

TIME
for
KIDS

YOUR



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FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR KIDS



Green Bronx Machine founder Stephen Ritz (back row) and his students display the harvest from their school garden.

FRESH LESSONS

Green Bronx Machine, in New York City, teaches students the skills to grow food—and profits.

Growing Brighter Futures

A program in New York City is teaching students to turn produce into profits.



Picture a classroom filled with green plants growing from floor to ceiling. Fish are swimming back and forth in a tank. Kids are pedaling exercise bikes that power blenders and a TV screen.

The classroom is in Community School 55, in the South Bronx section of New York City. It is one of the neediest neighborhoods in the U.S. Fast-food restaurants are everywhere. But fresh vegetables are hard to find.

Science teacher Stephen Ritz is working to change that. In 2010, he started a gardening program called Green Bronx Machine. Students have learned to grow tomatoes, eggplants, and other vegetables. They plant the seeds in tall tower gardens in the classroom. In warm weather, the vegetables grow in garden boxes outside.

Students learn to cook what they grow. They even sell some of their crops. The initiative teaches them healthy habits and business skills.

Growing Dollars from Pennies

Recently, students had the opportunity to test their sales skills. They set up a stand in the school. Then they **marketed** their fruits and vegetables to the community. A Whole Foods Market allowed them to sell their produce in its store as well.

Students got to decide how to spend the money they made. A class of second graders earned a \$62 profit. "They thought about buying ice cream," Ritz explains. But they thought better of it. They bought a pet rabbit for the class. With the money left over, they bought school supplies and seeds to keep the garden going.

That was an important financial lesson, Ritz says. Students had turned a one-cent eggplant seed into produce worth several dollars. And **reinvesting** some of those dollars on more seeds was a good business decision.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Be Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise

Think of a healthy, money-saving habit for your family. Cook a meal together instead of eating out. Take a walk instead of going to the movies. What activities work for your family?

Healthy Futures

Attendance at the school has soared since Green Bronx Machine started. Some kids have visited the White House. Others have used what they learned to get jobs at food-delivery service Fresh Direct and other companies. The experience has helped some get into college. Families benefit from the program too. Each week, kids bring a bag of produce home.

Now Ritz would like to see Green Bronx Machine schools around the country. "When you give a kid a seed, you're making a promise," says Ritz. The promise is not just about better test scores or making money. It's about kids learning to grow their way to a happier, healthier future.

—By Ellie Schroeder

POWER WORDS

market verb: to advertise or promote something

reinvest verb: to use the profits from an investment for further investment



A student and her mother harvest squash.



Lettuce is grown in vertical tower gardens.



After harvesting produce, students learn how to prepare it.



A student shows off a bunch of freshly picked kale.

Your Health, Your Wealth

Healthy choices can save money. Here's how.

Save \$2,500 per year by staying active.

Moderate exercise saves money on medical costs. Plus, it boosts your brainpower. You'll perform better at school, and that could lead to a brighter financial future.

Save \$1,900 per year by cooking at home.

The cost of eating out adds up quickly. Not to mention, you can't control what's in your food. Cook at home using fresh ingredients. You'll save money and eat healthfully.

Save up to \$4,000 per year by not smoking.

Cigarettes are costly. And since they can cause disease, smokers pay more for health care and insurance. Plus, employers are more likely to hire nonsmokers. So the habit could result in lost income.



HERO IMAGES—GETTY IMAGES



ASK JEAN

Jean Chatzky is a money expert.

If we don't have all of the money for it, how do we buy a house?

—Ainsley, 9, Windsor, Colorado

Ainsley, few people have enough money to buy a house. Most people become homeowners by saving enough money to pay 10 to 20% of the price of the house in cash. This is called a down payment. They borrow the rest using a loan called a mortgage. The most popular mortgages are 30-year loans. These give buyers a long time to pay back what they owe. As a result, more people can afford to buy homes.

Do you have a question? Write to Jean at tfkasks4you@timeforkids.com.

Grow Your Own Garden

Want to grow your own fruits and veggies to eat or sell? Here's advice from Stephen Ritz.

- Start small. Find out what types of produce are in season. Make a list of the fruits and vegetables that will grow well in your climate. Start with just a couple of plants.
- Eat what you grow, or sell to people you know. That's safer than selling to strangers.
- To start a school garden, ask a teacher or principal for help. Then start planting!



TOM WERNER—GETTY IMAGES