

Newsletter of the **Center for Sustainability and the Environment** at Wells College.



We earned this *Achiever* badge from the *Clean Green Campuses* program, recognizing our consistent efforts to lower operational carbon emissions and to contribute to a just energy transition on our campus. This badge from the *New York State Energy Research and Development Authority* (NYSERDA) commends our dedication to clean energy and sustainability. Wells College has been a member of the *Clean Green Campus* program (formerly known as the *REV Campus Challenge*) since its inception and actively participates in peer-to-peer networking activities and advising NYSERDA on college-focused clean energy projects.

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Sustainability Program Graduates



We celebrated the graduation of several students whom we wish all the best in their next steps: **Hannah Kulla**, Sustainability major who finished in December, is currently working as a Land Management/Conservation AmeriCorps Service member at the *Potomac Valley Audubon Society*.

Feleesha Jones, double major in Environmental Science and Sustainability, also completed her studies in December. Feleesha is working in retail while pursuing her boat captain's license and developing her plan to attend grad school in the future.



Liliana Talbot-Gould, double major in Environmental Science and Sustainability, will resume her summer work with NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at Bowman Lake State Park while mulling her graduate school options.

Jude Nash, Women's and Gender Studies major and Sustainability minor, also finished in December. Nash will work as a counselor for an LGBTQ summer camp while contemplating their path to future graduate studies.



We also celebrate **Hailey Onofre**, Health Sciences major who also finished in December. While Hailey didn't pursue a sustainability major or minor, she worked as our *Sustainability Programs Assistant* for 2 years. **Stay in touch, grads!**



Brooklyn Bugs Educational Collaboration with Cayuga Community College



Wells' *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* and *Cayuga Community College* (CCC) partnered to highlight a chef renowned for creating delectably sustainable delicacies that feature edible insects. As one of Wells' *Sustainability Special* presentations, Chef Joseph Yoon, celebrated as an edible insect ambassador and the founder of industry-leader *Brooklyn Bugs*, discussed how he became an edible insect ambassador and shared the sustainable benefits of entomophagy and insect agriculture, including its economic promise for rural and urban areas, and its potential to improve food security. Yoon led this "Bug Out" learning event on May 1st in our Sommer Center (top left) and reprised that talk on May 2nd out at CCC (top right). Both talks included tastings of foods incorporating insect proteins made by students in Cayuga's Culinary Arts program under the direction of Chef Yoon and CCC's Culinary program director, Chef Patrick Leibacher. Wells and Cayuga attendees snacked on foods such as crudites with cricket ranch dip, cheesy cricket nachos, mealworm brownies, caramel popcorn made with crickets and meal-



worms, and buttered popcorn dusted with powdered *gusano* (moth larva). Yoon is a Chef Advocate for the United Nations' *International Fund for Agricultural Development* (IFAD), the Culinary Advisor to the NASA's Deep Space Food Challenge, and was the Culinary Director for the 2022 *Insects to Feed the World* Conference. His work has been featured in numerous national and international media outlets. On May 2nd, to cap off Chef Yoon's 2-1/2 day residency, at Cayuga's Culinary Institute in Auburn, Yoon hosted two seatings of "Feeding Your Curiosity", a 10-course meal of insect dishes entirely prepared by Chef Yoon, Chef Leibacher and his Culinary Arts students. Wells College was well-represented at the later dinner seating. Eleven intrepid members of our campus community dined on delicious, gourmet delicacies such as black ant guacamole, a citrusy cricket and endive salad, a massaged kale salad with watermelon radish and cricket vinaigrette dressing, cricket scallion pancakes, mealworm and cricket falafel with mealworm tzatziki, trumpet mushrooms in an escargot shell garnished with grasshoppers, Brood X cicadas in a red lentil and cricket tempura served with cricket Green Goddess dressing, cricket stir fry noodles, and for dessert, "buggy" tiramisu made with cricket powder and decorated with chocolate-covered crickets. Chef Yoon's residency was made possible through the generous support of Wells College alumna, **Deb Callahan**, class of 1985.

Wells campus photo credit: BrierMae Ossont '23



RIT Grad Program Lunch

The Center for Sustainability hosted an informational luncheon for students interested in learning about our new affiliation agreement with the Rochester Institute of Technology's Master in Sustainable Systems. RIT's grad program chair Amit Batabyal provided a great overview of what Wells students could expect to study.



