

RED HOOK INITIATIVE

Impact Report

2024









A MESSAGE FROM RHI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

With sincerity and immense gratitude, Red Hook Initiative thanks you for believing in our mission, our visions, and our team, and furthermore, our capacity to nurture, develop, and invest in the dreams and aspirations of some of the most vulnerable members of the Red Hook community, our youth. It is an honor to acknowledge and commend the many accomplishments that we have achieved in 2024 with your unwavering support, relentless dedication, and thoughtful participation in ensuring that we continue to empower our youth and strengthen community by deepening our legacy of combating injustice, creating change, and fostering growth.

As we journey into our third decade of service, Red Hook Initiative's model continues to be driven by our values and belief system, our commitment to our youth, and the constructive impact we have had on Red Hook families this past year. Over the next few pages, you will learn more about the thoughtful ways in which we have supported over 6,500 Red Hook residents and the avenues in which we have fostered positive change, whether that be through socio-emotional wellness, environmental justice initiatives, college-readiness programs, workforce advancement exercises, or food sustainability initiatives. With your engagement, not only have we planted new seeds in the rich soil that makes up every corner of this community, we have continued to water and nurture the roots where this all even started.

Together, we will consistently and tirelessly support, advocate for, and believe in Red Hook, its youth, its families, and its community's aspirations. I know that as a team, we can support the youth and residents of Red Hook to continue our tradition of resilience, hope, and homegrown change in the coming year.

Thank you for all you have done, and all you will continue to do in the coming year.

With gratitude,

Michael Partis

Executive Director



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CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN, LED BY AND FOR RED HOOK

Red Hook Initiative (RHI) believes that social change to overcome systemic inequities begins with empowered youth. In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people in the NYCHA Red Hook Houses to be inspired, resilient and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society. We envision a Red Hook where all young people can pursue their dreams and grow into independent adults who contribute to their families and community. Since 2002, RHI has worked alongside youth and adults of Red Hook to carry out resident-led solutions to local problems and to confront the impacts of racial inequity and decades of disinvestment on our historically under-resourced community.

This past year, many of the residents of the NYCHA Red Hook Houses, Brooklyn's largest public housing development, participated in youth development, community building, urban agriculture, and trauma-informed healing initiatives.

Highlights of our 2024 accomplishments include:



A transformational gift for Red Hook

In case you missed it earlier this year, Red Hook Initiative was selected from among 6,353 applications from across the country to be honored with a \$1 million award from MacKenzie Scott's 2024 <u>Yield Giving Open Cal</u>l. The rigorous application process included a <u>short video</u> submission created by Maddy Jenkins, a former participant who is now our Senior Manager of Communications.



EMPOWERING YOUTH

SECTION 1

RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RED HOOK LEADERS

RHI's **Adolescent Youth Program** provides a safe space for growth, learning, and exploration. Through academic support, workforce development services and opportunities to earn income, and engaging socio-emotional health activities, we empower adolescents to unlock their full potential, cultivate leadership skills, and become agents of personal and community change.



Seven Summers of RHI Freedom Schools®

RHI continued our partnership with the Children's Defense Fund to offer a six-week research-based literacy and enrichment curriculum for 39 Red Hook youth in the 6th – 10th grades. The program cultivates a love of learning and service within the Red Hook community. A 2024 evaluation of Freedom Schools®, completed by the Children's Defense Fund, reported that **RHI youth demonstrated an average increase of nine months in instructional reading levels and read an average of seven books over the course of the summer.**

Peers Promoting Health Education & Support

Since 2002, RHI has trained and employed over 250 Red Hook high school students as Peer Health Educators and Peer Health Navigators, who have shared critical reproductive and sexual health information and resources with thousands of their peers. The Peer Health Educators & Navigators organized community events including: a Domestic Violence Awareness Event, a World AIDS Day Event, a National Condomania Awareness Day Event, a Denim Day Sexual Assault Awareness Event, a Spring Health Fair, and a PRIDE Week Workshop Series.

