





**RHI BELIEVES** <sup>that</sup>  
**SOCIAL CHANGE**

to overcome systemic inequities begins with  
**EMPOWERED YOUTH.**

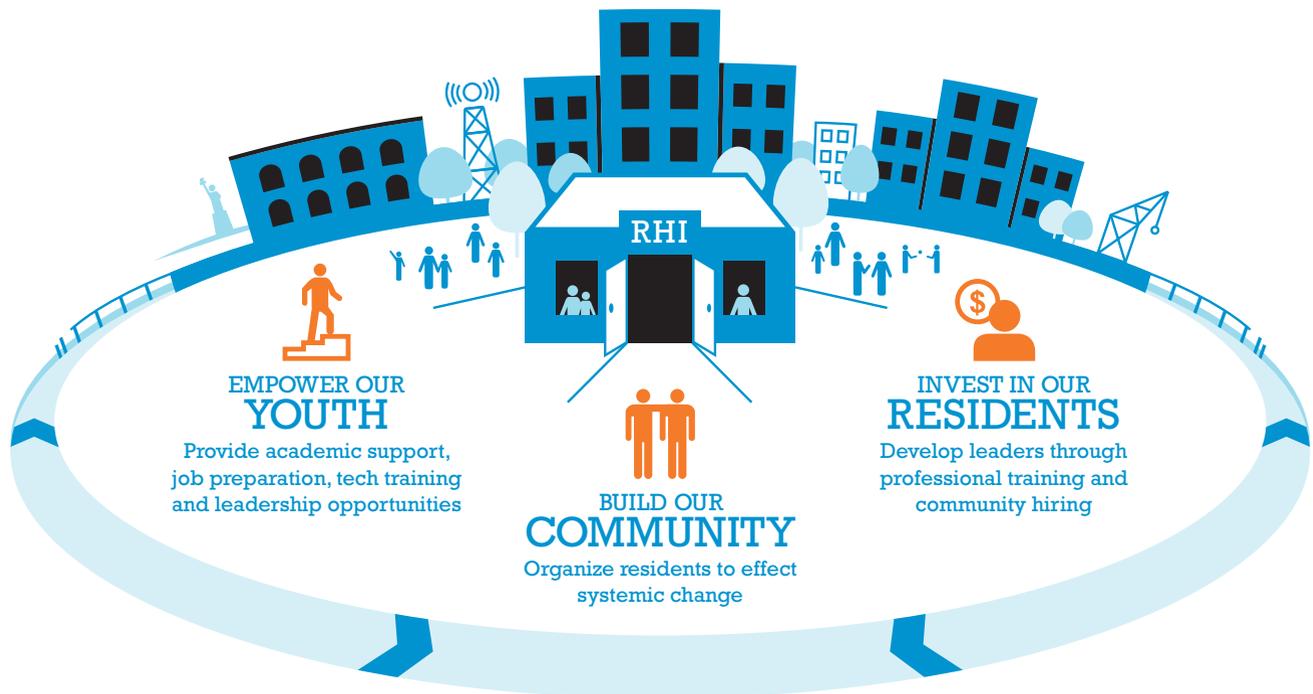
In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people in Red Hook to be

**INSPIRED**  
**RESILIENT**  
<sup>and</sup> **HEALTHY**

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

# Creating Change from Within

## Our Model



Red Hook Initiative (RHI) is a community center that primarily serves public housing residents in Red Hook, Brooklyn. This report demonstrates the impact of our three programs—youth development, community building and community hiring—on over 5,000 residents during the 2017 program year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). These three programs are at the core of RHI's approach to strengthening Red Hook's future.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

# Self-Discovery and Progress

**55** youth were enrolled in the daily afterschool program for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

### Academics & Enrichment

- Homework help
- Rites of Passage (empowerment program for boys)
- Mirrors of Strength (empowerment program for girls)
- Music production
- Skateboard building
- Cooking
- Sports & recreation
- Book club
- Career exposure days & trips

### Services

- Mental health screenings
- Individual & family counseling
- Workshops on cyberbullying, puberty & relational aggression





