

# WATERFRONT MATTERS

SPRING 2020

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ANNUAL  
REPORT





*“Because of this space, the community can gather to make the world a better, more beautiful place. Thanks to the Conservancy, the Park has become one of the most meaningful places to me.”*

AEILUSHI MISTRY, PROGRAMMING PARTNER

## **BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK CONSERVANCY**

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy works to ensure Brooklyn Bridge Park reaches its full potential as a dynamic and vibrant public space for all of New York City and beyond. Since 2000, we've brought the waterfront to life for more than 1.8 million visitors with free and low-cost cultural, recreational, and educational programming.

More than 130,000 kids and families come each season to enjoy over 500 events in the park — music, movies, theatre, waterfront workouts, kayaking, seining, volunteer opportunities, tours and classes, philanthropic fundraisers, and more. Our Environmental Education Program allows thousands of students and visitors to learn about the environment, ecology, and sustainability through Open Hours at the Environmental Education Center, experiential classes, citizen science initiatives, and outdoor activities.







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# A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



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Dear friends,

When we first drafted this letter introducing our 2019 Annual Report, the world was a different place. We reported on last year’s successes and shared the promise that 2020 holds. While we have been humbled and saddened by how COVID-19 has impacted the country and New York City, including many of our neighbors and friends, the Conservancy is here for you, planning for when we can be together again.

We have been heartened by the incredible acts of kindness, your generosity, and how the beauty of Brooklyn Bridge Park lifts us all. **We hope you will join us in thanking the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation and their staff for keeping the Park open, clean, and safe, especially during this challenging time.**

In early Spring 2020, the Conservancy suspended its programs and events. Due to a lack of revenue from fee-based soccer leagues, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events, and membership, the Conservancy, with our Board of Directors, had to cut spending significantly and take the painful step of furloughing the majority of the Conservancy’s workforce.

We are protecting the Conservancy’s financial position so that our employees have jobs to return to on the other side of this crisis, and so we can continue serving tens of thousands of kids and families (most of whom are low-income and live in park-deprived neighborhoods) through environmental education, kayaking, theatre, music, dance, fitness, and recreation programs.

So, while our 2019 Annual Report is a celebration of our past work, it is also a window into a more intentional and certain future. As we have for more than 30 years, the Conservancy will once again bring Brooklyn’s waterfront to life. We will do so with renewed strength and a commitment to serve those who need our programming most. We cannot predict the timing, but we are working tirelessly: planning, adapting, and fundraising so that we are ready to deliver joy, wonder, and exploration to park visitors.

We are especially excited to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Environmental Education Center this September, and are proud to have welcomed over 140,000 children and families to our environmental education programs. In 2019 alone, more than 10,000 K-12 students — 61% of from Title 1 schools — had access to high-quality, affordable environmental education through experiential field trips lead by our education staff. We will continue to build, and are undergoing strategic planning for the expansion of our Center and programming.

Thank you for your commitment to the Conservancy and for making our work possible. Together, we are building community along the waterfront, making our beloved Brooklyn more beautiful and unique, now and in the brighter days ahead.

Chris Coffey  
 Board Chairman

Nancy Webster  
 Executive Director



# FINANCES

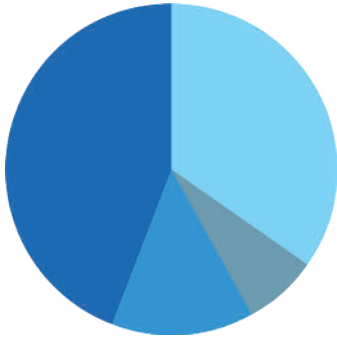
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

<i>Assets</i>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$803,480
Grants receivable	\$288,642
Prepaid expenses and inventory	\$18,463
Property and equipment, net	\$174,163
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$1,284,748</b>
<i>Liabilities</i>	
Accounts payable and unearned revenue	\$129,589
<i>Net assets</i>	
With donor restrictions	\$122,400
Without donor restrictions	\$1,032,759
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$1,115,159</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$1,284,748</b>

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

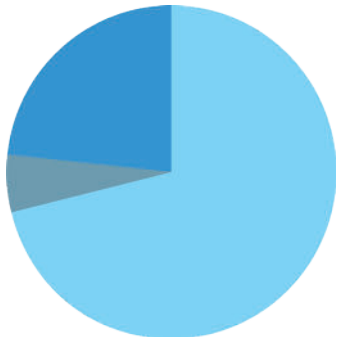
<i>Sources of funds</i>	
Contributions and grants	\$956,552
Government support	\$205,002
Program service revenue	\$378,529
Events (net of direct cost)	\$1,217,146
Other	\$219
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$2,757,448</b>
<i>Use of funds</i>	
Program services	\$2,024,727
Management and General	\$177,588
Fundraising	\$509,996
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$2,712,311</b>

## REVENUE



- EVENTS 44.1%
- CONTRIBUTIONS & GRANTS 34.7%
- PROGRAM SERVICES 13.7%
- GOVERNMENT 7.5%

## EXPENSES



- PROGRAM SERVICES 74.7%
- FUNDRAISING 18.8%
- MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL 6.5%





# ARTS & CULTURE

Every year, the Conservancy presents a dynamic lineup of arts and culture aiming to reflect the richness and diversity of the Park community. 2020 was no different — 60,000 visitors experienced the city’s cultural scene at outdoor movies, live music, book readings, dance and theatre performances, family festivals, and more.

