



THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT (NYRP) carries out founder Bette Midler's dream of a cleaner, more beautiful New York. NYRP restores, develops, and revitalizes underserved parks, community gardens, and open space in New York City.

GOODdirt

NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT NEWSLETTER FALL/WINTER 2005

DEAR FRIENDS,

To restore is human, to maintain divine. And believe me, I know a little something about maintenance!

In this auspicious year—NYRP's 10th anniversary, as well as my own 60th birthday—I am keenly aware that the health and vibrancy of our city's green open spaces is not measured in one-time snapshots but over the long term. Perhaps the biggest challenge to building on the New York Restoration Project's successes is to maintain the gains we have steadily achieved.

Maintenance is my new mantra. Restoring parks and community gardens means giving them back to their communities as assets, not eyesores. We're accountable to the communities in which we work, and we work to ensure that residents become accountable for helping keep their open spaces beautiful.

An example of how this pays off: Three years ago, we worked with the BBC's hit television series *Ground Force* to restore our community garden on Suffolk Street, an underutilized plot not far from Ground Zero. As this neighborhood space was given a beautiful, new lease on life, it inspired tangible change in the surrounding community. Garbage cans were moved off the sidewalk. Landlords fixed up their properties. A restaurant moved in and refurbished the building façade, and a nearby playground was resurfaced and is now regularly full of laughing, playing kids.

These kinds of neighborhood transformations are occurring around a number of our community gardens—Greene Acres and Jane Bailey Memorial Garden in Bedford-Stuyvesant, for example—and all reflect a local, enterprising spirit revived by nature's beauty. Neighborhood partnerships and involvement are critical to maintaining community gardens. The same is true for NYRP's park sites, where ongoing partnerships with the city, state, and local community keep these open spaces clean, green, and active. We appreciate your contributions to NYRP, which help us not only to reclaim but also to MAINTAIN!



Bette Midler
Founder



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GOOD DIRT

JOHN EWING, *Writer/Editor*
MARK MULLIN, *Art Director*

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Nicole Ruzano

Now that I've been at NYRP for a few months, I admire even more the amazing work done by Bette Midler, the NYRP field crew, staff, and Board over the past decade. And I am delighted by the loyal and generous support of NYRP's donors—people who share with us the conviction that everyone deserves a green oasis.

I hope that many of you have had the chance to see some of the oases that now pepper low-income neighborhoods in New York City. Like the spectacularly beautiful and peaceful Swindler Cove Park—a brand new city park on the Harlem River. On my first visit, the salt marsh and beach made me feel as though I was a thousand miles from midtown Manhattan. I also got to help neighborhood kids pick the tomatoes, peppers, basil, and chives they grew—and then watched them actually eat their homegrown salad. As one little boy said, "it tastes good out here."

What a joy for the families of Washington Heights to have this gorgeous waterfront retreat! And it's there for the rest of New York to enjoy, as well. Swindler Cove Park is just one of the gems that wouldn't exist without the New York Restoration Project. We've shown that, with generous private support, it's possible to restore abused and underused parks and community gardens to a healthy, beautiful, and more functional state.

Now, we have to keep these green spaces clean and fully used and enjoyed. Our decade of experience has taught us that "upkeep" is a broad term that must include engaging communities in the active use and sustained health of parks. And this requires increased neighborhood outreach and programming as much as actual park cleanup and restoration. We're drawing on our experience in successfully fostering a sense of "ownership" among the neighborhood folks who live around our sixty community gardens. And we'll work with some great partners, like the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, the City Parks Foundation, New Yorkers for Parks and other city, state, and local groups. For example, we're collaborating with the City of New York Department of City Planning to clean up the southern end of Sherman Creek and build a trail to Swindler Cove Park. Neighborhood volunteers are actually doing much of the work, which will help bond them to the land and give them a stake in keeping this new parkland clean and safe.

Our next 10 years will build on the critical niche we occupy—preserving and maintaining open space in New York City's low-income communities. And you're a part of that. Please spread the word to your friends and colleagues about what we're doing—we all have a stake in making all of New York City cleaner, greener, and healthier.

Julia Erickson
NYRP Executive Director

ON THE COVER: Kids in the Bronx enjoy "Creston Jungle," our community garden on Creston Avenue that features a colorful playscape constructed with KaBOOM! Beatrice Rogers, a "Creston Jungle" community gardener, was named a national finalist for the Scotts Urban Greenup Gardener of the Year Award in 2004. *Photo by Stephen Paredes*

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!
NYRP is proud to be a member of



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT SITES

- PARKS
- COMMUNITY GARDENS
- MAJOR PROJECTS



- 1 FORT TRYON PARK**
NEW LEAF CAFÉ
ANNE LOFTUS PLAYGROUND
- 2 SWINDLER COVE PARK**
RILEY-LEVIN CHILDREN'S GARDEN
PETER JAY SHARP BOATHOUSE
- 3 FORT WASHINGTON PARK**
- 4 HIGHBRIDGE PARK**
- 5 ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK**
- 6 BRIDGE PARK**

BETTE MIDLER FOUNDED the non-profit New York Restoration Project (NYRP) in 1995 to carry out her dream of a cleaner, more beautiful New York. NYRP reclaims, restores, and develops under-resourced parks, community gardens, and open space throughout New York City, primarily in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. NYRP invests in the communities it serves by providing ongoing maintenance and environmental education and recreational programs.

