

2014 Annual Report



Dear RHI Friends and Supporters:

As I reflect back on 2014, the twelfth year for Red Hook Initiative (RHI), it was clearly a year of tremendous growth and opportunity. Our work with young people from Red Hook has continued to intensify in both the depth and longevity of program offerings. This increasing work has been made possible by the addition of new programs and partnerships, new staff and a growing board of directors.

Our middle school, high school, young adult and community building programs offered an essential pipeline for over 350 young people to gain the skills and confidence needed to progress toward a high school diploma and go on to college or a workforce training program. These youth are fulfilling our mission as they envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society.

Our belief that people from the community have the power to create their own social change remains central to our philosophy and practice. In 2014 we paid over \$1M back into Red Hook through staff salaries, participation stipends and work with local businesses. We continue to invest in the professional development of our employees—both young people and adults; in 2014 every employee met at least one professional development goal, completed a training or developed a new skill. This development of local leadership creates a hope and spirit of positive change that is the driving force behind our work.

As you will see in the following pages, our work truly reaches deep into the heart of the community and nurtures the full potential of every young person we serve. This would not be possible without the generous and long-term support of so many; thank you for being a part of our success.

Sincerely,



Jill K. Eisenhard
Founder & Executive Director

IN 2014,
RHI's Programs and
Community Building Efforts
CREATED OVER

6,130
POSITIVE
POINTS
OF IMPACT
for Red Hook residents.



370

Participated in middle school, high school, young adult and Local Leaders programs

1,000

Engaged in participatory budgeting

750

Participated in education, health or housing related surveys to improve conditions

140

Participated in a middle school event or service learning project

170

Counseled or educated by a teen Peer Counselor

150

Participated in Red Hook Ready Day

150

Engaged in a Youth Leader Expo

900

Received reproductive health education from a teen Peer Health Educator

2,500

Utilized Red Hook WIFI

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

60
YOUTH
SERVED

RHI's ongoing and long-term programming reached

- ↳ 60 Middle School Youth
- ↳ 85 High School Youth
- ↳ 155 Young Adults
- ↳ 70 Local Leaders



Twelve-year-old **CARLA** started at RHI as a sixth grader. Her dad works full-time and is raising Carla and her sister by himself. At the beginning of the year, Carla was fairly reserved and introverted, but excited to be a part of our program. Carla, like all RHI youth, met with a tutor for an academic screen and shared that she was struggling in school—her average was 65 in her first marking period. Carla also met with a social worker to complete a socio-emotional screening, where she shared that she struggled in school because she had lost her much-needed pair of eyeglasses. Because of the screening, RHI staff was able to connect with her dad and help her get replacement eyeglasses. Carla continued to attend programs and tutoring regularly and was especially excited about Mirrors of Strength, RHI's young women's empowerment group. By the end of the school year, Carla had brought her average up to a 90, while finding a supportive community in RHI.

Please note that this student's name has been changed to protect her confidentiality.

Comprehensive middle school programs offered in 2014:

- Daily Tutoring and Academic Enrichment
- Counseling and Social Work Services
- Service-Learning Project, a partnership with PAVE Academy
- Mirrors of Strength, an empowerment program for girls
- Makerspace Inventors Workshop
- Brooklyn Boatworks, a boat building project
- Rites of Passage, a literacy and empowerment program for boys
- Cooking and Nutrition Education
- Family Institutes of Bold Hope, a family therapeutic group
- Arts and Dreams, youth empowerment workshops through art
- KIDS Arts, a partnership with Kentler Gallery Art Workshops

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS

155
YOUNG ADULTS
SERVED

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

85
YOUTH
SERVED

Comprehensive high school programs offered in 2014:

- Teen Chef*
- Robotics*
- Peer Health Educators*
- Peer Counselors*
- Youth Leaders in Training*
- Zine: Red Hook Magazine*
- Girls Who Code
- Filmmaking
- Poetry and Spoken Word
- My Life, My Story: Narrative Writing
- Sound Engineering and DJing
- Post-secondary Preparation and College Writing
- SWAG: LGBTQ Group
- Photography

*Paid employment program

Starting at RHI as a ninth grader, 17-year-old **RUBY** has participated in many of our high school youth leadership programs. Though she had been a consistent RHI participant, in 2014 Ruby found herself in her junior year of high school, on the verge of failing classes and not graduating on time because of inconsistent attendance and academic performance. She started to work closely with RHI's Education Coordinator on a steady, achievable plan toward graduation. By advocating for herself and accessing credit recovery courses at her high school, Ruby is now on track to graduate in June 2015. With support from RHI she has applied to more than 10 colleges, and has so far been accepted to Onondaga Community College. Ruby is eagerly awaiting other college responses, and will work with the Education Coordinator to weigh the options in front of her.

