers Community Garden (Figure 2, Figure 3). The youth interns work, on average, eight hours per week and earn \$5 per hour. In early summer, the farmers' market opens every Saturday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on what had been a vacant lot. On Friday afternoons before the market, youth interns harvest the produce (such as herbs, collard greens, berries, tomatoes) and prepare them for sale. On the morning of the farmers' market, the youth interns arrive at 8 a.m. to set up the tables and tents for the vendors. They work in the United Community Centers booth selling products from the community garden (Figure 4). They are also available to help other produce vendors if necessary. After 3 p.m., the youth interns help to disassemble the tents and tables, and clean the market site.

Figure 2. ENY Farms! interns planting their garden



**Figure 3. ENY Farms! interns picking zucchini**

In addition to working at the community garden and farmers' market, the youth interns participate in seminars on appreciating cultural diversity, public speaking, conflict resolution, marketing, environmental and economic justice, and leadership development. The United Community Centers Community Garden is also used as an educational resource and the youth interns lead tours and demonstrations for school groups.

## Method

### Procedures

Participants who completed the Youth Internship program in November 2001 were recruited for the study, which was introduced to their guardians via phone in March 2002. Interviews were scheduled with only those youth interns whose guardians consented to have their child(ren) be interviewed.

Interviews took place at United Community Centers from March to May 2002. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and all but one were audiotaped. The semi-structured interview consisted of open-ended and close-ended questions regarding participation in the program (e.g., how they got involved, how they viewed the internship experience), as well as their feelings about their neighborhood (e.g., how they feel others perceive it) and their role in the community.

**Figure 4. ENY Farms! interns selling fruits and vegetables at the Farmers' Market**



Each interview also included a game designed to elicit interns' feelings about their experiences in the different places of their daily life. They would hold a set of small cards which each listed one of the various places of their everyday life (e.g., school cafeteria, corner store, community garden, farmers' market, home, church, etc.). They would then be presented a category such as "where I laugh" or "where I feel safe and comfortable" and they would be asked to identify which places on the cards would apply. This exercise was used as an icebreaker at the beginning of each interview in order to get the participants thinking about how the community garden and farmers' market fit into their everyday lives. [See [Appendix](#) for interview protocol.]

### **Analysis**

Field notes and interviews were transcribed. Data analysis consisted of coding transcripts for information relevant to the research questions, and for any emergent themes. The next layer of analysis involved synthesizing the responses into

patterns and categories. For example, comments related to the community garden (e.g., "the garden is safe and beautiful"; "the garden is safe, comfortable wide open space"; "it gives people a chance to relax"; "more calm over here, not so much drama"; "gardens are pretty, they change the way people act") were interpreted to suggest the value of safe and calming spaces in East New York.

After the major themes were identified, I met with the ENY Farms! Coordinator to review my findings. I also shared my interpretations with a subsample of participants. Both groups were encouraged to offer comments and criticism. Their feedback led to revisions that were incorporated into this paper.

## Results

18 youth interns (seven female, 11 male) between the ages of 11 and 18 were interviewed. Eleven youth interns identified themselves as African-American, two were Caribbean-American, five were Latino-American. The length of their internships ranged from four months to seven months. Six of the interns had some exposure to gardening prior to starting their internship.<sup>9</sup>

I identified several major themes related to how participation in community development influences the youth interns' experiences of their sense of self, their neighborhood and the role of youth in the community. The youth interns developed a sense of self that included feeling useful and responsible, as well as possessing job and interpersonal skills. Important themes related to their experience of their neighborhood were the necessity of safe spaces and placemaking. Lastly, the youth interns emphasized the value of helping their community through the roles they play in the internship program. I will explore each of these themes in greater detail and offer examples from the interviews.

## Concepts of Self

### *Having responsibilities and feeling mature*

Many youth interns discussed how they saw themselves differently as a result of participating in the internship. Sixteen of the 18 youth interns reported that they enjoyed the responsibility of being a part of the internship program. They described their duties as getting to work on time, being nice to people (other interns and customers), growing fruits and vegetables, balancing the obligations of school, family and work, and focusing on an important goal. For Ebonie, the gardening aspect of the internship taught her that

*taking care of plants is a lot of responsibility. Have to use your hands and respect the bugs and plants you are working with. Have to weed things and do things gently.*

All of the interns except for one felt that their guardians saw them as being a little more mature and grown up as a result of seeing them be a part of the internship program. Nakwan, a 15-year old African-American boy who enjoyed working at the farmers' market because he got to interact with people, talked about how his family's perceptions of him affected the responsibilities and freedom afforded to him.

