



# Riverside Park Conservancy

2019 Annual Report

Working side by side with Riverside





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## From the President & CEO

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Dear Neighbor:

While the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on our 2020 plans and operations, 2019 was a banner year for Riverside Park Conservancy. Not only did we welcome 24 new goat “interns” to help us clear invasive plants during the summer, but we also delivered significant renovation projects in the Park, thanks to the generous funding of individual donors. I hope you enjoyed riding a bike through the newly paved 83rd Street tunnel, exercising on the Hudson Beach Swing-A-Rings, or visiting Hippo Playground’s new safety surface. These were all projects that we completed in 2019 as a result of the generosity of individuals.

The Conservancy continues to expand its reach, and we are regularly introducing exciting new initiatives. In 2019, we sponsored our first New York City Marathon charity team; we hosted the first Hudson Beach Party event; and we Laughed Out Loud with global actor Anupam Kher. And to help us along, we created an Advisory Board and added six new members to our Board of Trustees.

We made advocacy a primary focus in 2019, directing the City’s attention to deliver more for Riverside Park. As a result, the NYC Parks Department’s State of Good Repair cycle will include \$4.1 million for paving needs in Riverside Park. In addition, the Mayor and Parks Commissioner allocated \$11.5 million to begin to repair the broken drainage infrastructure north of 105th Street, and to address chronic flooding conditions. This investment in the Park will help us to significantly improve conditions that have persisted for far too long. In 2019, we continued to offer a summer full of wonderful free events with Summer on the Hudson, and grew our Multi-Sport Summer Camp, offering scholarships to 20 percent of all participants. Of course, our professional gardeners and field staff worked throughout the year—supported by our extraordinary volunteer efforts from neighbors—to make sure that the Park is always at its best.

I am so proud of all that the Conservancy accomplished in 2019. We couldn’t do it without our dedicated neighborhoods, friends, and supporters. I look forward to another tremendous year ahead with you by our side.

With gratitude,

Daniel R. Garodnick  
President & CEO



## From the Board Chair

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Dear Friends of Riverside:

After growing up in Riverside Park, and now seeing my children do the same, it was a particular honor to take on the role of Chair of the Conservancy’s Board of Trustees last June.

2019 was a year of continued progress for the Conservancy, enabled by the time, money, and creativity of the Conservancy’s supporters. Summer on the Hudson had its biggest program ever, with 257 social, cultural, and community events attended by more than 40,000 park-goers. Our Multi-Sport Summer Camp (where my boys would personally recommend the baseball and tennis camps) served 1,089 kids—more than ever before—with 20% receiving scholarship support.

We also supported an array of physical improvements in the Park. Most notably, after years of work, the renovation of the Field House at 102nd Street—a 1937 structure that fell into disuse and disrepair after a 1970s fire—was completed. We also did extensive restoration and planting work on the Greenway Slopes and along the highway in the West 70s, re-paved the 83rd Street Tunnel pathway, replaced the Hippo Playground safety surface, extended restoration work of the Amiable Child Monument at 122nd Street, and expanded our ornamental care at the 148th Street entrance.

Perhaps our greatest impact was in the area of advocacy, where the Conservancy worked to secure City support for the Park, including funding to make the 142nd Street dog run a permanent fixture, \$4.1 million in “State of Good Repair” funding to make asphalt paving improvements over the next three years, and \$11.5 million to repair broken drainage infrastructure and address chronic flooding problems.

The Conservancy counts on the generosity of New Yorkers like you. To our hundreds of hands-on, in-the-Park volunteers... to our thousands of donors... to the members of our Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Society (for individuals who plan bequests to the Conservancy), our Advisory Board, and our Board of Trustees... and to everyone who has, while picnicking or reading or playing or taking in the views, contributed to the spirit of joy that permeates the Park: Thank you for making Riverside the one-of-a-kind place that it is.

Sincerely,

Micah C. Lasher  
Chair, Board of Trustees





## From the Commissioner

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New York City's parks are the physical, cultural, and ecological hearts of our neighborhoods. They provide space for residents to relax, to play, and to connect with one another. Lively and inclusive public spaces can transform neighborhoods, serving as catalysts for community engagement, development, and resiliency.

The public-private partnership between the City of New York and the Riverside Park Conservancy has helped to make Riverside Park one of the most important public spaces for New Yorkers to enjoy the outdoors. Along with this flagship park, the Conservancy commits invaluable support to other northern Manhattan parks, including Sakura Park, Fort Washington Park, and West Harlem Piers. Having such a strong partner in the Conservancy allows these spaces to thrive with a combination of exciting programming, expert care and maintenance, and local community engagement. This year we had much to be thankful for when it came to our partnership with the Conservancy, led by President Dan Garodnick. His stalwart advocacy for essential repairs to address historic drainage and infrastructure issues within Riverside Park led to a huge win for the park. In the fall of 2019, we were thrilled to announce that \$11.5 million will be invested to begin the important work of bringing the infrastructure of this essential space back up to the highest quality, ensuring that it will be more resilient and accessible for New Yorkers to enjoy for many years to come.

Along with its efforts maintaining safe and healthy park spaces, the Conservancy kept the park active in all seasons, from entertaining local park goers with world-class events and programming to inviting in some new four-legged helpers from upstate to maintain the park's natural areas. The creative staff of the Conservancy continues to bring a vibrant program of free public activities, often surprising us with new ways to enjoy our public spaces.

Utilizing the assistance of local, enthusiastic partner organizations and their dedicated supporters makes a major impact on our parks and communities. Looking forward to the next year, we are excited for what is in store for the Conservancy and are eager to keep building upon this successful partnership.

Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Hon. ASLA  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation



# Riverside Park Conservancy

Working  
side by  
Riverside

Donate. Volunteer.

-  [riversideparknyc.org](https://riversideparknyc.org)
-  [riverside.park.conservancy](https://www.facebook.com/riverside.park.conservancy)
-  [riversideparkNY](https://twitter.com/riversideparkNY)
-  [riversideparkNYC](https://www.instagram.com/riversideparkNYC)



NYC Parks

Riverside Park Conservancy Impact



# Working side by Riverside



The office staff headed out to Riverside Park South in the fall to help (and learn from!) the gardeners during an all-staff project.

Restoring, maintaining, and improving this unique 400-acre stretch of parkland is only possible when conservancy, city, and community work side by side. A park alongside the Hudson River presents special challenges, such as storm damage, ecological vulnerabilities, and erosion. Not to mention the additional stresses of having a highway and a railroad running through it.

Not only do we support Riverside Park, but also Fort Washington Park, West Harlem Piers Park, Sakura Park, and Riverside Park South. While our name is Riverside Park Conservancy, we care for six miles of parkland from 59th Street to the George Washington Bridge.



The Conservancy staff is very knowledgeable about urban horticulture and ecology, and each Gardener brings unique expertise to the team.



Conservancy staff in the spotlight at the Gotham Award Ceremony in August, when the public voted on the favorite Riverside Park Goat.

We work side by side with the New York City Parks Department. While our daily tasks may differ, our goal is the same—to provide you with a better, safer, more enjoyable park experience. Throughout all four seasons, we work with a volunteer corps of loyal partners. Last year alone, our dedicated volunteers logged more than 40,000 hours of weeding, pruning, planting, painting, and picking up. We need you by our side. Private donations make up nearly 50% of the Park’s yearly operating costs. Thanks to the generosity of neighbors and Park lovers like you, we remain true to our mission.



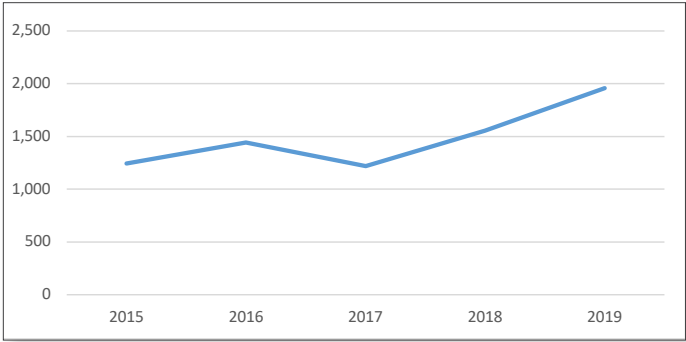
# Year in Review






2019 was a phenomenal year of growth for Riverside Park Conservancy. Our team worked side by side with the NYC Parks Department to take care of the Park throughout every season—rain, snow, sleet or shine. We also saw an enormous increase in support in every area of our fundraising efforts. We welcomed more than 500 new donors to our circle, most of whom live on the Upper West Side. The amount of support through our Adopt-a-Bench program almost doubled and our support from foundations more than doubled. Additionally, our social media following increased by 20% total, with some platforms seeing more than a 50% increase in followers. All of these increases translate directly into more work being done in the Park.