At the 20th Anniversary of *Movies With A View*, 38,000 attendees enjoyed outdoor films, kicked back to tunes by Brooklyn DJ’s, and savored treats from some of NYC’s best food trucks. *Unplugged* and *Brooklyn Americana Music Festival* featured intimate acts spanning a range of styles and genres. Seasoned and breakout authors and poets at *Books Beneath the Bridge* presented to hundreds at Pier 1’s Granite Prospect. At *All the Park’s a Stage*, actors swapped genders and roles at a fun New York Classical rendition of Oscar Wilde’s classic *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Major family festivals — *Lift Off: A Waterfront Kite Festival* and *Harvest Festival* — bookended the season, drawing over 12,500 kids and families to the piers for sunny afternoons filled with partner activities, music, lawn games, STEAM education, and more.

In August at Pebble Beach, the community came together for the 7th annual sacred *Hindu Lamp Ceremony*. Founder Aeilushi Mistry shares:

“The Hindu Lamp Ceremony is mirrored after the traditional Aarti Ceremony in India, in which you place a lamp in the river as an offering of respect and prayer. This year was especially moving. I had recently lost my husband, Paulom, who had been a big part of the day. I was blown away by the quality, richness, and outpouring of love from participants. The mass shooting in El Paso also happened that weekend and thanks to the Conservancy, people had a shared space to lean on each other and heal. The day was very peaceful and spiritually charged. Every year, so many express how essential this ceremony is for them.”

- AELIUSHI MISTRY, FOUNDER



## MOVIES WITH A VIEW

**38,000**

SUMMER FILMGOERS

## ALL THE PARK’S A STAGE

**1,250**

PUBLIC THEATRE SPECTATORS

## BOOKS BENEATH THE BRIDGE

**100**

LITERATURE LOVERS PER NIGHT

## HARVEST FESTIVAL

**6,500**

FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

## HINDU LAMP FESTIVAL

**3,500**

CELEBRANTS

## BROOKLYN AMERICANA

**2,300**

LIVE MUSIC FANS



# RECREATION

Throughout the summer, 15,000 participants came to enjoy active fitness and recreation along the waterfront in 2019.

New partnerships included basketball clinics with NYC's premier youth basketball organization, Kids in the Game, and an experiential mat-based workout with *The Class by Taryn Toomey*. Over a four-session series at *The Class*, more than 600 attendees came to jump, dance, and reflect under a beautiful East River sunset.

Off the Pier 2 floating dock, 9,000 paddlers enjoyed the city's skyline and harbor breeze at free *Walk Up Kayaking* sessions with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Boathouse. Certified instructors at the Conservancy's *Youth Kayak Program* taught day-long classes on the water, helping to connect young people — many from underserved areas — to the East River as an educational and recreational resource. *Waterfront Workouts* included favorites like *Zumba*, *Hip Hop Dance Aerobics*, *Yoga*, *Pilates*, and a new *Salsa* class on Pier 6.

*Adult and Youth Soccer Leagues* offered a fun and affordable option for community sport, with nearly 3,000 players competing on the Pier 5 fields. Youth soccer had record turnout with 1,000 co-ed players registered in the league. Chloe Gottlieb, mother to 2019 participant Stella Ting, shares:

"Fall 2019 was Stella's first season playing soccer in the Park. She was nervous at first, but built confidence over time — she even scored a goal this season! I signed her up not knowing how fun it would be for parents to watch the kids play in front of the NYC skyline. Nothing compares to those views. The league is a great way to try soccer in a fun and open environment, as all levels are encouraged and welcome. I grew up playing soccer and feel very grateful that the kids in the area have access to this great sport at an affordable price."

- CHLOE GOTTLIEB, PARENT



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## PUBLIC KAYAKING

**9,000**

EAST RIVER PADDLERS

## ADULT SOCCER LEAGUES

**1,700**

FOOTBALLERS

## YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUES

**1,000**

TEAM PLAYERS

## WATERFRONT WORKOUTS

**1,700**

FITNESS FANS

## YOUTH KAYAK CAMP

**600**

KIDS ON THE WATER

## YOUTH BASKETBALL CLINICS

**600**

DRIBBLERS



# EDUCATION

Over 22,000 students and visitors experienced groundbreaking environmental education in 2019. Programs included school classes, public fishing, citizen science events, *Open Hours* at the Environmental Education Center, professional development opportunities, *Early Nature Experiences*, *Discovery Sessions*, and more.

Over 10,000 K-12 students from across the five boroughs observed, interacted, and enjoyed the Park's ecology through experiential, hands-on classes on topics ranging from oyster restoration, sustainable design, ecology and the environment, geology, and the history of the Brooklyn Bridge. 61% of participants came from Title I schools.