**94%** of RHI 8th graders were promoted from middle school and are now enrolled in high school.

## How did RHI prepare middle school participants for high school?

*Homework help was really important*

*Helping me deal with conflict*

*Helping me pass subjects I was failing*

*Making friendships*

*I figured out what I want to be when I grow up*

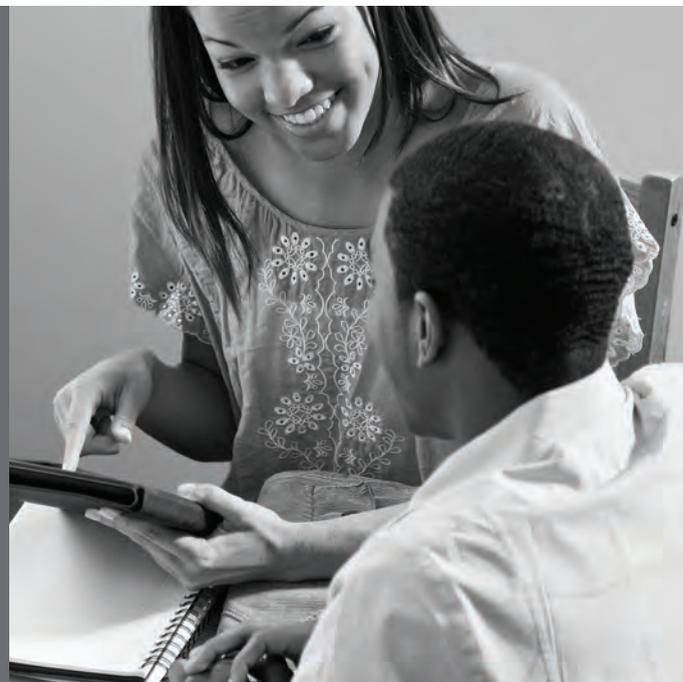
*I found my voice*

**“Since I’ve been at RHI, I’ve been more social. My grades got even better since last year. I got in trouble less than last year. In this program I had a lot of fun with the staff and my friends.”**

— Middle School Program participant

### Meet Jason

Early in the school year Jason was struggling with two of his 8th grade subjects. An RHI staff member joined Jason's mother, father and teacher to design a plan between school, home and RHI's afterschool program to improve homework completion. RHI's team worked together with parents, monitored Jason's report cards and set clear academic goals. By the end of the year, Jason's grades moved from a D to an A- in challenging subjects. He is now enrolled in a high school of his choice and prepared to succeed. Reflecting on how he changed his grades, Jason explained that he was able to shift his habits with support from everyone involved.





## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH LEADER PROGRAM

Community Impact,  
Personal Transformation

**99** youth participated in the Youth Leader Program

The Youth Leader Program provides a rare opportunity for participants ages 14–18 to receive paid, year-round training and work experience. Youth Leaders were hired as Peer Counselors, Youth Organizers, Teen Chefs, Teentrepreneurs or Photojournalists.

### Why do Youth Leaders come to RHI?

*It's a good place to start if you've never had a job. Everything is confidential here*

*This is my other family because they teach me right from wrong and I feel safe and comfortable here*

*They believe in me here*

*Freedom of voice*

*It's like a second home*

### Meet Leslie

Leslie joined RHI's Youth Leader Program shortly before starting high school. Having always felt at home in the kitchen, Leslie excelled as a Teen Chef. In fall 2017, Leslie enrolled in SUNY Cobleskill, where she will major in Culinary Studies. She is the first in her family to graduate high school, and to pursue a college degree. Leslie says, "I probably would never have even applied to college if it hadn't been for the staff at RHI."



“Peer counseling helped me and my co-workers identify healthy and unhealthy relationships and what we can do as young teens to provide service to those in need.”

— High School Youth Leader



**100%**

of high school seniors graduated (70%) or remain on track to graduate high school (30%) in the next nine months.



**91%**

of high school seniors who expressed interest in college gained admission or persisted toward being college-bound.



**96%**

of Youth Leaders felt like they gained access to resources to secure future employment.



## YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

# Securing a Path to the Future

**182** Young Adults served and engaged

### College Scholars

**41** College Scholars accessed support to secure housing, select a major, (re)apply for financial aid, apply for scholarships and stay enrolled in school.

**27** College Scholars had a summer internship subsidized by RHI relating to their major or other area of interest.

**93%** of College Scholars were in good academic standing and are still working toward their two- and four-year college degrees.

### Job Readiness

### & Subsidized Work Training

**135** Young Adults engaged in programs and services to support their search for employment, including mock interviews, resume writing, case management, one-on-one coaching and career mapping. Of these:

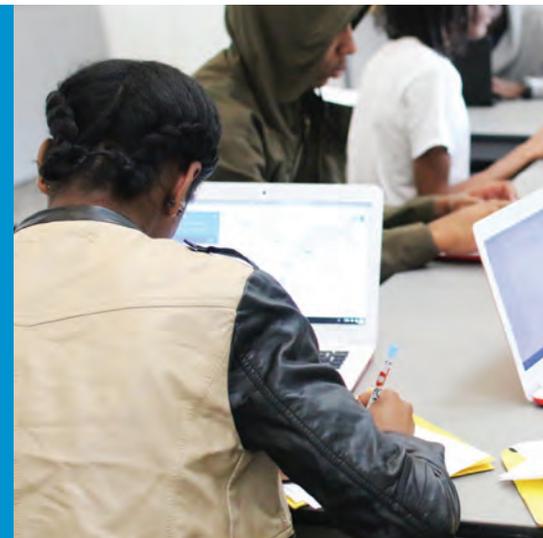
- 55 secured permanent employment
- 20 are completing subsidized job placements
- 23 are in external training programs
- 22 returned to or started college as part of their long-term career planning

### Social Work & Case Management

**75** Young Adults received support from RHI's social workers to address needs such as stable housing, food security, mental and physical health and legal services.

