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\$25,000 Donation from National Grid Foundation Supports Do-It-Yourself Environmental Workshop Series

Over 30 Urban Farmers to Promote the Importance of Water Conservation, Facilitate Interactive Workshop on How to Build a Rainwater Harvesting System

New York, NY (May 21, 2013) – This past Saturday, Citizens Committee for New York City (“Citizens Committee”) presented its “Build a Rainwater Harvesting System for Your Garden” workshop in a community garden located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. It was the second of a three-workshop series called “Do-It-Yourself Green Blocks.” The workshop series is supported by a \$25,000 contribution from National Grid Foundation.

Most New Yorkers remember how the past few summers scorched the city’s green spaces. Then last fall Superstorm Sandy made city dwellers much more aware of the disastrous effects of climate change on the urban environment. In response, “Do-It-Yourself Green Blocks” was launched as a series of intensive half-day skills-building workshops intended for volunteers of environmental and conservation organizations, as well as for community gardeners across the city. Workshop participants hail from all boroughs, indicating the popularity of neighborhood workshops that address serious environmental issues such as recent climate changes in the northeastern United States and water conservation in urban farms and community gardens.

"National Grid Foundation’s support means that grassroots environmental and conservation groups will grow stronger, have a greater impact in their communities, and involve more people in protecting the earth’s resources," said Peter H. Kostmayer, CEO of Citizens Committee. *"We are very grateful to National Grid Foundation for its continued commitment, leadership, and vision in making this program possible."*

"We are especially pleased to partner with Citizens Committee in advancing the development of sustainable urban gardens," said Bob Keller, President of National Grid Foundation. *"We know now more than ever that climate change is upon us, and we are privileged to participate in the cultivation of environmentally responsible community-based gardening."*

Sharon Smith, a workshop participant from Queens and Vice President of the Dunton Block and Civic Association commented, *“In the interest of conservation, it is extremely important to have the skills to harvest and recycle our natural rain water. The benefits of harvesting natural water are enormous, both environmentally and financially. We plan to share this knowledge with member gardeners, neighbors, and youth to make our community more sustainable.”*

Saturday’s workshop focused on a “Do-It-Yourself” method of making your own rainwater harvesting system and took participants through all the steps involved in building it! By the end of the workshop, over 30 city-dwelling environmentalists learned how to directly address long summer stretches without rain by building a rainwater harvesting system for the community garden. In addition to the inherent benefits of watering street trees and vegetable beds in community gardens, participants learned about:

- The importance of water conservation
- Good surface areas from which to catch rain
- Where to put your rain harvesting system
- What materials are needed for your system
- How to put your system together
- How to maintain your system
- How to measure and evaluate progress along the way

For information on the June 29 workshop series finale “Urban Street Tree Care: Build a Tree Guard”, registration, and general information, please call Citizens Committee for New York City at 212-822-9568 or email Wilfredo Florentino at wflorentino@citizensnyc.org

About National Grid Foundation

NATIONAL GRID FOUNDATION was created to enhance the quality of life across its grantmaking territory. The Foundation’s ongoing challenge is to create opportunities for solutions to educational and environmental issues. Its objective is based on the principle that giving people the tools to build hope is an essential ingredient in the development of individuals, families and communities. Since its inception in December of 1998, the Foundation has provided more than \$16 million in grants to hundreds of organizations.

About Citizens Committee for New York City

What would it take to improve your neighborhood? Whether it's painting a mural, organizing a farmer's market, installing a compost bin, or launching a dance camp, we can help make your idea a reality. As one of the nation's oldest micro-funding organizations, we at Citizens Committee for New York City raise money from foundations, corporations, and individual donors—then award it to projects we believe in. But we don't stop there. We're also here to inspire new ideas, and to offer active, hands-on help. That means we're in your neighborhoods presenting workshops, meeting community leaders, even weeding the occasional garden. We're here for you, helping make your neighborhoods greener, friendlier, and more resilient. For more information, visit our website www.citizensnyc.org.