



**2019**  
**IMPACT**  
**REPORT**

**Red Hook**  
**Lideres Locales**



# 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).

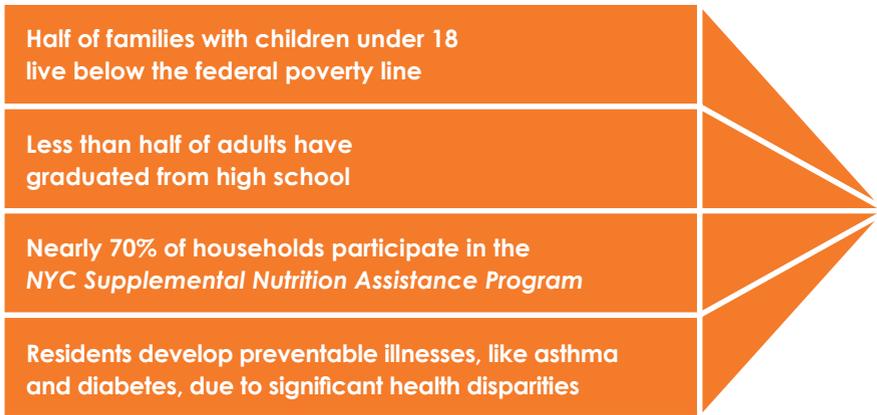
## OUR MISSION

At Red Hook Initiative (RHI) we believe 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.

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

# Impact

## INEQUITIES FACING OUR COMMUNITY



## 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 6<sup>th</sup> grade through age 24.



## empowerment

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 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> graders supports middle school youth to succeed in school, develop life skills and exercise leadership in the neighborhood.

**In 2019, 100% of 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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.

## 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.



## Headed to college debt-free

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.





## Envisioning the future of Red Hook

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.

“

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:

Baked, Bumblebees R Us, Chelsea Auto, CB Studios, CHS Group, Court Street Grocers Hero Shop, DYAD, Erie Basin, Fort Defiance, The Good Fork, Kmedialblox, Kustera Project, NY Printing & Graphics, OB Hair Salon, PAVE Red Hook, Pioneer Works, Pioneer Supermarket, Realty Collective, Record Shop, Red Hook Initiative, Red Hook Library, Red Hook Studios, Red Hook Winery, Rood Gallery, She-Weld, Treasure Island Storage, Visitation Church, Waterfront Kitchens, 106 Ferris Street



# Community Building

through local leadership

## 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 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.**

# resiliency

To be called a Local Leader  
is to accomplish something.

## 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*

AS FEATURED IN:

### **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.



A PROJECT OF RED HOOK INITIATIVE  
**RED HOOK**  
**FARMS**

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



**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.*



# Community Hiring

and professional development



**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.

investment



## 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.

”

**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.

**85%** of RHI employees are from Red Hook.

# thank you

to our community of  
dedicated volunteers

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 Pharmacy &  
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

