

# PARTNERSHIPS *for* PARKS Annual Report 2013



# Partnerships for Parks Overview

Partnerships for Parks (PfP), a joint program of NYC Parks and City Parks Foundation, helps people work together to make NYC greenspaces thrive. PfP believes that neighborhood greenspaces are vital centers of community life, and local, sustained community involvement helps these spaces and surrounding communities live up to their greatest potential. With the contributions of dedicated partners, our parks, beaches, greenstreets, and street trees become cleaner, safer, more vibrant and responsive to community needs. We also end up with public policy and urban planning informed by the diverse cultures and perspectives that make up our city.

Partnerships for Parks offers intensive staff support; grants; tools and supplies for cleanup and beautification projects; leadership and organizational development workshops; connections to key people in NYC Parks, partner organizations, and other decision makers; opportunities to network and celebrate accomplishments; and access to important information so that people have a voice in planning and decision-making. We also provide corporate and non-profit groups opportunities to contribute to neighborhood parks and communities by organizing and implementing service projects for them.

Through e-blasts and other outreach, we reach more than 50,000 people interested in engagement, and intensively-support nearly 500 dedicated community groups across the city. We also connect City Parks Foundation programming to neighborhood parks and affiliated groups, and help dedicated groups and individuals galvanize additional resources from partner organizations.

Through PfP's proven Catalyst model—Build, Connect, Sustain—we build the social capital needed for long-term stewardship. We support the development of a diverse network of individuals and grassroots community groups and empower people to positively impact their neighborhoods. The Bronx River Alliance and Green Shores NYC are examples of local community coalitions that have resulted from the Partnerships' model.

Partnerships' work results in collaboration amongst people, organizations, and government. The outcome is visible, sustained community commitment to local greenspace and strong neighborhoods able to leverage significant public and private resources and support.

Over the next few years, Partnerships for Parks aims to build the capacity of the program through expanded funding and infrastructure to support existing and new initiatives.

Partnerships has been recognized for its innovative work with many accolades from local, national, and international organizations as well as the City Council of New York. The program also received the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award in 2001.

**PARTNERSHIPS**  
*for* **PARKS**

*A joint program of NYC Parks and City Parks Foundation.*



**CityParks**  
Foundation  
creating programs for NYC parks

# Partnerships for Parks Conference 2013

Inform  Connect  Empower



Partnerships offered six workshops:

- Gardening From the Ground Up
- Raise Your Profile! Media Coverage and Marketing for Community Park Groups
- Getting Green \$ for Greenspace
- Ten Secrets of Successful Community Park Groups
- People Make Parks: Community Design of Greenspace
- All You Need to Know About 501(c)3 Status and Fiscal Sponsorship

\*Workshop materials are available online with a link to a short video.

<http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/partnerships-for-parks/2013-conference/>

The conference ended with an awards reception in which seven community groups and individuals were honored for their exceptional volunteer efforts in 2013.

On November 16, 2013, Partnerships for Parks hosted its second annual citywide conference for community park leaders. The event brought together nearly 350 attendees, including nonprofit leaders, students, and prospective volunteers, who learned about how dedicated groups improve quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods. Community leaders networked, met experts, and shared best practices to support their efforts, while newcomers learned about what resources Partnerships for Parks offers to help them get involved.

There were many highlights throughout the conference, notably the morning keynote on parks advocacy by Holly Leicht, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks, and the luncheon keynote by Steve Hindy, Co-founder & President, Brooklyn Brewery; Board Member, Prospect Park Alliance; and Founding Member, Open Space Alliance.



# Hurricane Sandy: Emergency Response



Partnerships' growing network of community partners positions us to respond swiftly and effectively in times of crisis. This was never more evident than in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. PfP immediately mobilized the people and supplies necessary to execute relief projects in NYC's five boroughs.

## In 2012-13, Partnerships staff:

- Executed over **170 relief projects** in coordination with NYC Service. Nearly **10,500 participants** removed **tens of thousands of pounds** of sand and debris.
- Designed post-Sandy assessment tours of East River Park to facilitate dialogue about climate change.
- Delivered goods and relief services to community members in some of the most heavily impacted neighborhoods including Coney Island.
- Developed and utilized a partners' resource exchange for needed resources including information, food, clothes, and shelter.
- Assisted volunteers in applying for emergency funds issued by nonprofits, City, and Federal agencies.
- Replaced **70 mature trees** that were lost during the storm in Sunnyside, Queens as part of the Greening Western Queens initiative.
- Distributed **\$20,000 in recovery funds** to assist community park groups in the wake of the storm.