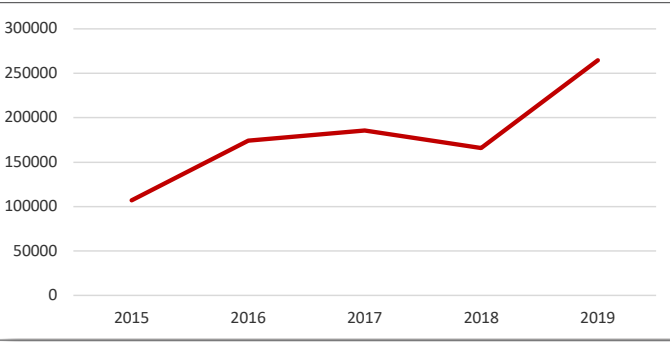
Our Adopt-A-Bench program offers the opportunity for neighbors to commemorate a special someone in the Park—supporting the Conservancy in the process.

Gift Count  
2015–2019

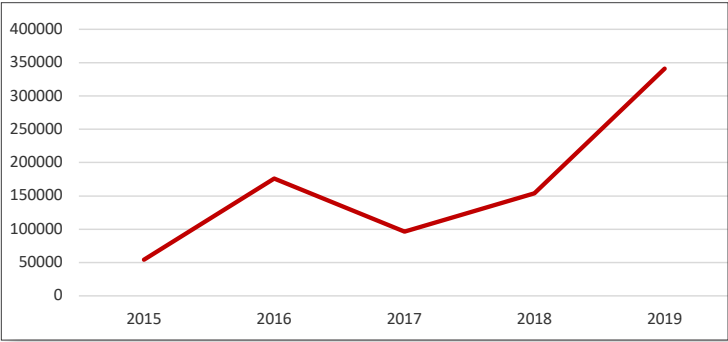


SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH	2018	2019	% increase since 2018
 E-mail	23,242	25,322	9%
 Facebook	2,220	2,863	29%
 Instagram	5,401	8,747	62%
 Twitter	1,519	2,372	56%
TOTAL	32,382	39,304	21%

