



 RED HOOK INITIATIVE

# 2025

## IMPACT REPORT



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Dear Friend,

When I think about change in Red Hook, I don’t picture a single event or a single person. I think about a series of quiet, determined steps — a young person who accepts a leadership role, a family who gains new access to fresh food, neighbors organizing for safer streets — that come together in something larger than themselves.

At Red Hook Initiative (RHI) in Fiscal Year 2025, we created space for those steps to occur and ensured that those taking them had what they needed to keep going. This year, our Youth Development & Socio-Emotional Learning programs created safe, ambitious spaces where young people found belonging and skills that last. Our College & Career Success programs opened pathways to meaningful employment and economic mobility. Our Community Development programs centered resident leadership for change that is driven by the people who know Red Hook best.

I’m thrilled to share RHI’s FY25 Impact Report with you because every page holds the story of Red Hook residents who chose something different for themselves and their families: the student who returned to school with confidence, the neighbor who earned income and learned skills from seed to sale as a paid farm apprentice, and the Local Leaders who mobilized residents behind the Clean Deliveries Act calling for healthier air in Red Hook and New York State. These are the moments when capacity became power and power created change from within.

RHI staff, volunteers, partners, and donors contributed expertise, time, and generosity while residents’ courage and leadership made the work real. As you read these pages, you’ll meet some of the leaders who created change within their lives, community, and society.

In FY25, Red Hook Initiative continued to advance opportunity, strengthen resident leadership, and build lasting change rooted in the community. We look ahead with purpose and responsibility to deepen this work in the year to come.

With gratitude,

Michael Partis  
Executive Director  
Red Hook Initiative (RHI)



### About Red Hook Initiative

Red Hook Initiative believes that social change begins with empowered youth. In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people living in NYCHA's Red Hook Houses to be inspired, resilient, and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, their communities, and society.

We envision Red Hook as a place where all young people can pursue their dreams and grow into independent adults who contribute to their families and neighborhood.

Since 2002, RHI has worked alongside 6,500 youth and adult residents annually to design resident-led solutions, confront racial inequities, and address the long-term impacts of historic disinvestment in Red Hook.



# Year In Review

Creating Change From Within Red Hook, Brooklyn

QUICK STATS

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**405** youth and young adults engaged in healing-centered workshops

## COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS

**\$1M** invested locally in stipends and salaries

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**\$203,493** distributed in emergency financial assistance to **98** residents

Together with residents, Red Hook Initiative is shaping a future grounded in dignity, opportunity, and collective power.

Every program, partnership, and investment reflects our belief that lasting change is built from within - when young people are supported to lead, communities are trusted to determine solutions, and neighborhoods are resourced to thrive.



**“The Peer Health program has been a transformative experience, helping me grow both personally and professionally. Through my involvement, I’ve developed stronger collaboration skills, gained the confidence to speak clearly and assertively in front of large groups, and learned how to effectively advocate for myself and others.”**  
**–Aiden Rivera, Senior Peer Health Navigator**

## The RHI Model for Creating Change from Within



### Empower Youth

Support academic and workplace success, emotional well-being, and leadership development.

#### Youth Development & Socio-Emotional Learning

**50** Middle School and **85** High School participants enrolled in after-school programs

**100%** of Freedom School scholars maintained or improved literacy

**250+** participants reached through peer-led health education

#### College and Career Success

**197** young people (ages 16–24) served

**100%** of young adults in RHI programs participated in the Career Starters Series professional development training program

**77** college scholars supported through ongoing advising and persistence efforts



### Build Community

Strengthen neighborhood networks, health and safety, and local leadership.

**181** residents engaged in community organizing, advocacy, and direct actions

Clients served primary language spoken: **57%** English, **31%** Spanish, **12%** Chinese

**1,250** free meals were distributed at RHI Open Streets during the summer



### Invest in Residents

**25** youth employed on RHI Farms (**68%** live in NYCHA housing)

**201** residents reached through the Community Health Network

**16,017** pounds of produce distributed to **1,151** residents



**Together, we strengthened pathways to opportunity, community thriving, and leadership. We are creating change from within Red Hook, for Red Hook.**



# Youth Development & Socio-Emotional Learning

## Belonging Starts Here

**Creating Change From Within** begins with a foundation of trust, support, and opportunity. Before young people can pursue careers, take on leadership roles, or shape their communities, they need a place where they feel seen, supported, and valued.

In FY25, RHI integrated its Adolescent and Health & Wellness programs to form a unified Youth Development & Socio-Emotional Learning model, serving young people ages 11-24.

This approach ensures consistent access to academic support, healing-centered practice, and leadership development—creating an environment where young people build confidence, strengthen relationships, and begin to define their futures.