NYRP MAJOR PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Swindler Cove Park
- Riley-Levin Children's Garden
- Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse
- Fort Tryon Park / New Leaf Café
- Highbridge Park
- Roberto Clemente State Park
- Bridge Park
- 24 community gardens in Brooklyn
- 18 community gardens in the Bronx
- 17 community gardens in Manhattan
- 4 community gardens in Queens
- 1 community garden in Staten Island
- Environmental Education and Recreational Programs

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO MAJOR PARK SITES

- 1 FORT TRYON PARK & NEW LEAF CAFÉ:** Take M4 bus to last stop (Fort Tryon Park–The Cloisters), or take A train to 190th Street.
- 2 SWINDLER COVE & HIGHBRIDGE PARKS:** take 1 train to Dyckman Street, turn right on Dyckman and walk 1/5 mile to intersection of 10th Ave. and Harlem River Drive. Continue south on Harlem River Drive—Swindler Cove Park is on your left and lower Highbridge Park is on your right. For upper Highbridge Park, take M101 bus along St. Nicholas Ave. and exit around 189th Street.
- 4 FORT WASHINGTON PARK:** Take 1, 9, or C train to 168th Street or M4 bus to 165th Street; walk west on 165th to park.
- 5 6 ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK AND BRIDGE PARK:** In the Bronx, take Bx40 or Bx42 bus.

Go to www.mta.info for subway and bus maps.



EPF GRANT FOR SHERMAN CREEK RESTORATION AND PEDESTRIAN

This fall and winter, NYRP is creating a pedestrian trail connecting Sherman Creek—a natural cove on the Harlem River—to Swindler Cove Park, the new park NYRP helped create on an illegal dumping ground immediately to the south. It's part of our work to improve public access to the Harlem River in northern Manhattan.

The project is a cooperative venture with the City of New York Department of City Planning. Together, we were awarded a \$300,000 joint grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) as part of a comprehensive Local Waterfront Revitalization Program spearheaded by the New York State Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources. The Sherman Creek trail is a new link in the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway and part of a long-term visioning effort for the neighborhood prepared with community groups and the City of New York Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

"The City is eager to partner with NYRP to initiate the first phase of the Sherman Creek inlet restoration," says Jennifer Hoppa, Deputy Director of Planning, City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation. "In collaboration with the Parks Department's Natural Resources Group, NYRP's work will contribute to a restored wetland that will dramatically improve environmental conditions and quality of life

for the entire Sherman Creek community."

Sherman Creek, a tidal estuarine habitat for fiddler crab, herons, and other species, was historically used for shipping and industry in the 19th century. But for decades, this scenic inlet off the Harlem River has been cut off from the community, especially its immediate neighbors, P.S. 5 and Dyckman Houses, a seven-tower public-housing project with over 2,500 residents. Chain-link fencing bars entrance to a long-

"The Sherman Creek restoration is going to be as challenging as Bridge Park was in its initial stage, but will also be as successful in its final stage"

neglected jungle, where invasive trees, vines, brambles, and garbage choke the banks of Sherman Creek

NYRP's effort to reclaim this forgotten waterfront is being led by Greg Kramer, our Director of Horticulture, and Chris Drury, Director of Field Operations. Working on the southern end of the Creek, the team began in September by removing invasive vines, stumps, and trees throughout the pathway area that follows the natural shore-

line behind P.S. 5 along Marginal Street. Next, the crew will prune the mature trees and later chip and recycle the branches to be used as pathway material. Not only is this cost effective and environmentally friendly, it also helps prevent infestations of the destructive Asian Longhorned Beetle, which can arrive with chipped trees from outside areas. "The Sherman Creek restoration is going to be as challenging as Bridge Park was in its initial stage, but will also be as successful in its final stage" says Kramer.

Community work days are scheduled for local and corporate volunteers to help NYRP crews remove low-lying invasive plants from the trail area. Then we'll put down coir logs and jute matting to control erosion. In the spring, more community work days will allow residents to help construct the trail, including leveling and grading the pathway by hand and laying wood chips over the surface. Lastly, native trees, shrubs, and smaller herbaceous plants—such as willow oak, dogwood, winged sumac, New York ironweed, and black-eyed Susan—will be planted along the new trail. The Parks Department's Natural Resources Group is providing technical assistance throughout the project, which is scheduled to be completed by spring 2007.