*I liked the responsibility of handling money, communicating with people of all ages. My family sees me as a little bit more different because they think I can take on more responsibility. I have my own key to the house now.*

This sense of self as more responsible also developed as a result of working in the farmers' market and interacting with the customers who were mostly adults and comprised of black or Latino residents of the immediate neighborhood, and elderly Russian Jews from a social housing complex nearby. Sondra said

*I learned that I never knew I had the ability to stand out there with all those people and still not catch an attitude. Aley<sup>10</sup> would tell me to take a break but sometimes I didn't even want a break because there would be three or four people standing up there and I just couldn't relax. Made me better at my salesmanship cause I learned how to sell- be nice to people so they won't be snotty with you. Let them know a little bit about the plants. Watch your money and your change.*

Samuel, a 12-year old boy talked extensively about how he wanted to work nearly every day, just so he could help his family monetarily.

*My mom has been sick a lot and had to have surgery today. My sister got fired from her job so if I made like 20 dollars a day and worked for four days, that's a lot of money. [Interviewer: That's a lot of pressure to deal with—how does it make you feel?] It makes me feel good! It makes me feel like I am taking care of the family.*

### **Significance of having a job**

The importance of having a job emerged in 13 of the 18 interviews as one major theme. Eleven of the respondents were younger than 14 years of age at the time of their internship and were keenly aware of the lack of employment opportunities for children their age and older. According to Marcus, a 12-year old African-American boy whose previous jobs were all informal (e.g., washing his neighbors' cars and doing yard work), "East New York is a job place for adults, but not for kids." Steven, a 15-year old African-American boy who was also involved in the arts and drama group at United Community Center maintained that "the garden taught me what to do if I ever have my own garden, but the farmers' market job taught me skills that will help me find other jobs."

Sondra, a 12-year old Latina had already worked when she was nine years old with the East New York Urban Youth Corps and had spent some time volunteering in another community garden. She talked about her family's reaction as

*When I first started working, I'd come home and they'd be like 'look at Sondra, the working lady.' But it's good to start young because that way you grow up and you already know a lot of stuff.*

Having a job also meant earning a salary for their work. This was highlighted by all the youth interns as something that made them feel good about themselves. For many, this meant that they could spend the money as they liked. Jeffrey, a 13-year old Latino boy stated, "I felt good that I had my own money, I could buy my



own things." Steven echoed that sentiment by saying "I spent it on clothes and other useful things, but I still asked my mother for non-essential things like candy."

Not all of the youth interns kept all the money for their own personal use. Tanya related the story that with her first paycheck, she went home and bought milk for her family (which consists of her mother and four other kids). Kristin, a 12-year-old African-American boy talked about how he took his family out for Chinese buffet with the earnings from his first paycheck.

Kathleen, an exuberant 11-year-old who was the youngest intern (ten years old) at the time she participated, spoke about it in terms of being accountable to someone else:

*For the first time I had a boss. Like my parents were the boss of me in the house. But this is someone else who is in charge of you. And they're telling you what to do. [Interviewer: how do you feel about that?] Feels good. You learn to respect adults a lot more. Not that I didn't respect adults before. And being able to have a boss to guide you and help you is a lot of fun. It was a little like a mentor job. I learned new stuff everyday. A lot of the kids helped me.*

### **Value of developing interpersonal skills with other youth and adults**

Another theme discussed by the youth interns was how they developed greater interpersonal skills as a result of working at the community garden and the farmers' market— particularly since both settings involved youth and adults of different ethnicities. Among the skills developed at the community garden were getting along with others, being patient, and working as a team. Tanya said,

*I learned how to get along more with people, I used to get mad fast if someone did something to me, but I learned to calm down. It's important cause there was a lot of kids, like different ages and everything and I learned how to resolve things by talking it out. It's different from being around family who are different ages cause you can fight with your family members. But workers you have to work with them.*

Kathleen spoke about the importance of understanding different cultures in the context of a social and work setting like the community garden and the farmers' market.