Adopt-A-Bench Donations (in \$)  
2015–2019

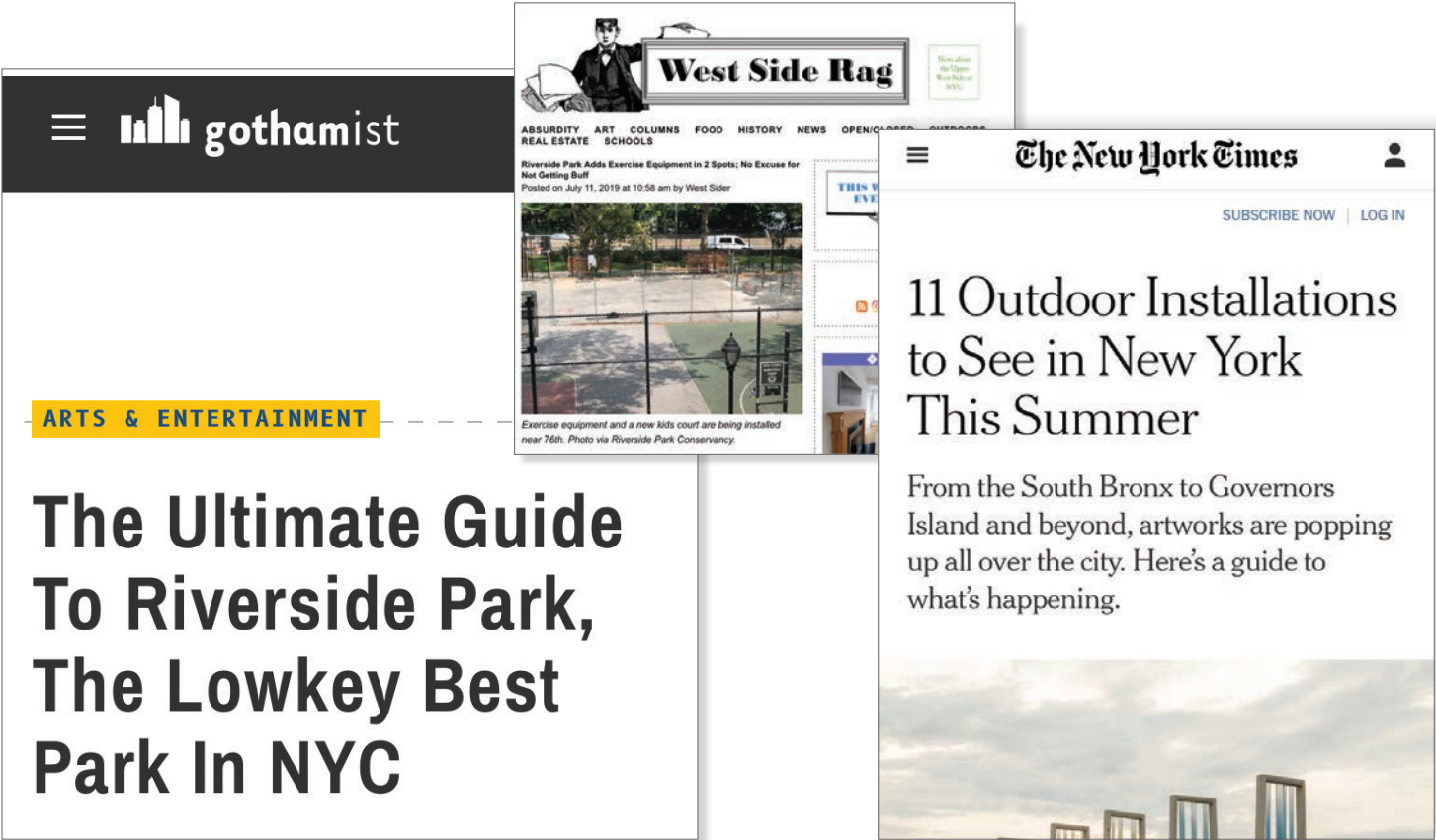


Institutional Grant Funding (in \$)  
2015–2019





# In the Press

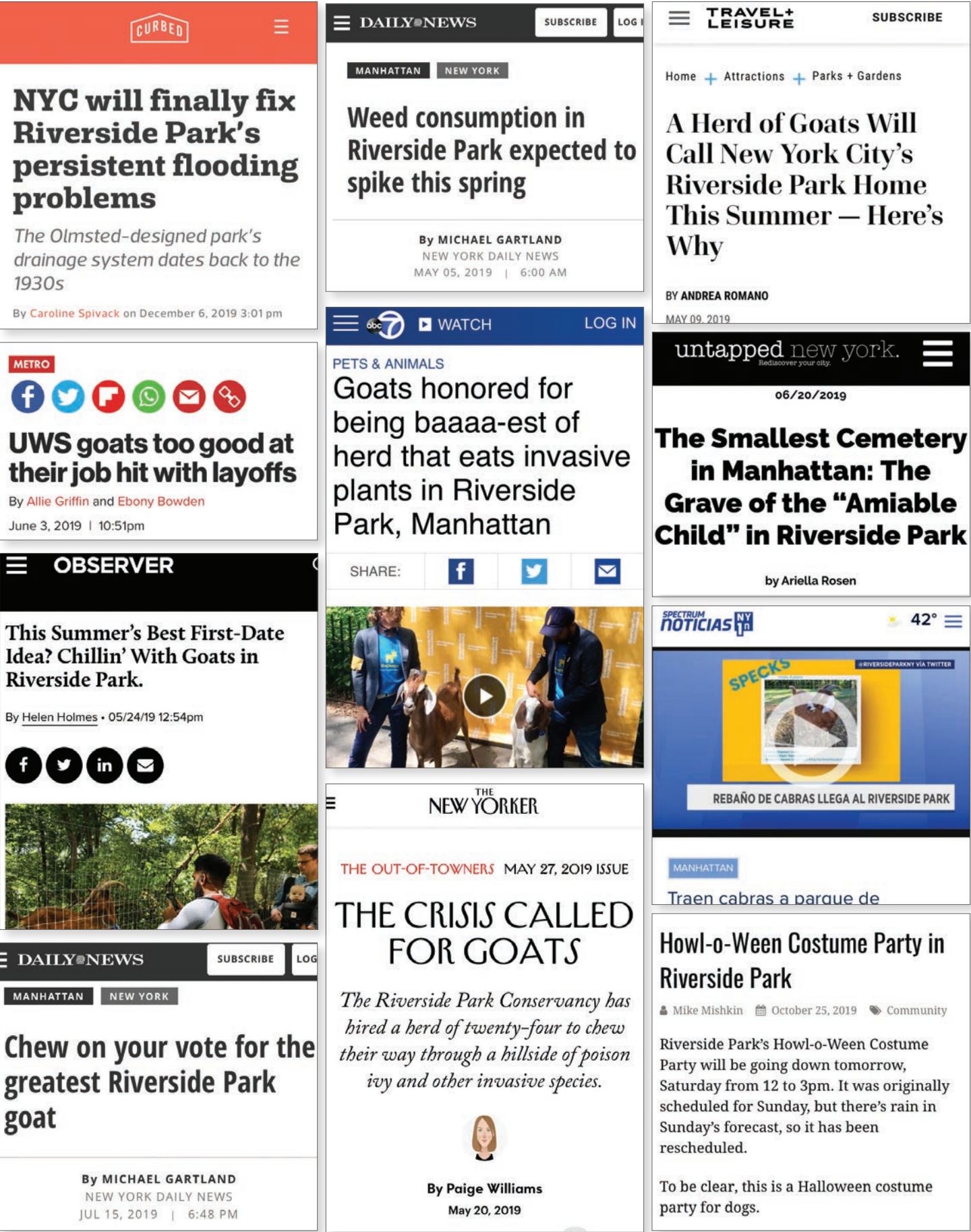


In 2019, the Conservancy saw a major increase in public awareness, both on its social media platforms and in the number of press features. An increased presence on social media, new park signage, and more frequent email communications resulted in a year with more appearances—on TV, radio, and in print media—than the Conservancy had ever experienced in its history.

In fall of 2019, *Gothamist* released “The Ultimate Guide To Riverside Park,” dubbing Riverside Park “The Lowkey Best Park In NYC,” and the Conservancy was excited to see such praise for the Park on a popular NYC media platform.

Over the course of 2019, there were 43 pieces of print and broadcast coverage about the Conservancy and Riverside Park. In addition to this, the GOaTHAM Initiative was featured in 34 pieces of print coverage and 47 pieces of broadcast coverage, resulting in approximately 600 million total impressions, over 12 million of which were broadcast or radio.

We are thrilled by the increase in awareness and coverage the Conservancy is getting, and we look forward to expanding our presence and message to an ever-growing audience in 2020 and beyond.









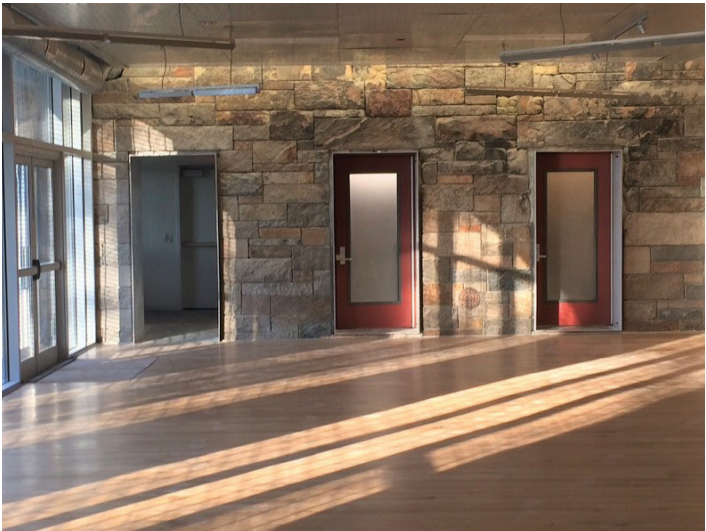
# Field House Renovation

We made substantial progress on our Field House Renovation Project over the course of 2019. The building, which was completed in 1937 and renovated in 1964, was unfortunately gutted by fire in the 1970s and sat empty for more than forty years.

As of the end of 2019, we completed construction on the interior of the Field House. The NYC Parks Department and Riverside Park Conservancy hosted the annual staff holiday party there for all Riverside Park staff. The outdoor courts will be the final step, to be finished in 2020.

When the Field House officially opens to the public, it will provide Riverside Park with a large indoor space that will serve as a central location for public recreational and athletic activities. A desperately needed public bathroom will also be available, adjacent to the recreation field area. The Conservancy plans to offer a variety of cultural, educational, and health and fitness programming in the Field House throughout the year. The building will also enhance the use of existing facilities, such as the athletic fields, jogging trails, and the bicycle and pedestrian Greenway.

We look forward to a grand opening when public health rules allow for such gatherings to take place.



The state-of-the-art interior was completed in 2019.



The outdoor courts will be finished in 2020.



The Field House will be a one of a kind indoor public programming space in Manhattan, and can host a variety of different activities.



Pavers were installed in 2019 as one of the final stages of work.



# Woodland Restoration and Pollinator Meadow

In 2019, the Conservancy continued to improve the Pollinator Meadow and the Woodland area. Working side by side with Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) to survey our natural areas, our staff received training to align our vision to improve the ecological health of Riverside and Fort Washington Parks, with efforts to improve citywide ecosystems. With NAC, Our Gardeners assessed the conditions of the Park’s 60 acres of forested areas, and developed a site-specific, 5-year management plan for this important habitat. This partnership also resulted in a 25 year plan for restoration of Riverside Park’s natural areas. Future investments of personnel, time, and resources will all be directed toward specific ecosystem goals to improve the future of our forest areas.

Our Conservancy’s Natural Areas Steward hosted a monthly Forest Restoration crew of volunteers to assist with invasive plant removal, path maintenance, and planting in the Woodland. During the summer months, the Natural Areas Steward and other Conservancy field staff hosted our annual Teen Corps program. Teen Corps members participated in Woodland restoration projects and also spent a large amount of time and effort weeding the Pollinator Meadow, to ensure that plantings from 2018 become established. Both the Woodland and the Meadow provide crucial habitat for insects, birds, and other wildlife—serving as an important piece of the City ecosystem.



Conservancy Natural Areas Steward worked with a recurring group of volunteers to weed, plant, and care for the woodland ecology.



Larger volunteer groups often focus on projects in the woodland. This group helped to spread fresh woodchips on the path.



The public was excited about a Great Horned Owl sighting in the Woodland in the fall.



# Greenway Slope Restoration



A corporate volunteer group from Absolut Vodka did a project mulching the slope in the spring.

In 2018 the Conservancy, with the support of private donors and the hands-on help of several volunteers, successfully planted native woodland species in the slopes from 72nd-79th Streets in order to support the local ecology, to provide natural erosion control, and to beautify the Park for visitors. 2019 saw a continuation of this multi-year effort, with Gardeners installing thousands of plants and weeding and watering regularly.



Conservancy Gardeners worked hard to make sure the 2018 plantings were well established and had proper care.

# Highway Cover Tree Planting



Conservancy Gardeners spent 2019 carefully watering and caring for the new trees to ensure that they were well established in the Park.

In 2018 the Conservancy, thanks to the generous support of a private donor, planted trees along Henry Hudson Parkway to mitigate noise and to beautify sightlines in the west 70s. In 2019, Conservancy Gardeners monitored the planting, and ensured that it was adequately watered and maintained in order to ensure the health and optimal growth of the new trees.



# Amiable Child Monument Site Restoration



The new fencing and regular maintenance has transformed this previously neglected historic site to a beautiful, healthy garden for park visitors to enjoy.

This unique New York City monument marks the site of one of the few private graves on public land within the five boroughs. It belongs to St. Claire Pollock (the namesake of nearby St. Clair Place), a child who died on July 15, 1797 in the fifth year of his life, probably from a fall from the cliffs of the park onto the rocks near the Hudson River. This historic monument is a humble and touching tribute to a young boy who never had the opportunity to grow into adulthood.

However, until the Conservancy undertook a restoration project in 2018—with the support of a generous donor—the surrounding parkland had been left unmanaged and overgrown.

