

The PwC Scholar's  
Community Service Day Project  
Spring 2009



Laurel Gardens

## 2009 Community Service Project

Throughout the 2008 - 2009 academic year, the Scholars worked with the VINES organization and members of the Laurel Avenue neighborhood to accomplish our second annual community service project, Laurel Gardens. This project was taken on by the Scholars because the Laurel Avenue lot had been a haven for drug trafficking and lacked an aesthetic appeal. The local residents asked for our help in transforming the vacant lot into a beautiful and functional garden space that would improve the neighborhood, offer low cost space for growing flowers and vegetables, and serve as an inspiration and example for other potential community gardens throughout the City of Binghamton.



Being that this was our second community service day, the Scholars were motivated to not only build on the first year's success, but add new elements to the project as well. As a group we made it our goal to help subsidize the cost of the project by raising money throughout the year. We also wanted to include a local elementary school and incorporate an academic aspect to the project that would serve as a learning opportunity for youths in the community. The Laurel Community Garden offered us that perfect opportunity because when we contacted representatives from the nearby Horace Mann Elementary School, they were very eager to get involved in the project and help develop ways for the students to have an involvement in the garden once it was completed.

On the day of the event, about two thirds of the Scholars worked to literally transform the empty lot into a beautiful community garden, while a third of the Scholars worked with the local school children at Horace Mann Elementary School on making pinwheels that were "planted" in the garden. We brought in soil, plants, compost, wooden beds, and bricks with sponsor names engraved on them. One whole side of the garden was also



designated solely for use by the school, which was to be used by fifth grade classes who were learning about plants/photosynthesis, as well as the second grade classes studying the food sources of Native Americans. Many members of the community came with baked goods to thank the Scholars for helping revive their neighborhood and several local politicians including Matt Ryan, the Mayor of Binghamton, took part in the closing ceremony.