*You learn more about other people than by just reading about them – but you learn through studying and being with them- hearing their point of view.*

All of the interns talked about how they enjoyed meeting other kids, kids they would never have gotten to know had it not been for the program. As Samuel said succinctly, "It's important to have friends here." Steven liked it because he was able to work outside and circulate and be around people.

## Concepts of Neighborhood

### ***Necessity of safe and calming spaces for youth***

Twelve of the 18 youth interns I interviewed talked about how children need a place to go instead of being on the street, and that working keeps them out of trouble. Having the garden and the farmer's market as places to go to that were safe and welcoming to kids emerged as an important theme for ten of the youth interns.

According to Malcolm, the garden is safe and comfortable and is "a wide open space that's different from the park; the park has open space too, but the park is sometimes dangerous." Malcolm retold the story about how his grandmother (who is the head of the block association), managed to procure the abandoned lot on their block to make their own community garden. He spoke admiringly about how "it would be a lot like UCC's garden- nice plants, calm spaces where you can go to be quiet and boxes where everyone can plant stuff." He felt that community gardens could teach a lot of life lessons to both adults and kids "'cause you're doing something, not just hanging around."

Seven of the interns made direct references to how being in the garden calms them when they are upset. Ebonie framed it in terms of how the community garden affected her mood.

*Say if I don't like something, in the neighborhood there is a place where I can feel better. Plants, you know- say you mad, you step out there and you feel better because of fresh air. Fresh air is nice, and the garden is peaceful and beautiful. In the city it's all smoke and rushing, but when you're in nature you sit and think about things and feel better.*

### ***Placemaking***

Placemaking has been defined as the intentional process by which youth and adults seek to transform their neighborhoods (Sutton and Kemp 2002). Through their active engagement in the physical environment through their work in the community gardens and as a visible presence in the ENY Farmers' Market, the youth interns were a part of re-shaping their physical and social reality. Ten of the 18 interns spoke about how processes like gardening and selling produce helped them to see their neighborhoods differently.

Ebonie, a 12-year old African-American girl who felt that garden work purified the earth, also talked about how

*people were surprised that we actually did something and like how before the changes, it used to be- it was not that pretty and [it was] dirty, so it cleaned up a lot.*

Other youth interns talked about how they felt proud to make their streets look nicer. "It's better to walk down the street and see a wall of flowers than a wall of graffiti," said Tymmaria, a 14-year old Caribbean-American girl who was re-hired as a returning intern. She continued, "I'm proud of how it looks and how other people might see it too."

Another impact of participating in placemaking was the meaning and value derived from watching plants grow and the way in which the interns saw their actions bear results over time. David talked about how he learned to put 100 percent effort into his goals “because good things come out. Our group was working on planting some potatoes, and after a few months they grew and it felt good.” Tanya also talked about how at first there is nothing but then your hard work pays off, and little by little you see something come alive.”

The value of growing also played a role in placemaking by affecting how they viewed their community, how they thought about their own efforts, and how they impacted community development. Kathleen said,

*I learned a lot of plants, grow things like food and vegetables. I had a lot of fun. Seeing all the work- it will come out really beautiful. [Interviewer: What about this is important?] Because I saw that my efforts and hard work and time went into something and when it came out, it was so beautiful. Like art, when you start off it might not look like what you want but when you finish, you just want to show it off to the world. It was so beautiful. And not just the garden, but the people I was working with. It was like we were growing in friendship. I enjoyed it a lot.*

Kathleen also spoke eloquently about what she learned through caring for plants.

*I learned that I should appreciate nature a lot more. Because it is so fragile. And if you put a lot of effort into it, it's so pretty. It's a lot of work but in the end it's worth it. It's really fun. I learned a lot about myself. Like being able to go in the garden, learning how to be serious, how to have fun.*

Ebonie's comments reveal how she feels the ENY Farms! project affected her sense of community and other peoples' perceptions of her community. She felt her work

*gives a different perspective on how kids can grow things, how they can buy things actually fresh not just from supermarket but some place else in their own communities like farmers. [Interviewer: Why was this important?] Probably change people's minds about how things are and give them ideas about what's going on in the community all the good things that are coming out of it. Like food – fresh– freshly picked– and people coming from all over. Some people from Long Island, Queens.*

Tanya talked about how the farmers' market

*gives attention to everybody that lives here. Someone coming from New Jersey came, they were staying a friend's house. It attracts a lot of people to come. Feel I am doing a good job by attracting people, bringing them over.*

## **Role of Youth in Community**

### ***Importance of helping the community***

A major theme that emerged from the interviews was related to the interns' desire to help the community and the resulting satisfaction at knowing their contribution played a role in improving their neighborhoods. All 18 of the youth interns talked

about the how working at the community garden and/or farmers' market did a lot to help the community.