In 2019, Conservancy Gardeners continued the successes from their initial cleanup and planting in 2018 by regularly tending to the native woodland plantings, weeding and watering the garden, and keeping the plaza neat and surrounding area free of litter and debris.

# Hudson Beach Adult Recreation Fitness Equipment



In the summer of 2019, the Conservancy held an official ribbon cutting to celebrate the addition of the equipment to this important active recreation area.

Hudson Beach is an important active recreation area that stretches from 101st Street to 111th Street in Riverside Park. This space and its facilities are used by athletes, fitness enthusiasts, casual sports players, and all park users who enjoy the riverside view. It is also the site of the Conservancy’s annual Multi-Sport Summer Camp and the very popular Swing-a-Rings.

In 2019, a gift from private donors (the same donors who brought us the Swing-a-Rings) facilitated the installment of additional high-quality outdoor fitness equipment at the 105th Street Hudson Beach area. The equipment, which includes pull up bars and multi-purpose parallel bars, is always busy. At any time of day, you might find body builders, kids, and everyone in between using this new park amenity.



The equipment is suitable for people of all ages to play and exercise.



# 83rd Street Paving

With the support of a generous private donor, the Conservancy recently did an overhaul of the pathway and tunnel at 83rd Street. In a matter of only six weeks, we repaved paths, installed new fencing, revealed the original granite stone, repainted the tunnel passage, and planted new trees. This new paving offers Park users a significant increase in the safety and enjoyment of Riverside Park.



The high-traffic pathway was severely weathered.



Upon completion, the pathway is free of trip hazards and safer for pedestrians and cyclists alike.



The tunnel was completely repainted, which made a major difference in the overall appearance of the access point.

# Hippo Playground Safety Surface



The state-of-the-art safety surface is permeable and buoyant, offering a safe and visually appealing surface to a high-traffic feature of the playground.



The pavement was cracked and damaged, presenting a potential safety hazard for children.

The Hippo Playground Project—a dedicated group of volunteers from our neighborhood—recently funded a brand new safety surface at Hippo Playground (91st Street & Riverside), which has dramatically enhanced usability, safety, and aesthetic in the area. On July 9th, 2019 we held a ceremonial ribbon cutting to officially celebrate this new feature.



# Joan of Arc



The crumbling steps were transformed into a safe access point.

In May 2019, the Parks Department began capital work to replace stairs leading to the Joan of Arc Statue at 93rd Street; to repair the plaza surrounding the Statue; to create space for additional seating; and to introduce a new south entrance at 92nd Street, as well as a new path on the south side of the Island. These much-needed renovations to the pathways and entrances have improved access to the Island and elevated the aesthetic experience for all who visit.

In addition to actively fundraising for private donations, the Joan of Arc Statue Committee, a volunteer-led affiliate of the Conservancy, worked side by side with NYC Council Member Helen Rosenthal to secure City funding to make this important project happen.



The pathway repairs throughout the Island greatly enhanced aesthetics and accessibility.

Thanks to funds raised by the Joan of Arc Statue Committee, the plaza surrounding the Statue has new benches and is now ADA compliant, the crumbling 93rd Street steps were totally rebuilt, a new paved pathway connects the plaza to a much safer new entrance at 92nd Street, and the pathways at the northern end of the park were resurfaced.

Committed volunteers maintained the surrounding plaza and parkland and in the spring moved hundreds of plants in preparation for the reconfiguration of pathways and access points. In the fall they planted hundreds more to replace those that failed to thrive. They have also helped to build new gardens at the southern end of the Park.



Joan of Arc is a glorious sight during every season.





**Overseers of Olmsted's Vision**



# Park Operations: Zone Gardener Initiative

Riverside Park Conservancy was born from a collective effort by local volunteers 33 years ago, and we will never lose touch with that history. The Zone Gardener Program, launched in 2010, serves to professionalize and to expand our reach. Our professional gardeners bring a unique expertise and passion to preserve, protect, and care for the Park’s health and beauty, and their presence has been crucial to help strengthen the Conservancy’s role as an extension of the local community. Our gardeners are on the frontlines of the Conservancy’s mission, as they frequently interact and communicate with Park visitors, and are responsible for significant advancements in Riverside Park’s condition since the program began in 2010.

Our Gardeners are each responsible for the maintenance of a section (“Zone”) of Riverside Park that best aligns with their particular expertise, interests, and skill set. Gardeners also collaborate with ParkTender volunteers in their Zones and lead group volunteer projects throughout the Park. The Conservancy aims to continue growing our team of passionate professional gardeners and field staff, who provide top-quality care to all six miles of parkland and interact with volunteers and park visitors every day.



Conservancy President & CEO Dan Garodnick joined Zone Gardeners for an all-hands-on-deck shoreline cleanup project in Riverside Park South in the fall.



Conservancy Gardeners engage in collaborative lectures, webinars, and other learning opportunities to deepen their professional skills and knowledge.

# Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Society

The Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Society, established in 2019, is an honorary group of generous individuals who have included Riverside Park Conservancy in their estate plans through a bequest, retirement plan, life insurance, trust, or other legacy gift.

We chose to name our Legacy Society after Eleanor Roosevelt, a native New Yorker who left a lasting legacy to our city, and was a champion of social equality. She aspired for a better world for all people, where everyone is treated with dignity.

Careful estate planning helps all of us to prepare for the future by providing for our loved ones and the institutions we cherish most. Planned gifts are vital to the Conservancy’s work by helping us to respond to future challenges while allowing us to continue improving and restoring Riverside Park every day.



## A Message from April Lane Benson, PhD Chair, Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Society

I was introduced to the beauty of Riverside Park in the spring of 1970, while a freshman at Barnard College. Jeanette Roosevelt, beloved head of the physical education department, tasked us with running through the park from 116th Street down to the 80’s and back with a full report on the status of the cherry blossoms.

Today there’s another beloved Mrs. Roosevelt, Eleanor (coincidentally, Jeanette’s grandmother by marriage), that invites all of us into the park—in a larger than life statue—half-seated on a boulder at 72nd Street.

Some Native American traditions believe that we need to consider the effect of our actions on our descendants at least seven generations into the future. That is the way Mrs. Roosevelt

comported herself, and advanced her goals of social justice.

In honor of Eleanor Roosevelt, the Riverside Park Conservancy has created The Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Society to ensure the long-term future of this remarkable urban oasis, through planned gift donations.

Riverside Park has grounded me for the fifty years I’ve lived by its side, yet it had never occurred to me to make a planned gift to Riverside Park for the next generation, let alone seven. My hunch is that I’m not alone in my oversight—which I have now corrected.

Please join me in protecting our six miles of magnificence for generations to come.



# North Park Initiative

The Conservancy’s North Park Initiative focuses on the area that stretches from 120th to 181st Streets and serves some of Upper Manhattan’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. We have never wavered in our commitment to ensure that all six miles of Riverside Park thrive, and the northern area of the Park is a central yet challenging part of this effort both in topogra- phy, accessibility, and availability of resources.

Our North Park Initiative focuses on the part of Riverside Park that borders the Hamilton Heights and Morningside Heights neighborhoods in New York City’s Community District 9, plus portions of Washington Heights. This area contains a community garden, bike path, sports fields and courts, a playground, and a generous quantity of open space. It also includes the iconic Little Red Lighthouse and ample waterfront access, but has historically received less consistent NYC Parks Department maintenance, and has fewer active volunteers than other park areas. It has a more challenging topography than the Park’s southern tier below 120th Street, with more hills and valleys and fewer access points, making it more difficult for volunteers to make dedicated commitments.

The North Park Initiative builds on the outstand- ing work of one volunteer, Ms. Jenny Benitez who, forty years ago, empowered a small group of volunteer gardeners who began transforming piles of trash, including abandoned cars, mattresses, drug paraphernalia, and piles of litter and debris into beautiful flower beds and vegetable gardens. Jenny’s success was an



The Conservancy began a partnership with The Fortune Society at 140th Street, successfully launching a volunteer group to care for the Island gardens from 138th - 142nd Streets.

important turning point for North Park, and the Conservancy has taken great inspiration from her work.

Riverside Park Conservancy is dedicated to the vision of a flourishing North Park. The Conservancy’s work in North Park is instrumental in reducing disparity and establishing a spectacular and truly equitable Park experience for all New Yorkers and delivering a better north park experience.

Our North Park Initiative continues to make strides, with volunteer groups and individual volunteers in North Park accounting for 10,387 hours from 1,136 volunteers.