The rest of Sherman Creek is no longer being neglected, either. The northern portion of the proposed Sherman Creek Waterfront Esplanade is located along the Academy Street corridor, which abuts Sherman Creek but lacks any access to the waterfront. This area is to be developed by the City of New York Department of City Planning and Audubon Partnership for Economic Development and will include a new paved walkway, recreational facilities, seating, lighting, and interpretive materials that present the unique history of Sherman Creek and the Harlem River.

For more information about Sherman Creek and the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, visit www.shermancreek.org and www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/pub/wf.shtml

FEATURED EYESORE – HIGHBRIDGE PARK

AS THIS OVERFLOWING TRASHCAN TESTIFIES, MAINTAINING CLEAN AND HEALTHY CITY PARKS IS AN ONGOING CHALLENGE...CHECK OUR NEXT ISSUE OF GOOD DIRT FOR AN UPDATE!



Mia Erickson



John Ewing

MARINO PUNTIEL: AMERICORPS MEMBER

"Marino is hardworking and personable," says Chris Drury, NYRP's Director of Field Operations. "He'll do anything that's asked of him, which is very commendable for a volunteer in this line of work. His lighthearted personality plays an important role on the field crew."

Puntiel's family emigrated from the Dominican Republic to the Bronx, where he grew up. Leaving school at an early age, the 28-year-old Puntiel worked at a shipping company and a picture frame manufacturer before applying for the AmeriCorps program. He was recommended by his younger brother, Sammy, who also participated in the AmeriCorps program as an NYRP community garden crew member. Puntiel's experience working with plants and animals on the family farm in the

Dominican Republic helped him to secure the position.

"I like taking care of the parks and gardens. It helps the air, the kids, and the animals...it's good for the community," says Puntiel. "I've learned a lot of plant names—Japanese honeysuckle, mugwort—and which plants are good and which need to be taken out."

Puntiel plans to return to school to study electronics once he has completed his AmeriCorps commitment. The program offers a living stipend (a portion of which is provided by NYRP), health insurance, and a \$4,725 education award to volunteers who commit to a full, eleven-month term of community service. *For more information about the program, visit www.americorps.org.*

With his wide smile and winning attitude, AmeriCorps member Marino Puntiel has been a valuable part of the NYRP parks field crew for the past eleven months. Participating in daily litter patrol, planting, and native forest restoration projects, Puntiel has distinguished himself as a dedicated team member—always early to work and a friendly presence among park visitors.



Chris Drury

**FIRE IN HIGHBRIDGE PARK!
NYRP TO THE RESCUE**

When former NYRP AmeriCorps member Karen Caban looked out her apartment window in the South Bronx on September 27 and saw flames in Highbridge Park across the Harlem River, she knew who to call—Chris Drury, NYRP Director of Field Operations. Luckily, an NYRP field crew with a watering truck was nearby in the park and rushed to the scene to douse the burning cherry tree and surrounding forest floor. By the time the Fire Department arrived, NYRP had extinguished the fire. This act of vandalism could have been much worse given New York City's unusually dry September—thank you, Chris and crew, for saving the day!

MEET JULIA ERICKSON NYRP'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Julia Erickson, NYRP Executive Director, and Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation at NYRP's 2005 Spring Picnic.

If you see me on the street, and I don't say hello," says Julia Erickson, "that's because it's not me, it's my twin sister!" This is an important point for NYRP's new Executive Director, whose dynamic, gregarious personality is a major key to her leadership success. Though both sisters now live in New Jersey, Julia Erickson's long history of public service is firmly rooted in New York and the health of the city.

In the 1980s, Erickson raised funds to "green the South Bronx" at the Bronx Frontier Development Corporation and helped direct programs that empowered low-income communities while at the Community Service Society of New York. As an Associate Commissioner in the New York City Department of Employment in the early 1990s, she led initiatives to link public workforce development efforts with private sector employers and administered \$60 million for job training. Erickson is best known for her eleven years at City Harvest, where as Executive Director she quintupled the annual operating budget and increased the amount of food rescued and delivered from 4 million to 20 million pounds annually.

Erickson has a fitting analogy for her career, stated recently on a panel at her 25th Smith College reunion. "I said, sort of jokingly, that in job training, I taught people how to fish. At City Harvest, we gave

people fish and helped them learn to cook it. Now, at NYRP, the job is even more fundamental—improving land, air, and water quality by restoring open space. Making the environment healthy and vibrant for people, plants, animals and, yes, fish."