All 18 of the youth interns stressed that the ENY Farms! project helps the community by bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to residents of the community at affordable prices. For many, the feeling of serving others by filling a need in the community made them feel better about themselves. Tanya said, "In the supermarket it is \$2.79/lb for a head of lettuce, but at the market it is \$1.00/lb. It is less expensive. It tries to help them." For Malcolm, a 12-year old African-American youth, "I used to see myself as useful to my friends and family, but now I see myself as useful to everyone I sell products to."

Several youth interns also observed that they derived benefit from seeing others try to help the community too, both adults and kids. Malcolm said that it changed the way he felt about East New York because "I see people who are there to help the community, some who are there to help themselves, but I feel good about the ones who are there to help the community." David, a 12-yr old African-American boy had been in the daycare and then after-school programs of United Community Centers, talked about how the "community garden does something for people in the neighborhood, shows them that there are people who have learned to help other people."

Sha'linqua spoke about the importance of youth involvement in the project by saying,

*It made me feel like I could participate a lot more, not that I didn't participate but you know helping to feel more into the neighborhood and being more involved. Not saying you can't do this or you're too young or I don't want you now it's not for you. Just made me feel like I'm good at this. It's a new responsibility, a new challenge.*

Tanya felt that cleaning the sidewalk around the garden made her feel more comfortable in the community. She felt that it was the same as being in her home, "you should try to take care of it." She added another nuance to this by talking about how helping her community might be a generative process. She says,

*Like old people, I know that one day I'm going to be older, and I want to know that people will help me too. Not just older people, young people too. I'm young and I like when people are helping me.*

## **Discussion**

Community-based agencies possess great power to identify the needs of the community through their ties to individuals, collaborate with other agencies with similar interests, and act as a framework for positive social change. The ENY Farms! project possesses many programmatic dimensions that can promote the participation of youth in the public realm.

First, the internship offered a platform from which the youth interns could take on responsibility, and demonstrate their competence and growing maturity to themselves and those around them. This cluster of qualities helped youth interns to develop their self-concept and identity as *important and valuable members of*

*the community*. Their internship was carried out in a setting that fostered ways for the youth to integrate and meaningfully connect with other community residents in the community gardens and the farmers' market. The visible presence of youth engaged in positive community change is both a pathway for civic engagement and a way to dispel negative beliefs about young people (Camino and Zeldin 2002). These are among the qualities that Hart et al. (1997) characterized as benefits of participation in community-based programs that are sensitive to young peoples' developmental needs.

Second, the internship provided opportunities to acquire and develop valuable knowledge and skills, as well as material compensation. These qualities have a direct impact on the *future employment and economic viability* of the youth interns. Knowledge about how to nurture a garden, how to sell, how to work with others toward a goal, and how to relate to other people were among the skills that youth interns cited as important to their success in securing future employment. The monetary payment contributed to their sense of agency as they experienced economic power and material wealth, and it offered them the experience of handling finances. (cf. Entwisle et al. 1999). The workplace can be an influential developmental setting. For instance, youth workplaces can provide an outlet to demonstrate autonomy and agency (Hansen and Johnson 1989), offering the immediate reward of a paycheck (Entwisle et al. 1999), and buffering youth from unpleasant aspects of their life (Hochschild 1997).

Third, although earning money was highly valued among the youth interns, many also made references to the joys of watching things grow over time from barrenness to a garden that is alive. The internship enabled the youth to contribute to developments that have a noticeable impact on the physical landscape and community of East New York. Their hard work and perseverance can be seen in the transformation of abandoned vacant lots, the increasing natural green beauty, the practice of convening a farmers' market in a gravel-filled corner lot, and the yield of the community gardens. The experience of enhancing the physical appearance of their neighborhood through their collective effort greatly impacted on their perceptions of the *role of youth in placemaking* (one component of community development). As Burgess states, community development efforts must also change "the external perception that a concentration of low-income people or people of color means a 'bad' community that may be dangerous to white people" (Burgess 2000, 31). By involving youth in community development, they not only break down stereotypes of youth but they also bolster the image of their community as a good place.

