

LEAFLET

THE NEWSLETTER OF *Partnerships for Parks*

winter/spring 2009

COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE IN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS' CATALYST PROGRAM is a multi-year initiative that works to improve under-resourced parks by investing in physical enhancements and providing programming and on-site Catalyst Coordinators dedicated to mobilizing volunteers. Launched in 2003, our round-two Catalyst projects—Historic Harlem Parks, the High Bridge and Highbridge Parks, Astoria/Long Island City Waterfront Parks, and Red Hook Parks and Recreation—are now near completion. At each of these sites, Catalyst has helped develop strong local constituencies that will sustain hard-won park improvements into the future.

Our challenges and successes at these sites will guide us as we embark on the new round of Catalyst, so now is a great time to reflect on the recent accomplishments and ambitious plans of round-two Catalyst community groups.

Historic Harlem Parks: Each of the four Historic Harlem Parks—Jackie Robinson, Marcus Garvey, Morningside, and St. Nicholas—has a strong community group associated with it. The Historic Harlem Parks Coalition (HHPC) is composed of leaders from each of these groups who come together to work towards shared goals. The Historic Harlem Parks Film Festival, which completed its seventh summer in 2008, is one example of successful collaborative programming put on by the HHPC.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Through a special program called Catalyst, Partnerships for Parks staff work intensively in targeted park sites to support community-led revitalization efforts. The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation and City Parks Foundation infuse extra resources into these sites, including programming and physical improvements. We are proud to announce the launch of *Catalyst: Reclaiming the Waterfront*, which aims to revive three waterfront park sites: Soundview Park (Bronx), East River Park (Manhattan), and Calvert Vaux and Kaiser Parks (Brooklyn).

At these sites, we will listen to the needs of park users and local residents, help them come together to articulate a shared vision for their park, and empower them to create and sustain meaningful change. The goal of Catalyst is to see parks enlivened and improved by the communities that use them, making them the vital centers of community life we know all our parks can be.

This issue of the Leaflet reflects on the previous round of Catalyst and our goals for the new Catalyst parks.

Sincerely,
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner,
Parks & Recreation
David Rivel, Executive Director,
City Parks Foundation

The HHPC is currently working with Partnerships for Parks (PFP) to produce a brochure that will promote the coalition and serve as a vision plan outlining goals for the future of the four parks. One goal of the brochure is to promote the parks as a destination for people from all over the city. HHPC member Brad Taylor from Morningside Park explains, "We've reached a certain level of visibility in our community, but we want to be recognized throughout the city. We want all New Yorkers to visit these four remarkable parks in the heart of Harlem."

The brochure will also articulate the coalition's goals for the parks, providing them with a fundraising, advocacy, and promotional tool. PFP's Harlem Outreach Coordinator Sarah Fort, who works closely with the Coalition, says, "I'm excited the Coalition will have a vision plan in the form of this tangible product that they can share with their community and beyond."

High Bridge and Highbridge Parks:

Attending the recent High Bridge Access Path ribbon cutting was a milestone for the High Bridge Coalition. Coalition

members have been advocating for years to reopen the city's oldest standing bridge and are overjoyed that PlaNYC funding will ensure that the bridge once again becomes a pedestrian corridor connecting the Bronx and Manhattan. Former High Bridge Catalyst Coordinator Joseph Sanchez recalls, "For years the Coalition had dreamed about and advocated for the reopening of the bridge, and at the ribbon cutting we saw that it's really happening. We had believed in it, but that day the vision became a reality. The Coalition will feel empowered by this achievement for years to come."

The Coalition will continue to provide input into the bridge renovation by working closely with Ellen Macnow, the newly appointed High Bridge Project Coordinator, but Coalition co-chair Sid Horenstein explains that the project of restoring the bridge will take years. In the meantime, he says, "we have to focus on the parks and the bridge as they are now. What programming can we do now to keep people coming to the parks and keep interest in the bridge alive? We can't languish waiting for the bridge to reopen."

Even in the midst of celebrating steps towards the reopening, such as the new Access Path, the High Bridge Coalition is strategizing about how to activate the parks while the bridge undergoes renovation.

Astoria/Long Island City Waterfront Parks:

Green Shores NYC (GSNYC) is a coalition that advocates for safe, vibrant, accessible public parks along the western Queens waterfront. In October, GSNYC celebrated the unveiling of the Astoria/Long Island City Waterfront Map and Guide, featuring an illustrated map and information about history, culture, and ecology. One of GSNYC's goals is to connect local residents to their waterfront parks, and the map, which encourages viewers to explore points of interest throughout Astoria/LIC, beautifully illustrates how inextricably linked the neighborhood is to the waterfront.

Red Hook Parks and Recreation:

Catalyst in Red Hook will continue for another year. In February, the Red Hook Recreation Center will host a week-long Winter Celebration (see "Things to Do" for details), which will offer fun, educational

SPRING IT'S MY PARK DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2009

Join thousands of New Yorkers in caring for and celebrating New York City parks on It's My Park Day. Participate in clean up and planting projects, enjoy free events or just get outside to enjoy your park. Supplies are provided for all projects.

