



ECOLOGICAL COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME MAKES BRONX DEBUT

By Jon Minners

Youth at Madison Square Boys and Girls Club are not just learning music, dance, sports, arithmetic and literacy. Something new has found its way to the Columbus Clubhouse and essentially the Bronx.

On Thursday, August 17, Bronx youth took part in a revolutionary new concept called Xeko.

Xeko is a trading card game with a mission: entertain and delight kids while teaching them about animals, introducing them to the principles of biodiversity and taking them on an adventure to some of the most precious and remarkable places on the planet.



Xeko was inspired by the work of Conservation International, an organization with a simple, but vital mission, to preserve the diversity of life on Earth and demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.

Kids are more likely to pay attention to and care about the fates of places and animals they've heard about, and a collectible card game was a natural choice for presenting interesting data about creatures and their habitats in a compelling and memorable way, said Xeko creator Amy Tucker.

The card game premiering in the Bronx was set in the African island of Madagascar, coincidentally enough, as the Bronx Zoo prepares to unveil its Madagascar exhibit in the near future.

Similar to blockbuster card games like Pokemon and Yu-gi-oh, Xeko involves collecting trading cards to create a custom library or Xeko-system and using the cards to match wits against opponents in exciting game play. Instead of monsters and fantasy, Xeko takes its cues from nature and science, casting actual animal species as the heroes and basing game play on ecosystem relationships.

A website, www.xekogame.com, will provide kids with news on the game as well as a portal to more information about the animals, biodiversity, hotspots, conservation and more that developers hope will lead kids, like those at Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, to take action and save their environment.

All by itself, Xeko obviously won't save the hotspots from the threats they face, said Tucker. But who knows? Maybe the game will lead to the ideas that ultimately create a truly sustainable society.