Please note that this student's name has been changed to protect her confidentiality.

Twenty-two-year-old **MICHAEL** successfully completed RHI's professional development training. At the end of the course, RHI staff helped Michael secure two interviews with local employment partners. Just before the first interview, he expressed doubts about his ability to get the job. He spoke with the Young Adult Program Manager, who was able to work through his doubts and help him arrive at the interview prepared and confident. A few days later, Michael was able to choose between the two job offers he secured through successful interviews. Michael chose to work at IKEA and was trained by another RHI young adult, who was leaving her job to attend college. Michael continues to receive strong performance reviews at IKEA, where he is a committed and enthusiastic team member.

Please note that this young adult's name has been changed to protect his confidentiality.

Comprehensive young adult programs offered in 2014:

- Employment Coaching
- Professional Development Training
- College Scholars and Pre-College Scholars
- High School Equivalency Referral and Support
- One-on-one Counseling / Social Work Support
- Paid Internships and Job Placement

COMMUNITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

70 LOCAL LEADERS TRAINED
AND THOUSANDS OF RED HOOK RESIDENTS REACHED

RHI's community building program works toward three goals: building social capital, creating positive institutional change in Red Hook and facilitating authentic participation and leadership in community life. We achieve these goals through youth-driven social change projects, community-led initiatives and organizing and advocacy projects.

RHI Staff Members and Local Leaders brought the Red Hook voice to the table through these coalitions / boards:

- Alliance for Just Rebuilding
- NYC Broadband Task Force
- NYC Neighborhood Capital Corporation Advisory Board
- New York Foundation Learning Lab
- Participatory Budgeting Citywide Steering Committee
- Red Hook Coalition
- Stronger Together



2014 HIGHLIGHTS



MARCH

- **Alisa Pizarro**, RHI Community Organizer, testifies before the City Council on the need for temporary boilers in public housing post-Hurricane Sandy
- RHI sends delegation to Rotterdam, Netherlands with Pratt RAMP (Recovery Adaptation, Mitigation + Planning) to study resilient infrastructure
- RHI and other organizing groups release "Weathering the Storm: Rebuilding a More Resilient NYCHA Post-Sandy", on the steps of City Hall

APRIL

- Social Justice Fellows attend National People's Action Conference in Washington, DC
- RHI participates in the District 38 Participatory Budgeting (PB) cycle, collecting ideas from the community, identifying PB delegates, crafting proposals and conducting a Get Out The Vote campaign, resulting in the highest voter turnout in a district in NYC since the inception of the PB process



AUGUST

- **Mayor Bill de Blasio** holds press conference at RHI, highlighting Red Hook's preparedness plan and Local Leaders Program

JULY-SEPTEMBER

- RHI trains 70 Local Leaders on emergency preparedness and community leadership



SEPTEMBER

- 50 Red Hook residents march on the front lines of the **People's Climate March**, led by Local Leaders
- Red Hook Coalition & RHI hold Red Hook Ready Day, where 150 residents walk through community recovery and readiness plan

OCTOBER

- Local Leaders host **Opportunity Fair** on the Anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, over 150 attend



DECEMBER

- Launch of **"The HUB"** a neighborhood-wide communication system
- As part of the Red Hook Coalition, RHI finalizes a year-long project of creating the Long Term Community Recovery Plan, a collaborative plan to prepare Red Hook in case of emergency. The plan is distributed to 5000+ households in Red Hook.



Young adult participant **JHERELLE** was the RHI youth representative on the trip to Rotterdam. She was then awarded a summer internship for community organizing and subsequently secured employment as a full-time staff member at Flatbush Tenant Coalition.



"I feel overjoyed and productive that I'm able to apply what I've learned at RHI to another organization and empower another community with those skills. I'd like to come back to RHI sometime and talk about my success which I owe greatly to the opportunities and experience gained at RHI!"