# Intensive Community Group Support

Outreach Coordinators in all five boroughs provide intensive support to a broad network of volunteers to strengthen ongoing community involvement in neighborhood greenspace.

Informed by local expertise and equipped with unique access to decision makers at NYC Parks and City Parks Foundation, Outreach Coordinators connect volunteers to projects, supplies, grant opportunities and other resources; circulate information; help people navigate agency permitting and planning processes; provide group development and leadership skill support; and implement programs to build lasting relationships among community, private, and governmental partners so challenges can be addressed and the life of neighborhood parks enhanced. Also, Outreach Coordinators use their expertise to facilitate community meetings and share best practices with groups.

Ultimately, we end up with community groups and individuals that have close working relationships with NYC Parks leadership and field staff; leverage funding from elected officials, foundations, businesses, and others for park improvements and programs; and build community investment.



## In 2013, Outreach staff:

- Provided intensive support to nearly **500 community groups** across the city.
- Assisted community groups with the coordination of over **115 service projects** and **190 events**.
- Facilitated over **25 meetings** for partner groups.
- Attended nearly **400 community meetings** to provide information and guidance.

# Corporate Volunteer Program

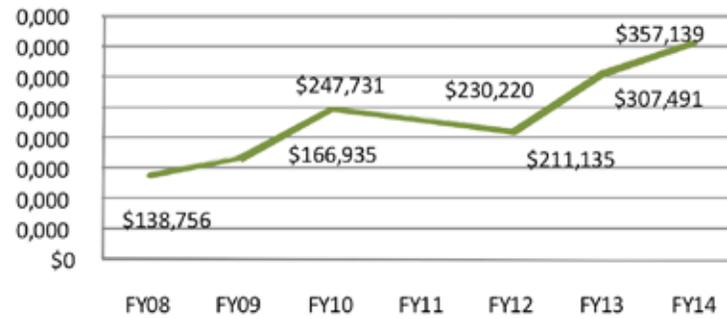
Our Corporate Volunteer Program enables NYC's most successful companies to help keep our neighborhood parks beautiful, while providing a unique teambuilding opportunity for employees through hands-on service projects.

This season, our team welcomed back dedicated corporate partners – including Deloitte Consulting, ING, Ralph Lauren and American Express – as well as numerous first-time corporate participants to NYC Parks. We work closely with project leaders to design customized service projects that meet Agency priority needs and offer a fun, engaging day of service to volunteers.

Corporate service opportunities range from small painting projects in neighborhood playgrounds, to large-scale cleanup projects engaging over 1,000 volunteers at multiple parks on a single day. This past year, our corporate partners brought people power and material resources to parks throughout the city -- painting over 5,400 feet of fencing and planting nearly 20 trees and 1,900 plants and shrubs. Partnerships also connected over 20 corporate volunteer groups to restoration projects in the Far Rockaways, Staten Island, Coney Island, Red Hook, and lower Manhattan, helping to rebuild and beautify greenspaces devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

## In 2013, the Corporate Volunteer Program:

- Raised **\$357,000** in gross revenue to support parks projects and Partnerships for Parks programming.
- Connected **3,628 volunteers** to service opportunities at local parks and beaches.
- Coordinated **66 service projects** throughout the five boroughs.
- Partnered with **36 corporations** to care for NYC greenspaces.
- Improved **39 park properties** throughout the city.



\*City Parks Foundation's Fiscal Year runs from April 1 to March 31



# It's My Park Day



In 2013, **300** It's My Park Day projects and events:

- Engaged **11,250** participants throughout the five boroughs.
- Benefitted **260** parks across NYC.
- Distributed **\$50,000** in paint, tools, and other park supplies to project leaders.
- Awarded **15,000** It's My Park Day **tee-shirts** to thank volunteers for their service.
- Received **55** press mentions, from NY1 News to Time Out New York, and other media sources.

It's My Park Day activities are organized and led by local community groups, with significant administrative and planning support from Partnerships for Parks staff. These community-led projects invite volunteers to paint park benches and fences, plant bulbs, remove debris, and beautify local parks. Many projects incorporate fun, free events which help to engage new community members in neighborhood parks. It's My Park Day projects are organized throughout the spring, summer, and fall, allowing volunteers to contribute throughout the year. Our 2013 It's My Park Day programs were made possible through the generous sponsorship of TD Bank, with additional support from Warner Bros.

It's My Park Day service projects help to: empower local community park groups to lead service projects; enable NYC Parks staff to support a large number of projects throughout the season; connect new park volunteers to active, sustainable community organizations; highlight the important work of Partnerships for Parks and volunteers in the media; raise the profile of NYC parks as centers for community life.



