

# GREENHOUSE

Established in 1974, Greenhouse is an alternative program of comprehensive secondary education blending academic studies, community resourcing, interpersonal skills development, and college and career preparation.

Students earn high school credits through a variety of learning style formats, including classroom coursework, cooperative community work experience, experience-based career internships (EBCI), student-centered research projects, and individualized teacher-coordinated learning units.

A vital educational difference distinguishing Greenhouse as an alternative placement is the method of awarding credit. A traditional setting provides an “all or nothing” format that requires students to work ten months, waiting until June to earn transcript credits. Here, to avoid the risk of total failure, students earn credit in five-week increments, or “cycles”, culminating at the mid- and end-points of each traditional marking quarter. Since there are eight cycles in a school year, a student can earn 1/8, or .125, credit per course per cycle. A student passing each course in a cycle will receive 1.125 credits. This system of positive reinforcement encourages the student who realizes more immediate rewards for her efforts. Additionally, the system protects a student who is susceptible to crisis pressures. One poor cycle will not ruin a student’s entire academic year.

South Side staff, counselors and administrators recommend students whose progress in school is threatened or affected by academic, personal or social problems. Students’ histories include chronic absenteeism and lateness, academic underachievement and failure, and behaviors resulting in suspension from school. Prospective candidates are encouraged to visit the school and must complete an application and a personal interview. An important factor is the student’s decision to choose this alternative in order to provide “student ownership” of his high school career. For student success and overall program strength, Greenhouse should be a student’s valued option.

Greenhouse courses, independent learning units, and independent research projects are designed to help students meet all New York State graduation requirements. Content areas include World and American Literature, Global and U.S. History, Writing Skills, Business, Math, Health Science, Environmental Studies, Biology, Sociology, and Earth Science.



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## Greenhouse FAQ sheet:

### **Program size?**

Greenhouse typically serves 35 to 40 students per year, carrying on its roster from 15 to 25 kids at any one time. Students range in levels from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with an occasional “super senior.” Students graduate at various points in the year, thus opening roster spots for students to join mid-year as needs arise. Students meet all necessary NY State credit and testing needs, earning local, Regents and Advanced Regents diplomas.

### **Staff requirements?**

Greenhouse is currently staffed by: a leadership team (one Special Ed. teacher and one “regular” Ed. teacher with 15+ years of alternative school experience); 1 Social Worker (approximately \_ - time), 1 full-time TA (funded through a Special Ed grant), and traveling teachers in Math, Social Studies and Science (at approximately 2 periods each), 1 Teacher’s Aide to help with data entry and support tasks, and 1 security guard.

### **Location and Physical Plant Issues?**

The program is housed in rented space in a professional building in downtown Rockville Centre about 3 miles from South Side High School. The space meets all state codes for school buildings, including handicap access and fire safety. The office space includes a 15-student classroom, an 8-student classroom, a main office, a teacher’s office, a private meeting office for the Social Worker, a main room and a small group room. Each teacher has access to a computer and there is a bank of research-only computers for students. A school bus serves students who live outside the distance limit for walkers and at the end of the day delivers to the school athletes who participating in varsity or JV sports.

### **Further information?**

Please call Frank Van Zant, Director, at (516) 766-3894.

## Greenhouse Alternative School Community Service Credo

In a typical year Greenhouse will serve about 40 high school students who might struggle in an academic setting, exhibiting poor motivational tendencies, rebellious attitudes and non-academic priorities. We challenge our students to think beyond their own issues, and to find ways to give positively to the community at large. We have connected our kids to several rewarding service opportunities, including volunteer sessions at a soup kitchen, The INN in Hempstead, a beach clean-up project at Jones Beach through the Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center, visitation sessions at various senior centers in our town, volunteer sessions in local churches and businesses, and clean-up and beautification projects around RVC schools. The experience has been energizing, helping our kids to develop a perspective on need, a positive community-minded togetherness, and pride in their giving.

The benefit for our various volunteer sites is obvious, an improved area; but the benefit to our students is always most important, tremendously uplifted spirits. Their pride becomes embodied in a completed job that they can point to, visit, and remember as a symbol of their best work as students and as people, the accomplishment of giving. This is always a program boost for those immediately involved, and shows the Greenhouse program in its best light, enhancing the quality of the school experience for students who have suffered frustrations in the past. The commitment to community celebrates the act of giving while providing the giver-learners with memory touchstones.

## Greenhouse Successes

- \* won grants from NEFCU, RVC Teacher's Center, NC Holocaust and Tolerance Center, RVC Education Foundation
- \* maintained ongoing community service projects at The INN, a soup kitchen in Hempstead, and the Sandel Center (RVC)
- \* designed a grant-funded group project for community service (Greenhouse Beautification and Community Service) at SSMS
- \* facilitated attainment of Advanced Regents diplomas
- \* facilitated attainment of Regents diplomas
- \* placed students in internship sites (including a church, a trucking company, several district classrooms, the Rosa Lee Young Daycare Center,
- \* motivate students to enjoy increased attendance
- \* motivate students to achieve credit earning goals
- \* facilitated student employment opportunities
- \* insisted on high work standards for credit awarded
- \* promoted physical health and active lifestyles in activities including yoga, walking, tennis, biking, weightlifting, and other activities
- \* maintained high social-emotional responses and interactions through activities such as horseback riding, Long Beach boardwalking, Thanksgiving and December holiday meals, touch football outings, canoeing, and other field trips
- \* succeeded in enlisting students to serve as peer leaders and positive role models
- \* supported athletes in their participation in South Side High School athletic programs

# Greenhouse Grant Supporters

Rockville Centre Teachers' Association

Nassau Educators Federal Credit Union

Rockville Centre Education Foundation

South Nassau Community Hospitals

Nassau County Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center

**School Districts Making Recent Visits  
to Greenhouse  
To Learn How We Meet Success**

Hewlett-Woodmere

Hauppauge

Long Beach

Freeport

Baldwin

*This should show you how highly regarded  
our program is throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties*

*Greenhouse Rocks*