RED HOOK WIFI & DIGITAL STEWARDS

2,500 COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONNECTED

Red Hook WIFI is a community-led effort to close the digital divide, generate economic opportunity, facilitate access to essential services and improve quality of life in Red Hook via the deployment of a wireless Internet network. The map below shows current Red Hook WIFI coverage.

RHI Digital Stewards is a year-long paid training program where participants learn technology skills and media production, then apply their skills to an internship at a local business. Digital Stewards alumni have gone on to secure additional work, training and technology fellowships.



ALDEN is one of 17 Digital Stewards employed by RHI to install, maintain, and promote the Red Hook WIFI network and use technology to bring about community development.

TYLER is a 23-year-old who was one of RHI's earliest high school participants. Throughout his time at RHI, he participated in a number of different programs, establishing a strong support network of RHI staff and peers. Tyler became part of the first class of Digital Stewards, a program that exposed him to careers in technology and gave him hands-on experience in technical installation and networking. He used his newly acquired skills to secure an internship with Sky Packets, a New York-based company that specializes in wireless network implementation and consulting. In 2014 Tyler accepted a full-time position with Sky Packets, just as he became a father, and he continues to thrive and learn in his new role.

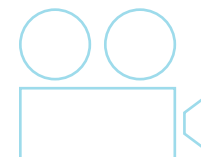
Please note that this participant's name has been changed to protect his confidentiality.



Digital Stewards presented at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit and Technica.ly/Diversity in Tech in Philadelphia.



Digital Stewards were involved in two Hackathon events: they co-hosted the Red Hook Hackathon in April, and participated and won a special mention during the Hackathon at The Feast Conference in October.



Digital Stewards recorded Red Hook Coalition Long Term Community Recovery Plan meetings, NY Rising events and made five videos for area businesses and organizations

Digital Steward Lorenzo Reed designed this logo during the media training portion of the Digital Stewards program.



Digital Stewards and Red Hook WIFI were featured by the following media outlets:

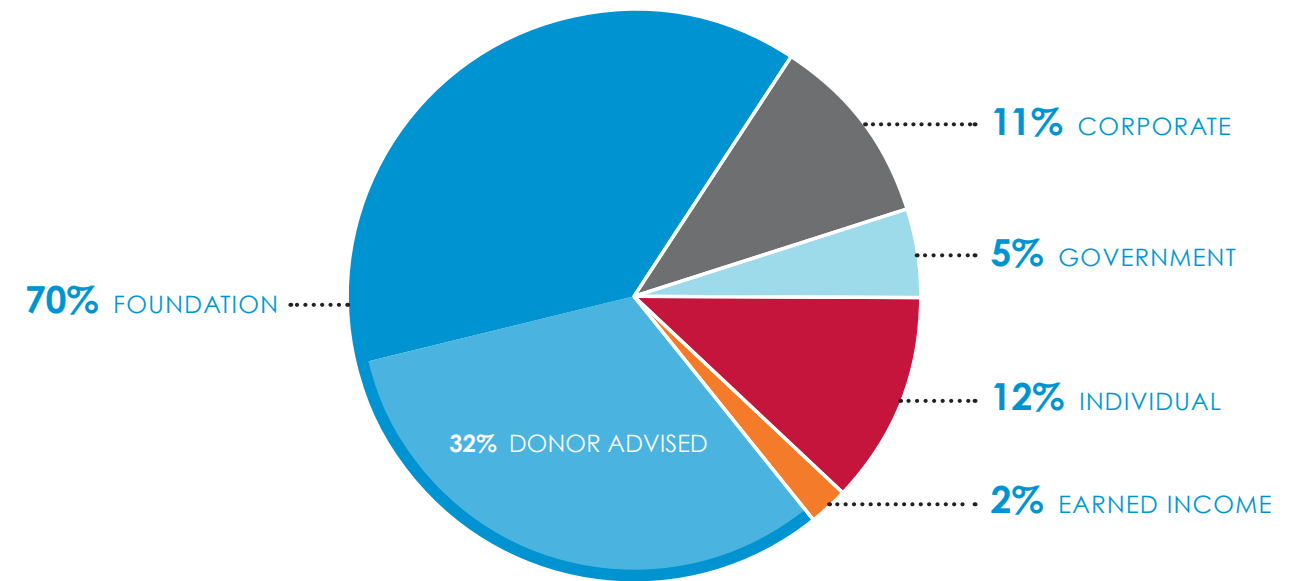
- "Red Hook's Cutting-Edge Wireless Network"; *The New York Times*. August 22, 2014.
- "How Brooklyn's Largest Public Housing Project is Getting Their Residents Online"; *NationSwell*. October 6, 2014.
- "To Help Connect the Two New Yorks, Bill de Blasio Should Build More Community Broadband"; *The Nation*. January 8, 2014.
- "U.S. Promotes Network to Foil Digital Spying"; *The New York Times*. April 20, 2014.