**50** middle school and **85** high school youth served in regular after-school programs

**100%** of Freedom School scholars maintained or improved literacy levels

**405** young people participated in socio-emotional and healing-centered workshops

**“At first my child was nervous about going, but the staff and her peers made her feel part of a community.”**  
– Freedom School Parent

## Strengthening Literacy, Confidence, and Identity

RHI’s Freedom School is a 6-week, culturally responsive summer program designed to strengthen literacy and social-emotional development in partnership with the Children’s Defense Fund.

Youth participants read an average of 5.5 books and engaged in reading, discussion, and creative expression using texts that reflected their identities and lived experiences—building both academic skills and self-confidence.

**93%** reported improved self-awareness across core SEL competencies

**91%** reported increased self-empowerment



## Developing Leadership Through Peer Engagement

Young people built confidence and were supported in stepping into leadership roles. In **Peer Health Navigators**, participants led peer education initiatives, facilitated conversations around reproductive health, and connected youth to essential services.

More than **250** youth reached through peer-led education

**96** youth accompanied to health-related appointments

**100%** reported increased knowledge of reproductive health

## Advancing Socio-Emotional Wellbeing

RHI prioritizes mental health and emotional wellbeing as essential in youth development.

### Individual Counseling

**100%** of participants reported trusting their counselor, making positive changes in their lives, and improved ability to cope with challenges

### Peer Healing Groups

**71%** reported increased trust in group

**100%** felt more capable of supporting others

### Community Healing Ecosystem

**405** participants engaged in workshops on mental health, stress management, nutrition, and mindfulness.

**“I was able to reaffirm who I am and what I stand for.”**

**–Taking Up Space Workshop Participant**

## Laying the Groundwork for Long-Term Impact

Belonging is not an endpoint but a starting point. RHI creates environments rooted in trust, identity, and support to equip young people with the confidence and skills needed to pursue education, navigate challenges, and take on responsibility within their communities as leaders.

RHI’s Youth Development & Socio-Emotional Learning work is building a generation of young people who are more connected, more resilient, and better prepared to shape their futures.

# College & Career Success

## Opportunity Takes Shape

**Creating Change From Within** continued as young people turned confidence into action and pathways into possibilities.

In FY25, RHI brought together its College Access & Persistence and Young Adult programs to form a unified College & Career Success model, serving young people ages 16–24.

This work supported young people in navigating the transition into adulthood—equipping them with the skills, resources, opportunities, and guidance needed to pursue education, employment, and long-term stability.

Through individualized support, academic advising, workforce training, and real-world experience, young people began to see what was possible and how to get there.

**197** young people  
ages 16–24 served

**128** young adults  
completed employment  
consultations

**77** college scholars  
received access and  
persistence support

**146** young adults  
participated in workforce  
training workshops

## Supporting College Access and Persistence

For many young people, navigating college can feel complex and out of reach. RHI provides guidance and sustained support to help students not only access higher education—but persist and succeed once enrolled.

**30 of 30** high school seniors who applied to college were accepted

**19** high school seniors awarded college scholarships - 12 full-gap scholarships and 7 annual awards of \$5,000 renewable for up to 4 years

**77** college scholars supported through ongoing advising and persistence efforts

**“The college retention workshop helped me think differently about my future.”**

**– College Success Participant**



**“The practice interviews were the most important—they helped me understand how to approach real opportunities with confidence.”**

**– Career Starter Series Participant**

### **Building Pathways to Employment**

RHI’s workforce development approach focuses on practical skill-building and direct access to opportunity. Through one-on-one coaching and structured programming, participants strengthen resumes, prepared for interviews, and explored career pathways aligned with their interests.

**128** young adults completed employment consultations

**70%** completed job applications, and **40%** of these secured employment, earning an average of **\$18.34/hour**

### **Supporting Stability and Growth**

Success in school and work is deeply connected to personal stability. RHI served 197 young adults with integrated case management, wraparound services, and socio-emotional support.

**75** young adults received individualized case management

**21** received emergency financial assistance

**28** set and achieved personal goals

### **Real-World Training and Experience**

RHI’s **Career Starter Series** provides a structured pathway from skill-building to paid work experience. Participants engaged in cohort-based training focused on professionalism, teamwork, and career readiness to advance in employment, continued education, and training.

**100%** completed the training program – including new resumes, cover letters, and mock interviews

**72%** completed paid internships, averaging 300 hours

**Project-Based Learning, Future Fridays, and Industry Insights** expanded participants’ exposure to real-world careers and industries in their interests. Participants earned certifications, conducted research, and built professional networks.

