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**FREDERICK DOUGLASS ACADEMY STUDENTS' RESEARCH FINDS  
THREAT TO HARLEM RIVER MARINE ORGANISMS**

*Students presented research and volunteers gave tours of new "eco-friendly" Harlem River Park on Saturday*

Students from the Frederick Douglass Academy, who have been collecting samples from the nearby Harlem River Park, have found that the Harlem River's water chemistry conditions threaten the environment for fish and other marine life.

"The most notable conclusion is that during the summer the dissolved oxygen levels in river fall below federal Environmental Protection Agency standards, putting at risk the organisms that live there," said Mauricio Gonzalez, the Frederick Douglass Academy teacher who has used Harlem River Park and its access to the river as a laboratory for teaching students marine biology research.

The students pushed carts of displays and instruments a few blocks east and over the Harlem River Drive from a local school district science fair to [demonstrate their research methods and findings](#) to the community. Members of the Harlem River Park Task Force conducted tours of the park, including the new, 13-block portion formally opened in a [ribbon cutting ceremony](#) on April 28<sup>th</sup>, for about two-dozen guests.

"The research provided by Mauricio Gonzalez and his students have helped us understand the complexities of the environment," said Harlem River Park Task Force Executive Director Thomas H. Lunke. "It also shows us how designing a waterfront park with the community can lead us beyond the shoreline to solutions that will improve our overall health and well being," said Lunke, Director of Planning for the Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC).

Research scientist Ray Sambrotto of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, who has been working with Gonzalez and the students, came out to support the significance of their work. The Harlem River lies at the point where the western Long Island Sound joins the tidal estuaries—the East and lower Hudson Rivers and Upper New York Harbor—that are critical to the New York City marine ecosystem. "The Harlem River is right at the center, so it should be important," Sambrotto said.

Working with the Harlem River Park Task Force, which includes the Frederick Douglass Academy and the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, the Parks Department design includes innovative approaches to bring the community to the water's edge in a mutually beneficial ecological manner called [Designing The Edge](#). With the

construction of Phases II and III of the park, the City is a step closer to creating a continuous esplanade around Manhattan.

**Harlem Community Development Corporation**, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, serves the greater Harlem community through planning and implementing a range of community development and revitalization initiatives for restoring Upper Manhattan as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. For more information on Harlem CDC and its role in the Harlem River Park Task Force, please visit [http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning\\_hr\\_park.htm](http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning_hr_park.htm)

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