Fourth, the internship provided participating youth with *safe spaces within their neighborhood*. This point resonated powerfully with the youth interns particularly when they spoke about ways in which their neighborhoods could be improved to help children. This is especially relevant in East New York where the introduction of crack cocaine in the mid 1980s, along with gang activity fostered a culture of violence that hurt the fabric of the neighborhood, and isolated residents from other parts of New York City and more significantly, from each other (Community Research Group 2001). A recent study by Halpern et al. (2000) examined neighborhood youth programs in a low-income Latino area of Chicago. Through interviews and interactions with youth the authors discovered that the settlement houses served various important functions related to community and safety by

offering them a chance to interact with other youth in a semi-structured and consistent environment that was a respite from the less safe alternatives in their neighborhood. The ENY Farms! youth interns often considered the community gardens and farmers' market as safe places where they could be with adults they trust and "nothing bad will happen to them."

The ENY Farms! project provides a structure from which youth interns can operate at multiple levels of engagement, ranging from transforming a physical space to being a part of a program that values the collective good and models that value in the public sphere. A report by Peter H. Hart Research Associates (1998) which surveyed 728 young Americans nationwide stated,

*Contrary to the popular portrayal of today's young Americans as self-absorbed and socially inert, the findings from this survey reveal a portrait of a generation not searching to distance itself from the community, but instead actively looking for new and distinctive ways to connect to the people and the issues surrounding them.*

## **Conclusion**

Community youth development is built on the notion of "youth contributing to communities, communities supporting youth," (Irby et al. 2001). The stories of the ENY Farms! youth interns are interwoven with narratives of self-reflection that display their awareness of their impact on the community and the ways in which their development interacts with their community context. The community youth development literature is calling for more research into the theory and practices that result from balancing the goals of youth development and community development (Cahill 1997; Irby et al. 2001). The present study contributes several insights into the ways young people create identities as "agents of community change." For example, the ENY Farms! project presents a vehicle in which participating youth can experience the process of improving their neighborhood and cultivate their sense of agency, while contributing to a community ethos that integrates youth and community development.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

The limitations of this research relate first of all to the generalizability of its findings. The results reported here are descriptive and specific to the context of East New York. However, they offer insights that may be useful in other youth programs regarding, for example, the importance of active physical involvement in development processes.

Secondly, I realize that the project sample draws from a small number of individuals and does not include the perspectives of others involved in ENY Farms!, nor does it include the perspectives of other youth in the neighborhood. I cannot determine what differences might exist in the education, family structure and household factors between those I interviewed and the seven interns from the 2001 season whom I did not interview. Further research into this topic could include longitudinal analysis, participant observation over the length of the internship, and a comparison of participating interns with youth who applied but were not accepted into the program.

Lastly, the qualitative interviewing technique could be altered to incorporate more aspects of youth participation. Because the youth were so articulate about the impact of the internship on themselves and their communities, a participatory action research methodology could be an appropriate means of evaluating the impact of ENY Farms! on youth and the community.

## Endnotes

1. This paper was a Co-winner of the First Prize in the 2003 CYE Graduate Student Paper Award for Excellence in Research competition.
2. Ratified by all nations but the United States and Somalia.
3. According to Wrigley et al. (2002, 151), food deserts are “‘areas of poor access to the provision of healthy affordable food where the population is characterized by deprivation and compound social exclusion’” (Beaumont et al. 1995; Department of Health 1996) or “an area lacking retail services within a 500-meter radius” (Wrigley et al. 2002, 154).
4. Disadvantaged consumers, “According to the RTPPI (1988) [are] most likely to be low-income families, those without access to a car, and/or residents in areas of poor public transport provision, constrained by caring responsibilities, the elderly, the disabled, and in some cases, ethnic minorities” (Whelan et al 2002, 2084).
5. Wrigley et al (2003, 154) note that “In response, several major cross-disciplinary investigations were commissioned and/or funded by government departments and research councils.”
6. Personal correspondence with Georgine Yorgey, ENY Farms! Coordinator
7. Personal correspondence with Salima Jones-Daley, ENY Farmers’ Market Coordinator
8. One of the changes suggested by two youth was that returning interns would have the opportunity to take on more responsibility for greater pay.
9. There were seven interns in 2001 that did not participate in the study because parental consent was not granted. Among those who did not participate, five are male, two are female, and with the exception of one Latino-American, all are African-American.
10. Aley Schoonmaker was the 2001 ENY Farms! Coordinator.

