



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I've now been at New York Restoration Project for almost three years, but in some ways, 2022 felt like a first. I was thrilled to finally see our staff, parks, gardens, and events operate at full capacity throughout every corner of the city. Our spaces were not just open and essential this year—they thrived!

The season kicked off in March with the return of our popular free tree giveaway program after a two-year hiatus. We distributed 2,000 individual saplings with community partners in every borough and, thanks to the strong demand, will increase that number to 3,500 in 2023.

We continued our longstanding reforestation work in our Northern Manhattan parks where we planted over 1,400 native trees and shrubs, mostly with the help of volunteers. In Highbridge Park, we planted more American chestnut hybrids in an effort to help restore the functionally extinct tree to its historic range and bolster the native forest habitat. Our American chestnut planting and monitoring effort is the largest urban trial of its kind.

In our gardens, we hosted more than 100 public programs and events including fitness classes, movie nights, back-to-school giveaways, and cooking classes for over 4,000 community members. We were also excited to install Little Free Libraries at more than half of our 52 spaces this season. They've been instant hits and led to collaborations with schools, libraries, bookstores, and local authors.

Many of our gardens also continued to be important food hubs where our urban agriculture team provided technical assistance via consultations, tutorials, and workshops. Our staff advised gardeners on all aspects of urban growing, from planning and trellising to pest control and harvesting.

None of this work would be possible without your support. Thank you for your commitment to New York Restoration Project and to ensuring that every New Yorker has access to the benefits of nature. I look forward to working with you in 2023.

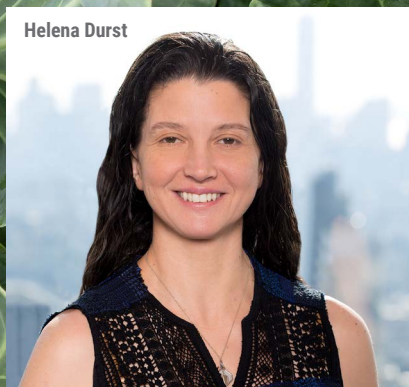
With gratitude,

Lynn Bodnar Kelly
Executive Director

FROM OUR BOARD CO-CHAIRS



Darcy Stacom



Helena Durst

Despite the many challenges our great city has faced in recent years, New York has come out even stronger, and we at NYRP are so proud to have played an important part.

In 2022, we continued to work with communities citywide to improve and maintain the green spaces that have always been vital locations for growing and gathering. We've worked with dozens of organizations and hundreds of community partners to support New Yorkers' needs.

With the help of partners and volunteers from every borough, this year we:

- Removed **60 tons of trash** from parks
- Composted **50 tons of organic materials**
- Planted or distributed over **8,000 trees, perennials, and seedlings**
- Worked with over **700 urban gardeners** to cultivate fresh produce
- Hosted **129 workshops, skill shares, and consultations** for gardeners through our Urban Agriculture program
- Hosted over **100 public events** for over **4,000 community members**
- **Built 20 new green spaces** at schools, community organizations, and public housing campuses
- **And welcomed over 1,200 volunteers** to plant trees and help maintain our parks and gardens

We've learned just how strong and resilient our city is. NYRP will continue to support our neighbors while working to ensure that every New Yorker has access to these crucial natural spaces for years to come.

We are thrilled with what we accomplished in 2022 and we couldn't have done it without you, our dedicated donors. Thank you for believing in equitable and enriching green space for all New Yorkers. Your support continues to make a difference every day in the communities that need it most.

With gratitude,



Darcy Stacom and Helena Durst
Co-Chairs, Board of Trustees

MISSION AND VALUES

Everyone deserves access to high-quality public green space.

NYRP works collaboratively with residents in communities across the five boroughs to renovate gardens, restore parks, plant trees, promote urban agriculture, and build partnerships that transform the city's landscape. We value the unique experiences, knowledge, and resources that each community member brings to our work. We are committed to creating a greener, more resilient city for all.



Summer campers at Brooklyn Youth Sports Club in East New York make pickles from the produce they grew in a garden built by NYRP's Gardens for the City program.



NYRP's Urban Agriculture team facilitates a composting workshop in partnership with Compost Power at Paradise on Earth Community Garden in the Morrisania section of The Bronx.