"Being a Peer Health Navigator has allowed me to be aware and cautious of things. This work has allowed me to educate my fellow youth on the importance of sexual education, which is especially important if they don't have anybody at home or someone close to them to discuss these topics with." - Amiya, Peer Health Navigator



Peer Health Educators Sexual Assault Awareness Denim Day





RHI's Youth-Led Health Fair

Peer Health Educators Condomania Event

Scholarships & Support

In 2024, RHI provided college access and matriculation support for 40 high school students, with 89% of high school seniors were accepted to college. During spring break, we took high school students on an overnight college tour of four Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Hampton University, Delaware State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Norfolk State University. RHI youth gained a deeper understanding of life at HBCUs and felt inspired to envision themselves as part of these vibrant academic communities.

Additionally, RHI worked closely with SUNY Geneseo and philanthropists Elizabeth and Greg O'Connell to establish The Greg and Elizabeth O'Connell Red Hook Scholars Program, a new scholarship opportunity for students from Red Hook who demonstrate academic excellence and commitment to service to attend SUNY Geneseo debt-free, at no cost to the student. When the O'Connell family, who has supported RHI since our founding, approached us with this incredibly generous idea, we couldn't wait to offer the scholarship opportunity to our rising college scholars.



MEET RHI'S 2024 JORDAN BRAND WINGS SCHOLAR, MELANY SALCEDO

With generous support from RHI's decade-long partner, Jordan Brand, Melany Salcedo joined the prestigious nationwide Wings Scholar Program and received a full four-year college scholarship to attend Baruch College with a major in Business Administration. Born and raised in Red Hook, Melany worked as a Youth Farm Apprentice on Red Hook Farms, where she moved into a Senior Apprentice role and mentored her peers. RHI coached Melany throughout the college application process and connected her to scholarship opportunities.

"I felt honored to have been chosen for the Wings Scholarship because growing up I have been limited to such opportunities in a low-income household. This scholarship has opened academic and social connections for me, allowing me to become the best version of myself as a business owner."

- Melany Salcedo

Beyond the Boroughs College Scholarships for Red Hook Youth

RHI is grateful for the partnership of New York Community Trust for providing multiple \$5,000 Beyond the Boroughs college scholarships to outstanding RHI scholars, with the potential to renew each year. This past year, four RHI College Scholars received a 2024 Beyond the Boroughs award.

Melany Salcedo Baruch College

Jakai Lowe Cleveland State University

Timothy John SUNY Albany

Kelly Clemente Hunter College



PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER SUCCESS, RHI'S YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

RHI's programs for young adults address three core areas of need – workforce development, socio-emotional health support, and leadership and career development. In 2024, 154 young adults accessed job readiness coaching, workforce development training, subsidized internships, case management and counseling services, and our in-house RHI Works Fellowship. RHI's integrated, highly personalized model helps young adults successfully transition into adulthood, prepared to be personally and professionally self-sufficient.

Building a Green Future for Red Hook

Kobe Vaughn was unemployed when he enrolled in RHI's workforce readiness programs at age 19. He came to RHI with limited work experience and an open mind. Kobe completed RHI's Career Starters Series, a 30-hour job readiness training, and engaged in employment coaching. Our team provided socio-emotional support and career coaching to help Kobe secure a job. He soon realized his interest in the green economy, specifically construction. Our team referred him to a vocational training program at Rebuilding Together, a local nonprofit partner, that helps under-resourced residents embark on careers in construction trades. Kobe was a stellar student, graduating from the training program in July 2024, and obtaining his OSHA30, DOT flagger4, and NYC Department of Buildings Supported Scaffold4 certifications. Kobe is currently considering employment offers from Turner Construction and Environmental Social Governance at SL Green Building Maintenance. He reminded us, "I told them I want to be in green construction – they have good jobs and it's good for my neighborhood, too."