# Group and Leadership Development



In 2013, through specialized resources, Partnerships:

- Trained **375 park group leaders**.
- Awarded close to **\$100,000** in small grants.
- Provided fiscal sponsorship to over **40 park groups**.
- Supported over **25 park groups** with publications and/or websites.
- Graduated **10 community groups** from our 6-month Fellowship program.

Partnerships for Parks builds the capacity of volunteers and community groups to accomplish their goals and ensure the sustainability of their work. We act as free, expert consultants to help groups and volunteers reach their full potential. We do this by offering small grants through our Capacity Fund program; specialized trainings, workshops, and coaching through the Partnerships Academy; fiscal sponsorship; and publications and website production services. In addition to supporting local partners, we provide best practices for sustainable community development to agency and organizational counterparts from locations as far as Anchorage, Berlin, and Tokyo.



# Greening Western Queens

The Greening Western Queens Urban Forestry and Community Stewardship program is a four-year community forestry project bringing new trees, greening initiatives, and many exciting citizen stewardship opportunities to Astoria, Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Woodside. It is a project of City Parks Foundation through the Partnerships for Parks program, in collaboration with NYC Parks Central Forestry, Trees New York, and New York Restoration Project. The motto of this project is "planting trees, growing community." As we green the area, we are engaging residents and organizational partners, helping them participate in tree care, and connecting them to resources and each other with the ultimate goal of developing a community of environmental stewards in Western Queens.



## In 2013, the Greening Western Queens program:

- Planted over **200 trees**.
- Trained over **100 tree stewards**.
- Collaborated with over **30 community groups**.
- Organized tree care events attend by more than **900 tree stewards**.
- Solicited tree care and planting input from over **300 community members**.



# People Make Parks



In 2013, the People Make Parks project has given groups the tools to work with NYC Parks to:

- Improve 10 parks and greenspaces.
- Raise over \$1.5 million capital dollars.
- Involve close to 700 local residents in the design process.
- Engage over 20 community groups and neighborhood institutions.



People Make Parks (PMP) is a joint project of Hester Street Collaborative and Partnerships for Parks to help New Yorkers participate in the design of parks and greenspaces. PMP provides community groups with tools and resources to effectively contribute to the NYC Parks Department's building and design process. The initiative promotes collaboration between invested communities and NYC Parks, encouraging a diversity of participants to participate in the creation of meaningful places. On average, the neighborhoods where PMP projects are taking place have fewer acres of greenspace per resident than 59% of NYC community districts. Building and greening projects offer a unique opportunity for community members to have a long-term impact on public space in their neighborhoods. And when people are involved in the design, they feel a greater sense of ownership and are more likely to become dedicated stewards.

# Catalyst

The Catalyst Program is a multi-year community development program that fosters engagement in NYC greenspaces such as neighborhood parks and community waterfront spaces. Currently, Catalyst is focused on three waterfront parks—East River Park in Manhattan, Kaiser Park in Brooklyn and Soundview Park in the Bronx.

The Catalyst Program supports the formation and builds the capacity of local community groups to serve as stewards. The program utilizes three core strategies—community engagement, programming, and physical improvements—in three programmatic phases: BUILD, CONNECT, SUSTAIN. We build community participation and pride; connect people, ideas, and efforts to develop shared goals; and sustain local leadership and greenspace stewardship. Catalyst is committed developing diverse and multifaceted programming in parks, fostering local leadership of greenspaces, and creating opportunities and projects which empower groups. This work builds on capital investments and resources from NYC Parks, programming and staff support from City Parks Foundation together with New York State LWRF funds and other external sources of funding.

## During 2013, the Catalyst Program has:

- Facilitated large-scale beautification projects with the local participation of more than **1,400 people** from local communities.
- Hosted **98 community-based meetings** to activate programming and engagement in the waterfront parks.
- Provided intensively supported community groups resulting in **59 locally-led events and activities**.
- Organized International Coastal Clean-up Day celebrations across Catalyst sites with **550 people** in attendance.
- Provided planning support to the Friends of Soundview Park who produced their 4th consecutive Summer Festival drawing more than **750 artists and local families**.
- Engaged nearly **50 public school students** from the Lower East Side community in “Make Your Mark” in the Park project, connecting STEM education to design and environmental and social justice, in partnership with DESIS Lab and students from Parsons The New School for Design.
- Worked with our partners to support Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts in Kaiser and East River Parks.
- Attended Mayor’s press announcement in Kaiser Park regarding the **\$20 billion in funding** for Post Hurricane Sandy resiliency efforts.