NYRP Trustee Sophie von Haselberg helps plant trees in Northern Manhattan's Highbridge Park.

REVITALIZING OPEN SPACE

With more New Yorkers than ever seeking access to open space, demand for NYRP's work has never been greater. "The interest in our programs has grown each year since the pandemic started," says Director of Garden Horticulture & Citywide Greening Projects Jason Sheets. "Word has spread that we do good work at no expense to our community partners."

Jason has led Gardens for the City (GFTC) since it began over a decade ago. The NYRP program renovates gardens and outdoor space for partners throughout New York City with the goal of helping communities envision, design, and create vibrant green spaces.

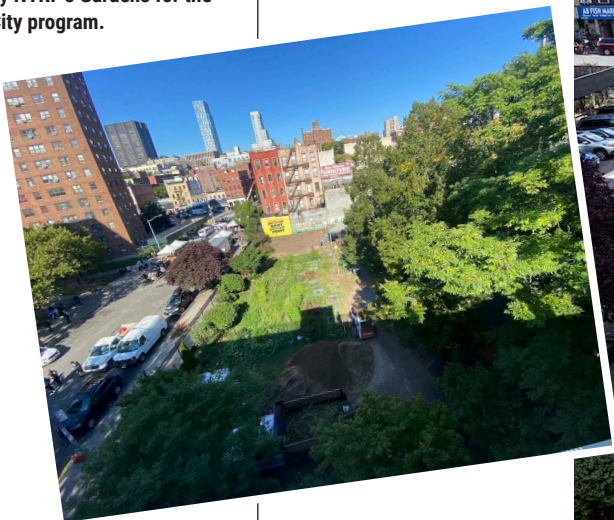
GFTC has completed over 350 projects citywide for groups ranging from schools and assisted living facilities to harm reduction centers and houses of worship. Each project is specifically tailored to meet the partner's needs

and has the option to receive individualized urban agriculture consultation led by our Deputy Director of Urban Agriculture Corey Blant throughout the year following renovation.

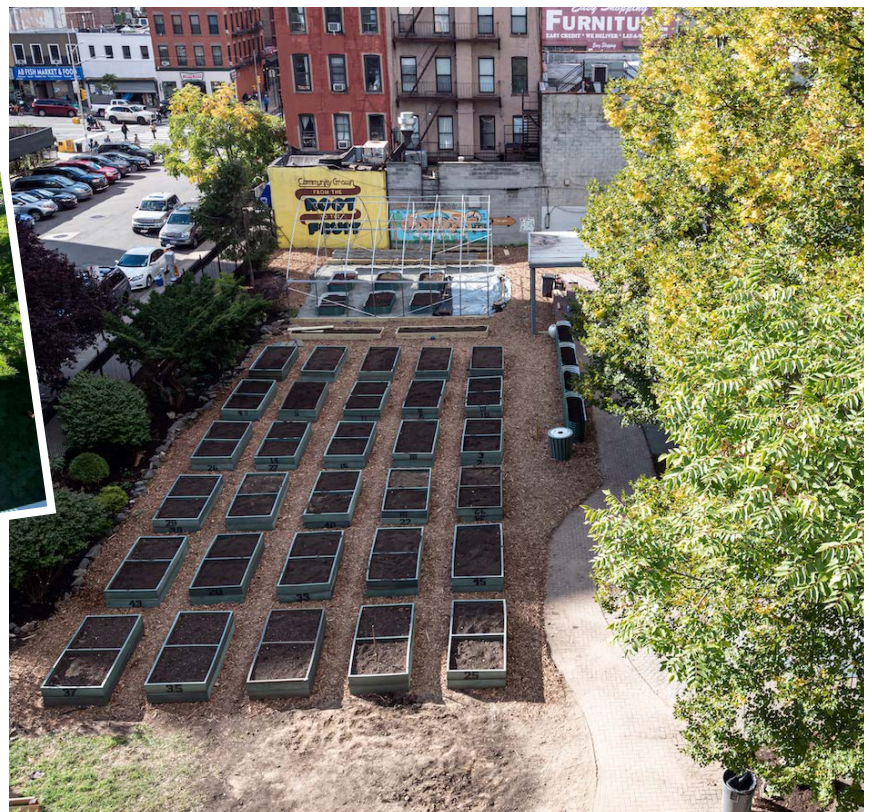
There's no question that 2022 was one of GFTC's busiest. The program completed 20 garden renovations at a range of property types including the backyard of a Bronx co-working space, a community center rooftop, and the last phase of a multi-year urban farm build at a school for students with disabilities.