Spring Break 2023 crew celebrating progress on the hugelkultur garden

Alternative Spring Break

Visiting assistant professor of Sustainability **Jen Myers** led a group of Wells students to participate in the *Tenderfoot Learning Lab's* Sustainable Spring Break. This program has as its primary goal that students leave feeling more empowered to make sustainable choices. With the guidance of *Tenderfoot* staff, participants manage a garden, cook for each other, and work on sustainable building and maintenance projects. Students also spend time in group discussion exploring how sustainability is relevant to their own academic majors, professions, and communities. Wells students earned 1 credit for this week-long sustainability immersion program.

Marian Brown, director of the Center for Sustainability, was invited to serve as a judge for the Union Springs Academy's STEAM Fair on Sunday, March 12. Brown judged junior and senior architecture projects. Brown also helped the fair organizers connect with their main expert architect presenter.

Spring Sustainability Academic Projects

In the latest round of the so-called *Sustain-a-Cell* contest, students in BIOL 130L *Systems Biology: Biology of Organisms* must - either individually or as a small team - create a model of an animal or plant cell using "found" materials (items that no longer serve a useful purpose) and/or incorporating natural materials. Each model must include a key that identifies each cell organelle and its function, the material used to represent that organelle and where that material was found on campus. The Center for Sustainability director offered cash prizes for the best entries. The grand prize team of **Cherylanne Garrett '26** and **Zee Cain '26** did a great job. Our one quibble is that the items representing smooth/rough endoplasmic reticula/ribosomes painted directly onto the recycled Chili's bowl (plasma membrane) rendered an otherwise still-useful item unusable. But we liked the overall style and especially liked the use of green dental picks for cilia.



Grace Kahl '24, Inclusive Childhood Education major and Sustainability minor, presented on the development and delivery of her very-well-received Sustainability Camp program, offered to students at Peachtown School as an extra enrichment opportunity on Fridays when the school was not in session. Photo at right shows Grace with her Peachtown "campers".

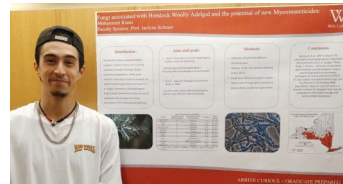
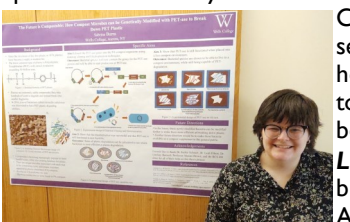
During the Spring Internship Fair and Natural Science thesis presentations, we noted a number of sustainability-related internship projects. Senior Psychology major **Makayla Zapanta** presented her Summer/Fall 2022 *Aurora Farmers Market* manager internship poster—she is flanked here by her site supervisors, Wells emeritus faculty **Vic Munoz** and supervisor **Ellen Hall**. Makayla provided stats on the number of vendors and patrons participating in each market day last season.



Environmental Science major **Mohammed Rzana '23** presented his thesis poster on fungi associated with hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the potential of new mycoinsecticides.

Chemistry major **Sabrina Burns '23** presented a poster and also orally presented her project during *Science Colloquium*. Her topic was titled "The future is compostable: how compost microbes can be genetically modified with PET-ase to break down PET plastic."

Liliana Talbot-Gould '23, Environmental Science and Sustainability double major, did her ENVIS thesis on "Determining Pale Swallowwort Patch Area and Forest Canopy Light Effects". Lili was also one of several students who accompanied professor **Ernie Olson** to Hawai'i during January term for the "Anthropological Experience in Hawai'i" course. Each student studied different aspects of Hawaiian environment and culture: Lili experienced sea life while snorkeling on the Big Island (photo at right); **Lydia Thomas '24** studied the medicinal and spiritual properties of Hawaiian tea; **Mohammed Rzana** explored island volcanic activity; **Alaina Reidler '23** photographed native flowers; **Maria Munoz-Ochoa '23** studied Hawaiian animals; and **Seana Leece '23** completed an internship supporting and reviewing the OCS 300 course experience itself.

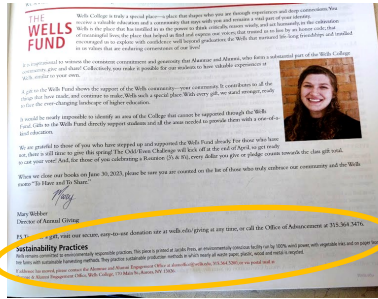


Two *Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence* independent student research projects had sustainability themes. **Clara Lima '24** researched "Cayuga County can incorporate traditional farming practices of the Cayuga Nation to combat climate change and its effects on local food security" while **Abigail McKenna '25** studied "How Increases in Occurrences of Wildfires Pose a Significant Security Threat."



