Each year, RHI impacts the lives of over 6,500 residents of Red Hook.

The majority of RHI program participants live in the NYC Housing Authority Red Hook Houses—Brooklyn’s largest public housing development.

The Red Hook Houses are comprised of 32 buildings on 39 acres of land.

Since our founding in 2002, RHI has prioritized the needs of this historically under-resourced community by confronting the impacts of racial inequity and decades of disinvestment.

This report details the impact of RHI’s 2019 program year (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019).
INEQUITIES FACING OUR COMMUNITY

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<th>Inequity</th>
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<td>Half of families with children under 18 live below the federal poverty</td>
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<td>Less than half of adults have graduated from high school</td>
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<td>Nearly 70% of households participate in the NYC Supplemental Nutrition</td>
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<td>Residents develop preventable illnesses, like asthma and diabetes,</td>
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RHI’s model confronts these inequities. Youth and residents are given tools, resources and opportunities with which they can interrupt the systems and barriers that perpetuate disadvantages for certain members of the Red Hook community. Residents lead the way toward a more equitable, hopeful future.

Our model focuses on three key areas:

- **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
- **COMMUNITY BUILDING**
- **COMMUNITY HIRING**
Youth Development

Each year, RHI engages over 450 youth from 6th grade through age 24.

RHI believes social change begins with empowered youth. Our youth development programs offer year-round support for middle schoolers, high schoolers and young adults. These programs ensure that Red Hook youth can work toward academic success, explore careers, develop life skills, strengthen social support systems and lead by example in their neighborhood.
Middle School Program

Our daily after-school program for 6th–8th graders supports middle school youth to succeed in school, develop life skills and exercise leadership in the neighborhood.

In 2019, 100% of 8th graders graduated from middle school and enrolled in their first choice for high school.

Freedom Schools

In 2018, RHI began partnering with the Children’s Defense Fund to host Freedom Schools, a literacy and cultural enrichment program rooted in the legacy of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. The program promotes literacy, civic engagement and social action among youth and their families by developing reading skills and reducing the learning loss that often occurs during summer vacation. Participants take home relevant books each week to feed their curiosity and augment home libraries.
High School Youth Leader Program

Youth Leaders access academic support and leadership opportunities while creating a positive impact within their community. This year’s participants earned a regular paycheck as Teen Chefs, Youth Organizers, Peer Health Educators, Peer Counselors, Photojournalists and Farm Apprentices. Through extracurricular programs, youth learned about a range of career paths, expressed themselves creatively and freely explored their identities.

PEER-LED HEALTH CARE APPROACHES

Youth Leaders reached over 900 peers through reproductive health fairs, workshops on topics relevant to Red Hook teens and mental health awareness events. Teenagers are the most likely to experience the onset of mental health challenges, but the least likely to access services. The stressors facing Red Hook youth stem from interpersonal trauma, violence and systemic inequities.

This year, 91% of Youth Leaders who screened positive for a mental health need received support. We attribute this success to our holistic approach to trauma-informed, healing-centered youth development grounded in community building and peer leadership.

- 95% of Youth Leaders graduated high school on time.
- 95% of high school seniors gained admission to college.
- 86% of Youth Leaders believe they learned skills that will help them succeed in a job.
- 74% of Youth Leaders believe they can make a positive change in their community.
- $250K was paid to Youth Leaders for their work serving Red Hook.
Jasmin was selected as a recipient of the Jordan Brand Wings Scholarship, a competitive annual award given to 24 high school seniors nationwide. Jasmin was chosen for her determination, authenticity and potential for greatness. She is currently enrolled in the State University of New York at Geneseo.

I feel very relieved that there aren’t any financial burdens that will prohibit me from attending college. I’m very excited, very happy for this new chapter in my life.
Young Adult Program

With RHI’s support, young adults aged 19–24 set individual goals for academics (high school diploma, HSE or college degree), employment and professional or personal growth.

225 young adults served

Through our College Scholars Program, young adults receive help navigating financial aid applications, arranging and attending college tours, managing class enrollment and schedules and finding internships and jobs in line with their interests and majors.

RHI offers job training, coaching and work-readiness sessions to help young adults set and achieve employment and school-related goals. Our social workers provide counseling and social service support to address pressing needs related to housing, food security, mental and physical health and legal needs.