Jason resists picking favorites, but one standout project was reestablishing a garden at NYCHA's Manhattanville Houses in West Harlem. Annette and Arlene Wilcox, daughters of Bernella Wilcox who founded the garden in the 1960s, applied to GFTC to revive the campus's open space when it took on new significance during the pandemic. The sisters describe NYRP's work as the "shot of

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Union Settlement's half-acre East Harlem outdoor campus before renovation by NYRP's Gardens for the City program.



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Union Settlement's outdoor campus after NYRP's renovation. Over two days in mid-September, NYRP welcomed dozens of volunteers to complete an ambitious redesign.

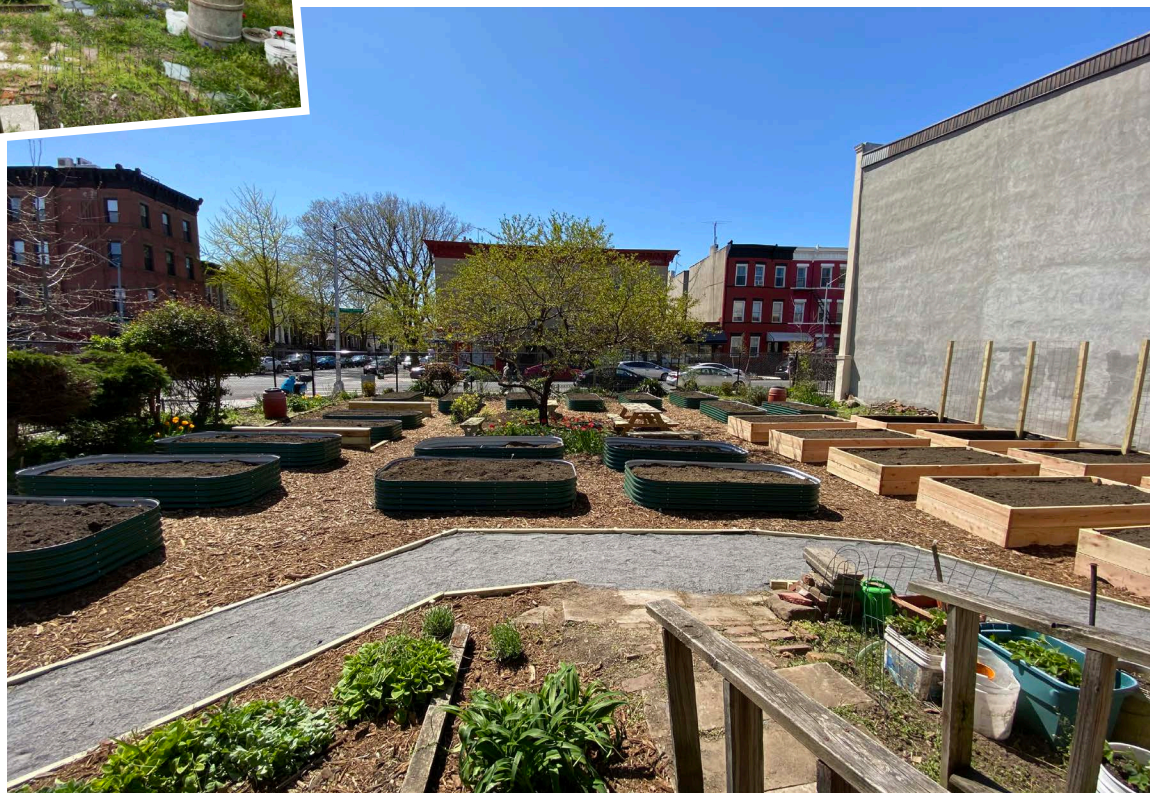




721 Decatur Community Garden in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn before renovation by NYRP's Gardens for the City program.



