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Beczak Environmental Center to use \$1M windfall to expand

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YONKERS - The Beczak Environmental Education Center will use \$1 million it will receive as part of a settlement between the state and Yonkers Raceway to establish an endowment and expand, officials said yesterday.

The \$1 million is part of a \$9 million settlement to which the track agreed after an investigation by state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer found that the raceway had discharged raw human and animal waste into the Bronx River.

The Beczak Center, located alongside the Hudson River on Alexander Street, will expand the scope of its programs to include the Bronx River, Executive Director Kathleen Savolt said.

Half of the money, however, will be set aside to create an endowment that will help shore up the 17-year-old nonprofit's future. Just a month ago, the organization wasn't sure how it would meet its payroll, Savolt said.

"This will ensure Beczak will be here forever," she said, at a press conference. She was joined by Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone and Schools Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio in Habirshaw Park.

Under the Oct. 6 settlement, raceway officials agreed to stop the pollution and take several steps intended to help clean up the river. The settlement also calls for the raceway to pay \$6 million toward reducing storm-water pollution and \$2 million in penalties to the state.