Nonprofits are the Erickson "family business." Julia's father, John, is a Lutheran minister and former General Secretary of

"If you have a clean, beautiful open space to reflect and daydream, you can start imagining all kinds of possibilities for your life."


the American Bible Society and the Reading, England-based United Bible Societies. "I was raised in an environment of service and giving, appreciating the gifts I'd been given," says Erickson. "I've always felt an obligation to help the world become a better place—I had that example in my father."

After a missionary stint in Japan, the Ericksons settled outside Minneapolis. As a kid, Julia explored the Minnesota woods, developing a passion for nature that had

been seeded in the magnificent public parks of Tokyo. That passion continued when she moved to New York. "I consulted for the Central Park Conservancy and explored every inch of Central Park," says Erickson. "I learned all sorts of fun facts that helped me raise money for the Central Park restoration, but I also learned how important parks and open spaces are for people to find their souls, to get back in touch with themselves after the jangle of city life."

Living in Greenwich Village for 23 years, Erickson closely followed the early efforts to develop green, open space in New York, from Battery Park City and the "green street" parks downtown to the development of Hudson River Park. "If you have a clean, beautiful open space to reflect and daydream, you can start imagining all kinds of possibilities for your life. That's so important for kids!" she notes. Along with park restoration, Erickson is eager to explore the ways neighborhood gardens can address critical needs of underserved communities, including access to fresh produce, education and cultural programs, and small-business development.

"I'm a big believer in collaboration, which is the history of NYRP. It's essential to partner with those who have resources, expertise, capacity, and the desire to share. When you have a serious urban problem, it's important to create as many different vehicles as possible for people to participate in finding the solution—you bring people together around the same goal," says Erickson.

Making New York a better place to live and work for everyone is a theme that runs through Erickson's career in nonprofit leadership. She received the James Beard Foundation's "Humanitarian of the Year" award in 2003, and was one of *Women's Day Magazine's* "Women Who Inspire Us" in 2002. But don't tell her no! "You can tell me 'not yet'; that just means the time hasn't come. But I prefer 'how can we?' If the goal's worthwhile, it's critical to look at a system and not accept it for what it is, to work beyond it. Always look outside the box." 

IN THE PARKS:

FRESH & DIRECT!

For neighborhood members of the Washington Heights CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), Tuesday is pickup day behind NYRP's New Leaf Café in Fort Tryon Park for fresh produce, pastured meats and yogurt. The one-hundred-person cooperative has a mutually beneficial partnership with Little Seed Gardens, a 56-acre family farm in Chatham, NY. Before the growing season begins, co-op members buy "shares" in the farm's harvest and from June to October receive weekly shipments of certified organic food raised in nearby Columbia County.

For providing a meeting site, parking, and storage, New Leaf Café is given the undistributed portion of the Tuesday harvest, adding to its seasonal menu such delicacies as broccoli raab, sweet nantes carrots, heirloom tomatoes, and winter squash. "Enabling farmers to grow quality organic produce is very important to me as a chef, and I also love experimenting with the CSA produce," says New Leaf Café chef, James Bellicchi.

"We get foods like Swiss chard, which I wouldn't buy on my own. The variety of produce gives us a much more varied and healthy diet," says CSA core member Alex Brown, who helped organize the three-year-old group with four other neighbor-

hood moms. Now, it's a fun way for neighbors to meet and socialize. Distribution days at New Leaf Café are lively gatherings of members, spouses, and children, who also learn about seasonal vegetables.

"We have a full, twenty-two week season...from pea shoots to pumpkins," says core member David Sklar. Other members note the environmental benefits of low-impact agriculture and the popular "farm parties," when members visit Little Seed owners Claudia Kenny and Willy Denner and see where their food comes from.

The thirty-six CSAs of New York City are a lifeline to small, family farms. The co-op "share" structure allows local farmers to raise interest-free operating capital. In return, members receive seven to ten types of vegetables each week (enough to feed a family of three) and at least forty different types of vegetables throughout the season. The New York CSA movement was started in 1994 by Just Food, an all-volunteer organization advocating more wholesome solutions to food, hunger, and agriculture issues.

For more information about Just Food and CSA cooperatives in New York City, visit www.justfood.org and www.littleseed.org.



Brian Dolben

MARIA RODALE JOINS NYRP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees of the New York Restoration Project is delighted to welcome new member Maria Rodale. "I am thrilled and honored to join the Board of NYRP, since they have already accomplished such amazing transformations, from barren to beautiful, in New York. I look forward to helping them continue to transform our world into a better place," says Ms. Rodale, Vice Chairman of Rodale Inc., the world's leading publisher of information on healthy, active lifestyles. A major supporter of NYRP, Rodale Inc. has funded the endowment and restoration of NYRP's Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden in East Harlem.