This spring, It's My Park Day will focus on community members working to "Reclaim our Waterfront Parks", with shore clean-ups, free paddling and rowing, and other fun water-based activities at sites throughout the city. Here are a few highlighted projects – both on and off the waterfront – out of the over 150 projects and events happening on the day. For more information, contact your Outreach Coordinator or visit www.PartnershipsForParks.org

Bronx

Williamsbridge Oval, St. Mary's Park

Brooklyn

Red Hook Parks (Coffey Park, Red Hook Park, Valentino Pier*, Red Hook Farm)

Kaiser Park

Manhattan

East River Park*, East River Esplanade @ E. 96 Street*
St. Nicholas Park, Highbridge Park*

Queens

Astoria Park*

Staten Island

Conference House Park*

*Waterfront Park

programming, including job training and college preparation, for youth during the public school break. Catalyst Coordinator Tiffany Irizarry is supporting the planning for the event by connecting recreation center staff to community partners who will present workshops, serve as resource speakers, and encourage the youth they serve to attend. Two of the goals of Red Hook Catalyst are to bring community members into the recreation center year-round instead of just during the pool season, and to highlight the neighborhood's parks as a venue for addressing the community's larger concerns, such as creating education and job opportunities for youth. The Winter Celebration is a step towards achieving both of these goals, and it is hoped the event will take place annually, bringing local kids to the recreation center every February long after Red Hook Catalyst comes to an end.

While each Catalyst site is different, the park improvements at each of these sites will be maintained and expanded by the strong community coalitions Catalyst has helped establish. ☆

Dear Mary,

Why did Partnerships for Parks choose waterfront parks as the theme for the new round of Catalyst?

New York City's 600 miles of shoreline is an under-utilized resource that has the potential to enhance the quality of life of the city's residents. Our waterfront has long been inaccessible to the public, and Catalyst will help New Yorkers reconnect to public space on the waterfront.

The new Catalyst sites—Soundview Park in the Bronx, East River Park in Manhattan, and Calvert Vaux and Kaiser Parks in Brooklyn—are all established waterfront parks that have not yet fulfilled their potential to serve both as hubs of local community life and as regional destinations. Now, funding through Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC will allow Soundview and Calvert Vaux Parks to be developed into natural and recreational attractions, and construction is already underway at East River Park to replace the seawall and build an esplanade .

As plans are made for these waterfront parks, *Catalyst: Reclaiming the Waterfront* will bring communities to the table to help ensure that the parks serve the needs of local residents and visitors from all over the city.

Our waterfront parks provide the chance to experience the ecology of our city's rivers, harbors, bays, and beaches. The Catalyst waterfront parks will link visitors to the city's greenways and blueways and to the boating opportunities mapped out in the NYC Water Trail Guide published by Going Coastal and Queens Borough Commissioner Lewandowski.



CAPACITY FUND NEWS

We regret to announce that the June 1, 2009 deadline for Capacity Fund applications is cancelled.

The next deadline will be October 1, 2009.

Applications will be accepted between now and October 1; they must be received (not postmarked) by 6pm on Thursday, October 1, 2009. We will be using the opportunity of the cancelled June deadline to offer an expanded schedule of **Capacity Fund Consultations** at 49 Chambers Street, Room 1027, Manhattan, 10007

- Tuesday, June 16 at 12pm
- Thursday, July 9 at 10am
- Monday, August 24 at 6pm
- Wednesday, August 26 at 3pm

Sign up for a consultation to learn about what kinds of projects qualify for Capacity Fund grants. We will discuss Capacity Fund guidelines and review case studies of projects that have successfully secured funding in the past. Potential grant applicants will receive tips about how to prepare a strong proposal and feedback about their project ideas. Come prepared to network and discuss your ideas.

Registration is required. To register for a consultation, please email kate.louis@parks.nyc.gov.

thingstodo

How to reach us

www.PartnershipsForParks.org

www.nyc.gov/parks

www.CityParksFoundation.org

To contact Partnerships for Parks or for information on volunteering in parks, call (212) 360-1357 or call the City's non-emergency hotline, 311.

PARTNERSHIPS for PARKS



City of New York
Parks & Recreation

CityParks
Foundation

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS helps New Yorkers work together to make neighborhood parks thrive. We strengthen our diverse, growing network of dedicated park volunteers and groups by creating opportunities for them to celebrate their parks and accomplishments, access resources, become more effective leaders in their communities, and work with government to affect decisions about their parks.

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
City of New York

Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
Parks & Recreation

David Rivel, Executive Director
City Parks Foundation

Jason Schwartz, Director
Partnerships for Parks

EDITORS: Asaf Klein, Melissa Garcia, Jordan Pender
WRITER: Kate Louis DESIGN: Anne LaFond



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