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# STEPHEN RITZ

FOUNDER OF GREEN BRONX MACHINE;  
GREEN INITIATIVE EDUCATOR; WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT INNOVATOR; U.S. GREEN  
BUILDING COUNCIL AMBASSADOR

## FEATURED VIDEOS

- > [TEDx Talk: Stephen Ritz](#)
- > [Stephen Ritz on The Today Show](#)
- > [CNN Coverage: NYC Students Learn How to Farm in Urban Landscape](#)
- > [Urban Farming NYC](#)

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

"It's an unlikely scenario: students in one of the most densely populated and economically challenged areas of the US (in fact, the poorest congressional district in the country) becoming productive farmers and environmental stewards. But that's exactly what Stephen Ritz and his Green Bronx Machine are doing, making a significant difference in his South Bronx community and for his students' future.

Ritz is extremely passionate about what he does, and it shows both in academic results and in the well-being of his students and their families. Known for his inspiring vision, Ritz sees farming as a metaphor for education."

> *Anthony Salcito, VP of Microsoft Partners in Learning*

"This is a bold initiative that gets people to understand that an environmental project like this is in everyone's common interest—it's what I call "green literacy." ...Projects like the Bronx Green Machine are what Career and Technical Education is all about. We know that quality CTE programs prepare students with the academic, technical and employability skills that are needed in a rapidly changing technological world. Above all else, we ignite a love of learning in our students and a zest for success in life."

> *Sterling Roberson, Vice-President of Career Technical Education for United Federation of Teachers*

Stephen Ritz is a South Bronx teacher and administrator who believes that students shouldn't have to leave their community to live, learn, and earn in a better one. Moving generations of students into spheres of personal and academic successes they have never imagined, while reclaiming and rebuilding the Bronx, Stephen's extended student and community family have grown more than 30,000 pounds of vegetables in the Bronx while generating extraordinary academic performance.

His Bronx classroom features the first indoor edible wall in NYC DOE, which routinely generates enough produce to feed healthy meals to 450 students and trains the youngest nationally certified workforce in America. His students, traveling from Boston to Rockefeller Center to the Hamptons, earn living wages en route to graduation. Stephen has consistently moved attendance from 40 percent to 93 percent daily, helped fund and create 2,200 youth jobs, captured the US EPA Award for transforming mindsets and landscapes in NYC, recently won the ABC Above and Beyond Award and the 2012 Chevrolet National Green Educator Award, and helped earn his school the first ever Citywide Award of Excellence from the NYC Strategic Alliance for Health—and Stephen attributes these results directly to growing vegetables in school. The National Association of Secondary School Principals cited Stephen's work and the Green Bronx Machine as one of the five national exemplars of service learning.

His speech at Columbia University, entitled "From Crack to Cucumbers," along with the release of a YouTube Video, "Urban Farming NYC," resulted in a national following, including an invite to the White House Garden. Recently dubbed the Pied Piper of Peas by Lorna Sass, Stephen has launched the Green Bronx Machine to a national audience and has signed on more than 6,000 local followers in several months. Stephen was just announced as a national Green Apple Education Ambassador for the US Green Building Council and is working on embedding the concepts of sustainability and environmental justice into K-12 programming and beyond.

Dedicated to harvesting hope and cultivating minds, Stephen dreams of opening a nationally replicable Career Technical Education public school in the poorest Congressional District in America rooted in urban agriculture, green, and sustainable initiatives. Stephen recently lost more than 100 pounds by modeling positive behavior and eating what he and his students grow in school.

## POPULAR TOPICS

### FARMING FOR THE FUTURE: INVESTING IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

A whirlwind of energy and ideas, Stephen Ritz is a teacher in New York's tough South Bronx, where he and his kids grow lush gardens for food, greenery—and jobs. His classroom in the Bronx generates enough produce to feed healthy meals to more than 400 students, as well as trains the youngest nationally certified workforce in America. In this inspiring talk, Stephen spins through the many, many ways there are to grow hope in a neighborhood many have written off, or in your own. Steven explains how creating projects for youth can help keep them out of trouble, reshape the workforce of the next generation, and educate young adults early on how to take care of their bodies, minds, and communities. Audiences will be inspired to create projects in their own neighborhoods that have the ability to reach far and wide.