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Anna Adams-Sarthou, anna@ascomms.com; DEP, depressooffice@dep.nyc.gov

New, State-of-the-Art Green Playground, Designed by Students at P.S. 120Q, Improves the Health of Flushing Creek



Broken Porcelain, Harvested from Recycled Toilets, Forms Base of Green Playground

Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

Thanks to a significant public-private partnership, local leaders today announced the opening of a new, state-of-the-art green playground for P.S. 120 Queens in Flushing. The playground was made possible by grants from Queens Borough President Melinda Katz and Council Member Peter Koo as well as through an ongoing partnership between the Trust for Public Land's New York City Playground Program, the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection, the School Construction Authority and the New York Road Runners. The playground also includes green infrastructure elements that capture up to an inch of rainwater during storm events, amounting to about 500,000 gallons per year. This will ease pressure on the combined sewer system and help to reduce overflows into Flushing Creek.

"Flushing Creek has suffered from more than a century of neglect and in order to reverse that legacy DEP has invested \$500 million over the last decade to reduce pollution and improve the ecological health of the waterway," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "The more green infrastructure we build, including curbside rain gardens in sidewalks, playgrounds at schools and on private property, the healthier Flushing Creek will become, so we look forward to many more ribbon cuttings for green playgrounds!"

"The Trust for Public Land was pleased to work with PS 120Q students as well as city and local leaders to create a beautiful school and community playground for Flushing," said **Mary Alice Lee, The Trust for Public Land's Playgrounds**

More Information

NYC Department of
Environmental Protection
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373
(718) 595-6600

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Director. “The playground will be a fun space in which community members can come together while also providing more trees and green infrastructure to the neighborhood.”

“We are pleased to cut the ribbon on much anticipated upgrades to P.S. 120Q’s new, state-of-the-art playground,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.** “Mayor de Blasio, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Councilmember Peter Koo, the New York Road Runners and the Trust for Public Land deserve to be commended for their efforts to make the transformation of this playground into a reality for the families of Flushing.”

“This new playground will make sure our kids are given the best space possible to stay active, healthy, and that they are challenged both inside and outside the classroom,” said **Council Member Peter Koo.** “What makes this playground especially unique is that its design came from the hearts and minds of PS 120Q’s own students and faculty. I’m very proud to have helped contribute funding to this project so that our kids can have the best infrastructure possible to help them achieve a world class education.”

“We’re so excited to be a part of the playground opening at the second of three Rising New York Road Runners sites this fall, which will provide the participants of our free youth running program with a great space to get outdoors and moving,” said **Michael Capiraso, president and CEO of NYRR.** “Through New York Road Runners partnership with The Trust for Public Land and the support from Queens community leaders, the DEP, and the students and staff of PS 120Q we took another step towards creating a healthier, more active community.”

“It is an incredible feeling to arrive at P.S. 120 each day and see the beautiful space that was created by our students and the Trust for Public Land. Along with funding from NYBP Katz, Councilman Koo, NYC DEP and support from the NYRR, a dream to transform our concrete schoolyard in to a proper, multi-faceted playground has become a reality,” said **PS 120Q Principal Robert Marino.** “We look forward to daily recess, comprehensive sports and PE activities, as well as sharing this beautiful space with our community. It is also amazing to know that we are helping to reclaim millions of gallons of water to the Earth though the turf field, rather than have it spilled off into the sewer.”

P.S. 120 Queens Community Playground was designed by students, staff, parents, and community members through The Trust for Public Land’s NYC Playgrounds Program. This playground includes trees, plantings, pervious pavers, and a synthetic turf field. Together these green infrastructure elements will capture up to an inch of rainwater in storm events, amounting to about 500,000 gallons per year. DEP funds green infrastructure on publicly owned property to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSO) into New York’s waterways, including Flushing Creek and Flushing Bay.

In addition, the turf field at P.S. 120 includes materials recycled from DEP’s Municipal Water Efficiency Program (MWEP), which replaces old 5-gallon flush toilets in public schools with low-flow toilets. For this playground project, DEP crushed 3,500 toilets. This crushed porcelain now serves as a sturdy, porous sponge under the turf field. Now, instead of wasting clean water, those toilets help one inch of rain soak into the soil beneath, reducing the burden on the city’s sewer system. Since 2013, the MWEP has replaced 29,500 old toilets in public schools across the 5 boroughs, allowing the city to save 2.82 million gallons of clean water per day. This fall, the program is replacing 91 toilets at P.S. 120.

Today’s playground opening ceremony complements The Trust for Public Land’s ten-minute walk campaign, the goal of which is to ensure all New Yorkers live within a ten-minute walk of a playground. The 120Q playground serves 12,160 community members, of which 2,467 are under the age of 19—nearly a fifth of the population served by the school’s neighborhood.

The opening of this playground follows a recent playground groundbreaking of another Flushing school, JHS1289/Q263, which is also funded through partnerships with the Queens Borough President, Council Member Koo, DOE,

DEP and the Trust for Public Land. The renovations of these playgrounds are part of an ongoing campaign of the Trust for Public Land to create beautiful, fun, exercise- and educational-focused playgrounds for New York City students.

Since 1996, The Trust for Public Land's NYC Playgrounds Program has designed and/or built 191 school and community playgrounds across the five boroughs. In addition to serving students, all playgrounds in New York City are open to the public on weekends and after school hours, providing opportunities for both children and adults to be physically active. Nearly 3.3 million New Yorkers live within a ten-minute walk of one of TPL's playgrounds.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 21 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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