Joining the family business in 1987, Ms. Rodale helped to build an international multimedia company from the small publishing business founded in 1930 by her late grandfather J. I. Rodale (who coined the term "organic" as we now use it). Today, Rodale Inc. reaches tens of millions worldwide through its magazines *Prevention*, *Men's Health*, *Organic Gardening*, and other titles. Rodale Inc. also publishes books on health, fitness, gardening, environmental issues, and home arts, among other categories.

Ms. Rodale is herself author of four books: *It's My Pleasure*, co-written with her daughter, Maya Rodale (The Free Press), and *Maria Rodale's Organic Gardening* (see Bette's Book Corner, pg. 12), *Maria Rodale's Organic Gardening Companion*, and *Betty's Book of Laundry Secrets*, all published by Rodale Inc. She has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, ABC's *Good Morning America*, CBS's *The Early Show*, *CNNfn*, and NPR's *All Things Considered*. In 1998, Ms. Rodale served as director of strategy, leading the company to refocus its publishing efforts on health and fitness. Prior to her current role as Vice Chairman, Ms. Rodale was editor of *Organic Gardening* and the founding editor of *Organic Style* magazine.

"...it's a fun way for neighbors to meet and socialize."



IN THE GARDENS:

SPRING PICNIC & COMMUNITY GARDEN OPENINGS



Left to right: John Loring, Design Director for Tiffany & Co.; Robert DeNiro; Glenn Close; Bette Midler; Frank Pellegrino, owner of Rao's Restaurant; Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation.

The New York Restoration Project celebrated the opening of the Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden and The Family Garden sponsored by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation on Tuesday, June 14, at our Fourth Annual Spring Picnic in East Harlem. Guests enjoyed cocktails in the beautifully restored gardens, followed by a seated dinner and salsa music under a tent in nearby Thomas Jefferson Park. Honorary Co-Chairs Glenn Close and Robert DeNiro joined Co-Chairs Fernanda Kellogg, Frank Pellegrino, and Ardath and Maria Rodale, to celebrate these magnificent renovations. The event raised over \$528,000 to benefit NYRP's work to restore underserved parks and community gardens.

NYSCA FUNDS DESIGN FOR LIVONIA AVENUE IN BROOKLYN



Architect Lee Weintraub's master design plan for Livonia Avenue.

At the invitation of the City of New York Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), NYRP designed street improvements for an area of underutilized land along a seven-block stretch of Livonia Avenue in Brooklyn. Funded by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Architecture Planning & Design division, this design project could assist in the beautification and revival of one of East New York's most economically disadvantaged and open-space deprived neighborhoods.

Because community participation is

critical to the success of this project, HPD held a series of neighborhood forums and workshops to develop a unified approach, with guidance from a task force of community leaders including East Brooklyn Congregations, New Lots Nehemiah Homeowners Association, Community Board 5, the Police Athletic League, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). Based on the ideas and guidelines formulated in these meetings, NYRP—in collaboration with acclaimed landscape architect Lee Weintraub and students from the City College Architecture Center (CCAC)—has

reimagined this barren "Avenue of Iron," so named for the elevated L subway line that runs along Livonia Avenue.

NYRP's master design plan includes streetscape enhancements, such as trees, perennial plantings, lighting, and signage. The plan also features environmentally sensitive bio-swale landscaping to intercept, cleanse, and dissipate storm-water runoff away from the city sewer system. All of these open-space improvements are intended to enhance community cohesion and attract renewed commercial development to the area. 🌿

DIVINE INTERVENTION AT BRIDGE PLAZA



Before



In Progress

On a busy corner at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge in Brooklyn, across from a building that houses four high schools, sits the Bridge Plaza Community Garden. For twenty years, the 2,500 sq. foot flower garden has provided a passive recreation space for the surrounding neighborhood, but more recently has suffered from neglect. Enter a group of angels from the Parsons School of Design. Last fall, Parsons instructors approached NYRP to collaborate, and soon third-year undergraduate students in the Integrated Design program were able to sign up for “WORKstudio: Community Garden.” The course features a practice-based DesignBuild format, where students work as a team to design and construct a sustainable community garden.

“This was something we had never done before,” says Brian Sahd, NYRP’s Vice President of Community Development. “It was definitely a big deal to turn the design and construction of one of our community gardens over to a group of students.” The class was presented with several locations to choose from and made a tour of the sites. The Bridge Plaza Community Garden was chosen for its layout and easy access from Parsons/The New School campus in downtown Manhattan.

Over the school term, the students met with community gardeners and NYRP to discuss ideas and requirements for the project. Everyone had strong opinions, and all major decisions required consensus between all three entities. But by summer the students and their instructor, architect Steve Hoffman, were deep into implementing their design plan, working alongside the community gardeners, the Bridge Plaza Association, and the NYRP crew. “It was a

“It was a
win-win situation
from every side”

win-win situation from every side,” says Parsons student Ryan Milk. “The project gave us a chance to get beyond the abstract and work outside the walls of the school, and the garden got a great design.” Neighborhood gardener Juan Salazar agrees: “The garden has changed looks many times over the years, but the latest is definitely the best. It was great to have an open dialogue about the design and then implement it.”