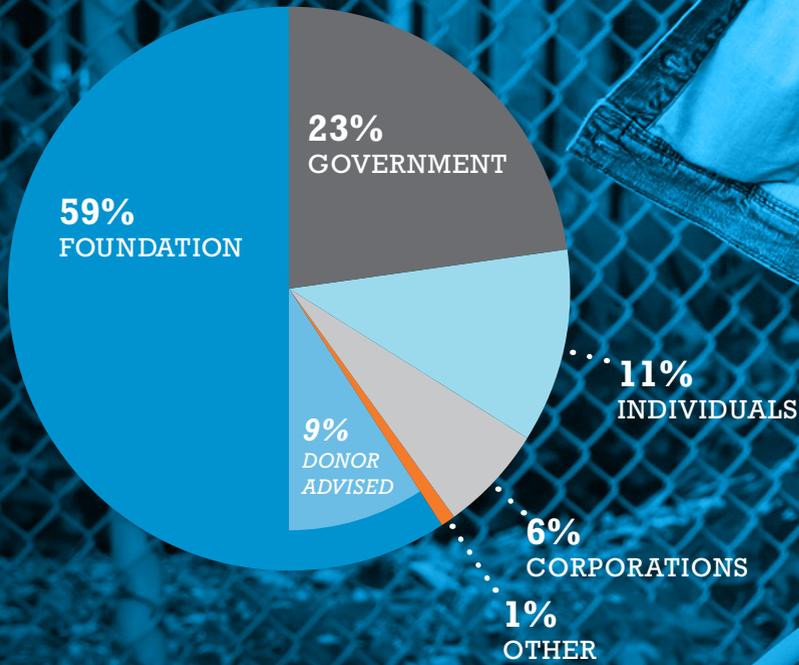
Rita

Saxelby Cheesemongers

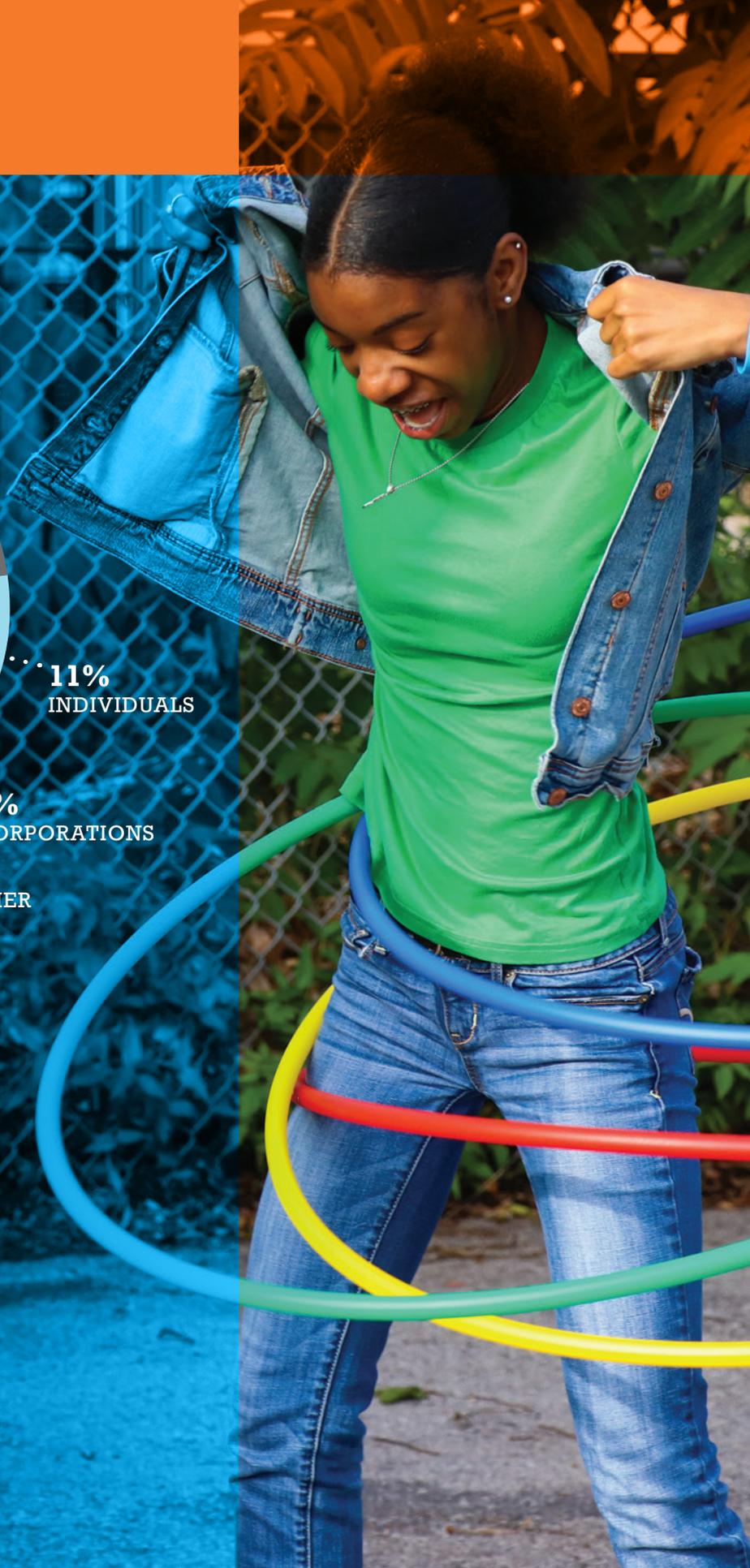
Shalini's Kitchen

# 2019 INCOME

2019 TOTAL EXPENSES:  
\$4.37M



: 91 cents of every dollar  
: directly supports programs  
: and services





# INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

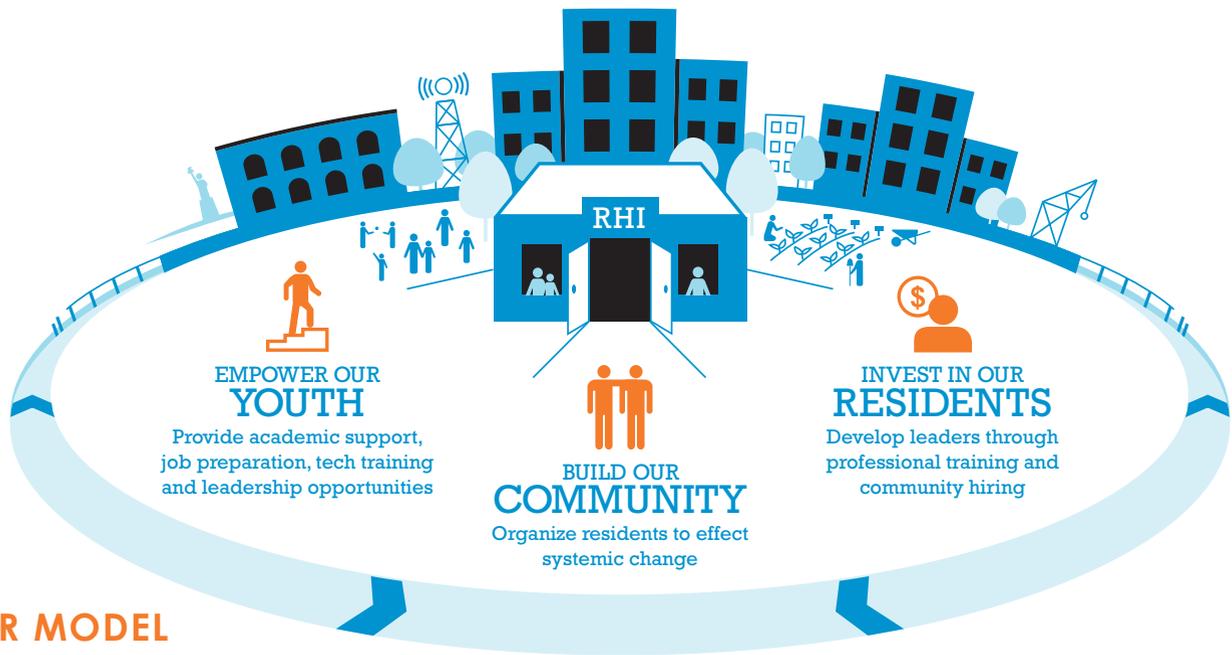
- Adya Family Fund  
AECOM  
Andrew Strauss and Katie Buckels Fund  
Arthur & Patricia Hill Foundation  
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Brooklyn Community Foundation  
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J.M. Kaplan Fund  
James Matthews Enterprises  
Jennifer Wheary and Paul Walker Fund  
Jordan Brand  
Joseph S. & Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust  
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Koya Leadership Partners  
Laura B. Vogler Foundation  
Levitt Foundation  
Lily Auchincloss Foundation  
M&T Charitable Foundation  
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Merck Family Fund  
MJS Foundation  
Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund  
Neighborhoods First Fund  
New York Business Development Corporation  
New York Community Trust  
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets  
New York Water Taxi  
NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene  
NYC Department of Youth & Community Development  
NYC Economic Development Corporation  
NYC Human Resources Administration  
NYU Langone Family Health Centers, Sunset Terrace  
O'Connell Family Foundation  
O'Connell Organization  
Penobscot Fund  
People's United Community Foundation  
Pinkerton Foundation  
Propeller Industries  
Rebecca and James Katz Fund  
Red Hook Winery  
Rio Vista Fund  
Ripple  
Robert J. Katz Charitable Fund  
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation  
Robertson Foundation  
Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust  
Santander Bank  
Scherman Foundation  
Seth Sprague Education & Charitable Foundation  
Signature Bank  
Sitex  
Stainman Family Foundation  
Suffolk Construction  
Terra CRG  
TR Pipe  
Two Trees  
van Ameringen Foundation  
Valentas Foundation  
Whole Cities Foundation

\*This list includes institutions contributing \$2,500 or more.





767 Hicks Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11231



## OUR MODEL



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## CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

[rhicenter.org](http://rhicenter.org) | [info@rhicenter.org](mailto:info@rhicenter.org) | 718.858.6782



### Contributing Photographers:

Alden Parkinson, RHI Program Associate  
Tracie Williams, *The Nation*