In 2019, RHI offered the only program for LGBTQ-identifying youth in Red Hook.

96% of Young Adults who attended work-readiness sessions reported feeling more confident in their ability to secure or advance employment.

87% of Young Adults who completed RHI’s job training program secured employment or started school within six months.
Keturah joined RHI’s youth programs over a decade ago. Since then, our long-term approach has helped Keturah graduate from SUNY Albany and find her first job out of school working as a Community Development Intern with Karp Strategies. Keturah now mentors an RHI College Scholar who is pursuing a degree from her alma mater and she is considering enrolling in graduate school.

Envisioning the future of Red Hook

‘‘Being able to see my work implemented into the community is something that I need in order to be happy in a career.’’
Participants in RHI’s Digital Stewards program, a paid, 160-hour training program for young adults, maintained and promoted the Red Hook WIFI network, coordinated tech-related projects and events and gained valuable media production skills.

More than 7,000 residents are now able to access free and reliable internet via Red Hook WIFI.

This year, our team brought Red Hook WIFI to dozens of local businesses impacted by Hurricane Sandy:

Community Building through local leadership

Our approach builds leadership of youth and adult residents to address issues facing the neighborhood. Community building programs work to drive positive change and increase social cohesion to build a more resilient Red Hook. In 2019, the Community Building team, through the Local Leaders and Youth Organizers programs, prioritized issues such as unsafe public housing conditions, discriminatory over-policing and transit access.

This year, community building programs engaged over 500 local residents through leadership development trainings, criminal justice and public housing advocacy, participatory action research and events to increase access to resources.

Our Community Building Impact

**Over 500** residents attended RHI’s community events.

49 Local Leaders graduated from the emergency preparedness and community organizing program.

250 Red Hook residents voted in Participatory Budgeting at RHI.

$500,000 in Participatory Budgeting funds was awarded to an irrigation system on the Columbia Street Farm.

20 Red Hook residents mobilized for a campaign to restore gas to over 60 families.
OUR STRATEGIES

Youth Organizers were trained in the history of advocacy and current campaigns in NYC, participated in community meetings, town halls and voter mobilization efforts and met with state legislators to advocate for more funding for public housing in the New York State budget.

Red Hook adults trained through RHI’s Local Leaders program gained skills in emergency preparedness and community organizing. Their efforts and partnership with local elected officials resulted in gas restoration for over 60 families after an outage that lasted three months.

Real Rites, a team of seven young adult researchers, released findings from their 18-month project focused on community-led solutions to violence in a report titled “Young Adults’ Experiences of Violence and Dreams of Community-Led Solutions.” The team developed a model of violence prevention for young adults; hosted community forums for youth and local stakeholders; and presented to students, researchers and city agencies about their research process and findings.
A NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

AS FEATURED IN:

Brooklyn Daily Eagle
“After months without gas, Red Hook NYCHA residents demand reimbursement” on June 10, 2019

“This issue is that the residents are not centered in really being provided with all of the information that they need to understand the totality of the problem.

It’s about sitting in the lobby of each building and saying this is the problem; this is how we’re trying to solve it, and let tenants respond to that. That type of dialogue needs to start happening. The tenants deserve that. The tenants expect that.” – Javier Lopez, Chief Strategy Officer

The Nation.
“Is New York City’s Public Housing Ready for the Next Storm?” on January 29, 2019

Juana Narvaez, a Red Hook Houses resident of 42 years known in the community as the “leader of the seniors,” graduated from the inaugural Spanish-language Local Leaders training [at RHI]. The following session, she became a co-facilitator.

Karen Blondel has lived in the Red Hook Houses for 36 years, and has been involved in community organizing since the early 1990s. Although skeptical of RHI at first, she was impressed with the Local Leaders program, and “fell in love with the fact that they were engaging young people.” Blondel now facilitates the Community Organizing, Political Education and Climate Justice component of the Local Leader training.

Portraits of Local Leaders on this page accompanied this article.
Photo credit: Tracie Williams.
RHI launched Red Hook Farms to increase access to fresh affordable produce and nurture the next generation of green leaders.

In late 2018, RHI took over management of Added Value, one of Brooklyn’s first and largest urban farms, and re-launched as Red Hook Farms—an innovative model for urban gardening, youth development and community-led food production.

