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## Earth Week helps students 'go green'

**Shaunna Murphy**

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The recent popularity of disturbingly informative documentaries like "An Inconvenient Truth" and "Who Killed the Electric Car?" may lead students to feel powerless and confused about what they can do to help.

But NYU's annual Earth Week, which kicked off last Thursday and runs until Friday, will provide several opportunities for interested people to get their hands dirty in the fight to "go green."

Tisch sophomore Jonathan Silver claims that these films inspired him to propose last Friday's "Change a Bulb, Save the World" program. Silver handed out 100 energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs to residents of Alumni residence hall.

"It's just a really easy way to make a difference," Silver said. "I'm a cinema studies major, so seeing documentaries like that was inspiring. I originally proposed the event for just my floor after reading about the bulbs online, but the hall council program liked the idea and paid for 100 bulbs. They save energy and reduce carbon emissions; I really don't see any downside. Plus, the reaction from students has been extremely positive."

Steinhardt freshman Cassie Abousamak was surprised at how easy it was to get involved with Earth Week activities. She was running errands on Friday morning when she passed the Village Improvement Program Day stand in the park, and she decided to participate by helping to paint the park's lampposts and rails.

"I never thought I could get so much done in such a short amount of time," she said. "I want to go help out with everything now."

Lisa Kail, the assistant director of the Office of Community Service, says that this is exactly the point of NYU's Earth Week activities - to help students like Abousamak realize that you don't have to be a sign-carrying activist to make a difference.

"We had just under 100 volunteers for VIP Day, and a lot of people have signed up to clean Rockaway Beach tomorrow," Kail said. "Anyone can help out for even just an hour. Everyone's work is needed."

Kail said there will be plenty of opportunities next week for students to clean up a little. The Neighborhood Walk About, where volunteers can help beautify the NYU campus by removing illegal posters from poles and mailboxes, will be held today.

Kail is eagerly anticipating the Gardening Projects, which will take place Monday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. Volunteers truly can get their hands dirty by planting more than 5,000 flowers around local gardens - flowers that will not require pesticides.

"The flowers are going to be beautiful and colorful and historically accurate, and they won't be harmful to the soil," Kail said.

Community Relations administrator David Lehmann is also looking forward to this event, mostly because it is garnering recognition for a relatively unknown NYU figure, gardener George Reis.

"George has done so much planning for this event," Lehmann said. "Most people don't even know that NYU has a gardener. No one thinks of NYU as being a very green campus. With all the 'going green' events that have been receiving so much deserved attention in the media, people are starting to pay more attention."

Lehmann also participated in Sunday's "Swap-o-Rama-Rama," where participants could bring in bags of old clothes in order to gain new ones, without giving in to the pressures of consumerism. The event also featured a fashion show and a table of young people sewing and designing for alterations.

"The clothes-swap event is pretty neat," he said. "The thing about NYU students is, well, they have a lot of clothes - cool clothes. Stuff that I like. I'm going to have some nice new T-shirts to wear."

For documentary buffs like Silver, there will be a screening of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" slideshow Friday night at the Kimmel Center, featuring a live host from Solar One, a New York City-based center that teaches city residents how to go green. After the event, students can head over to Starbucks for an open-mic Earth Week concert, with a raffle for prizes.

*To register for events and view the full schedule, visit [www.nyu.edu/about/earth.week](http://www.nyu.edu/about/earth.week).*

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