RHI BELIEVES that
SOCIAL CHANGE
 to overcome systemic inequities begins with
EMPOWERED YOUTH.

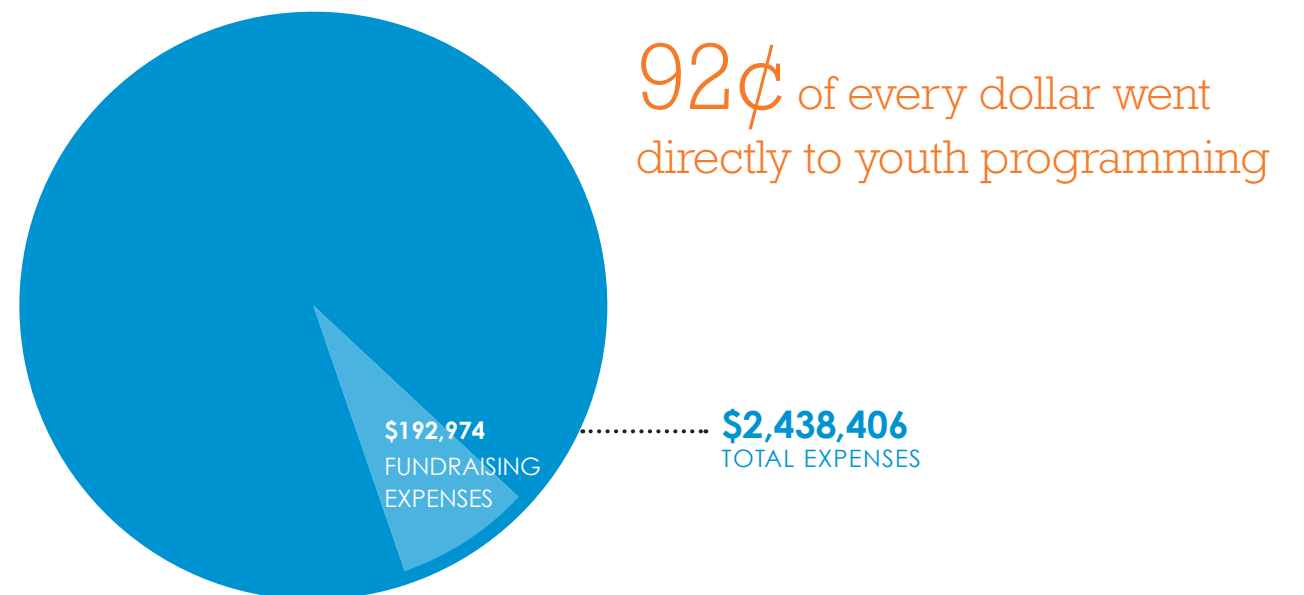
In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people in Red Hook to be

INSPIRED
RESILIENT
 and **HEALTHY**
 and to envision themselves as co-creators of their
LIVES, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY.

2014 Income



2014 Expenses



“My job and my dream is to see that every young person who comes to Red Hook Initiative finds employment and enjoys their job, like I enjoy what I do.”

