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 and RESILIENT and HEALTHY and to envision themselves as co-creators of their LIVES, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY.
Red Hook Initiative (RHI) is an active community center that primarily serves public housing residents in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

This report demonstrates the impact of RHI’s three programs on thousands of public housing residents during the 2018 program year (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018).

- **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
- **COMMUNITY BUILDING**
- **COMMUNITY HIRING**

These three programs are at the core of RHI’s approach to strengthening Red Hook’s future.

*Front cover: RHI Fellows, a few of the more than 5,000 Red Hook residents who access Red Hook Initiative programming each year. Photos by Jeyhoun Allebaugh, Brooklyn Community Foundation.*
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

40 youth served through the daily after-school program for 6th–8th graders

Academics & Enrichment

- Homework help
- Rites of Passage (empowerment program for boys)
- Mirrors of Strength (empowerment program for girls)
- STEM education
- Cooking Club
- Sports & recreation
- Improvisation
- Photojournalism
- West African dance

Services

- Mental health screenings
- Individual & family counseling
- Education-related advocacy
- Puberty education, taught by RHI’s Peer Health Educators
Transition to High School

The Middle School Program is the entry point for RHI’s youth development participants. RHI’s Academic Advisors successfully supported 8th graders in completing middle school and navigating the complex high school enrollment process. These students received group and individualized assistance to prepare for important academic and social transitions. The eighth graders’ anxiety and expectations about high school—including new freedoms, potential violence and an onslaught of homework—were all tackled with peers and trusted coaches at RHI.

91% of RHI 8th graders graduated from middle school and are now enrolled in high school.

“I’m glad I was able to get into the high school mentality with this group.”
— 8th Grade participant

“Staff members are young and we can relate to them. They make us want to do our work, not because they told us to do it.”
— Middle School Program participant
The Youth Leader Program served participants with academic support, professional development training and leadership opportunities. Juniors and seniors earned paid positions as Peer Health Educators, Peer Counselors, Youth Organizers, Teen Chefs, Photojournalists and Farm Apprentices.

Youth Leaders reached over 600 peers through the health fairs, workshops, participatory research reports, community meals and social media they designed, developed and delivered.

**What do Youth Leaders value about peer education?**

I kind of felt like a teacher in a way. I liked teaching back to my peers.

It was fun and gave me a leadership role.

Our workshops helped people around us understand the world better.
“RHI has so much more to offer than any other paying job. It offers a sense of direction which was helpful in deciding the next steps for my future.”

— High School Youth Leader

**Long-Term Impact**

Cameron has been a dedicated Youth Leader at RHI since the summer before 9th grade. As a senior in 2017, he participated in every session during College Application Week, completed his applications and student aid forms early, and in turn supported other students to do the same. RHI connected him to an external mentoring program that led to relationships with professionals and helped shape his understanding of what he wants for his future. Finally, with encouragement and guidance from RHI staff, Cameron applied for and won a Jordan Brand WINGS scholarship, receiving full coverage for the cost of the college career he’s beginning at SUNY Albany.
Advocacy and Social Support

81 accessed RHI’s social workers to address needs such as stable housing, food security, mental and physical health and legal services. RHI staff conducted over 325 counseling or case management sessions.

40+ participated in social and emotional health groups that increased mutual aid, knowledge building and group healing. Topics included healthy relationships, dating violence, gender-specific content, trauma recovery, addiction, current events and self-care.

College Scholars

88 utilized RHI’s college access and retention services, getting support with challenges such as deciding when and whether to enroll, securing housing, selecting a major, (re)applying for financial aid and scholarships and troubleshooting tricky roommate relationships.

Job Readiness & Subsidized Work Training

47 participated in RHI’s two-week intensive professional development training program, and 76% found employment within three months of completion.

67 connected to vocational training programs such as Rebuilding Together, Solar One, Roofer’s Union and Digital Stewards, building practical, applicable skills with real earning potential.

44 engaged in tailored job readiness coaching, focusing on interviewing, resume building, dressing for interviews and assets-based career mapping.

146 supported by RHI to work toward an employment goal.

Advocacy and Social Support

270 young adults served

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

College Scholars

88 utilized RHI’s college access and retention services, getting support with challenges such as deciding when and whether to enroll, securing housing, selecting a major, (re)applying for financial aid and scholarships and troubleshooting tricky roommate relationships.