Young volunteers helped care for the gardens at Ralph Ellison Memorial on National Public Lands Day.



Cleaning up and planting in areas of the Park that are in need of more consistent care.

We removed invasive species, planted more than 1,000 perennials and 100 shrubs, expanded ornamental garden care at the 148th Street Park entrance, and introduced a new pollinator habi- tat along the 135th Street bike path. We also con- tinued to provide care for five key access points and at 120th Street, 125th Street, 138th Street, 148th Street, and 151st Street in Riverside Park.

The Conservancy partnered with the Dog Run 142 User Group and Councilman Mark Levine to advocate for funding to make the dog run per- manent. Our efforts were successful and the Mayor allocated \$350,000 to make the dog run a permanent fixture in the community.





Riverside Park Conservancy worked closely with Natural Areas Conservancy to create a plan for forest restoration and management in the Park’s forested areas.

### Natural Areas Conservancy Partnership

A new and exciting partnership took root in 2019 with Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC). Our Gardeners, volunteers, NAC staff, and CUNY students completed a rapid site assessment to evaluate the health of the natural areas in Riverside Park’s northern reaches. NAC has made a recommendation for a planting pallet in Riverside Park that will foster a climate resilient habitat – and included a maintenance plan to ensure the woodlands at 145th-150th Streets and in Fort Washington Park at 181st Street thrive.

The Conservancy also directly advocated for more investment in this area of Riverside Park. As a result of this advocacy, NYC Parks Department’s three-year State of Good Repair cycle will include \$4.1 million for paving in Riverside Park.

This investment will provide a significant boost to the park’s usability in several areas, including the 148th Street park entrance.

As Council Member Mark Levine said, “The historically underserved northern areas of Riverside Park that span the communities of Morningside Heights, West Harlem, and Washington Heights have seen inadequate investment from the City for years and needed urgent help.” It is our mission to continue doing so by ensuring Riverside Park is healthy, safe, and accessible for these communities.

## Advocacy



The Monument and plaza had to be fenced off because the conditions are potentially dangerous to the public.

### Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument

The Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument is one of the most magnificent Civil War structures in the United States. The cornerstone was laid in 1899 by New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt, 34 years after Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox. It was dedicated on May 30, 1902, and today it is a landmark and shrine for veterans of all U.S. wars. New York City’s annual Memorial Day observance is held there every year.

A tribute to the brave soldiers who gave their lives to defend the Union in the Civil War, this monument has had no significant investment in maintenance since 1962, and as a result, the mortar joints on the monument as well as the



The inside of the Monument, like the plaza and exterior, is in severe disrepair due to water damage.



The Monument is literally crumbling due to decades of water damage.

surrounding plazas, steps, cheek walls, and retaining walls are failing. The entire monument is in a state of disrepair, it is getting worse due to severe water damage—and as a result, it is fenced off from public access.

The Conservancy is asking the City to commit the necessary funding for its renovation without further delay.

The fact that this important tribute to the Civil War has been left to crumble is shameful. We simply cannot afford to let it become a ruin.





When it rains, staircases and entrances become flooded and unnavigable.



The aged drainage infrastructure inhibits the Park from absorbing and filtering rain water properly, which results in major pooling of stagnant water on paths.

### \$11.5 Million in City Budget for Drainage Infrastructure

Riverside Park’s major infrastructure challenges include chronic flooding, which urgently needs to be addressed. In 2019 the Conservancy advocated for the City to invest public resources into improving our drainage infrastructure. The Mayor and NYC Parks Commissioner responded by allocating \$11.5 million toward fixing this critical infrastructure, with particular focus on the most severely impacted area between 108th and 116th Streets. This will be the first time since the 1930s that such an investment has been made, and we are grateful for the support. This urgently needed funding will fix the chronic flooding and erosion that happens after every rain—and will maximize the Park’s capacity to absorb storm water.

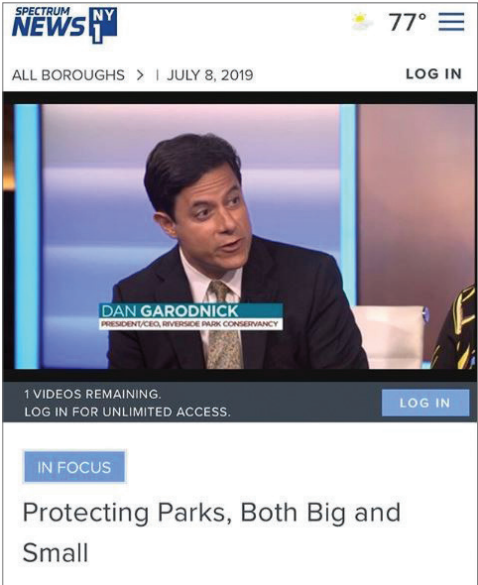


The Conservancy joined a coalition of hundreds of organizations to demand that the city equitably, and adequately, fund its parks.

### Play Fair Coalition

Riverside Park Conservancy enthusiastically supported the New Yorkers for Parks Play Fair campaign, which advocated for an increase in public funding for the NYC Parks Department. The campaign aimed to prioritize the condition of parks by providing adequate—and equitable—funding for every park, right now and for the future.

Thanks to this campaign and the work of many people and organizations that were involved with it, the City allocated a historic \$44M investment for NYC Parks in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. This is a huge win for NYC Parks and for all New Yorkers and visitors. We join New Yorkers for Parks and the Play Fair campaign in thanking the Speaker and Mayor for investing in our green spaces. We also would like to recognize all of the workers and volunteers that worked so hard to make this happen.



Conservancy President & CEO Dan Garodnick was interviewed by NY1 to discuss the impact and implications of PlayFair’s successful first year.

Riverside Park Conservancy President Dan Garodnick appeared on NY1 with Lynn Kelly, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks, and Council Member Peter Koo, Chair of the NYC Council Parks Committee, to discuss the significance of the Play Fair campaign’s historic success in securing \$44 million toward parks across the City.

“We are so happy to be part of this Play Fair coalition, because while the Conservancy has some resources to put back in Riverside Park, that is not the case for all parks around the City.” –Dan Garodnick.

The Play Fair Coalition will continue our ask to the Mayor and the City Council to direct much needed maintenance and operations funding to NYC Parks.



# Welcome our new Trustees

In 2019, Riverside Park Conservancy was proud to add to its Board of Trustees ranks. Our passionate Board is responsible for championing and advancing our important work in Riverside Park.



## Victoria Benitez

Assistant Vice President at the Office of Communications and Public Affairs, Columbia University

A native New Yorker who grew up and continues to live in West Harlem—in the same building on Riverside Drive at 138th Street where she’s lived since 1964. She is a founding member of the Riverside Valley Community Garden (known as Jenny’s Garden, in honor of Jenny Benitez, Victoria’s mother) in Riverside Park that was started by her parents over 40 years ago.

Riverside Park is where Victoria learned about the intersection of nature and community. It is where she learned to ride a bike and roller-skate; where she had her first kiss and best of all, it is the place that gives her peace at the end of the day.



## Deborah Brown

Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer for Health, NYC Mayor’s Office

“Riverside Park has been a part of so many phases of my life: I worked off Law School stress with late afternoon runs on the promenade; I took my late father, an avid gardener, to admire the 92nd Street garden; I chased my toddlers around Dino Park for years; I coached my son’s soccer team at the fields at 101st street....I could go on and on. Having the opportunity to give back to a place that has given so much to me and my family is a privilege.”



## Angela Fernández

Commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights

Angela Fernández is a human rights attorney who brings to the Board 20 years of experience in law, media, non-profit management, government, policy development, and advocacy. She is the Commissioner of the NYS Division of Human Rights. Prior to that position she was the Executive Director and Supervising Attorney for the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights. She also served on the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board and was Chair of the National Dominican Day Parade. Angela lives with her family in Washington Heights



## Betsy Goldin

Consultant for Cheree Berry Paper

Betsy Goldin has been an Upper West Side resident for the past 9 years and actively visits Riverside Park as a mother of two young children and occasional marathon runner. She is currently a board member of the JCC Manhattan, where she sits on the Executive Committee. Betsy and her husband, David, live on the Upper West Side with their son, Charlie and daughter, Katie.