721 Decatur Community Garden after NYRP's renovation. Upgrades included redesigning the space to replace 40 dilapidated beds with 50 new ones.



Brooklyn Youth Sports Club campers enjoy a new garden constructed by NYRP's Gardens for the City program. NYRP built 8 raised beds, installed a 3-bin composting system, and introduced rainwater catchment among other capital upgrades.

adrenaline" this garden needed. "The garden is evolving into what we wanted—a community space that is outside," says Arlene.

The season's largest project was the expansion and revival of Union Settlement's half-acre outdoor space in East Harlem. Union Settlement has been the largest service-providing non-profit in the neighborhood since its founding 125 years ago, and its sprawling garden at their East 104th Street location is integral to this mission.

Over two days in mid-September, with the support of Viking Global Foundation, NYRP and more than 125 volunteers completed an ambitious redesign that included repurposing, building, and installing 44 raised garden beds; constructing a new 30-by-30-foot high tunnel green house to support year-round food production; planting over 200 shrubs



and perennials; and adding new picnic tables, benches, and a Little Free Library. Our Urban Agriculture team will consult with Union Settlement staff and community members throughout this coming season to help them make the most of this new and dynamic resource.

Looking ahead, Jason is always eager to work with a variety of different property types, populations, and neighborhoods. Each season is a new opportunity to help bring the benefits of nature to communities who need it most.

“We call these spaces community gardens, but to me, they’re more like community assets,” he describes. “There’s so much that people want from and can do out of these spaces besides what the word ‘garden’ implies. They’re important spaces for local meetings, food distribution, instruction, community programs, and every other way that you can imagine New Yorkers might use open space.”

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Flushing International High School teachers, family, and administrators harvest produce grown in their NYRP-built garden during a season-end harvest celebration.

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Urban Agriculture Coordinator Afeni Powers (right) harvests kale from a NYRP-built raised bed with teachers, family, and administrators at Flushing International High School.

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A Brooklyn Youth Sports Club camper cuts cucumbers grown in a NYRP-built garden to make pickles.



2022 GARDENS FOR THE CITY PROJECTS

NYRP's Gardens for the City program worked with the following community partners to revitalize their outdoor spaces in 2022:

BROOKLYN

NYC GreenThumb 721 Decatur Garden Association (Ocean Hill)

Brooklyn Youth Sports Club (East New York)

NYC GreenThumb Farmers Garden (Ocean Hill)

PS 1, The Bergen School (Sunset Park)

PS 163, The Bath Beach School (Bath Beach)

THE BRONX

BronxWorks (Concourse)

The Bronx Collab (Wakefield)

International Community High School (Mott Haven)

NYC GreenThumb Rainbow Garden of Life and Health (Melrose)

PS 811X, The Academy for Career and Living Skills (Longwood)

WHEDco, Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (Highbridge)

MANHATTAN

Fort Washington Collegiate Church (Hudson Heights)

NYCHA Manhattanville Community Garden (West Harlem)

Union Settlement (East Harlem)

Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School, WHEELS (Washington Heights)

QUEENS

Johnson Academy Pre-K (Corona)

NYC GreenThumb Tree of Life Organic Garden (Jamaica)

Q263, Flushing International High School (Flushing)

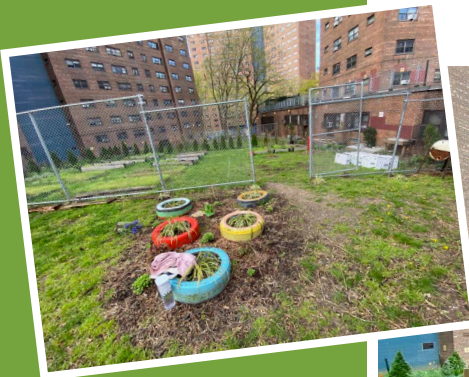
STATEN ISLAND

PS 44, The Thomas C. Brown School (Port Richmond)

PS 68, The Port Richmond School for Visionary Learning (Port Richmond)



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PS 811X, The Academy for Career and Living Skills, before (top) and after NYRP renovation



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NYCHA Manhattanville Community Garden before (top) and after NYRP renovation



GROWING COMMUNITY

New York Restoration Project's public programs returned in full force in 2022: from March through October, we hosted more than 100 events. "Programming came back in a huge way," describes Senior Engagement Manager Jessica North. "In some ways it was even busier than before COVID in 2019."