**70%** engaged in career exploration and industry sessions

**30%** participated in paid Project-Based Learning opportunities

### **Turning Opportunity Into Long-Term Impact**

Whether pursuing higher education or entering the workforce, young people at RHI are building futures rooted in purpose and possibility.

By connecting support, opportunity, and real-world experience, RHI ensures that young adults are not only prepared for the future—but equipped to imagine, pursue, and sustain their goals.

# Community Development



## Power Builds in Community

**Creating Change From Within** reaches its full expression when residents lead, organize, and shape the future of their neighborhood.

In FY25, RHI's merged the work of our Community Building and Red Hook Farms teams in one Community Development department to support the health, stability, and long-term wellbeing of Red Hook residents.

RHI connected residents to essential resources while supporting community-led solutions that addressed the root causes of inequities. Our farms provided access to fresh food while creating paid opportunities for youth and cultivating a new generation of green leaders.

## Connecting Residents to Critical Services

RHI provided direct support to help residents navigate housing, benefits, and health systems:

### Top Services

- SNAP and benefits enrollment
- Housing support and rental assistance
- Emergency financial assistance
- Translation and language access

Primary language spoken by clients served:  
57% English, 31% Spanish, 12% Chinese

**181** residents engaged in community organizing, advocacy and direct actions

**201** residents connected to resources and support through the Community Health Network

**16,017** pounds of fresh produce distributed to **1,151** residents

**25** youth completed the Farm Apprenticeship Program

**"I built a sensor, presented my work, and now I can teach others confidently what I learned."**  
– Environmental Justice Fellow





## Direct Financial Support

RHI provided direct financial support to help households cover essential expenses, maintain stability, and navigate financial challenges.

**\$203,493** financial assistance provided through **98** support grants

## Expanding Health Access Through Community Partnerships

As the coordinating organization for the Red Hook Community Health Network, RHI supported expansion of services through a new Food as Medicine collaboration, launched an air purifier distribution effort, and hosted a NYCHA Health Corps member from the Red Hook community.

**105** air purifiers distributed to NYCHA households

**4** Red Hook residents led a collaborative effort with Red Hook Art Project, bringing awareness to the physical and mental health impacts of substandard housing conditions

**25** community organizations, schools, health partners, and resident members engaged in the Red Hook Community Health Network

## Farms & Community Food Access

In FY25, we expanded our efforts to address food insecurity in the neighborhood through the Food as Medicine launch, the continuation of the free Friday Farm Stand at the Red Hook Houses Farm, the Garden Club, and a sliding-scale model and EBT access at our Saturday Farm Stand.

**16,017** pounds of produce distributed to **1,151** residents of Red Hook Houses

**30** families received a weekly produce voucher for \$25 to shop at Saturday Farm Stand for 22 weeks through Food as Medicine

**57** live cooking demonstrations showcased how to prepare seasonal local ingredients

**24** NYCHA resident farmers grew their own produce through the Red Hook Garden Club

**1,601** visitors to **22** farm stands

**27** school visits and **460** school visitors

**15,909** pounds of food scraps were diverted from the landfill and turned into compost



## Building Community Power for the Long Term

Through organizing, environmental justice, food access, and community-based health partnerships, RHI is strengthening resident leadership and advancing solutions shaped by the Red Hook community itself.





## SPOTLIGHT

# Food As Medicine

### Advancing Health Equity Through Food Access

In Red Hook, access to fresh, nutritious food is deeply connected to broader issues of health, equity, and systemic disinvestment.

In partnership with NYU Family Health Centers, Red Hook Initiative's Food As Medicine program addressed these challenges by connecting residents to fresh, locally-grown produce alongside nutrition education and community-based support.

Operating from June through November, participants received weekly \$25 vouchers to shop at the Columbia Street Farm Stand—creating consistent access to healthy food while reinforcing autonomy, dignity, and choice.

More than a food program, Food as Medicine built pathways toward healthier routines and long-term well-being.

### Participant Outcomes

Participants' fresh produce consumption increased by **16%**

**97%** participants reported increased variety in the fruits and vegetables they consume

**97%** participants reported saving money on food purchases

**100%** of families enrolled in Year Two

**22-week** farm season of consistent access

**100%** of participants would recommend the program

*"Having fresh vegetables regularly made a big difference in my life and helped me start eating healthier. This program also introduced me to a variety of vegetables that I wouldn't have tried before! I noticed positive changes in my health, including losing weight and lowering my blood pressure, which made me feel better overall."*