# Groups Partnerships Supports and Their Achievements

Below are highlights from groups spanning different neighborhoods across NYC. All of these groups are working to improve their local greenspaces and build community by utilizing a host of resources from Partnerships for Parks. These are five groups out of hundreds doing similar high-impact work:

## Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership, Staten Island

- The Partnership was formed to help transform Tappen Park in Stapleton from an underutilized space to a cornerstone of Stapleton's historic downtown district and to strengthen community involvement in the park.
- The group is supported with funds and promotion assistance from elected officials, local organizations, and institutions including the Staten Island Foundation and the Staten Island Downtown Council.
- Events organized by the Partnership have included It's My Park Day events and service projects, Oktoberfest, an eco-friendly holiday event, and a family day.
- Working with GrowNYC and City Harvest, the Partnership has hosted a youth market in the park bringing locally-grown food into the neighborhood, led by young people.
- In January 2013, the Partnership received a \$1,000 Partnerships for Parks Recovery Grant for park cleanup following Sandy storm damage.

## Marcus Garvey Park Dog Run Group, Manhattan

- By working closely with their Outreach Coordinator and NYC Parks, the group successfully advocated for replacement fencing and other upgrades to the existing large and small dog runs.
- Group members regularly attend Partnerships Academy workshop sessions and share best practices with other community groups.
- The group holds monthly "Bark in the Park" cleanup days and encourages the surrounding community to bring donations of canned dog and cat food for the local Animal Care and Control shelter.
- The group's leader provides consistent, accurate messaging to the greater dog run community via email and Facebook posts. They have publicized community events and recruited volunteers from other park organizations including the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance and the Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association by utilizing a double-sided bulletin board installed by NYC Parks.
- Marcus Garvey Park Dog Run Group is a prior recipient of the Capacity Fund grant which enabled them to develop promotional materials.



### **Friends of Brookville Park, Queens**

- The Friends of Brookville Park coordinate projects and events throughout the year including student-led horticultural and clean-up projects.
- The group collaborates with NYC Parks, local civics, Idle Wild Preservation Committee, Friends of Springfield Park, Victorious Women's Organization, Jack and Jill Foundation, Queens Botanic Garden, Department of Education, NYPD Explorers, City Parks Foundation, Council Member Saunders, and local businesses to produce seasonal events.
- Working closely with the Urban Park Rangers, the Friends have supported and promoted educational programs including canoeing and nature walks.
- Through the programs offered by Queens Botanical Garden and MillionTrees, the group has advocated for the preservation and care of street trees.
- The group is a past Emerald Award Recipient and has received a Capacity Fund grant to support membership growth and retention.