At Open Hours at the Environmental Education Center, rotating themes and new live animals — seahorses, snakes, moon jellies, and East River fish — introduced 9,700 visitors to the Park's local flora, fauna, and estuary habitat.

Participants at *Public Seining* and *Citizen Science Fishing Clinics* engaged with the abundant East River wildlife through cutting edge catch-and-release practices. Throughout the summer, attendees contributed to data collection that served the wider scientific community for research purposes and wildlife monitoring. Peter Park, evolutionary ichthyologist and a Conservancy on-site marine biologist, shares:

"What's special about this program is the balance of mission and accessibility. I've been an environmental steward of the East River since childhood and it's mind-blowing that the same waterfront, that was once almost forgotten, is now home to dynamic environmental education and stewardship initiatives. Through environmental education programming, the story that is emerging for local marine wildlife is one of nature's resilience, resurgence, and recognition. I find it quite symbolic that just as more and more people are attracted to the Park, so too are more and more fish species.

- PETER PARK, PROGRAM PARTNER



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## STUDENTS

**10,200**

YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED

## OPEN HOURS

**9,700**

ED CENTER VISITORS

## SCHOOL & DAY CAMPS

**120**

REPRESENTED

## CLASSES

**270**

CONDUCTED

## TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

**61%**

FROM UNDERSERVED AREAS

## ZIP CODES SERVED

**568**

FROM NYC AND BEYOND



# STEWARDSHIP

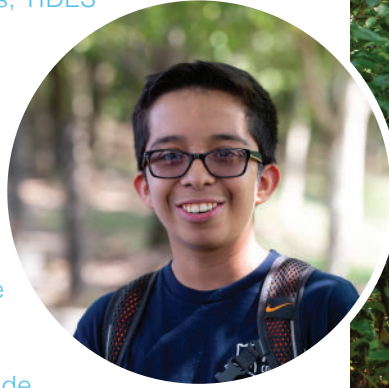
2019 saw another strong season of stewardship in the Park. Participants of all ages and skill sets provided essential year-round support at *Green Team*, *Park Peers*, *Coastal Cleanups*, *TIDES*, *Park Greeters*, and more. Over 800 volunteers contributed more than 3,600 hours, worth over \$106,000 in labor, by leading tours, greeting visitors, photographing events, helping maintain the Park's gardens and greenway, supporting Environmental Education Center staff, and assisting at the Conservancy's major festivals and programs.

At *Park Peers*, a stewardship opportunity for volunteers with disabilities, participants developed hands-on professional skills, while working with Park gardeners and custodial staff on maintenance and horticulture tasks. In 2019, the program also expanded with additional projects in the summer and fall in support of the Conservancy's education and programming teams.

*TIDES (Teens Interested In & Dedicated to Environmental Stewardship)* hosted its fourth season with 13 new high-school students from across the five boroughs. Due to the popularity of the program and increasing demand, the Conservancy is planning for the expansion of *TIDES* in the years ahead. Gabriel Gutierrez had the following to say about his experience last fall:

"Unlike most volunteer opportunities, *TIDES* appealed to me because it was so hands-on. At *TIDES*, you can really find something to enjoy because there are so many opportunities – like clearing oyster cages, seining, gardening projects, or doing a coastal cleanup. I liked the oyster session the most – I've never interacted with oysters up close like that! It's also an experience I won't forget because of the special connections and friendships we made. *TIDES* taught me how little we have to do to improve the Park and our communities.

- GABRIEL GUTIERREZ, *TIDES* FALL 2019



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## VOLUNTEERS

**814**

GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

## SERVICE HOURS

**3,600**

TOTAL HOURS CONTRIBUTED

## VALUE OF SERVICE

**\$106,000**

WORTH OF LABOR

## INFO STATION

**4,500**

VISITORS ENGAGED

## COASTAL CLEANUPS

**2,000**

POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

## WEEDS REMOVED

**55**

CUBIC YARDS



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Conservancy is most appreciative of the thousands of individuals — members and friends — and organizations who generously support and attend our events and activities each year. We gratefully acknowledge the following people, businesses, corporations, and foundations who have made gifts of \$250 or more in 2019. List as of December 31, 2019.

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**Jen Votaw, leading member of the Conservancy's Family Committee, Brooklyn Bridge Park enthusiast, and champion for the Women's Luncheon Committee shares:**

“Brooklyn Bridge Park is a special place for our family. It’s the very first Park my children set foot in at a very young age. Now that they are 2 and 5 years old, I cannot imagine our life without it. We play here, learn here, rest here, eat here, and enjoy the outdoors!

One of our favorite places is the Environmental Education Center. We have visited weekly since it’s opening, whether for *Early Nature Experiences* or *Open Hours*. To enrich our kids with all things nature and learn about our surrounding environment, including the marine life, has been so special. One of the favorite things my daughter learned was about how a chrysalis comes to life and becomes a butterfly. I found this to be pretty amazing, as one wouldn’t think you could learn about butterflies in an urban environment!



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**BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK CONSERVANCY**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PARK PLEASE  
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