

# Impact Report 2018

**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**

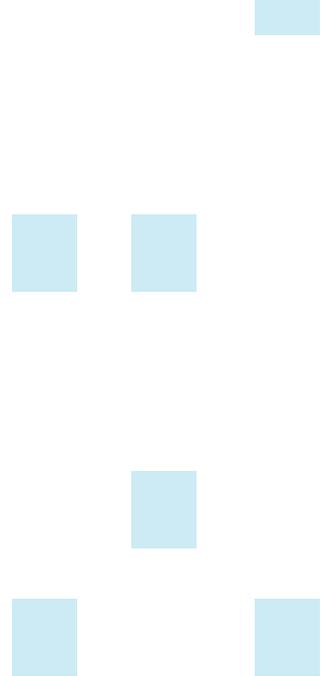
**RESILIENT**

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.

[www.rhicenter.org](http://www.rhicenter.org)



# 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



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

## 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.

**“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



## ■ HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH LEADER PROGRAM

127 high school participants served

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.*

*Our workshops helped people around us understand the world better.*

*It was fun and gave me a leadership role.*

“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



**88%**

of Youth Leaders graduated or stayed on track to graduate high school in four years.



**100%**

of high school seniors who expressed interest in college gained admission.



**89%**

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



**88%**

of Youth Leaders found supportive peers and gained access to supportive mentors.

## 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.

## ■ YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

270 young adults served

### 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.

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

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.

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.

College  
Decision  
Day May 1

#IDecided





## 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.





# COMMUNITY BUILDING

## OUR APPROACH

Facilitate Authentic  
Participation and Leadership  
in Community Life

Build  
Social  
Capital

Create Positive  
Institutional Change  
in Red Hook

### 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.



125 people participated in the Local Leaders Forum (February 2018) to identify resiliency priorities for Red Hook, in a partnership with 100 Resilient Cities, Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency and with support from The Rockefeller Foundation.

**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.



“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](http://www.redhookwifi.org).





# COMMUNITY HIRING

## 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.



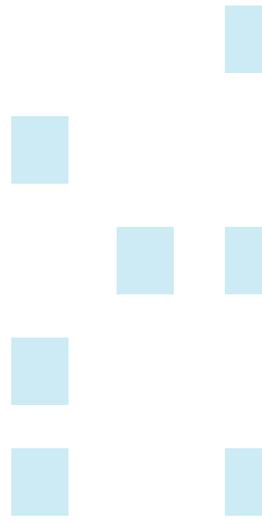
During program year 2018 RHI paid over **\$1.26M** directly back to people from Red Hook through staff salaries, stipends, contracts and business agreements.

### 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



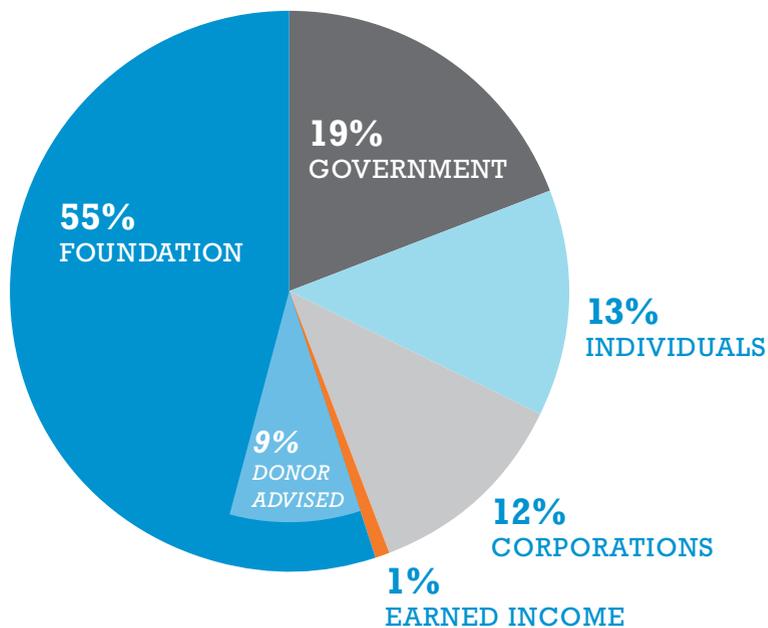
**“My mentor was a great help for me to get interviews and write a great résumé.”**

— 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.**

**Featured Tastes donated by:** Added Value, Alma, Ample Hills, Angels' Share Wine North, Baked, Bar Bruno, Blue Marble Ice Cream, Brooklyn Crab, Brooklyn Ice House, Bruce Cost Ginger Ale, Buttermilk Channel, Cacao Prieto, Cafe Booqoo, The Chocolate Room, Court Street Grocers, Defonte's, Dolce Brooklyn, Fort Defiance, The Good Fork, Hometown Bar-B-Que, Hope & Anchor, IKEA, Jessie Sheehan Bakes, Joe Coffee, Kevin's, La Newyorkina, Margaret Palca Bakes, Mark's Pizza, Mile End Delicatessen, Pizza Moto, Pok Pok, Popina, Raaka Chocolate, Red Hook Winery, Rick's Picks, Saxelby Cheesemongers, Sixpoint Craft Ales, Steve's Key Lime Pie, Van Brunt Stillhouse, Whipped Pastry Boutique, White Moustache, Widow Jane

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## CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

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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](http://rhicenter.org/our-story).



Devano



Malcolm



Jazmin

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