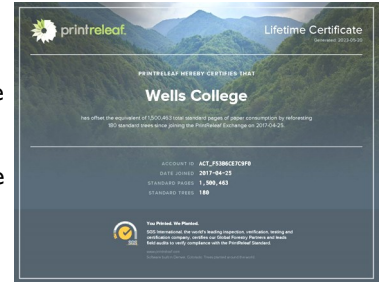
Wells Notes Sustainability Statement

Whenever Wells Notes, the print version of the alumni newsletter comes out, we read thru the alumni listings, searching for graduates working in relevant fields to whom we might reach out to invite to speak to current students. In leafing through the latest issue of Wells Notes, in addition to identifying a couple of alumnx we plan to invite back, we were pleased to see this statement included: Wells remains committed to environmentally responsible practices. This piece is printed at Jacobs Press, an environmentally conscious facility run by 100% wind power, with vegetable inks and on paper from tree farms with sustainable harvesting methods. They practice sustainable production methods in which nearly all waste paper, plastic, wood and metal is recycled.



Final Print Releaf certificate

Dan Wentworth, Information Technology (IT) director, notified the campus earlier this semester that IT is changing print management service providers from Toshiba to Canon. Toshiba had offered Wells free participation in their Print Releaf program which, based upon the number of print pages we collectively processed through their network printing equipment, partnered with a reforestation partner to replant one tree for every 8,333 letter size pages we printed. We recently received our final Print Releaf certificate, showing that in the six years since we joined the program, Wells printed more than 1.5M pages and 180 trees were replanted on our behalf by the reforestation program partner we previously had selected, the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

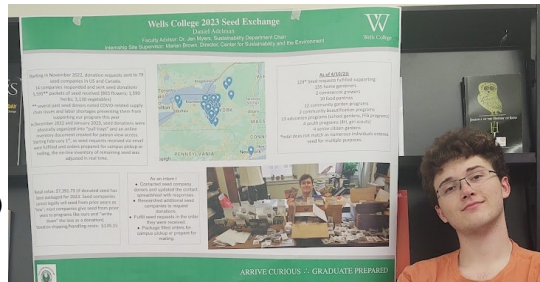


2023 Wells College Seed Exchange Statistics

The Wells College Seed Exchange has wrapped up for the 2023 season. **Dan Adelman '25**, our seed exchange intern, presented his poster at the Spring Internship Fair listing the final exchange program stats. Starting in November 2022, Dan sent donation requests to 79 seed companies in the US and Canada. 15 companies responded and sent seed donations to us. Dan received 5,646 packets of seed (878 flowers; 1,595 herbs; 3,173 vegetables) with a retail value of over \$7,500. We fulfilled 133* seed orders, either mailed out or picked up on campus, supporting the following uses:

- 177 home gardeners
- 2 commercial growers
- 10 food pantries
- 13 community garden programs
- 2 community beautification
- 13 education programs (school gardens, FFA programs)
- 4 youth programs (4H, Girl Scouts)
- 4 senior citizen gardens

*total does not match as some individuals ordered seed for multiple purposes.



Repurposing Plant Pots

Jack Bjorkander '16, Residence Hall director, requested donations of old mugs or small pots for students to use to pot plants for their rooms. At almost the same moment, **Anna laleggio**, studio art faculty, stopped by to inquire what to do with a couple boxes of glass vases left in the *String Room Gallery* storage area. We suggested Anna put those vessels in the Food & Freebie Room so interested students could fill them with soil and use them for potting plants for their res hall rooms.



Sophomore ivy plant tradition

Natural Upcycling final stats

We contract with **Natural Upcycling (NU)**, a Rochester-based food waste hauling company, to manage the dining hall food waste our campus diners divert from landfill trash in the Dining Hall and coffee grounds and filters the baristas separate from other waste in the *GRIND Café*. NU provides us with a number of 65-gallon compost totes and picks up full totes of food waste on a weekly basis; their collection trucks feature an on-board washing system so emptied totes can be cleaned and reset. NU transports our diverted material to the *Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA)* composting facility in Amboy for processing into soil amendments and mulch. This year, **Natural Upcycling** hauled away over 16 tons of compostable food waste, a 30% increase over last year's total.



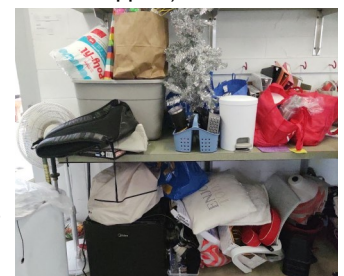
Sustainable Swag

For several years now, we have purchased custom-imprinted pens for the *Center for Sustainability* that are made of plastic recycled from single-use water bottles. While our intent in offering these pens is for visitors to take them, Wells students regularly report that they are their "favorite pens". We recently heard from **EcoPlum**, the company from whom we have purchased these pens that their company is now a certified **B Corporation** plus they meet other social benefit criteria as a NYS minority and woman-owned business enterprise (M/WBE). This makes us feel even better about our purchasing source!