Job Readiness & Subsidized Work Training

47 participated in RHI’s two-week intensive professional development training program, and 76% found employment within three months of completion.

67 connected to vocational training programs such as Rebuilding Together, Solar One, Roofer’s Union and Digital Stewards, building practical, applicable skills with real earning potential.

44 engaged in tailored job readiness coaching, focusing on interviewing, resume building, dressing for interviews and assets-based career mapping.

146 supported by RHI to work toward an employment goal.

Advocacy and Social Support

81 accessed RHI’s social workers to address needs such as stable housing, food security, mental and physical health and legal services. RHI staff conducted over 325 counseling or case management sessions.

40+ participated in social and emotional health groups that increased mutual aid, knowledge building and group healing. Topics included healthy relationships, dating violence, gender-specific content, trauma recovery, addiction, current events and self-care.
Demonstrating Personal Resilience

Mercedes was disappointed to learn that she received an academic dismissal from SUNY Potsdam after two semesters. RHI staff responded with social and emotional support and help enrolling in Kingsborough Community College where she could improve her grades. She joined RHI’s paid summer internship program, and maintained weekly counseling sessions with an RHI social worker. She was paired with an external mentor who helped her build systems that would enable her success in college and life. After excelling at Kingsborough, Mercedes reapplied to SUNY Potsdam and returned to her original school a year later. She then participated on an RHI-led panel for incoming college students, where she relayed her experience and things she wished she had done differently, as only a peer can. Her resilience transformed obstacles into stepping stones in what has become a model college career.
Highlights

Local Leaders
This training, facilitated by former graduates of the program, equips public housing residents to be resilient in the face of emergencies and to build the power of community members to drive positive change. This year, Local Leaders participated in actions in NYC, Albany, NY, and Washington, D.C. on campaigns ranging from increased funding for public housing to climate justice.

Over 200 Local Leaders trained since the program’s inception in 2013.
Anti-Violence Research Team
In partnership with the CUNY Public Science Project, RHI assembled a research team of eight young adults from Red Hook to investigate the roots of peers’ violent experiences and ways to reduce violence within the neighborhood. The team developed a report including findings and recommendations, and utilized the findings to fuel advocacy. Over the next year, RHI will support the team’s recommendations to reduce violence by increasing opportunities for youth to imagine, design and lead community activities, events and programs.

The research team presented their findings at the Innovations in Participatory Democracy Conference in Phoenix, AZ. The team also hosted educational research professionals from around the world at a national academic research conference in New York.

“You to see my facilitator come up from where she came from is so powerful. It’s a blessing to see her blossom and work in the community. Maybe I can teach the class some day.”
— Local Leader

Youth Organizers
Youth learned about community organizing and advocacy and then led an action of their choice. This year, Youth Organizers hosted workshops, supported the Fair Fares campaign for reduced cost Metrocards, and lobbied in Albany, NY for increased funding for Summer Youth Employment Program, which resulted in 3,000 guaranteed jobs for New York State.

85 community members received referrals to job training programs, free tax preparation services, public benefits and translation services.
Red Hook WIFI and Digital Stewards

RHI’s technology programs focused on training young adults for tech and media careers and providing free WIFI to the neighborhood. Digital Stewards is a paid, 8-month training through which young adults maintain and promote the Red Hook WIFI network, coordinate tech-related projects and events and gain media production skills.

Using their newly renovated “V-Studios,” Digital Stewards created an internal production company that designs and creates media, including videos for college scholarship applications, new hire orientations, technology tutorials and RHI promotional materials.

Red Hook WIFI was accessed over 8,500 times in the 2018 program year. Red Hook HUB connected 4,400 residents to resources and information in the neighborhood, including nearly 100 community events.

“I did more than I was asked to do. I took initiative on the weekends, too. I realized that I have to be on my A-game at all times because people come to me with questions and they trust that I have their best interest in mind.”

— Digital Steward, on taking a leadership position

Red Hook WIFI, is a free wireless network that RHI built to strengthen the community’s resiliency and economy, and to bridge the digital divide. During the program year, RHI expanded the WIFI network, to include 38 business partners on Red Hook’s commercial corridors. RHI also manages Red Hook HUB, a digital bulletin board and information sharing platform.