Timber and stone salvaged from a nearby construction site were wheelbar-

rowed to the garden and used to create a pergola and retaining wall. The garden also now features a rainwater collection system, a garden shed, a 7-x-23 foot pond and irrigation system operated by a solar-powered pump, and new planting beds inside and outside the garden. The students received a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to defray some of the material costs. NYRP added a new sidewalk, garden fencing, and plantings, and will conduct community outreach, thanks to a generous grant from the Rochlis Family Foundation. As Susan Rochlis notes, “We’re a small foundation and want whatever grants we give to make a tangible impact. This is the second year we’ve worked with NYRP because we can, in some small way, actually participate in the life of the community gardens.”

“Because of this collaborative process, this garden will become one of our most active,” says Sahd. “What we relinquished in terms of controlling the design and construction process, we gained in community involvement—the neighborhood loved working with the students and is now so well-organized, they’ve even begun to do some of their own fundraising. This project developed an entirely new model for restoring community garden spaces.”

GARDENERS OPEN VEGETABLE MARKET

Photos by John Ewing



Gardeners at NYRP's Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden are turning their efforts into cash with a farmer's market on alternate Saturdays through the early fall. When the garden's yield exceeds consumption, these enterprising women—most of them immigrants from Mexico—bundle and sell their crops of epazote and papalo, a delicious, leafy herb with a pepper/citrus flavor (grown from prized seeds from Mexico at the East 114th Street garden). These items are supplemented with onions, jalapeno peppers, and other produce when available. This fall, the gardeners planted two large beds of cempazuchiles (Mexican marigolds, a natural pesticide) to be harvested in time for los Dias de los Muertos (Nov. 1 & 2), the annual Mexican holiday to remember loved ones who have passed away. Garden members post fliers in the surrounding East Harlem neighborhood to advertise the market, which has increased an awareness of and traffic to this lovely neighborhood green space. Garden visitors will also see a tile mosaic designed and constructed by neighborhood children. Market days are also an occasion for gardeners to gather, socialize, and cook out.



SUSAN SARANDON AND FRIENDS PLANT AN APPLE TREE



NYRP NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

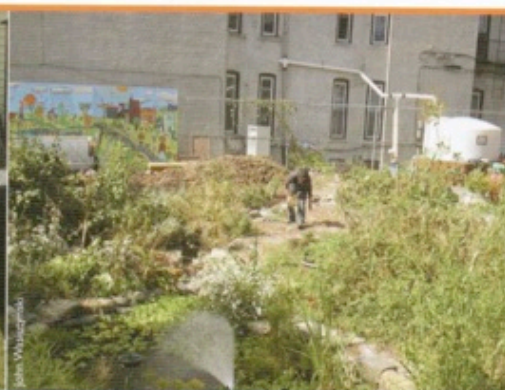
In addition to trees, garden benches, pergolas, and boats constructed by students in our Boatbuilding Program, NYRP also offers naming opportunities at the Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse, Swindler Cove Park, adopt-a-garden opportunities in our community gardens and endowed positions in our environmental education program.

For more information on giving and naming opportunities at NYRP, visit our website www.nyrp.org, or contact Susan Madden, Director of Development, at (212) 333-2552, or smadden@nyrp.org.

In May 2004, Oscar-winner (and NYRP supporter) Susan Sarandon and the rest of the cast and crew of the newly released John Turturro film *Romance and Cigarettes* made a gift of a flowering apple tree, which was planted in NYRP's La Casita Garden on 119th Street in East Harlem. Thank you Susan and friends for this lovely gesture.



RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS



Left to right: Rainwater collection workshops at Claremont Homeowners Civic Improvement Association (Bronx), Greene Acres Community Garden (Brooklyn), Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden (Manhattan)

NYRP is part of the Water Resources Group (WRG), a citywide coalition of environmental organizations that installs rainwater collection systems throughout the city. We have installed such systems in six of our community gardens. Using a system of PVC pipes, rainwater is carried from nearby rooftops to collection tanks and cisterns, which can hold up to 1,100 gallons of water. During heavy rainstorms, these tanks fill quickly—in Greene Acres Community Garden in Brooklyn, this extra water is carried through underground pipes into a dry stream bed, which feeds a garden pond, home to wetland plants, fish and frogs.