## Lara Mehraban

Associate Director for Enforcement in the New York Office of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Lara has lived on the Upper West Side since 2000, and spends a lot of time in Riverside Park with her family. She enjoys jogging through the Park with her dog in the morning, and then riding her bike to the office. “Having the Park as a resource is something I truly appreciate on a daily basis. Riverside Park is my family’s backyard. I am so excited to be joining Dan and the other amazing board members in continuing the work to restore, maintain and improve Riverside Park.”



## Steve Zammarchi

Steve Zammarchi works in creative transformation, and is a Business and Marketing Advisor who joined the Board in 2019 and was instrumental in driving the Conservancy’s recent rebranding effort.

“I was introduced to Olmsted’s belief that parks are a common right of every citizen—that parks bring together people of all walks of life, and that, in effect, parks are the ultimate democratization of New York City. I joined the Board of Trustees to help to raise awareness of the many responsibilities of Riverside Park Conservancy. We’ve only just scratched the surface of all that we can accomplish, together, to put Riverside Park and the Conservancy on the map.”





## Riverside Park South





# Riverside Park South



Phase 5 includes a playground for neighborhood families and visitors to enjoy.

Many park visitors have scratched their heads about the progress in Riverside Park South in recent years, and why it seems to be taking so long to complete. While the Conservancy is not managing these projects, we look forward to caring for these new park spaces when they are done; until then, we have done our best to share the most up-to-date information with the community. This has been a six-phase project—of which, only Phases 5 and 6 remain.

In 2019, substantial progress was made on Riverside Park South's Phase 5 capital construction project, despite delays due to weather, inter-agency coordination and legal matters. Phase 5, located between 65th–67th Streets, is anticipated to be completed in 2020,

and includes many new exciting amenities, such as beach volleyball courts, a new playground, a bank of swings, a dog run, more entrances to the park and many more sitting areas. 2020 is also expected to launch several capital projects, including: the FEMA-funded reconstruction of the waterfront path at 59th Street, damaged by Hurricane Sandy; the Phase 1 reconstruction project of the Hudson River Greenway between 70th–72nd Streets to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety; and the final Riverside Park South Phase 6 project, located between 59th–65th Streets, which includes a multi-purpose field and basketball courts, among other amenities. Phase 6—the final portion of the project, is anticipated to take 2 years to complete.





## Special Events and Public Programming



# Summer on the Hudson



Weekly yoga and fitness classes have a loyal following.

Summer on the Hudson is an annual outdoor arts and culture festival held in Riverside Park from 59th to 181st Streets. Launched in 2001, Summer on the Hudson is co-sponsored by the New York City Parks Department and Riverside Park Conservancy. This public programming series offers a wide range of concerts, movies, health and wellness classes, educational workshops, family programs, and other outdoor events.

In 2019, Summer on the Hudson hosted 257 events from May 4th–November 2nd and saw an overall attendance of 43,321. All programs are free and open to the public with the aim of bringing quality arts programming to six miles of diverse neighborhoods on the west side of Manhattan.



Families gathered on the Locomotive Lawn to watch a live show for kids every Thursday morning in June.



In 2019 Conservancy Gardeners began giving Horticulture tours to the public once a month. The tours were popular with all age groups.



Summer on the Hudson hosts an array of lively bands on the Pier for the Amplified Sundays series in July.



# Multi-Sport Summer Camp



Camp offers kids an opportunity to get active and enjoy the park during the summer – and to make many lasting friendships.



Campers can choose to participate in multiple sports.

Launched in summer 2013, the Conservancy’s Multi-Sport Summer Camp provides an opportunity for young people between the ages of 4-16 to spend their summer days outside at a high-quality camp in Riverside Park. The Conservancy provides scholarships for families that need financial assistance to ensure that the Camp is fully inclusive for all who seek to participate. 20% of our campers received full or partial need-based scholarships provided by the Conservancy.

Riverside Park Conservancy partners with three providers to operate the Camp: Kids of Summer, Carlos Oliveira Soccer Academy, and Riverside Clay Tennis Association. Sports offerings include: baseball, basketball, flag football, soccer and tennis.

In 2019, 1,089 children attended the Camp at an average rate of 184 campers per day and 2 weeks per camper, which equates to 2,173 total enrollment slots filled throughout the season. Children from all over New York City travel to Riverside Park to attend this popular camp.

Since 2014 our camp has hired over 100 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) interns and has partnered with the Police Athletic League (PAL) and the City to provide internships for disadvantaged youth ages 16-24. Several interns have excelled at the opportunity and have been offered promotions, such as Coach and Camp Manager’s Assistant.

# LOL with Anupam



Hundreds of New Yorkers gathered to laugh together in the Park.

Why are people laughing in Riverside Park for no apparent reason?

Anupam Kher, Upper West Side neighbor, and global Indian actor from the hit series *New Amsterdam*, helped Riverside Park Conservancy launch our very successful, first-ever laugh fitness series, Laugh Out Loud with Anupam. For three Saturday mornings in the Fall of 2019, over 250 neighbors and friends of all ages gathered in Riverside Park to hoot, howl and guffaw our way through mood-boosting breathing techniques and side-splitting laughter exercises.

We thought of it as meditation. Only a whole lot louder.



Anupam and Conservancy President Dan Garodnick shared some hearty laughs with the other participants.



The Laugh Out Loud events left everyone feeling positive and light for the rest of the day.



# Riverside Clay Tennis Association

Riverside Clay Tennis Association (RCTA) is one of Riverside Park Conservancy’s oldest park User Groups. In addition to maintaining and operating the beautiful red clay public tennis courts along the Hudson River near 96th Street, the RCTA offers a wide variety of public programming—and it’s not all about tennis.

RCTA hosts free sunset concerts every Saturday evening throughout the summer, which attract hundreds of people each week and feature a variety of musical styles, ranging from classical to reggae, from jazz to French pop.

This past year, RCTA teamed up with other Riverside Park Conservancy Multi-Sport Camp providers to rent a giant screen TV and host an outdoor viewing party for the Women’s World Cup Soccer Final. Hundreds of people came out to cheer the USA team onto victory. The day included a free youth tennis festival on the clay courts and plenty of hamburgers and hot dogs for all!

RCTA’s Adaptive Tennis Program for people with physical and cognitive disabilities tripled the number of participants in 2019. Additionally, the clay courts hosted the USTA Eastern

Adaptive Championships in the fall, drawing adaptive players from all over NY State to compete, including RCTA’s adaptive athletes. Many of these athletes joined RCTA youth players for an on-court demonstration during the US Open on the stadium court.

As part of an outreach program, RCTA volunteers brought tennis programming to the first and second grade gym classes at PS 123 in central Harlem four days each week for over 3 months at the beginning of 2019.

## FORT WASHINGTON TENNIS

Starting in 2019, Riverside Park Conservancy acquired a 5-year concession to provide tennis programming at the Fort Washington Park Tennis Courts. Conservancy staff also organized volunteers to help improve the courts. Pruning surrounding trees, painting new lines, and installing new nets were just the beginning of long-term plans for caretaking of the facility.

Additionally, the Conservancy partnered with the USTA to host a city-wide tournament that brought dozens of players from parks across New York for the Battle of the Boroughs Championship in September.

## Joanna Nieh, Tennis Champion

In 2019, Joanna, whose inspiring career began at the 96th Street Red Clay courts, achieved the title of number one player in the world in the Girls Singles Wheelchair category. Joanna, now 17 years old, started playing over ten years ago as part of the Riverside Clay Tennis Association’s Adaptive Tennis Program, a free program available to young people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities and challenges. After years of hard work and dedication, Joanna achieved the prestigious title. She still frequently practices in Riverside Park.



Over 50 children participated in RCTA’s Free Youth Tennis Festival last July, learning skills and fun games with RCTA tennis camp coaches like Ezra Jones, pictured here. While the children played, the parents were watching the Women’s World Cup Final on a giant outdoor screen TV on the lawn next to the courts.



Dan Garodnick, Conservancy President & CEO, and John Herrold, Riverside Park Administrator, came to the courts in the early spring to help refresh the clay courts at the annual “Clay Date.”



Bob Ryland, the first African-American man to play professional tennis in the United States, and long-time RCTA member, visited the courts in 2019. Mr. Ryland, pictured here with Conservancy Sports Camp Manager, Ahmed Cohen, will turn 100 years old in June, 2020.



# Spring Benefit: Celebrate a Year of Working side by Riverside



The band—along with the dancing shrub—led guests into the International House to enjoy dinner and the awards ceremony.