Learn more at www.redhookwifi.org.
RHI Institute

RHI is committed to hiring locally and investing in residents who will improve their lives and the community in which they live and work. Last year marked the launch of RHI Fellows, a program of RHI Institute, which already shows tremendous promise for cultivating our next generation of nonprofit leaders. In year one, Career Accelerator, another pilot program of RHI Institute, is supporting seven permanent staff to advance their careers through coaching, trainings and goal setting with a professional mentor.

RHI Fellows

- Competitive program open to young professionals from the neighborhood
- 20 hour/week paid position at RHI, for eight months
- External and internal mentors
- Weekly coaching with peers
- Professional development and job search support services

Career Accelerator

- Competitive program for permanent staff with at least one year at RHI
- Year-long program
- External mentors
- Monthly coaching and group check-ins
- Targeted goals with plan to rapidly advance learning or experience

“*My mentor was a great help for me to get interviews and write a great résumé.*”

— RHI Fellow
2018 INCOME

2018 TOTAL EXPENSES: $3.34M

90 cents of every dollar goes directly to programs and services

Thank you to everyone who made our 11th annual fundraiser a great success.

Taste of Red Hook would not be possible without the generosity of local businesses.

AECOM
American Honda Foundation
Barker Welfare Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Bulova Stetson Fund
Capital One Services
Carson Family Charitable Trust
Charles Hayden Foundation
Collegiate Church Corporation
Compass Real Estate
Con Edison
Corcoran Real Estate
Council Member Carlos Menchaca
Daniel Arnow Fund
Durst Organization
Edith & Herbert Lehman Foundation
Edward S. Moore Family Foundation
Eileen Fisher
Erie Basin Marine Associates
Ford Foundation
Forest City Ratner Companies
Freygish Foundation
Fund for the City of New York
Goldman Sachs Gives
Gwen Libstag Fund
Heckscher Foundation
Heisman Trophy Trust
Industry City
Ira DeCamp Foundation
J.M. Kaplan Fund
Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation
Jordan Brand
Kamco Supply Corp
Kenworthy-Swift Foundation
King Equity Partners
Koya Leadership Partners
Lily Auchincloss Foundation
Lower Manhattan Community Church
Lone Pine Foundation
M&T Charitable Foundation
Mariposa Foundation
Mary J. Hutchins Foundation
Matelski Family Fund
May Ellen & Gerald Ritter Foundation
Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC
MJS Foundation
Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund
Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY
NBCUniversal Foundation
New York Business Development Corp
New York Community Trust
New York Water Taxi
NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
NYC Ferry by Hornblower
NYC Human Resources Administration
NYU Langone Family Health Centers, Sunset Terrace
Paul Balser and Paula Del Nunzio Balser Fund
People’s United Community Foundation
Propeller Industries
Rebecca and James Katz Fund
Rio Vista Fund
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
Robertson Foundation
Rockefeller Foundation
Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust
Santander Bank
Signature Bank
Sills Family Foundation Next Generation Giving Group
Sitex
Stainman Family Foundation
The Alvin and Fanny B. Thalheimer Foundation
The Andrew Strauss and Katie Buckels Fund
The Irene Ritter Foundation
O’Connell Organization
O’Connell Family Foundation
The Pinkerton Foundation
Steinberg Charitable Trust
Two Trees
Warburg Pincus Foundation
Williams Capital Group

This list includes institutions contributing $2,500 or more.
2018 Board of Directors

Board President
Gregg Bishop

Board Vice-President
Chris Cardona

Board Vice-President
Janice McGuire

Board Secretary
Maria Mottola

Board Treasurer
Andrew Strauss

Directors
Millicent Comrie
Donovan Hamlet
Brandon Holley
Rebecca Kirszen Katz
John Kline
David Xi Bing Ma
Nanda Prabhakar
Jennifer Wheary
Eden Wurmfeld

Executive Director
Jill Eisenhard

In the 2018 program year, Red Hook Initiative celebrated our 15th anniversary.

To honor this milestone we highlighted 15 voices that collectively tell Our Story. See them all at rhicenter.org/our-story.

“"This is an extended family for a child, a network that they will have for life...”

Contributing Photographers:
Jeyhoun Allebaugh, Brooklyn Community Foundation
Alden Parkinson, Digital Steward alumnus

CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

718.858.6782 | info@rhicenter.org | www.rhicenter.org