The season began with the return of NYRP's beloved free tree giveaway program after a two-year hiatus. NYRP distributed 2,000 native species trees across all five boroughs, partnering with elected officials, botanical gardens, libraries, schools, and community groups to get these saplings in the hands of local residents. The giveaways had such a high demand that we've increased the free tree count to 3,500 in 2023.

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With the generous support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, we distributed 2,000 native species trees with community partners throughout all five boroughs, including Red Hook Farms in Brooklyn, pictured here.



NYRP's 52 community gardens officially opened at the beginning of April with membership inquiries reaching new highs. NYRP-led programming helped welcome new and existing members back into our spaces with fitness classes, cooking demos, movie nights, musical performances, art classes, and back-to-school giveaways among other family-friendly activities.

"It's hard to overstate how useful our spaces can be when you live in the city," reflects

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NYRP's free tree giveaway program returned after a two-year hiatus. Here, participants pick up their sapling at Queens Botanical Garden in Flushing.



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The return of our tree giveaway program was so successful that we increased the number of saplings we're giving away in 2023 to 3,500. Here, participants pick up their trees at the Bruckner Mott Haven Community Garden in The Bronx.

Public Programming Coordinator Mike Horwitz. “There’s a lot of concrete around all the time, so having easy access to greenery and nature is good for your health. That time’s all the more meaningful when you actually participate in an event in that space.”

One of the ways NYRP has best helped people connect with our gardens is through our Urban Agriculture program. For two years and counting, the program’s charge has been to support the network of over 700 active gardeners in NYRP’s 52 portfolio gardens. The program also supports urban growers in partner spaces across the city to grow more food.

Deputy Director of Urban Agriculture Corey Blant believes the best way to do this is to meet gardeners where they are. “So many of the gardeners we work with have a wealth of first-hand and ancestral knowledge. Many folks come from cultures with deep agricultural roots,” says Corey. “Whether someone is growing food for the first or hundredth time, our NYRP Urban Agriculture team is here to help people make the most of their space.”

In 2022, the team was able to do this through 130 different skill shares, workshops, and consultations attended by 950 gardeners throughout the season, with interpretation provided in Spanish, Cantonese, and Bengali as needed. Event topics ranged from plant selection, soil health, and pest management to learning how to grow edible mushrooms and starting a 3-bin composting system.

Several workshops and events were offered in partnership with subject matter experts offering knowledge on a highly specific topic. “New York City is full of urban agriculture pros specializing in pretty much every aspect of



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Our Urban Agriculture team taught a variety of hands-on workshops including how to grow edible mushrooms.

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One of the season’s most popular workshops was on seed saving and organized in partnership with Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture.



food production,” says Corey. “We’ve started formalizing those relationships this season and I look forward to widening the scope to eventually include all food-growing experts, whether they’re based in the city or not. There’s a lot of knowledge we can all share.”

**For a full list of
NYRP parks and gardens,
visit nyrp.org/gardens**

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Little Free Libraries were an exciting addition to over half of our 52 community gardens. Local authors including chef Gaby Melian, pictured here, have donated books to help stock this welcome garden amenity.



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Every season, Eastchester Road Community Garden in The Bronx produces standout produce both in volume and variety. Here, gardener Dolores Knight stands with her bed near the season's peak.

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Our spaces are venues for a variety of outdoor events including art classes at our Paradise on Earth Community Garden in The Bronx. Here, Cayla Casciani of the nearby Morning Glory Community Garden, facilitates a natural dye workshop.

BUILDING URBAN RESILIENCE



NYRP maintains and monitors the largest urban trial to help restore the functionally extinct American chestnut to its historic range. The 300+ trees show encouraging signs of growth including producing their first nuts this past growing season.

When NYRP first started working in Northern Manhattan parks in the mid 1990s, they looked nothing like the verdant open spaces they are today. Dilapidated boat docks crumbled into the Harlem River, mountains of old tires littered steep hillsides, and abandoned cars were left to rust. Even calling certain areas parks felt inaccurate to many local residents; these were neglected landscapes used as dumping grounds.