### **Shore Road Parks Conservancy, Brooklyn**

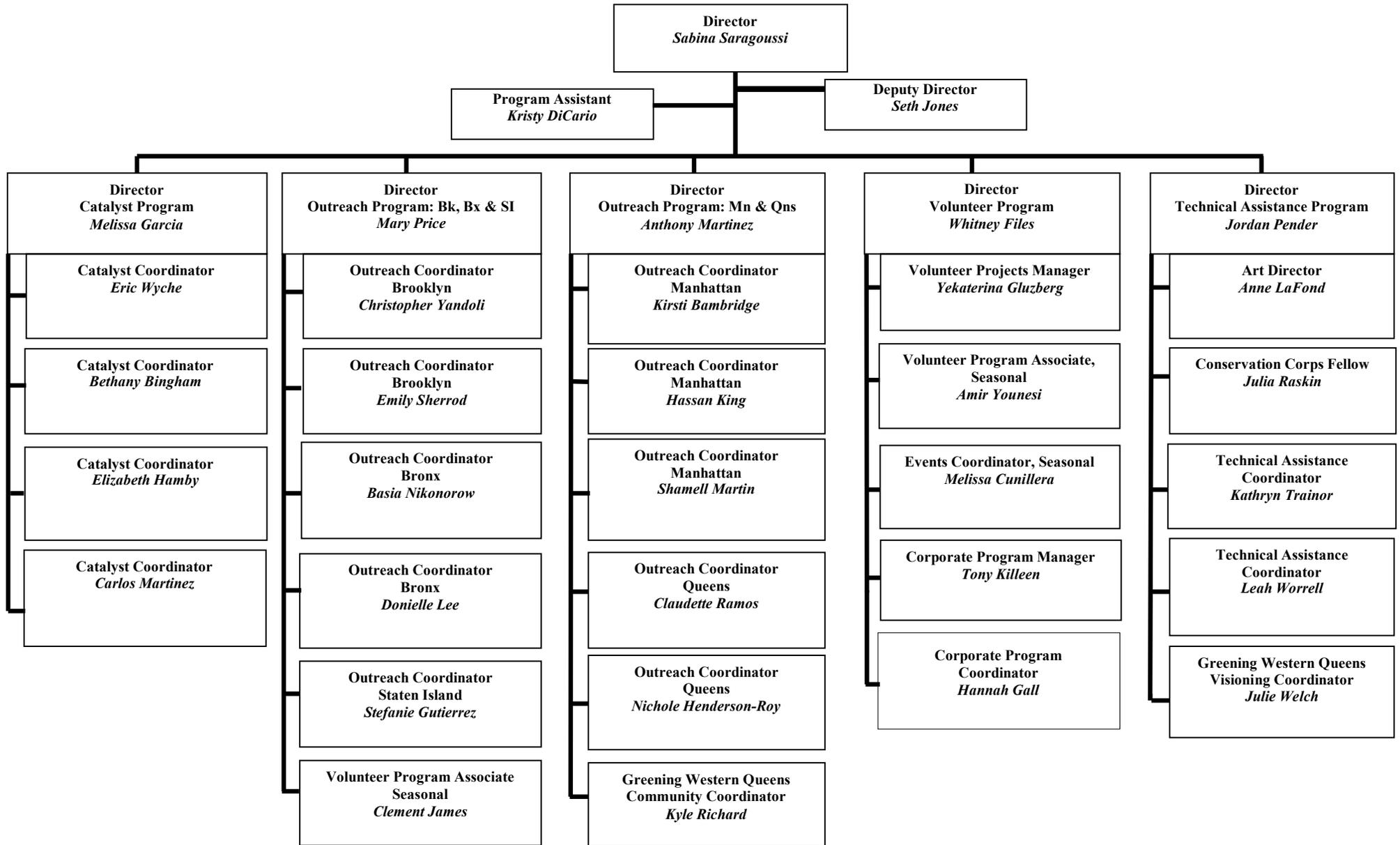
- The Conservancy hosts major clean-up projects throughout the year, including It's My Park Day projects in spring and fall.
- On average, the Conservancy receives \$7,000 in annual donations from local community members and businesses.
- Each year, the group produces holiday tree lighting events in the park in collaboration with NYC Parks' staff, local schools, businesses, residents, and elected officials. The group collaborates with Xaverian High School, First Church of the Brethren, and soldiers from the Fort Hamilton base. Also, the Conservancy receives support from NYS Senator Golden and Council Member Gentile.
- The Conservancy has worked with NYC Parks to leverage several million dollars for park renovations, with the recent addition of funding for repaving pathways throughout the heavily used park.
- The group has received a Capacity Fund grant for the creation of a brochure and park map.

### **Friends of Soundview Park, Bronx (Catalyst site)**

- In 2013, the Friends group organized activities including It's My Park Day events, New York Restoration Project's Tree Giveaway, and their 4th Annual Soundview Park Waterfront Festival.
- The group has successfully collaborated to produce free programs for the community including: Tree Swallow Nesting and Citizen Monitoring project (Rocking the Boat, Hunter College, Cornell University, Bronx Academy High School, Bronx Arena High School); International Coastal Clean-up Day (Bronx River Alliance, REI, Con Ed, The GYM Project); and Urban Nature Art, a free 8-week workshop series for local youth to explore the park through the arts (Urban Park Rangers, G.I.V.E., Rocking the Boat, Bronx River Alliance).
- Friends of Soundview Park embarked on the design process of a butterfly and meditation garden that will be completed in spring 2014. This project grew out of a community planning session held in 2012 as part of Amplify Soundview Park, a partnership with DESIS Lab and students from Parsons The New School for Design.
- In 2013 alone, the Friends have secured in-kind and service donations and have raised over \$8,000 in monetary funding (Partnerships for Parks' Capacity Fund and Catalyst Grant, Citizens Committee for New York City, and Joy of Giving Something).
- Utilizing social media for promotion and engagement, the group has developed a large following—1,100 "likes" on Facebook, 550 followers on Twitter, and a very active Google Group.



Partnerships for Parks December 2013



# Financial Contributions



Expense by Source	City Parks Foundation	NYC Parks
(Figures as of 3.31.13)		
Salaries, stipends, and fringe	\$857,097	\$1,418,804
OTPS	271,657	115,000
Office space	-	30,143
Subtotal	<u>1,128,754</u>	<u>1,563,947</u>