SECTION 2 HEALTH & WELLNESS

RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM OF HEALING

RHI's Health and Wellness Program offered socio-emotional health support and arts-based healing opportunities for nearly 500 youth and adults, and worked to integrate traumainformed care into our program model. Healing from the impact of systemic racism and inequities is a continuous journey, and to support our young people and community, RHI is building an ecosystem of healing that includes:



Integration of socioemotional skill building into RHI's youth development programs



Wellness screenings



Crisis and individual counseling



Peer healing groups





Arts-based healing opportunities in dance, visual arts, and poetry

Kaniyah's Love of Health and Wellness

As a Peer Health Educator in high school, Kaniyah guickly developed an interest in helping others. In 2023, Kaniyah graduated summa cum laude from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, with her Bachelor's in Psychology. After graduation, Kaniyah came back to Red Hook and joined RHI's Young Adult Peer Healing Program. Kaniyah has gone on to cofacilitate an adolescent healing group for her younger peers. She continues to build her professional skills with certifications in Youth Mental Health First Aid, CPR, Mandated Reporting, and training in Overcoming the Stigma of Mental Illness in Black Communities.





Healing Through the Arts

At RHI, arts-based healing programs in dance, visual arts, and poetry inspire youth to heal from trauma and build resilience. This past year, dance classes encouraged students to work collaboratively, evaluate personal behavior as it reflects on self and others, and make decisions both personally and as a community that promote empathy and optimism. In visual arts programs, young people explored art as a means of expression and healing, while building community amongst their peers.









SECTION 3 COMMUNITY BUILDING

RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

LOCAL LEADERSHIP LIFTS RED HOOK

RHI's Community Building team works to improve the health and economic wellbeing of Red Hook residents while also working to change the root causes of problems impacting the community. Active in city- and state-wide coalitions, Red Hook residents advocated for investments in public housing infrastructure, healthcare access, emergency rental assistance, and environmental justice. In 2024, RHI's Community Building program reached thousands of Red Hook residents through events and public space activations, leadership development trainings, case management services, and environmental and public housing organizing work.

Building Local Power

RHI's Organizing Academy continued to serve as a pipeline into campaigns focused on public housing and environmental justice. This past year, 27 Red Hook residents graduated from our intergenerational leadership development training.



Advocating for Red Hook Houses

More than a decade after Superstorm Sandy devastated the Red Hook Houses, unfinished construction repairs make life challenging on top of mold and other unhealthy conditions. RHI's #FullyFundRedHookHouses campaign mobilized 44 Red Hook residents to advocate for improved NYCHA policies and increased funding for public housing infrastructure needs. Through this work, 17 Red Hook residents provided testimony at public hearings, sharing stories from Red Hook Houses about urgently needed improvements to their apartments and buildings.

Organizing for Clean Air

RHI launched the Red Hook Action for Clean Air initiative in response to the ongoing construction in the Red Hook Houses, rapid expansion of last mile distribution centers, and historical environmental injustices in Red Hook. The initiative builds the capacity of Red Hook Houses residents to measure, document, and interpret air quality issues and is developing an advocacy agenda to address air quality issues and implement strategies to mitigate environmental harms. In 2024, the initiative reached 143 residents through workshops and events, 23 middle school youth through in-school workshops, and 10 high school students through an intensive "Environmental Stewardship" summer camp. RHI trained two Young Adult Environmental Justice Fellows in partnership with CUNY Advanced Science Research Center.



Transforming the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway Corridor

In 2024, as an active member of the Brooklyn–Queens Expressway–Environmental Justice coalition, RHI advocated for a comprehensive redesign process for the BQE that centers the marginalized communities most affected. RHI rallied for a transformation of the expressway to address the negative environmental and health impacts of the highway on communities, with a complete summary of our research documented in the "<u>Ants Among Buffalo" report</u>. The coalition's efforts are often covered in the media, recently in <u>The Brooklyn Eagle</u>.



Accessible Open Space

RHI is committed to creating safe and accessible public space for the Red Hook community. In 2024, RHI hosted Red Hook Open Streets, reaching 950 people and held nine community lunches, serving 1,050 meals. In partnership with the NYC Department of Transportation and the Horticultural Society of NY, we launched "RHI Street Seats", a public seating plaza for the Red Hook community. We are grateful to the Beyer Blinder Belle Foundation for their dedicated support of the project.







Community Resource Team

RHI's Community Resource Team served 386 clients and provided 429 services, including 100 Emergency Rental Assistance applications, preventing eviction and housing insecurity. RHI's Emergency Fund distributed 89 grants totalling \$101,795 to Red Hook families who experienced financial hardship.

Caring For Red Hook

RHI is a proud member and steward of the Red Hook Community Health Network, working in partnership with the Alex House Project, the Red Hook Community Justice Center, Good Shepherd Services, NYU Langone, and NYU Family Health Center to increase access to health services. The Network conducted a series of community dialogues designed to understand how the community envisions a healthcare system that would meet the needs of Red Hook residents. Interviews and focus groups with 60 residents from youth to seniors were held in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. The summary of our findings and recommendations are documented in a <u>comprehensive report</u>, Caring for Red Hook: What Healthcare Providers Should Know.





RED HOOK FARMS

RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

FIGHTING FOOD APARTHEID, PROMOTING NUTRITION & CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GREEN LEADERS

Red Hook Farms promotes food justice, nurtures the next generation of BIPOC green leaders, and increases the amount and variety of affordable, sustainably-grown produce that is making its way to the kitchens of low-income Red Hook families. We operate two urban farms, and our programs include a teen farm apprenticeship, a weekly farm stand, a free produce distribution, a CSA, a school workshop program, and a new Food as Medicine initiative. This past year, Cornell College's Small Farms Program featured our work in a short video, <u>Red Hook Farms: A Hub for Community, Food and Education</u>.

Farm Fresh Facts for 2024 include:



A record-breaking harvest of **30,877** pounds of **60** varieties of culturally-responsive produce, sustainably grown on our two farms.



24 Youth Farmers collectively worked 9,376 hours on the farms and contributed to all aspects of the farm from seed, to harvest, to sale.



Thanks to the hard work of our youth farmers and volunteers, we completed an extensive rebuild of the Wolcott Farm in the Red Hook Houses.

488 school children and their teachers from local schools explored the farms, learned about plants, nutrition and culinary heritage, and enjoyed a farm-grown snack.



1,148 visitors attended our weekly produce distribution, which shared 8,487 pounds of free produce with foodinsecure NYCHA residents.



Wolcott Farm Rebuild

Thanks to hours of labor from our youth farmers and volunteers, we now have 76 beautiful brand-new raised beds in which to grow veggies, herbs, and flowers at the Wolcott Street Farm!

The farm is already bridging Red Hook's diverse communities. Our new Garden Club brought 10 resident farmers who speak different languages (English, Spanish, Cantonese and Mandarin) to the farm around a shared interest in food and nutrition. Each member tended their own plot in a newly-built bed at the Wolcott Street Farm.



Food as Medicine

This spring, in partnership with the Red Hook Community Health Network and NYU Langone Family Health Center, RHI piloted the Red Hook Food as Medicine initiative. Through weekly vouchers, 30 Red Hook families who are experiencing food-related chronic illness and foodinsecurity shopped for vegetables, fruit, and eggs at the farm stand. Steady participation, high usage of vouchers, and overwhelmingly positive feedback has led to a continuation of the program in 2025. A participant in the initiative reported:

"I've been eating more vegetables... my habits are different now. Before, I used to eat my rice and beans, and that's it. Now I have to have cabbage or cucumber or lettuce, tomatoes on the side. I never did that before."





Cooking Demonstration at the Wolcott Street Farm Produce Distribution







RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

2024 TASTE OF RED HOOK CULINARY PARTNERS

Taste of Red Hook is RHI's signature annual fundraiser featuring dozens of local restaurants, wineries, distilleries, and bakeries. The food festival is celebrating 20+ years and we couldn't hold the event without the generosity of our culinary partners and sponsors!

Baked **Brooklyn Crab** Brooklyn Farmacy & Soda Fountain **Brooklyn Gin** Calexico Dolce Brooklyn Fort Defiance The Good Fork Grindhaus Hometown Bar B Que Ikea Insa Keg & Lantern La Newyorkina Las Chingonas Imports Meat Asia Pearl Street Caviar Raaka

The Red Hook Winery Red Hook Farms Rick's Pick's Seaborne Steve's Authentic Key Lime Pie Strong Rope Sweet Treats by C Tito's Handmade Vodka Van Brunt Stillhouse Victor Wet Whistle White Moustache Widow Jane Distillery Company Yubakery

2024 Taste of Red Hook Sponsors

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Thank you to all the corporate partners who provided volunteers, philanthropic support, and tremendous energy to our work!