– Beatriz Romero, Food as Medicine Participant

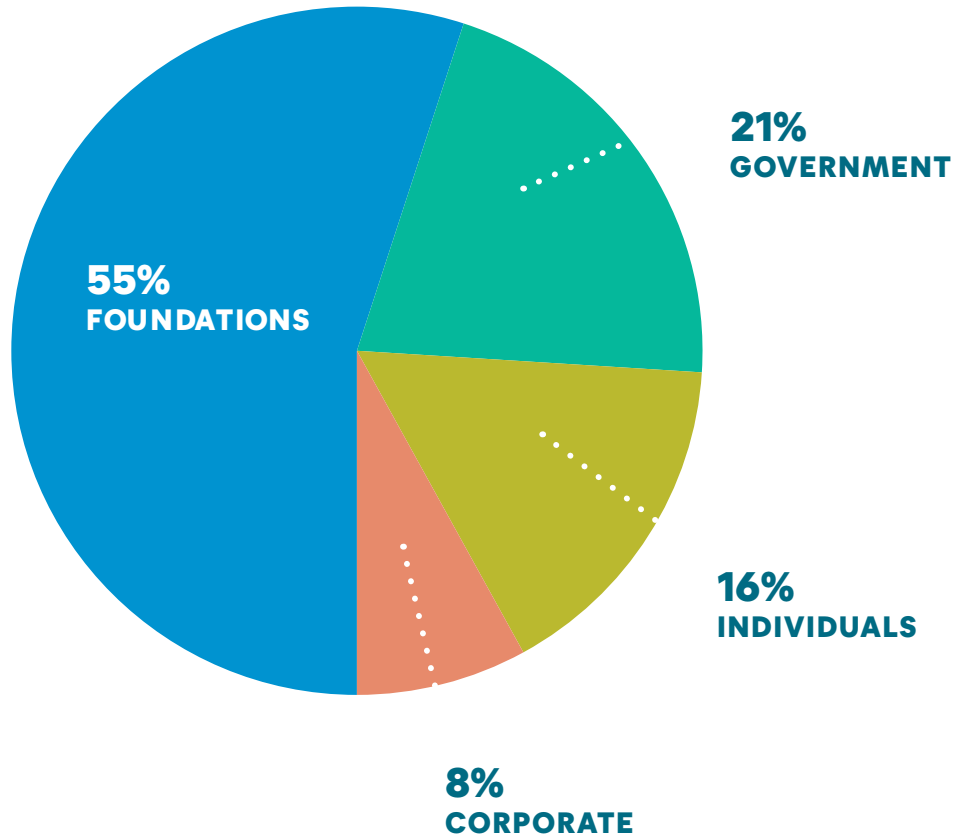


# FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year  
07/2024 – 06/2025

Total Revenue: \$5,113,716  
Total Expenses: \$5,367,082

## REVENUE BREAKDOWN:





# Donors & Partners in Action

## Institutional Supporters

Thank you to the public and private philanthropic partners who believe and invest in Red Hook youth and families:

- Altman Foundation
- Amazin' Mets Foundation
- Amalgamated Charitable Foundation
- American Eagle Outfitters Foundation
- B. Robert Williamson Jr. Foundation
- Barker Welfare Foundation
- Brooklyn ORG
- Bulova Stetson Fund
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- New York Foundation
- New York Health Foundation
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Transportation
- NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
- NYU Langone Family Health Centers, Sunset Terrace
- NYS Department of Sanitation
- NYS Office of Children and Family Services
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- The United Way
- United Neighborhood Houses
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Van Ameringen Foundation
- van Beuren Charitable Foundation
- Washington Square Fund
- WXY Studio



## Corporate Partners

Thank you to the corporate partners who financially supported our events and programs, as well as volunteered their time:

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 Apriov  
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\* denotes a Taste of Red Hook corporate sponsor

<sup>∨</sup> denotes a corporate volunteer partner

## 2025 Taste of Red Hook Taste Partners

Thank you to the Red Hook restaurants and businesses who shared food, drink, and prizes to make our annual fundraiser a true celebration of *Creating Change from Within*:

BAKED  
 Bar Mario  
 Brooklyn Gin  
 Brooklyn Ice House  
 Court Street Grocers  
 Goog Thai Cook Shop  
 Hometown Bar B Que  
 IKEA  
 La newyorkina  
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Other Half Brewing  
 Pearl's Dive  
 Pioneer Gelato Inc. DBA Dolce Brooklyn  
 Popina  
 Raaka Chocolate  
 Red Hook Farms  
 Red Hook Lobster Pound  
 Steve's Authentic Key Lime Pie  
 Strong Rope Brewery  
 The Chocolate Room  
 The Red Hook Winery  
 The White Moustache  
 Wet Whistle Wines  
 Widow Jane Distilling Company





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Brooklyn, NY 11231

***Creating Change From Within***

## 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.**



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### Executive Director

Michael Partis

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