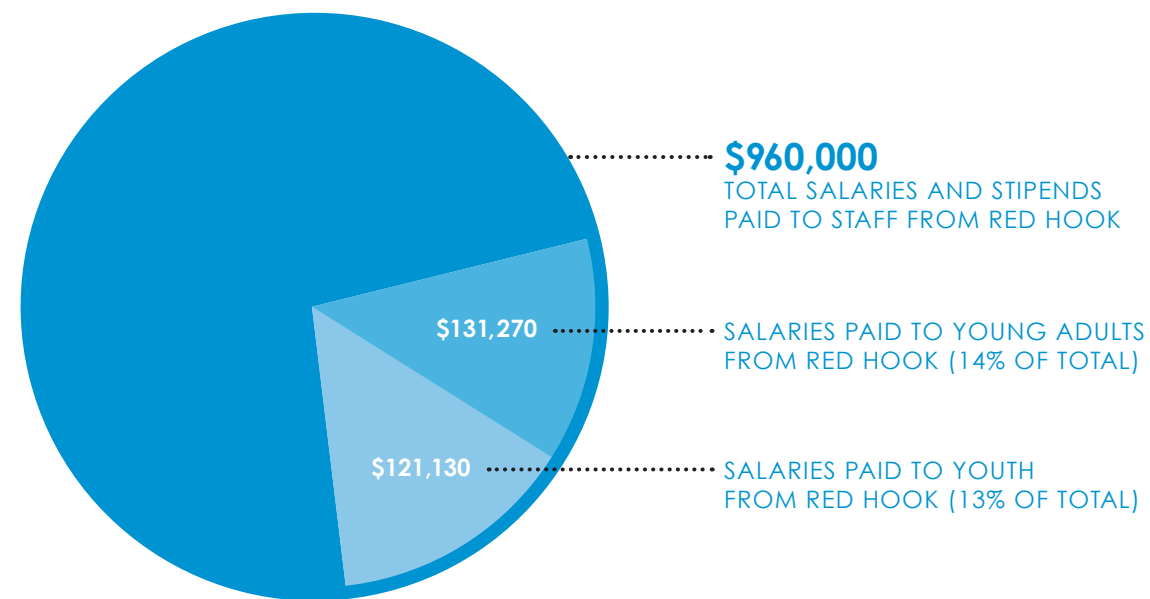
SHERYL NASH-CHISHOLM, Youth Jobs Developer

Community Hiring



RHI employs more than 100 staff members,
90% of whom are from the Red Hook community.

In 2014, nearly **\$1M** was paid to people from Red Hook in the form of salaries



“I work for Red Hook Initiative because I believe in the power of happiness. With happiness comes one heart, and with one heart...we become a stronger community.”

CARLOS VIVEROS, Young Adult Program Assistant



OUR 2014 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Advocates for Youth | Erie Basin Marine Association | New York Water Taxi |
| Alfred P Sloan Foundation | Etsy | North Star Fund |
| Altschul Foundation | Forest City Ratner Companies | NYC Center for Economic Opportunity |
| aptsandlofts.com | Freygish Foundation | The O'Connell Organization |
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| Brooklyn Baseball Co., LLC | Hyde & Watson Foundation | Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and Environment |
| Brooklyn Community Foundation | International School of Brooklyn | Robertson Foundation |
| The Burberry Foundation | Irene Ritter Foundation | Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust |
| Capital One | Jordan Brand | Signature Bank |
| Carson Family Foundation | Julian Price Family Foundation | Sky Ranch Foundation |
| Change Capital Fund | Kamco | Sovereign Bank |
| Con Edison | Koya Leadership Partners | Stainman Family Foundation Inc. |
| Corcoran Cares | Lily Auchincloss Foundation | Stella & Charles Guttman Foundation |
| Council Member Carlos Menchaca | Lone Pine Foundation | Terra CRG |
| Department of Youth & Community Development | M&T Bank | Union Beer Distributors |
| Edith & Herbert Lehman Foundation | Mariposa Foundation | William T. Grant Foundation |
| Edward S. Moore Family Foundation | Mary Hutchins Foundation | Woodbury Fund |
| Eileen Fisher, Inc. | Massey Knakal | |
| Erie Basin | New York Academy of Medicine | |
| | New York Business Development Corporation | |
| | New York Stock Exchange Foundation | |



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Brooklyn, NY 11231

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Jill Eisenhard

“RHI gave me opportunities to set positive examples every day for my peers. Each day walking through Red Hook I remind myself of where I could have gotten lost in my neighborhood but I didn't. I want to be the change and promise I will be the change for others.”

MICHEL'LE THOMAS

Administrative Assistant and RHI Young Adult Participant

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CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN