

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: September 30, 2025

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## **Red Hook Houses Kindergartners Will Receive \$1,000 Each for College and Career Training Through Red Hook Initiative Community Scholarship 2026**

**Red Hook, NY** — Today, [Red Hook Initiative](#), [NYC Kids RISE](#), and a coalition of local philanthropists publicly launched a groundbreaking investment in the futures of children living in Red Hook's public housing. As part of this neighborhood-led initiative, **every kindergartener residing in Red Hook Houses and enrolled in a NYC public school will receive a \$1,000 contribution into their NYC Scholarship Account in January**, marking a significant commitment to educational equity and long-term opportunity.



See more [photos](#) and [video](#) here.

Red Hook Houses, Brooklyn's largest public housing development, is home to nearly 6,000 residents — predominantly Black and Latino families who face systemic barriers to economic and educational opportunity.

*"This investment is a down payment on the futures of Red Hook's youngest learners," said **Michael Partis, Executive Director at the Red Hook Initiative**. "It sends a clear message: We believe in you and your potential. By providing these resources early, we're opening doors for children and families that have historically been left behind."*

*"The Save for College Program has been designed to allow every part of a child's community — from schools, to philanthropy, to local businesses, to civic organizations and places of worship — to come together to show support for their children and invest in their futures together," said **Debra-Ellen Glickstein, Founding Executive Director of***

**NYC Kids RISE.** *“We all have a role to play to make sure our kids are set up for success. Thank you to the Red Hook Initiative for this pioneering investment and the incredible community of support in Red Hook Houses.”*

This initiative, powered by community members, educators, donors, and local leaders, aims not only to provide financial resources but also to lay the foundation for intergenerational wealth through accompanying financial literacy workshops. For many families in Red Hook, financial literacy has often felt like a distant, abstract concept — taught in theory but disconnected from day-to-day realities. By putting \$1,000 into each child’s account, students and their families now have a tangible stake they can build on, plan around, and use to imagine a different kind of future.

The Red Hook Initiative Community Scholarship 2026 leverages the NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program — a first-of-its-kind universal wealth-building platform for New York City neighborhoods that provides infrastructure for New Yorkers — and government, business, philanthropy — to come together to directly invest in the children’s futures. Started in 2017 in Queens, including Queensbridge Houses, the largest public housing development in the country, with the City and NYC Public Schools with support from the Gray Foundation, the platform expanded across the five boroughs in 2022. To date, nearly every 1st-4th grader has an NYC Scholarship Account with funds for their futures, including 300+ who live in Red Hook Houses. In all, there are nearly 280,000 students with nearly \$50M accumulated. In January, the new kindergarten class will follow.

Overall, the initiative aims to encourage and inspire others — from local stakeholders to citywide institutions — to invest in students’ scholarship accounts and support long-term educational success. The Kindergarteners who live in Red Hook Houses and attend public school with NYC Scholarship Accounts will receive the first-ever \$1,000 **Red Hook Initiative Community Scholarship 2026** in January. This will be on top of the initial \$100 seed they receive when they get their Account. As they matriculate through their educational journeys, through the Program, families can earn additional rewards through completing the Building Blocks, and additional Community Scholarships — creating a “capital stack” of assets for their futures.

Read the quotes from other partners and supporters below:

*“NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program is a platform that allows New York City students to dream big- no matter their neighborhood. It provides the necessary infrastructure to help communities come alongside our children as they work towards those dreams and lays the groundwork to help those dreams of college and career come to fruition. This Red Hook Initiative Community Scholarship 2026 is a beautiful example of this vision in action, and we welcome the support for our students’ postsecondary goals,”* **said Rafael T. Alvarez, Superintendent, District 15.**

*“The 529 Project reflects Red Hook Initiative’s unwavering commitment to New York City kids. By seeding college savings accounts for every child in NYCHA Red Hook, we are*

*opening the road to higher education and career training at the stage when it makes the greatest impact. Through partnerships with neighborhood organizations, we are strengthening the fabric of our community and fueling a cycle of opportunity—from college readiness to workforce development to community hiring—that ensures Red Hook families can thrive for generations to come,”* **said Brandon Holley, RHI Board President.**

*“The NYC Kids RISE Save for College program is a model wealth-building platform for New York City neighborhoods. This Red Hook Initiative Community Scholarship 2026 is a prime example of a community coming together to invest in its children, leveraging the Save for College Program infrastructure,”* **said Sideya Sherman, NYC Chief Equity Officer & Commissioner of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Equity & Racial Justice.**

*“Thank you to the Red Hook Initiative and all the community and school leaders who have made this possible. When we invest in children, we’re making a down payment on the future of our city.”*

*“At NYC Kids RISE, we are counting on this next generation of Red Hook youth to take care of our city and country, and we are thrilled to be able to support them in realizing all of their tremendous potential. We are so glad to partner with the Red Hook Initiative to develop the next generation of leaders that we need,”* **said Lisa Cowan, Board of Directors, NYC Kids RISE.**

*"This investment is more than just money in an account — it’s the message that my daughter’s dreams are possible. She’s only just starting kindergarten, but knowing that she already has something waiting for her future gives her hope and confidence. For me, as her mother, it means peace of mind. It means that when the time comes, she’ll have choices and opportunities I never had, and that her community stood behind her from the very beginning,”* **said Danielle Fludd, Parent of a Red Hook Kindergartener.**

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### **About Red Hook Initiative (RHI)**

Red Hook Initiative (RHI) is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization established in 2002 in Red Hook, Brooklyn, that works alongside residents of the NYCHA Red Hook Houses -- Brooklyn’s largest public housing development -- to address the impacts of systemic inequities and to carry out resident-led solutions to neighborhood challenges. We believe that social change to overcome systemic inequities begins with empowered youth.

Through integrated Youth Development and Social-Emotional Learning, College and Career Success, and Community Building programs, we address systemic challenges, promote economic mobility, and advance racial and social justice. We nurture young people to be inspired, resilient, and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community, and society. A commitment to local leadership and local hiring is at the core of our

place-based approach. Each year since 2014, we have invested over \$1M back into Red Hook through salaries and stipends. RHI engages more than 200 young people and impacts the lives of over 6,500 residents of Red Hook annually.

### **About NYC Kids RISE**

The [NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program](#) is a community tool New Yorkers can use to build wealth in their neighborhoods and support the college and career dreams of their children. The public-private-community partnership provides NYC public school students, starting in kindergarten, with financial resources for higher education and support from their communities to achieve their goals.

NYC Kids RISE is a nonprofit organization managing the Save for College Program in partnership with NYC Public Schools and the City of New York, with founding and ongoing support from the Gray Foundation. Students in eligible grades enrolled in an NYC public elementary school (including participating charter schools) automatically receive an NYC Scholarship Account with an initial investment in a 529 plan and opportunities to earn more through early rewards and [Community Scholarships](#), unless their families choose not to participate. To date, more than \$49 million has been invested across the Accounts of nearly 280,000 students that will help to support their future college and career training.