“It’s important to step outside your comfort zone. That can take you places that can change your life.”

— Young Adult participant on what she learned in the Professional Development program





## Digital Stewards

A key component of the Young Adult program is Digital Stewards, a paid, 8-month training program through which young adults maintain and promote the Red Hook WiFi network, coordinate tech-related projects and events, and gain tech skills and knowledge.

**92%** of Digital Stewards agreed or strongly agreed that they learned skills that allow them to succeed in the workplace and to make a difference in their neighborhood.

**77%** of Digital Stewards remained employed or were actively pursuing further education within six months of completing the program.

**“I found the tech side of me I didn’t know I had.”**

— Digital Steward

Photo: Alden Parkinson, Digital Steward alumnus





## COMMUNITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Individuals Can Only Be as Strong as the  
Community in Which They Live

# Our Approach to Community Building

Facilitate Authentic  
Participation and  
Leadership

Build Social  
Capital

Create Positive  
Institutional Change  
in Red Hook

## Build Social Capital & Facilitate Authentic Participation in Community

- RHI Trained **44 Local Leaders** in individual and family preparedness and community response to emergencies such as natural disasters (includes 18 primarily Spanish language speakers).
- Through a partnership with Brooklyn Workforce Innovations, Fifth Avenue Committee and Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation, RHI screened **69 Red Hook adults** and referred them to services like public assistance, legal support, health care and other critical resources.
- Youth Organizers developed their own "Know Your Rights with Police" palm cards and distributed them to over **300 RHI youth**.
- **15 Youth Leaders** went to Albany to lobby for more state funding for summer jobs at Summer Youth Employment Program Advocacy Day. **35 Youth Leaders** went to Washington DC to participate in the People's Climate March. **8 Youth Leaders** participated in a national rally to protest cuts to housing in Washington DC.
- **25 residents and youth** attended the "No Cuts" rally at the Housing & Urban Development (HUD) office in Manhattan. Youth Facilitator John Texidor was the sole youth speaker explaining the effect of HUD cuts on young people in Red Hook to several hundred attendees.



“After completing the Local Leaders program, I know how to prepare an emergency kit and I know the methods to use to be safe and assist others.”

— Local Leader

## Create Positive Institutional Change in Red Hook

### The RHI Youth Committee

RHI played an instrumental role in the District 38 Participatory Budgeting process. The Youth Committee—comprised of nine high school participants from Red Hook—collected 75 ideas for projects to improve their community, drafted five project proposals (one of which appeared on the final ballot), collected 450 votes to decide which of those ideas would be implemented, and ultimately secured funding for one Red Hook project.

### Participatory Action Research Project

RHI conducted a Participatory Action Research project led by a team of residents, and on the fourth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, released a report on mold in the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Red Hook Houses. The report highlights the conditions of mold, the effect of mold on residents' health and a narrative of NYCHA's response. The report was circulated widely among public officials and was referenced in several news outlets, including *The Atlantic*, POLITICO, and News 12 Brooklyn. The report resulted in a number of wins, including NYCHA re-training its Red Hook staff to address issues relating to mold, a City Council hearing on mold held in Red Hook, and the support of City Council legislation to address issues of mold licensing.



RHI's Technology Program develops and uses technology to create opportunities and tech-centered solutions for the Red Hook community.



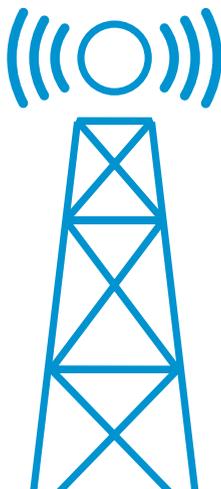
Photo: Alden Parkinson, Digital Steward alumnus



### Red Hook WiFi Program Impact

In 2017, RHI's Red Hook WiFi expanded significantly with the recruitment of 38 local business partners on Red Hook's commercial streets to host hotspots. The free wireless network is a key part of RHI's digital strategy to support community development.

Red Hook WiFi was accessed **17,901** times in the 2017 program year.