Now, over 25 years later, there are few obvious traces of this history. Highbridge Park is a diverse and recovering native forest; Sherman Creek Park features a living shoreline (complete with an artificial oyster reef) to act as an erosion buffer from the rising Harlem River; and NYRP continues to remove litter daily from the 80+ acres of parkland we oversee in partnership with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation.

Our overarching goal in both Highbridge and Sherman Creek has always been to restore and maintain robust native ecosystems while keeping the parks accessible and inviting for visitors. This has been a long-term undertaking, but in 2022, we saw several important developments that underscored the effectiveness of our approach.



Thanks to the generous help of volunteers from corporate partners including UBS, pictured here, we planted over 1,400 trees and shrubs in Highbridge Park in 2022.



We were happy to welcome New Yorker Scarlett Johansson (left) to Highbridge Park to plant trees in partnership with One Tree Planted and The Outset, her skincare line. She planted a scarlet oak alongside her co-founder at The Outset, Kate Foster Lengyel.



One exciting milestone was the completion of tree restoration plantings throughout larger swaths of Highbridge Park. While there will always be smaller tree plantings to complete as we continue to restore the forest, the 1,400 trees and plants added in 2022 effectively completed the large-scale planting plan for the northern half of the park.

One tree species we have been especially excited to plant is a hybrid variety of the functionally extinct American chestnut. Once called the “Redwood of the East,” an invasive

fungal blight wiped out the tree during the first half of twentieth century. NYRP now operates and monitors the largest urban trial to help restore the species to its native range in partnership with The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF). We have planted and now monitor over 300 hybrid American chestnut trees in Highbridge in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

“The Highbridge planting is unique in its purpose,” explains Sara Fern Fitzsimmons, NYRP collaborator and Director of Restoration for TACF. “Urban forestry has been around for a long time, but urban forestry in the realm of restoration of tree species is new. This is a unique and innovative project that NYRP is putting together, and I can’t wait to see it blossom into other similar work.”

NYRP Director of Northern Manhattan Parks Jason Smith’s favorite success of the past year is Sherman Creek Park’s living shoreline. NYRP installed the nature-based design along the banks of the Harlem River in 2020 to curb erosion and nurture thriving wildlife habitat in Manhattan’s largest remaining wetland. There are multiple design elements, including an artificial oyster reef and wetland grass



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A 2022 goal for our living shoreline installation at Sherman Creek Park was to protect wetland grass plantings from the geese population. Here is a portion of the shoreline before replanting.



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Volunteers from Bloomberg joined us in the spring to replant wetland grasses before installing a more robust goose-exclusion fence.

plantings, which help prevent the waterfront park from washing away.

"The biggest story for me for the past year is that the shoreline's wetland grasses have established and are growing very well," describes Smith. "They were replanted in the spring with Bloomberg volunteers after geese had stifled previous attempts. We rebuilt a stronger goose-exclusion fence to protect this new planting and it has allowed the wetlands to really thrive this year."

Looking ahead, Smith is excited to hone environmental analysis of the shoreline while

creating more specific and detailed maps of Sherman Creek that will help us monitor local sea level rise down to the centimeter. In Highbridge, he is also eager to focus more on forest stream restoration, biodiversity assessments, and nurturing the understory.

"We're proud of our work keeping these parks well maintained all year round," reflects Smith. "The fact that we've also been able to take on ambitious restoration projects and see indicators of their success is all the more meaningful and makes us hopeful about the seasons ahead."



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The new plantings took root and were thriving by September, pictured here. They help to both keep the shoreline habitat intact and increase its species diversity.



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NYRP has been happy to begin the transition away from fossil fuels by adopting electric tools including chainsaws like this one held by Director of Northern Manhattan Parks Jason Smith.

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Riley-Levin Children's Garden at Sherman Creek Park once again served as a hub for the local community in 2022. NYRP was happy to add an adjacent edible forest garden to help teach about the benefits and uses of local forest plants.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Our corporate partners help us clean and green at a meaningful scale. In 2022, NYRP worked with over 1,000 employees from 32 leading companies to pick up trash, plant wetland grasses, renovate community gardens, and care for trees.