Trash2Treasure Move-out Collection

For our annual move-out collection, called *Trash2Treasure*, with the help of Facilities staff, we place blue collection bins in common areas in the residence halls. Students and staff are invited to donate still-usable but no-longer-wanted room furnishings, housewares, clothing, non-perishable food items and personal care products. Items collected are brought to *Zabriskie Hall* to be weighed and evaluated for further campus use. Retained items restock the *Food & Freebie Room* in Main or the *RUM-PUS Room* (office/school supplies). Unserved items are donated to area reuse programs. We collected over 1,680 pounds of reusable "stuff", an 80% increase over 2022! Yowza!



Saved items to restock reuse areas



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Wells Center for
Sustainability and



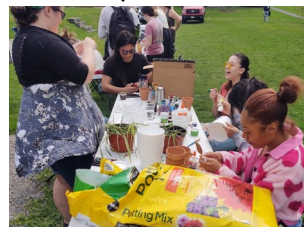
Our "Green Goodie Baskets, filled with a curated assortment of more sustainable personal care and cleaning products, remain popular. We provided one for the silent auction for the Geneva Music Festival—that one was valued at \$125. We offered a basket filled with more student-centered items, with a \$90 value, as the Grand Prize for the Earth Week BINGO raffle drawing.



Sustainability is a decision-making framework for continuous improvement that mindfully takes into account the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our choices.

Earth Week 2023 Activities

During Earth Week (April 21-27), Wells Campus Greens were joined by other groups to coordinate an active schedule of fun and educational activities. On Saturday, April 22, they coordinated the Earth Day Fair, held in conjunction with Student Activities' Spring Fling. Unfortunately,



the rainy weather drove most activities indoors for most of the afternoon. Campus Greens sponsored a Mending workshop for students to learn how to make "needle and thread" repairs to their clothing. Greens also sponsored a plant pot decorating activity and supplied soil and plant cuttings for potting. Students in Dr. Jen Myers' Psychology of Sustainability class offered some upcycling activities, decorating donated tote bags and using other "found" materials to upcycle into useful items. They also offered a DIY Natural Beauty workshop making sugar scrubs and other personal care products. Several Aurora Farmers Market vendors were in attendance to sell their food, veggies and craft items to Fair-goers.

On two days during Earth Week, Dr. Jadyn Schnurr, professor of Biology and Environmental Science, led her two Plants! class lab sections on a hike to the campus waterfall. In conjunction with those hikes, she offered a BioBlitz activity in which participants collected useful biodiversity data using the iNaturalist app. Plants! lab students had to document their findings of different plant varieties. For the BioBlitz, observations could be anything that you could photograph (birds, plants, insects, mammals, etc) or record (bird songs, amphibian calls, etc). Once uploaded into the iNaturalist app, the findings were logged and tracked. The Center for Sustainability worked with Dr. Schnurr to award prizes for the most findings. Janelle Smalls '24 won 1st place, uploading 186 total observations of 79 different species. Delaney Beers '25 was second, with 157 observations of 62 different species, followed by Timothy Miller '26 (140 total, 55 species). Jim Babcock, lab manager, donated a lovely pink geranium from his greenhouse stock as one of the BioBlitz prizes.

And speaking of prizes, for the BINGO game that Campus Greens hosted to cap off Earth Week, the club solicited "sustainable" items for prizes. The students suggested that some crocheted or knitted items might be nice and, aware that some of our alumni were avid handcrafters, they reached out to Rachel Porter '06, Alumnae/i Engagement Officer in the Office of Advancement. Rachel in turn reached out through her alumni networks, including the SIP & WIP virtual alumni handcraft group she co-hosts with Fran Trubilla Kissel '78. Packages of hand-crafted prize items soon began arriving. On behalf of the Stagecoach Fibers Guild, Fran donated a lovely pair of "Superwash" wool fingerless gloves. Rachel herself donated an embroidered rendering of the college belltower and she enlisted the assistance of her sister, Bethany Weldon, to make a pair of crocheted "bucket hats". Last but not certainly not least, Pat Greninger '78 sent a large box stuffed full of crocheted reusable shopping bags, which proved amazingly popular! For the Greens club's Earth Day Fair plant pot decorating / plant potting table, Rachel also solicited donations of plant cuttings/rootings from local alumni for the latter part of that activity. Sarah Gleason '88 answered that call, delivering a nice assortment of "spider plant" babies for students to pot in their custom-decorated pots. The supportive response from Wells alumni was most gratifying to the students. Thanks, everyone!

