

**Project Green Reach at Brooklyn Botanic Garden:
A Case Study of the Summer Program**

**A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Project Green Reach (PGR), one program of the Children's Education Program at Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG). Located in Brooklyn, NY, BBG is a public garden that has served as a model program for garden-based youth education since 1914. PGR utilizes both the indoor classroom and outdoor laboratory to engage K-8 students and teachers at Brooklyn's Title I schools in informal learning about science. Every year, PGR instructors select a small group of students into the summer program where they work in teams on garden and science projects at BBG. A case study was conducted to document PGR's summer program as a potential model for informal science youth education and to investigate the effects of PGR on inner city youth. Field observations of PGR's summer program participants and collection of program documents were conducted during the 2004 Summer Program. In 2005, phone interviews were conducted with four adult PGR Summer Program alumni and one former staff member who discussed their experiences while participating in the program and described the meaning of PGR in their lives. From the data collected and triangulated through document review, observations, and interviews, seven themes emerged: (1) PGR participants come from challenging home and school environments, (2) PGR developed academic and interdisciplinary skills, (3) Participation increased understanding of science concepts and developed gardening skills, (4) PGR fostered environmental awareness, (5) PGR supported social development and personal growth, (6) PGR was a positive life experience, and (7) BBG is culturally significant to the participants' community. From the results, it is concluded that PGR has had an impact on participants' lives, showing that PGR had positive influence on their views towards BBG, gardening, and science.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Susan Conlon entitled "Project Green Reach at Brooklyn Botanic Garden: A Case Study of the Summer Program." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Plant Sciences.

Susan Hamilton
Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Mary Lewnes Albrecht

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Accepted for the Council:

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)