*Yvonne Hung is currently working towards her Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology at the City University of New York/Graduate Center. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from McGill University. Her research focuses on exploring the ideas, practices and challenges of sustainable development, place making, and the meaning of nature in urban environments.*

## References

- Andrews, D.** (2001). "Growing Sites: The Use of Gardening and Farming in Youth Development Projects." Unpublished Masters thesis. York University, Toronto, Ontario.
- Brown, K.H., M. Bailkey, A. Meares-Cohen, J. Nasr, J. Smit, and T. Buchanan** (2002). *Urban Agriculture and Community Food Security in the United States: Farming from the City Center to the Urban Fringe*. Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition.
- Burgess, J.** (2000). "Youth and the Future of Community Renewal." *National Civic Review* 89(1): 27-32.
- Cahill, M.** (1997). *Youth Development and Community Development: Promises and Challenges of Convergence*. Community and Youth Development Series Volume 6. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation.
- Camino, L., and S. Zeldin** (2002). "From Periphery to Center: Pathways for Youth Civic Engagement in the Day-to-Day Life of Communities." *Applied Developmental Science* 6(4): 213-220.
- Caplovitz, D.** (1967). *The Poor Pay More: Consumer Practices of Low-Income Families*. New York: Free Press.
- Community Research Group** (2001). *What Did Ian Tell God? School Violence in East New York*. New York: Community Research Group of the NYSPI and Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.
- Chawla, L.** (2001). "Putting Old Ideas into Action: The Relevance of Growing Up in Cities to Local Agenda 21." *Local Environment* 6(1): 13-25.
- Checkoway, B., and K. Richards-Schuster** (2001). "Lifting New Voices for Socially Just Communities." *Community Youth Development Journal* 2(4): 32-37.
- Clifton, K., and S. Handy** (2001). *Limits on Access in Low-Income Neighborhoods and the Travel Patterns of Low-Income Households*. Austin: Center for Transportation Research, University of Texas.
- Coley, R.L., and Frances E. Kuo** (1997). "Where Does Community Grow? The Social Context of Nature in Urban Public Housing." *Environment and Behavior* 29: 468-498.
- Cotterill, R., and A. Franklin** (1995). *The Urban Grocery Store Gap: Food Marketing Policy Center Paper No. 8*, April 1995. Presented at Public Voice, Inner City Supermarket Task Force meeting. Washington, D.C. May 15, 1995.
- Cummins, S., and S. Macintyre** (1999). "Food Deserts: Evidence and Assumption in Health Policy Making." *British Medical Journal* 325: 436-38.



**Eisenberg, M.E.** (1999). *Being Left in East New York: Tensions between Race and Class in Community Organizing, 1954-1980*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. City University of New York, New York.

**Entwisle, D.R., K.L. Alexander, L.S. Olson, and K. Ross** (1999). "Paid Work in Early Adolescence: Developmental and Ethnic Patterns." *Journal of Early Adolescence* 19(3): 363-388.

"Farmers' Markets on the Rise" (2001). *Futurist* 35(1): 2.

**Ferris, J., C. Norma, and J. Sempik** (2001). "People, Land and Sustainability: Community Gardens and the Social Dimension of Sustainable Development." *Social Policy and Administration* 35(5): 559-568.

*Fertile Ground: A Report on the Madison/Dane County Food System* (1997). Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Fisher, A., B. Gottlieb, T. Forster, and M. Winne** (2001). *The Healthy Farms, Food and Communities Act. Policy Initiatives for the 2002 Farm Bill and the First Decade of the 21st Century*. Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition.

**Francis, M.** (1984). *Community Open Spaces*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

**Gesser, M.E.** (1993). *Farmers' Markets in Urban Areas: A Means of Exploring Their Contributions and Characteristics*. Unpublished Masters thesis. Technical University of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

**Ginwright, S. and J. Cammarota** (2002). "New Terrain in Youth Development: The Promise of a Social Justice Approach." *Social Justice* 29(4): 82-96.

**Ginwright, S. and T. James** (2002). "From Assets to Agents of Change: Social Justice, Organizing, and Youth Development." *New Directions for Youth Development* 96: 27-46.

