

## OUR REGION

# Tiny House is big on the environment

Designed by students, self-sustaining home unveiled in Cornwall

By Richard J. Bayne  
Times Herald-Record

CORNWALL — They call it a “Tiny House.” It’s only 100 square feet, enough room for a kitchen, a bathroom with a shower and a loft bedroom.

And it’s totally self-sustaining. All the electricity comes from solar panels on the roof — enough to power three lights and a mini-fridge. The water supply — runoff from the downspouts — is stored in a 32-gallon tank. The toilet is a bucket, lined with sawdust. The 6.5 foot-by-7-foot loft bedroom, which sleeps two, takes advantage of the thermal principle that heat rises.

The Tiny House, which celebrated its opening to the public Saturday at the Black Rock Forest Consortium in the Town of Cornwall, is the product of a science-class project at Avenues: The World School in Manhattan, an innovative private school that challenges students to be ecologically aware. Fifty students, all juniors

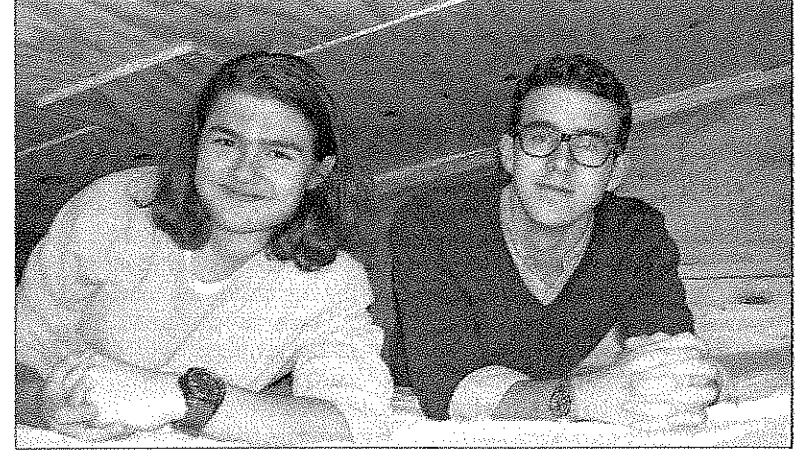


Dylan Vaccaro, a junior at Avenues: The World School in Manhattan, helps Jane Redfern, parent of a fellow student, exit the Tiny House after Saturday’s tours. Fifty Avenues students built the house, which is designed to be completely self-sustaining. PHOTOS BY RICHARD J. BAYNE/TIMES HERALD-RECORD

now, started their Tiny House last year. They designed and built it on the ninth floor of their 10-story school in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. Then they dismantled it, and trucked it up to the Black Rock Forest preserve and reassembled it. They celebrated their grand opening Saturday with tours and demonstrations.

Sophia D’Urso, 16, of Manhattan,

explained how the windows were installed on the south side of the building to maximize heat. There’s no furnace. The walls are carefully constructed, using insulation made from recycled denim. Sophia Kooock, 16, proudly showed her family through the house. “If you live in an apartment building in New York City, you don’t think about the environmental impact,”



Antonio Rivoli, left, and Dylan Vaccaro, both juniors at Avenues: The World School in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, show off the “bedroom” at the Tiny House their class built and then moved to the Black Rock Forest Consortium preserve in the Town of Cornwall. The bedroom is actually a loft, with about two feet of ceiling clearance above the sleeping space.

said Kooock, who lives on the 12th floor of a 13-story building in the Garment District.

“In school, you usually get a lot of information, but you don’t do anything with it,” said Antonio Rivoli, 16. “But this house will be here forever.”

The house made its way to Black Rock Forest after the school contacted the executive director, Dr. William Schuster, who agreed to welcome it as a permanent installation. He cleared it with the town’s

building inspector, and the students set it up, right next to the Science Center, at the foot of Whitehorse Mountain at the 3,870-acre preserve. “We’re really open to innovative educational programs and collaborative projects here,” Schuster said. He said the Tiny House could be used to accommodate visitors if the lodge is filled. He plans to spend a night in it himself soon.

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