



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**NEW ENGLAND GROWS ANNOUNCES A \$50,000 COMMITMENT  
TO BENEFIT THE BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE;  
2007 SHOW BREAKS ATTENDANCE RECORD**

BOSTON, Mass.—New England Grows, the Northeast's largest Green Industry exposition and educational conference, announced it has committed \$50,000 to the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative (BSFC) in support of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI), a public/private partnership between the BSFC and the City of Boston dedicated to revitalizing the City's schoolyards and neighborhoods.

New England Grows' five-year commitment to benefit the BSI was highlighted at this year's 15<sup>th</sup> annual show, which took place February 6 through February 8 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC). A record-breaking crowd of more than 15,000 attended the event, taking part in the award-winning tradeshow's world-class learning opportunities for Green Industry professionals.

"The BSI is doing great things for kids and horticulture in Boston, and New England Grows is honored to make this commitment in support of an organization that is so vital to the fabric of Boston's communities," said Cricket Vlass, president of New England Grows.

At the Landmark Luncheon held at New England Grows on February 8 to mark the tradeshow's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Ms. Vlass presented a check for \$10,000 to the Honorable Mayor Thomas M. Menino. The mayor accepted New England Grows' first year commitment on behalf of the City of Boston and the BSI.

"I am delighted to accept this generous gift on behalf of the BSI and the City of Boston," said Mayor Menino at the luncheon. "The re-designed schoolyards created by the BSI have improved the quality of life for children and have made our neighborhoods a better place to live. We welcome the Green Industry's commitment to help realize our goal of environmental sustainability for the future of our city."

New England Grows' contribution will help maintain the significant green spaces

included in the 61 schoolyards BSI has worked to revitalize. The funds will be used to implement programs aimed at teaching students how to care for the plantings and hardscape features of their schoolyards and, ultimately, how to become stewards of these urban green areas. Funds from New England Grows will also be used to research and design a program to encourage school-to-career opportunities within the Green Industry.

“New England Grows’ generous commitment gives us an opportunity to work with the Green Industry to positively affect urban schools and neighborhoods,” said Kirk Meyer, executive director of the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative. “We believe the students’ bond with nature developed in outdoor classrooms can have an enduring effect on their lives and on their communities.”

New England Grows was recently named the fastest growing association-led tradeshow in North America by *Tradeshow Week* magazine, and ranked among North America’s 200 largest tradeshows in 2005. Next year’s show is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6 through Friday, February 8, 2008 at the BCEC. For more information and to learn how to exhibit please visit [www.NEGrows.org](http://www.NEGrows.org) or call (508) 653-3009.

#### **About New England Grows**

New England Grows is an educational partnership between the New England Nursery Association, Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Arborists Association, Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association, and its network includes more than 30 allied Green Industry organizations.

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Suggested caption:

New England Grows president, Cricket Vlass, presents Boston Mayor Tom Menino with a \$50,000 commitment to the Boston Schoolyard Initiative at the conference’s 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held on February 8, 2007.

Photos available upon request.