**Hall, E.V.** (2000). *Manifestations of Community-Based Agriculture in the Urban Landscape: A Canadian Compendium and Four Winnipeg Case Studies*. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Halpern, R., G. Barker, and W. Mollard** (2000). "Youth Programs as Alternative Places to Be: A Study of Neighborhood Youth Programs in Chicago's West Town." *Youth and Society* 31(4): 469-506.

**Hansen, D.A., and V.A. Johnson** (1989). "Classroom Lesson Strategies and Orientations toward Work." In D. Stern and D. Eichorn, eds. *Adolescence and Work*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 75-100.

**Hart, Roger, C. Daiute, L. Iltus, D. Kritt, M. Rome, and K. Sabo** (1997). "Developmental Theory and Children's Participation in Community Organizations." *Social Justice* 24(3): 33-63.

**Heath, S.B.** (1994). "The Project of Learning from the Inner-City Youth Perspective." *New Directions to Child Development* 63: 25-34.

**Heath, S.B., and M.W. McLaughlin** (1993). *Identity and Inner-City Youth: Beyond Ethnicity and Gender*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**Hevesi, D.** (2001). "East New York: A Neighborhood Reborn." *New York Times*. June 10.

**Hochschild, A.R.** (1997). "There's No Place Like Work." *New York Times Magazine*. April 20.

**Holloway, L., and M. Kneafsey** (2000). "Reading the Space of the Farmers' Market: A Preliminary Investigation from the UK." *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(3): 285-324.

**Irby, M., T. Ferber, and K. Pittman** (2001). *Youth Action: Youth Contributing to Communities, Communities Supporting Youth*. The Forum for Youth Investment.

**Kuo, Frances E.** (2001). "Coping with Poverty." *Environment and Behavior* 33: 5-35.

**Kuo, Frances E., and W.C. Sullivan** (2001). "Aggression and Violence in the Inner City: The Effects of Environment via Mental Fatigue." *Environment and Behavior* 33: 543-571.

**McLaughlin, M.W., M.A. Irby, and J. Langman** (1994). *Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Morland, K., S. Wing, A. Diez Roux, and C. Poole** (2002). "Access to Healthy Foods Limited in Poor Neighborhoods." *American Journal of Preventive Health* 22(1): 23-29.

**Peter D. Hart Research Associates** (1998). *Leadership for a New Century: Key Findings from a Study on Youth, Leadership and Community Service*. Washington, D.C.: Public Allies.

**Pothukuchi, K.** (2003). *The Detroit Food System: A Handbook for Community Planners*. Department of Geography and Urban Planning, Wayne State University-Detroit.

**Pratt Planning Studio** (1996). *Pitkin Avenue: Filling the Gaps*. Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, Brooklyn.

**Sanoff, H.** (2000). *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*. New York: Wiley.

**Shaffer, A.** (2002). *The Persistence of Los Angeles' Grocery Store Gap: The Need for a New Food Policy and Approach to Market Development*. Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College-Los Angeles, May.

**Sommer, R.** (1998). "Shopping at the Co-op." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 18: 45-53.

**Sommer, R., J. Herrick, and T. Sommer** (1981). "The Behavioral Ecology of Supermarkets and Farmers' Markets." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 1: 13-19.

**Stokols, D.** (1978). "Environmental Psychology." *Annual Review of Psychology* 29: 253-95.

**Sutton, S.E., and S.P. Kemp** (2002). "Children as Partners in Neighborhood Placemaking: Lessons from Intergenerational Design Charrettes." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 22: 171-189.

**Thabit, W.** (2003). *How East New York became a Ghetto*. New York: New York University Press.

**Ulrich, R.S., R.G. Simons, B.D. Losito, E. Fiorito, M.A. Miles, and M. Zelson** (1991). "Stress Recovery During Exposure to Natural and Urban Environments." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 11: 201-230.

**UNDP** (1996). *Urban Agriculture*. New York: Author.

**Villarruel, F.A., and R.M. Lerner** (1994). "Development and Context and the Contexts of Learning." *New Directions for Child Development* 63: 3-10.

**Wasecha, A., and K. Ness** (1998). *Involving Children in Children's Gardens: Farm in the City*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Community Gardening Association.

**Whelan, A., N. Wrigley, D. Warm, and E. Cannings** (2002). "Life in a 'Food Desert'." *Urban Studies* 39(11): 2083-2100.

**Winston, P.** (1995). *Envisioning East New York*. Brooklyn: Pratt Institute for Community and Environmental Development.