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SECTION 6
FINANCIALS

RED HOOK INITIATIVE IMPACT REPORT 2024

2024 FINANCIALS FISCAL YEAR 23/24



Total Revenue | \$4,625,356 Total Expenses | \$4,700,497



SECTION 7 THANK YOU

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

Our board, staff, and community are grateful for the generous support of many institutional donors who invest and believe in Red Hook youth and families.

Aclima Foundation Alfresco NYC **ALLINBKLYN** American Eagle Outfitters Foundation Aprio **Barker Welfare Foundation** Anna and Peter Levin Fund **Beyer Blinder Belle Foundation Bloomberg Philanthropies** Brooklyn ORG **Bulova Stetson Fund Carson Family Charitable Trust** Charina Endowment Fund **Charles Hayden Foundation Chirag Foundation** Citizens Committee for New York City City Gardens Club **Coleman Family Charitable Trust** Commonplace Fund Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust Edward S. Moore Family Foundation **Gerstner Family Foundation** Grace Baptist Church Hyde and Watson Foundation **Ichigo Foundation** Irene Ritter Foundation Joseph S. & Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust Kamco Keith Haring Foundation Kenworthy-Swift Foundation **Kettering Family Foundation** Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Levitt Foundation Lily Auchincloss Foundation M&T Charitable Foundation MacKenzie Scott Yield Giving Mariposa Foundation Mary J. Hutchins Foundation Merck Family Fund Mertz Gilmore Foundation Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund Neighborhoods First Fund New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) New York City Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) New York City Council Discretionary Funding, Council Member Alexa Aviles New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (OCJ) New York City Office of Emergency Management New York Community Trust New York State Health Foundation New York State Assembly Discretionary Funding, Assembly Member Marcela Mitaynes New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OFCS) New York State Senate Discretionary Funding, State Senator Andrew Gournades New York State Department of **Criminal Justice Services** NYU Langone Family Health Centers, Sunset Terrace **Robert Sterling Clark Foundation** The Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation **Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust** Scherman Foundation Seth Sprague Education & Charitable Foundation **Siegel Family Endowment SMS** Foundation Stainman Family Foundation The B. Robert Williamson Jr. Foundation George B. Storer Fund at The Miami Foundation The Marilyn and James Simons Charitable Fund The O'Connell Organization Family Foundation The Rudolph J. and Daphne A. Munzer Foundation Theodore Luce Charitable Trust Trio Foundation of St. Louis US Environmental Protection Agency van Ameringen Foundation van Beuren Charitable Foundation Washington Square Fund

RHI LEADERSHIP

Thank you to our Board of Directors for giving their time, talent, and treasure to serve the RHI and the Red Hook community!

Directors

Brandon Holley, President Nanda Prabhakar, Vice President Gregg Bishop, Secretary George Suttles, Treasurer

Paxton Barnes Dr. Millicent Comrie Kevin Correia Rebecca Kirszner Katz Michael Lee Alison Maschmeyer Janice McGuire Thomas McMahon

Maria Mottola Amanda Sue Nichols Jennifer Wheary

An extra special thanks to Chris Cardona, Andrew Strauss, and Eden Wurmfeld, our outgoing Directors who served on our Board during Fiscal Year 2024.

And a warm welcome to Paxton Barnes, Kevin Correia, and Alison Maschmeyer! We are thrilled to have you onboard.

Michael Partis

Executive Director





Before joining RHI, I struggled with limited access to educational resources and felt isolated. RHI helped me overcome these obstacles by connecting me with peers and staff, providing educational resources, and offering extracurricular activities that opened up new opportunities for growth. RHI has empowered me to pursue my goals and given me hope that I can positively impact my community."

– RHI youth member

"One of the most vital ways we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone."

– RHI youth member





CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

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