We were so gratified by the grand show of support for the Conservancy at our 2019 Spring Benefit. Our honoree Ariel Deckelbaum received the Robert M. Morgenthau Citizenship Award for his generous support of Riverside Park Conservancy over the years, and Jenny Benitez received the Community Service Award for her decades of work as a pioneer community leader at Riverside Valley Community Garden.

Nearly 400 supporters and guests joined us for a special evening in Sakura Park and the International House in celebration of all we have accomplished in Riverside Park. Much to the delight of all, there was an appearance from one of our goats—and a dancing shrub—at cocktail hour.

The commitment and dedication of our neighbors makes it possible for the Conservancy to provide year-round care to this spectacular public space.



Guests started the evening with cocktails in Sakura Park.



Jenny Benitez received the Community Service Award for her decades of work at Riverside Valley Community Garden, which her children, Victoria and Julio, accepted on her behalf.



Honoree Ariel Deckelbaum and his wife Cathy take a fancy photo with the special guest—one of Riverside Park’s goats.



The auction raised a great amount of support for the Conservancy.



Guests arrive to celebrate a year of Working side by Riverside.



# Goatham



The goats felt right at home in Riverside Park.

The New York City nickname Gotham—meaning “goat town” in Old English—was popularized by Washington Irving in 1807. Though originally meant as a put-down, New Yorkers embraced the name. “Goat town” was an apt description of the undeveloped Upper West Side where goats used to roam.

Today, it applies once again.

On Tuesday, May 21, 2019 Riverside Park Conservancy brought a herd of goats to Gotham, to create Goatham—a hard-to-access area in the northern part of the Park, from 119th Street to 123rd Street. The goats, who have all retired from former careers, were from Green Goats farm in Rhinebeck, NY. They took

up a residency for the summer on sloped terrain that is rife with invasive plants. Since goats are naturally effective weed whackers, putting them to work in Goatham was like treating them to an all-you-can-eat buffet. It was healthy for the goats and good for the environment.

## Why Goats?

As part of our Woodland Restoration Initiative, Riverside Park Conservancy spent countless hours of volunteer and staff time over the last 15 years to control invasive species in our Bird Sanctuary. Substantial progress was made from 116th to 119th Streets, and along the West Side Highway north of the 119th Street Tennis Courts.



## Meet the G.O.A.T. of 2019

Vote-the-Goat election results were revealed at the first annual Riverside Park GOAT Award Ceremony on August 1, 2019

Massey was named the official G.O.A.T of Riverside Park. President & CEO Dan Garodnick presented her with an elaborate bouquet of weeds, a trophy, and a medal, as she was met with the flashing of cameras and a roar of applause from the crowd.

Unfortunately, it has been difficult to make progress in areas with steep slopes. Some of the species of plants that have proven most difficult to control are Porcelain Berry, English Ivy, Mugwort, Multiflora Rose and Poison Ivy, among several other species. These plants and vines have dominated two acres of the degraded woodland that we are working to improve.

Riverside Park’s goats were a new herd of full-time professional weeding staff for the summer. They were able to traverse difficult, hard-to-reach places, and gulp down poison ivy without a second thought. This freed up human hands—and significant portions of time—to work on other components of park restoration, and is a sustainable, chemical-free method of removing invasive species from a landscape.



Volunteers and goats worked together to pull invasive vines from the treetops.



Over 1,000 people gathered to greet the goats upon their arrival on May 21.



# Hudson Beach Party



Guests enjoyed a gorgeous summer evening by the riverside.



The event drew in many new young supporters from the neighborhood.

2019 marked the Conservancy’s first-ever Hudson Beach Party on July 25. We were so happy to see that over 250 park lovers came out to party with us at the beach and to support our work in Riverside Park.

# 2019 TCS New York City Marathon



In addition to supporting the Conservancy, Andrew Rigie and the other runners brought a lot of enthusiasm to Marathon day.

The Conservancy formed our first NYC Marathon team in 2019. As a charity partner to the New York Road Runners, our team—Running side by Riverside—raised funds to support the Conservancy’s work. Our five runners Maya Boukai, Ryan Costanzo, Tyler Crump, Kristen Klauda, and Andrew Rigie conquered the spectacular 26.2 mile route through all five boroughs of New York City, and we couldn’t be more proud.



Maya Boukai and the rest of the team were proud to run for Riverside Park.





Over 6,000 Volunteers



# Dedicated Volunteers



Wendy, Dee, and Iva (not pictured) have been taking care of the garden beds at the 104th Staircase entrance for several years, and have become regular fixtures in the Park for those who pass by often.



The ParkTender at 83rd Street Warsaw Ghetto Memorial and Mt. Tom has been taking care of the gardens in the area for decades. The blooming perennials and shrubs delight park goers every spring.

The history of the Conservancy is intrinsically linked to Riverside Park’s volunteers. Since the 1980s, when local grassroots volunteers took on providing an added level of care for their neighborhood Park, Riverside Park Conservancy’s volunteers have been essential to our mission and continue to make Riverside Park a place of beauty, community, and successful environmental stewardship.

Within our expansive and distinctive volunteer program, you will find ParkTenders, who have spent years—sometimes decades—tending to their own specific areas, as if in their own backyard. You will find ParkRovers, who pop up as we have needs for a few extra hands on projects. You will find high school-aged interns who work alongside Gardeners, learning about horticulture and what goes into taking care of an urban park. Each volunteer also acts as a steward of the park through communicating with visitors and locals alike about all the Park has to offer, whether it is to describe a new planting or simply to give directions. The Conservancy provides tools and supplies, offers free training sessions and workshops, and coordinates activities between volunteers and the New York City Parks Department to ensure common goals are met.

2019 VOLUNTEER HOURS			
	Groups	Volunteer	Hours
Community	69	3,040	8,865
Corporate	31	1,394	4,012
School	43	1,215	2,820
GROUPS TOTAL	143	5,649	15,697
ParkTender		194	16,214
User Group		112	7,580
Board of Trustees		26	600
INDIVIDUAL TOTAL		332	24,394
TOTAL		5,981	40,091

In 2019, more than half of our 40,000 volunteer hours was put in collectively by our 306 recurring volunteers, contributing to the upkeep and beautification of Riverside Park. Our ParkTender program enabled over 90 areas in the Park to be completely maintained by volunteers, who work alongside our staff in all four seasons, and are deeply connected and committed to Riverside Park.

During the winter, the Conservancy has an all-volunteer “Snow Corps” emergency response crew. Members of the community join with park operations staff on the day of a storm to help clear entrances and staircases and keep Riverside Park safe and accessible all year round.



# Teen Corps Program

Riverside Park Conservancy runs the Teen Corps Horticulture Internship Program each summer, which provides an experiential learning program for local teenagers from West Harlem interested in horticulture and urban ecology. Teen Corps members work closely with our Gardeners in our natural areas, taking care to maintain key horticultural sites, care for plantings, and keep the Park safe, clean, and healthy. This program provides a stipend and invaluable experience with hands-on stewardship of public parkland.

Our Teen Corps in 2019 featured 14 teens, ten of whom were from neighboring areas of West Harlem. Teen Corps interns worked in our natural areas between 108th Street and 125th Street each Tuesday and Thursday, removing invasive plants, implementing erosion control measures, and learning to identify native plants.

With funding from the West Harlem Development Corps, the Conservancy wrote a curriculum that provides stability to our program, and enables us to bring the park experience into schools.



The group grew closer to the park—and to each other—over the course of the program.



The interns had fun pulling invasive plants, and discovering insects, at the Pollinator Meadow.



Teen Corps interns learned about the ecology of the woodland as they performed trail maintenance and removed invasive plants.



# Group Volunteers and Projects



Corporate groups, schools, and community organizations participate in large-scale projects like coastal cleanups, trash pickup, plantings, and invasive weed removal.

Volunteering is a great way for groups of all ages and types to team-build while improving the Park. We host corporate, community, and school groups in a variety of park projects, selected based on the Park’s greatest needs and led by our dedicated and knowledgeable horticulture staff. Groups ranging in size from 10-50 volunteers can be found any day of the week, and we regularly work with larger groups (100+) throughout the year. Whether a one-time project or part of a larger on-going commitment, group volunteers have a major impact on our large-scale, long-term park projects.

Projects are tailored to meet each group’s interests and capabilities, and activities depend on the time of year and current Park priorities. In addition to these specific group projects, the Conservancy hosts community-wide volunteer events every month.



Every spring, families participate in a park-wide volunteer event called *Sandsational!* to refresh sandboxes at every playground.