RHI OPERATES TWO FARMS IN RED HOOK

Columbia Street Farm
2.75 acres

Wolcott Street Farm
1.1 acres

Fresh Food Access
Grow and distribute at least 20,000 pounds of produce.

Youth Empowerment
Employ 25 Youth Farm Apprentices from Red Hook.

Community Engagement
Provide opportunities for residents to learn about healthy food.

NYCHA residents take home free produce in exchange for investing time into the Wolcott Street Farm.

Red Hook Farms was listed as one of New York City’s best urban farms by Curbed New York.
RHI operates two farms in Red Hook, New York, and is one of the largest community employers, with over 150 youth and adults from Red Hook on staff. RHI hires locally and invests in residents who will improve their lives and the community in which they work. We believe participants will contribute greatly to programming and leadership roles within RHI as well as the broader non-profit community.

More than $1.5 million was paid in the last fiscal year to people from Red Hook through salaries, stipends, grants, contracts and business agreements.

RHI is one of the largest community employers with over 150 youth and adults from Red Hook on staff.

RHI hires locally and invests in residents who will improve their lives and the community in which they work. We believe participants will contribute greatly to programming and leadership roles within RHI as well as the broader non-profit community.
The RHI Institute offers programs that build on the strengths, resiliency and tenacity of Red Hook’s current and future leaders. We created this approach to confront and reduce barriers to professional advancement that are rooted in systemic inequities and racism.

INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

RHI Fellows is a competitive training program open to young professionals from the neighborhood. As part-time, paid employees of RHI, Fellows receive professional development, mentorship and job support services to secure employment or further education in their desired fields.

Career Accelerator is a competitive year-long program for staff who have worked at RHI for at least one year. Participants are paired with a mentor, receive monthly coaching and engage in professional development workshops, as they work toward ambitious goals such as becoming an Executive Director, opening a therapeutic healing space or pursuing a Masters degree in health policy.

Our barrier-breaking leaders

As RHI’s Education Manager, Tarik empowers hundreds of youth to strive towards their academic aspirations. He believes it’s critical to forge connections with academically rigorous institutions on behalf of our Youth Leaders. After completing Career Accelerator, Tarik reflected:

“This opportunity allowed me to think about the ways in which I would like to improve my skills as a leader and develop them in real time.”

85% of RHI employees are from Red Hook.
We proudly hosted committed volunteers from the following groups.

- Australia and New Zealand Banking Group
- Berkeley Carroll School
- City Squash
- Genius
- Goldman Sachs
- Google
- Kroka Expeditions
- Krupp Group
- NY2X Coalition
- NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
- Ripple
- Stuyvesant High School
- Viacom
- Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our 12th annual fundraiser. Taste of Red Hook would not be possible without the generosity of the following local establishments.

- Ample Hills Creamery
- Baked
- Blue Marble Ice Cream
- Brooklyn Crab
- Brooklyn Farmacy & Soda Fountain
- Brooklyn Ice House
- Buttermilk Channel
- Cantine Catering
- The Chocolate Room
- Court Street Grocers
- Dolce Brooklyn
- Fairway Market
- Fort Defiance
- The Good Fork
- Hometown Bar-B-Que
- IKEA
- Jessie Sheehan Bakes
- Joe Coffee
- Kevin's
- La Newyorkina
- La Slowteria
- Margaret Palca Bakes
- Mark's Red Hook Pizza
- Mazzat
- Popina
- Raaka Chocolate
- Red Hook Copper Pot
- Red Hook Farms
- Red Hook Winery
- Rick's Picks
- Rita
- Saxelby Cheesemongers
- Shalini's Kitchen
2019 TOTAL EXPENSES: $4.37M

91 cents of every dollar directly supports programs and services.
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<td>Citi Bike, Healthfirst, and Lyft</td>
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*This list includes institutions contributing $2,500 or more.*
THE RHI MODEL

Organize residents to effect systemic change

BUILD OUR COMMUNITY

Develop leaders through professional training and community hiring

INVEST IN OUR RESIDENTS

Provide academic support, job preparation, tech training and leadership opportunities

EMPOWER OUR YOUTH

Organize residents to effect systemic change

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OUR MODEL

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