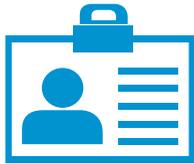
In summer 2016, a team of Digital Stewards and a doctoral candidate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) partnered to conduct a participatory action research project to explore the meaning and impact of Red Hook WiFi. Digital Stewards presented the resulting study at MIT, and their findings were included in sessions at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit, Michigan.



## COMMUNITY HIRING PROGRAM

Community Members Have the Power  
to Create Their Own Social Change

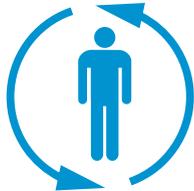
RHI is committed to hiring locally and investing in residents who will improve their own lives and the community in which they live and work.



### 93% of RHI Employees Live in Red Hook

257 total RHI employees

82% were youth, age 24 or under



### \$1.15 M Local Economic Impact

\$947,000 in wages were paid to people from Red Hook

\$20,000 in stipends or special grants were paid to people from Red Hook

\$148,000 was paid to Red Hook consultants, vendors, and businesses



### Red Hook community members hired in the 2017 program year:

Dabriah Alston, WIFI Project Manager

Kenny Frazier, Group Leader

Rasheed Johnson, IT Intern

Jazmin Nazario, Tutor

Jada Penson, Group Leader

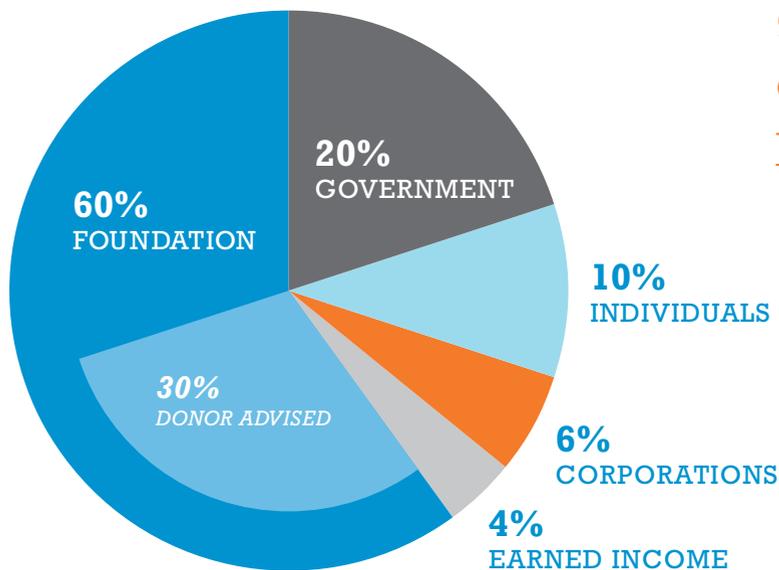
Quinton Phillips Dalton, Receptionist &  
Development Assistant

John Texidor, Participatory Budgeting Facilitator

Jazzhane Wade, Program Assistant

Davonne Walker, IT Assistant

# 2017 INCOME



**90** cents of every dollar goes directly to programs and services

**2017 TOTAL EXPENSES:  
\$3.05M**



Thank you to everyone who made our biggest annual fundraiser a great success!

**Featured Tastes:** Baked, Blue Marble Ice Cream, Brooklyn Crab, Brooklyn Farmacy, Brooklyn Ice House, Bruce Cost Ginger Ale, Buttermilk Channel, Cantine Catering, Court Street Grocers, Culture, Defonte's, Dolce Brooklyn, Fleishers Craft Butchery, Fort Defiance, Grindhaus, Hope & Anchor, Hometown Bar B Que, IKEA, Joe Coffee, Kao Soy, Kevin's, La Newyorkina, La Slowteria, Margaret Palca Bakes, Mark's Pizza, Pizza Moto, Raaka Chocolate, Rare Bird Sweets, Red Hook Winery, Rick's Picks, Sixpoint, Steve's Authentic Key Lime Pie, The Chocolate Room, The Good Fork, The Hop Shop, The Water Club, Treats Truck, Uncouth Vermouth, Van Brunt Stillhouse, Whipped Pastry Boutique, White Moustache, Widow Jane & Cacao Prieto, & Wilma Jean



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New York Water Taxi  
NYC Department of Youth & Community Development

NYC Economic Development Corporation  
NYC Human Resources Administration  
O'Connell Organization Family Foundation  
The O'Connell Organization  
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People's United Community Foundation  
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Rebecca and James Katz Fund  
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation  
Russell Berrie Foundation  
Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust  
Santander Bank  
SeaChange Capital Partners  
Signature Bank  
Sills Family Foundation Next Generation Giving Group  
Sitex  
Sky Ranch Foundation  
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“Do something positive and the community looks at you differently, like you can be somebody. They have faith in you.”

— High School Youth Leader



**CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN**

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