→ Rain or shine, volunteers came out to our parks, gardens, and partner spaces to help develop and maintain public green spaces, primarily in low-income communities. Here, team members from **UBS** lend a hand at Highbridge Park in Northern Manhattan.



← We are grateful for the assistance of **BNP Paribas** volunteers who helped transition an overgrown lawn area in Highbridge Park into a native meadow and rain garden.



→ In April, we joined forces with **Bloomberg** volunteers in Sherman Creek Park along the Harlem River to successfully plant 3,000 spartina grass plugs to help seed our living shoreline initiative, a project that works to rebuild and restore Manhattan's largest wetland.



← **Delta** planted trees in Flushing Meadow Park in Queens to help extend our tree canopy stewardship. Volunteers planted 15 shade trees including swamp white oaks, red maples, sweetgums, and tulip trees near a heavily used playground.





Across the city, volunteers worked with NYRP staff at 12 of our portfolio gardens, including our 103rd Street Community Garden in East Harlem where employees from **Blackstone** helped paint fences, revitalize pathways, spread fresh wood chips, and weed garden beds.



Thanks to the generous support and VoluntEAR power of **The Walt Disney Company**, in just one week we were able to revive a decades-old NYCHA community garden at the Manhattanville Houses in West Harlem, turning it into an accessible green space for residents.



Viking Global Foundation is a longstanding NYRP partner. They take on the largest garden transformation project we offer each season, which in 2022 involved renovating Union Settlement's East Harlem campus. More than 125 Viking volunteers helped us redesign and expand a half-acre outdoor space to create 20-30% more usable area, install 44 raised garden beds, build a 30-by-30 foot high tunnel greenhouse, and plant over 200 shrubs and perennials.



At the end of our 2022 season, volunteers from **Goldman Sachs** took our Gardens for the City program to new heights by helping install a roof garden at the BronxWorks community center in the South Bronx.



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*This list includes the Board of Trustees
as of the close of our FY22 on
September 30, 2022.*



New York Restoration Project founder, Bette Midler.



Citywide Project Manager Andrew Stewart builds a new shade structure for the Manhattanville Houses Community Garden in West Harlem.