**Wrigley, N., D. Warm, and B. Margetts** (2002). "Deprivation, Diet and Food Retail Access: Findings from the Leeds 'Food Deserts' Study." *Environment and Planning A*. 34(1): 151-189.

**Zeldin, S., A.K. McDaniel, D. Topitzes, and M. Calvert** (2000). *Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations*. Chevy Chase, MD: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.

## Appendix

### Youth Intern Interview

"Let me remind you before we begin that anything you say during this interview will be kept confidential; that is, I will keep all your name and contact information separate from your tapes and my interview notes. I do this so that you can hopefully feel safe to share your feelings and thoughts with me. There are no right or wrong answers. I am just interested in listening to what your ideas are. Finally, if I do any reporting with what you've shared with me, it will only be as a group, that is, I will not name one single person but will address your ideas and thoughts in terms of the whole group's thoughts and ideas. Do you have any questions before we get started?"

Before we start with the questions, I would like to play a game that involves you organizing these 'place cards' using certain headings. It may not make any sense at first, but once we get started, it should become clearer. For instance, we have 'place cards' with names of places that you might visit in your everyday life printed on them, 'garden' 'playground' 'my friend's house' 'school cafeteria' 'corner store' 'farmers' market'. We can add any other places as we go along. And at the top of the page, there are a bunch of headings: 'where I laugh most,' 'where I could be alone,' 'where I feel safe and comfortable,' 'where I get to meet new kinds of people,' 'where I learn new kinds of information,' 'where I get to feel that I am useful to others.' I'd like you to put the place cards under the first heading 'where I laugh most.' Please put any place cards that apply under this heading. Before we get started, do you want to add any places that I haven't included?"

*[as participant places cards under the category, ask her/him to explain why they would put the card there, if they can think of any specific memories, and how the qualities of the places that determine the specific grouping]*

"Now that we've categorized some of the places in your life, I'd like to ask you more about specific places such as the farmers market. I'm going to start first by asking you about how you got involved with the farmers market."

1. Tell me the story of how you got involved in East New York Farms. [probe: how did you learn about it, did anyone encourage you to get involved, what got you interested].
2. How would you describe East New York? What are some of the good qualities? What are some of the things that could be changed? How long have you lived here? Have you noticed any changes in the neighborhood in the last few years?
3. What are the good things that East New York offers kids like you? How could East New York be improved to be even better for kids like you?
4. How do you think people who have never been to East New York would describe it? How does that make you feel?
5. Do you think the community garden impacts the neighborhood? What about the environment? Can you share some examples?

6. How do you think the farmers' market impacts the neighborhood? What about the environment? How? Can you share some examples?
7. What do you think it takes to be a good community garden worker? What are some of the important qualities to have? What about for the farmers' market? Can you share some examples of why you think these are important qualities? Do you think these might apply to other jobs too?
8. Do you eat fruits and vegetables at home? What kinds? How often?
9. Do you have a garden at home? If so, please tell me about it. What do you grow there?

For Returning Interns ONLY:

1. When you first started last season, did you find working in the garden or the farmers' market like what you expected it to be? [i.e., 'gardening is easy work,' or 'selling food is difficult'].
2. What did you learn how to do at the community garden? What about at the farmers' market?
3. What did you learn about yourself through working at the community garden? What about the farmers' market?
4. What was it like to have a job? What did you do with your first paycheck? Do you think that there are aspects of this job that you would like to have in your future jobs?
5. Did anyone in your family or friends see you differently once you started working? Did they treat you differently?
6. Do you see yourself differently? What did you learn about yourself?
7. Did working in the garden affect the way you feel about East New York? What about working in the farmer's market?
8. Did you feel like you and the other interns had a lot of say as to what happened in the garden and the farmers' market? Do you feel that young people have a say in what happens in their neighborhoods? How does that make you feel?
9. How do you feel about being invited back to work? Do you think you will do anything differently this year compared to last year? Do you think this year's experience will be different from last year?

For New Interns ONLY:

1. What do you think working in the garden will be like? What about the farmers' market?
2. What do you want to learn from this experience?

3. What interests you most about working in the garden? What about the farmers' market?
4. What interests you least about working in the garden? What about the farmers' market?
5. Have you worked in a garden before? What was that like?
6. Have you shopped at the farmers' market before? What was that like?