In all of our gardens, rainwater harvesting systems highlight a variety of land-use issues. As John Wasiutynski, NYRP's Brooklyn District Garden Manager, notes, "Water directed into the garden from rooftops means less water going into the combined sewer system. What we capture in tanks is water that we don't have to take from the city system and provides us with insurance in times of drought. Overall, community gardens serve as excellent spaces to educate the public about water and its connection to people and the land." For more information about Water Resources Group (WRG) visit: <http://www.greenguerrillas.org/press-item.asp?id=87>

PETER JAY SHARP HEAD OF THE HARLEM REGATTA



Amy T. Gavaris

On September 24, the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation and New York Rowing Association (NYRA) hosted the 1st Annual Head of the Harlem Regatta at NYRP's Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse, the first "head race" on the Harlem River in almost half a century. Crews from over twenty high schools, colleges, and rowing clubs participated, including the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Sarah Lawrence College, and the World-Champion Penn Athletic Club Rowing Association.

Featuring sweep (one oar per rower) and scull (two oars per rower) races, the regatta included men's and women's singles, doubles, quads, and mixed events in all classes. In true "head race" fashion, rowers competed against the clock instead of each other, with staggered starts and timed finishes managed with laser technology by Ronin Racing. The Peter Jay Sharp Rowing Club placed 1st in the Women's Open

4X and Mixed 2X and 2nd in the Men's Open 2X and the Women's Junior 2X.

All 40-plus races occurred over a 2.4 mile course between Yankee Stadium and the University Heights Bridge, along the historic Harlem River Speedway. In the 19th century, this scenic location was a popular spot for competitive and leisure boating—such activities were mostly abandoned in more recent decades of neglect along the Harlem River waterfront.

"It's marvelous to see this all come alive after nine years of working in a place that was once so forlorn and forgotten," says Amy Gavaris, NYRP's Executive Vice President, commenting on the hundreds of people out on the river, running on the Harlem River Esplanade, biking the Manhattan Greenway, and enjoying the Harlem River Festival nearby at NYRP's Swindler Cove Park. "It's been a thrill to work with people who had the vision, commitment and resources to make this a reality, and

clearly people want to be out here."

Tom Curry, head coach of the Peter Jay Sharp Rowing Club, agrees. "We're creating rowing culture in New York, but that couldn't happen without a boathouse. Now it's possible to hold regattas on the Harlem River. It's a straight course and convenient location for our kids, who develop so much confidence in this sport." Jim Barker, National Championship-winning head coach at Haverford, a Philadelphia prep school, can attest to that. "I rowed here as a boy in 1949, in the Middle States Regatta, and now my grandson is out there today competing in a single. History is repeating itself!"

The new generation of Harlem River rowers includes novices such as Sofia Mohammed, a high-school junior in the Frederick Douglass Academy college preparation program who moved to northern Manhattan from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, eight years ago. With plans to pursue business and law studies, hopefully on a rowing scholarship, Sofia has enjoyed two seasons with the Peter Jay Sharp Composite Crew, which is composed of students from different high-schools in New York City. "We have to make an effort to be friends and be a team. It's about working together, especially with crew," says Sofia. "Everybody is important in that boat." For information about the Peter Jay Sharp Boat Club, future regattas, and how to sponsor a student rower, contact Tom Curry at (917) 538-5792, or tc Curry@nyrowing.org.

ART SHOW ON THE WATER

On August 4, high-school students from our Aquatic Science Summer Program conducted with The Liberty Partnerships were joined by their parents in Swindler Cove Park for a showing of original monotype art prints, rowing, seining demonstrations, and refreshments. Over the summer, the 24 students in the five-week program came to Swindler Cove Park two days a week for a variety of aquatic activities led by NYRP's Aquatic Science Coordinator, Rachele De Clerck, including rowing, water quality and salinity testing in the Harlem River, seining and dip netting, a field trip to Orchard Beach in Pelham Bay Park, and an excursion on *The Pioneer*, moored at the South Street Seaport. NYRP's Boatbuilding Educator, Jeff Weber, who holds an MFA in printmaking, led the students in creating original monoprints and assisted the students in constructing bee, bird, and bat houses for Swindler Cove Park.



Jane Jackson

LOOK WHAT WE FOUND!

July 14, Edwards Santos, Swindler Cove Park Manager, discovered this large adult snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) straining against the park gate. Most likely a resident of nearby Sherman Creek, the 32 inch turtle had crossed Marginal Street and the parking lot of adjacent PS 5 before getting stranded. Chris Drury, NYRP Director of Field Operations, contacted the naturalists at the Inwood Hill Park Urban Ecology Center, who noted that this species has begun to lay eggs later in the season, a possible explanation for the turtle's move upland. After cleaning the animal's shell and attending to a few cuts, NYRP returned the intrepid turtle to its natural habitat on the banks of Sherman Creek.



Chris Drury



Jane Jackson

JUAN ACOSTA: NYRP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR

To many New York City kids, environmental educator Juan Acosta is a TV star. While on a canoeing outing with kids from Casita Maria settlement house, one of our community partners in the South Bronx, Acosta was filmed by the PBS children's program *Maya and Miguel*, popular among the Dominican and Puerto Rican kids who make up a large part of NYRP's Environmental Education enrollment. For these kids, Acosta's friendly, recognizable face and bilingual instruction is a welcoming introduction to both environmental science and a new country.