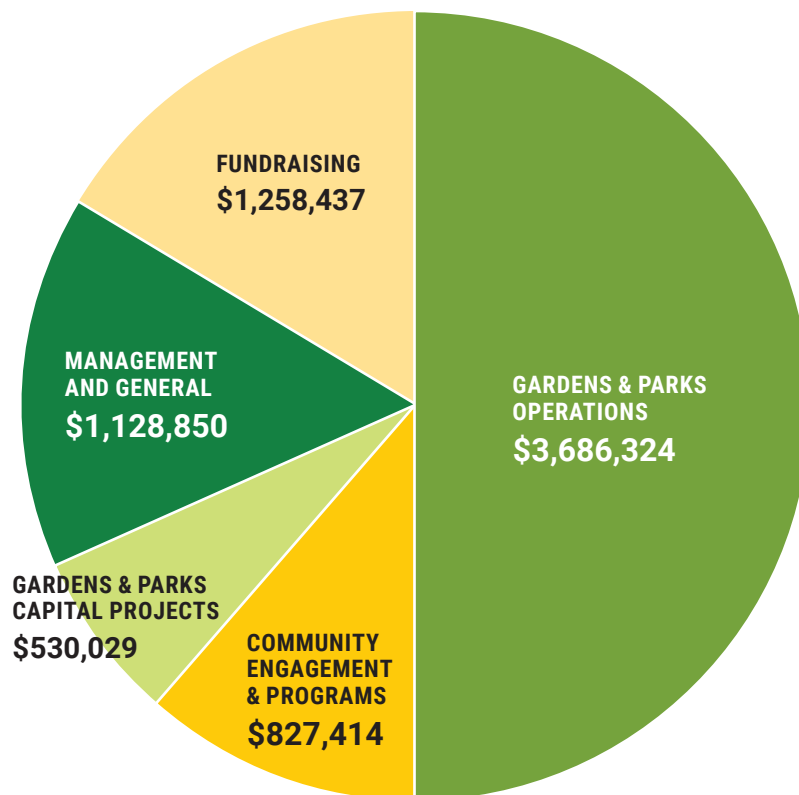
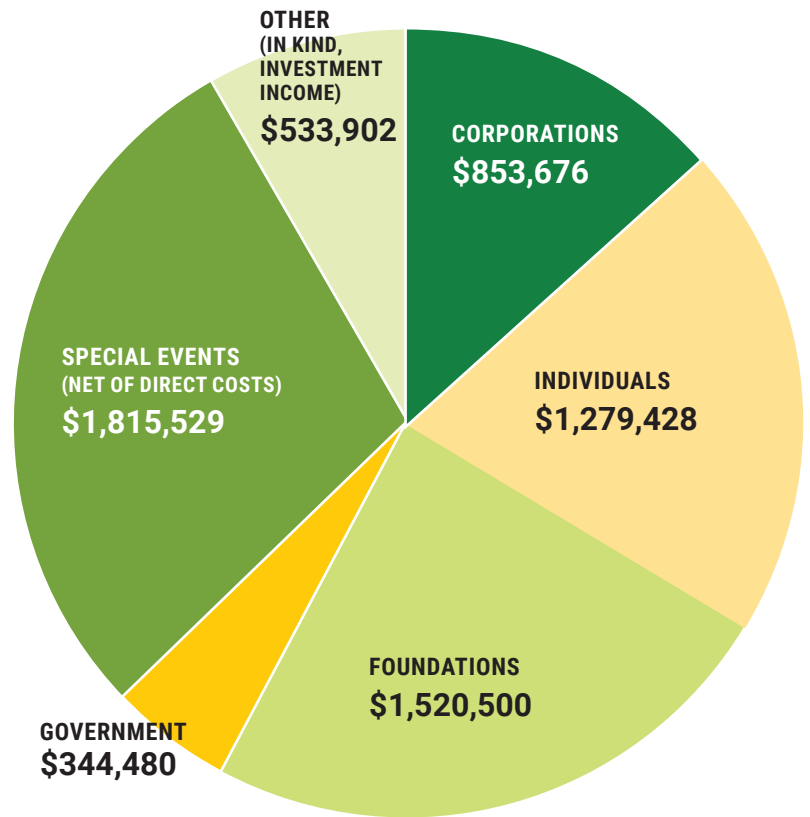


NYRP staff celebrate the end of the season at our 2022 Fall Fest.

2022 FINANCIALS

OPERATING REVENUES \$6,347,515

All figures based on
audited financials.



OPERATING EXPENSES \$7,431,054*

*This statement of functional expense
reflects \$777,315 in depreciation of
garden improvements and equipment.

2022 SUPPORTERS

Equitable access to green space has never been more important. We are grateful for our many generous donors who hold this conviction as strongly as we do.

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←
NYRP Executive Director
Lynn Bodnar Kelly (right) with
NYRP Trustee Walter Hood
(center) and NYRP Chair of
Chairman's Council Janice
Parker (left). NYRP honored
Walter and Janice on June 15,
2022 at our Spring Picnic.



←
NYRP Trustee Michael Kors
(right) and Lance Le Pere
(left) attend Hulaween and
the Seven Deadly Sins on
October 28, 2022.

← ←
NYRP Board Co-Chair Darcy
Stacom (center) with 2022
Hulaween Honorees the Hon.
Ritchie Torres (right) and NYRP
Trustee Samuel M. Ashner (left).



↑
STUDIOS Architecture
attends Hulaween and the
Seven Deadly Sins.

PHOTO: MADISON MCGAW
AND YVONNE TNT/BFA.COM

→
2022 Hulaween Honoree
Jane Krakowski poses
on the red carpet at
Hulaween and the Seven
Deadly Sins.



↑
2022 Hulaween Honoree
Sondra Wenger shares
her acceptance speech.

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CBRE volunteers joined NYRP staff at Highbridge Park in Northern Manhattan to help plant a native meadow and rain garden.

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↓
**Melba Wilson (left) and NYRP Trustee
David Rockwell (right) at Hulaween
and the Seven Deadly Sins.**



↑
**Sara Arno (left) and Kevin Cornish
(right) attend Hulaween and the
Seven Deadly Sins.**



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