Volunteers kick off the year in January at Mulchfest, helping to “tree-cycle” Christmas trees from the neighborhood into mulch to be used in gardens throughout Riverside Park and tree pits along Riverside Drive.



Volunteers contribute an enormous amount to park stewardship every year.



# User Groups



Joan of Arc Statue Committee volunteers were interviewed by NY1 about their work taking care of the Island.



In 2019 the Dog Run 142 User Group successfully engaged the community and advocated for the City to allocate funding for capital renovations to the run’s surface, gate, entrance, and water source.

Riverside Park Conservancy works side by side with volunteer-led “User Groups” that focus fundraising and maintenance efforts in a particular area of the Park. In 2019 our Dog Run user groups collaborated to form Riverside D.O.G. (Dog Owner’s Group) to begin fundraising for a full time employee who can deliver quality maintenance to Riverside Park’s 5 Dog Runs.

The Dog Run 142 User Group also celebrated the success of its dedicated advocacy when the City fully allocated the necessary funds toward major renovations to what has been a temporary run at 142nd Street.



The Hippo Playground Project, a volunteer User Group, raises money all year to support the Park’s playgrounds and hosts an annual Halloween Parade for families in the neighborhood, where hundreds gather to enjoy sweet treats and a live children’s band.



The Soldiers’ and Sailor’s Monument, a NYC Landmark, has a dedicated group of volunteers who raise money for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony.





**In Memoriam**



# In Memoriam



## Jenny Benitez (1933 – 2019)

Jenny Benitez, a giant in our community, who planted some of the original seeds of Riverside Park’s restoration several decades ago, passed away on November 13, 2019 at home, surrounded by her family, at the age of 86.

The Board of Trustees, staff, and volunteers of Riverside Park Conservancy, as well as the staff of the Parks Department, are deeply saddened by this loss.

Jenny’s legacy began more than 35 years ago, when she took aim at an abandoned, derelict lot, which is now recognized as Riverside Valley

Community Garden (“Jenny’s Garden”) at 138th Street. This space was severely neglected for years and was littered with trash, abandoned cars, and home to dangerous activity.

In a decades-long, never-ending process of stewarding this one acre area of Riverside Park, Jenny, alongside her husband Victor, her children, and her neighbors, created a multi-generational, multi-cultural community of urban gardeners in West Harlem. In partnership with Riverside Park Conservancy and the New York City Parks Department, Jenny engaged the neighborhood, fed the hungry, and blessed the city with a horticultural oasis that grew across a half mile of landscape along Riverside Drive.

She will be missed by all, but her legacy will live on in the Garden, in Riverside Park, and beyond. Riverside Park Conservancy is committed to the continued success of Jenny’s Garden. With the generous support of our donors, we hope to ensure that the results of Jenny’s life’s work thrives for generations to come.

## Harold Levy (1952 – 2018)

Harold Levy served on our Board of Trustees in the early stages of the Conservancy. He brought his deep corporate experience to the Conservancy and helped bring us to a new level of professionalism. We appreciate his contributions—he will be deeply missed by the Riverside Park community as well as New York City as a whole.

## Milton Norman (1925 – 2019)

Milton Norman took over as Chair of the Riverside Park Fund when the organization was much like an exuberant teenager—passionate but not sure what direction we should be going. Milton moved the organization forward on the path to maturity and with consistent vision. The Conservancy is thankful for his leadership, guidance and enthusiasm. In 2006, he told *The New York Times* about Riverside Park Conservancy “Our pride and joy is our volunteer force”, and that still holds true today.

## Michael O’Neal (1936 – 2018)

Michael O’Neal was one of the Conservancy’s founding Board members, and served on the Board of Trustees for over 20 years. Michael was truly “Mr. West Side.” His civic commitment knew no equal, and along with helping to found Riverside Park Conservancy, he also founded many other organizations, and managed many restaurants that are essential to the neighborhood. He alone could have had the vision to turn the desolate Rotunda into one of the West Side’s favorite destinations and a treasured institution—The Boat Basin Cafe. He will be dearly missed by our Board, our staff, the neighborhood and New York City.







# Financials



# RIVERSIDE PARK CONSERVANCY, INC. AND AFFILIATE

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

### Assets

	<u>December 31</u>	
	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$3,532,375	\$2,875,491
Contributions receivable	735,021	21,600
Prepaid expenses	13,459	7,212
Total current assets	<u>4,280,855</u>	<u>2,904,303</u>
<b>Investments, at fair value</b>	<u>1,228,112</u>	<u>1,280,766</u>
<b>Property and equipment, at cost</b>		
Furniture and equipment	58,818	96,743
Leasehold improvements	<u>20,350</u>	<u>20,350</u>
Sub-total	79,168	117,093
Less: accumulated depreciation and amortization	<u>59,140</u>	<u>53,636</u>
Net property and equipment	<u>20,028</u>	<u>63,457</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<u><b>\$5,528,995</b></u>	<u><b>\$4,248,526</b></u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 581,163	\$ 587,291
Deferred RPC - South maintenance fees	<u>230,187</u>	<u>254,684</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>811,350</u>	<u>841,975</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	900,944	1,364,300
With donor restrictions	<u>3,816,701</u>	<u>2,042,251</u>
Total net assets	<u>4,717,645</u>	<u>3,406,551</u>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<u><b>\$5,528,995</b></u>	<u><b>\$4,248,526</b></u>

# RIVERSIDE PARK CONSERVANCY, INC. AND AFFILIATE

## Consolidated Statement of Activities Year Ended December 31, 2018 (with summarized comparative information for 2017)

	<u>2018</u>			<u>2017</u>
	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Public support and revenue</b>				
Contributions	\$ 1,259,981	\$ 2,594,790	\$ 3,854,771	\$ 1,400,903
Special events proceeds (net of direct expenses of \$123,992 for 2018 and \$266,856 for 2017)	601,909	-	601,909	391,581
Interest and dividends	3,964	24,347	28,311	25,296
RCTA fees	344,870	-	344,870	385,882
Sports camp fees	778,381	-	778,381	793,345
RPC-South maintenance fees	1,328,328	-	1,328,328	1,570,796
Other	233,741	-	233,741	255,164
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>775,920</u>	<u>(775,920)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total public support and revenue	<u>5,327,094</u>	<u>1,843,217</u>	<u>7,170,311</u>	<u>4,822,967</u>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program services				
Field operations and volunteers	2,982,403	-	2,982,403	2,499,321
Public programs and events	1,568,493	-	1,568,493	1,498,312
Design and construction	<u>361,193</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>361,193</u>	<u>213,865</u>
Total program services	<u>4,912,089</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,912,089</u>	<u>4,211,498</u>
Supporting activities				
Management and general	408,366	-	408,366	570,508
Fundraising	<u>469,995</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>469,995</u>	<u>541,531</u>
Total supporting activities	<u>878,361</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>878,361</u>	<u>1,112,039</u>
Total expenses	<u>5,790,450</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,790,450</u>	<u>5,323,537</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets from operating activities	(463,356)	1,843,217	1,379,861	(500,570)
Non-operating activities				
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	-	(68,767)	(68,767)	110,826
<b>Increase (decrease) in net assets</b>	<b>(463,356)</b>	<b>1,774,450</b>	<b>1,311,094</b>	<b>(389,744)</b>
<b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>	<u><b>1,364,300</b></u>	<u><b>2,042,251</b></u>	<u><b>3,406,551</b></u>	<u><b>3,796,295</b></u>
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<u><b>\$ 900,944</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 3,816,701</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 4,717,645</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 3,406,551</b></u>

See notes to consolidated financial statements.





## Riverside Park Champions



# Board of Trustees

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as of December 31, 2019

# Advisory Board

Riverside Park Conservancy’s Advisory Board is a dedicated group of professionals whose mission it is to help us expand our reach in the community through advocacy, events and social media. The Advisory Board joins Conservancy staff for periodic meetings to hear what is happening and offer guidance and feedback as engaged neighbors. In the summer of 2019, our Advisory Board hosted the first very successful Hudson Beach Party at Ellington in the Park.

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# Mission Statement

The mission of the Riverside Park Conservancy is to restore, maintain, and improve Riverside Park in partnership with the City of New York for the enjoyment and benefit of all New Yorkers. We support the preservation of the Park’s historic landscape, structures, and monuments, engage the community in active stewardship of the Park, and provide a wide range of public programs.

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