Since early 2004, Acosta has headed up NYRP's Garden Science program, which now reaches over 120 students at PS. 5, I.S. 90, I.S. 218 in Manhattan and I.S. 229 in the Bronx. Taught in NYRP's Riley-Levin Children's Garden at Swindler Cove Park and various schoolyard gardens, Acosta's lessons cover plant anatomy and life cycles, soil science, caring for plants and gardens, and nutrition. "A lot of these kids don't care for vegetables and salad, but they want to eat what they've grown," says Acosta, whose students raise carrots, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, and other vegetables, herbs and flowers.

Retired from the U.S. Navy, Acosta was a volunteer teacher while stationed in Sicily and then began education studies at the University of Maryland's on-base program. Later he completed a degree in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and early childhood education at Lehman College (CUNY) in the Bronx, a unique combination he uses to teach basic orienteering skills to students in garden-mapping activities. A father of three, Acosta's own family immigrated to the Bronx when he was a child from Santiago de los 30 Caballeros, Dominican Republic. He would occasionally return to help with the harvest on his grandfather's farm, an experience that now enriches garden science instruction for a new generation of New York transplants.



Jane Jackson

LITTLE RED LIGHTHOUSE FESTIVAL AND "CLEAN UP THE WORLD"

On September 17, over 2,000 visitors enjoyed the 13th Annual Little Red Lighthouse Festival, co-sponsored by NYRP and The Historic House Trust of New York City. Besides a gorgeous sunny day in Fort Washington Park, a scenic setting on the Hudson River in northern Manhattan, the festival offered tours of the Little Red Lighthouse by the Urban Park Rangers, hayrides, face painting, a stilt walker and fish fry, live music by the Latin Jazz Alliance and neighborhood musicians Orville Davis and Karen Hudson, and sea shanties by the Stout Trio.

This year, our celebrity reading of the children's classic *The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge* was performed by Dr. Ruth Westheimer, as well as beloved folk singer and songwriter Pete Seeger, who also sang and played the guitar and banjo. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of the City of New York Depart-

ment of Parks & Recreation, introduced Seeger by highlighting the contributions his sloop *Clearwater* has made to environmental education and improving the health of the Hudson River.

Volunteer organizations assisting with the festival included One Brick and festival founders, the West 181st Street Beautification Association. After the event, members of the Kiwanis Club of NYC Young Professionals assisted NYRP with separating recyclables from trash as part of a "Clean Up the World" activity (www.cleanuptheworld.org). Also celebrating its 13th anniversary, this environmental program empowers communities around the globe to clean up, fix up, and conserve their environment. CUW mobilizes over 35 million volunteers from more than 100 countries annually, making it one of the largest community-based environmental campaigns in the world. 🌱

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION GRANT FOR NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION IN BRIDGE PARK

In June, NYRP received a \$10,000 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, one of 13 national grants for wetland and watershed restoration. The award will help NYRP to combat the negative effects of invasive plants in Bridge Park and increase biodiversity by restoring native species to the site (i.e. Paw Paw, Dutchman's Pipe, Bald Cypress), with particular attention to the conservation of butterflies and other pollinators. Native plantings will also help to stabilize the Harlem River shoreline in the South Bronx. Project partners include the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation.

NYRP HONORED BY AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

On October 6, NYRP was honored by the AIA New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation at the annual Center for Architecture Heritage Ball. In a celebration of civic spirit and design excellence, NYRP was acknowledged for "beautifying our city and educating our children," and joined honorees J. Max Bond Jr., FAIA; Amanda Burden, Hon. AIA; and Frank J. Sciame Jr., Hon. AIA, for this gala kickoff to Architecture Week 2005.

BETTE TESTIFIES FOR "NO WAKE" LEGISLATION



On June 9, Bette Midler testified before the New York City Council Transportation and Waterfront Committees in favor of an amendment to the City's administrative code to stop wakes on the Harlem River between the Spuyten Duyvil trestle and the Broadway Bridge and between the University Heights Bridge and the High Bridge. NYRP has helped to restore waterfront parks located along this stretch, including Swindler Cove Park, Bridge Park, and Roberto Clemente State Park. Bette argued for regulating the speed of motorized boat traffic to ensure the safety of young kids rowing from the Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse and other non-motorized boats, the conservation of wetlands, and to protect the boathouse. "Our goal is to work with the Council to find a practical way to address the needs of commercial vessels without endangering the people who make the Harlem River a vibrant recreational waterfront," said Ms. Midler.



THE HOME DEPOT GIVES GRANT FOR VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

FOUNDATION
Building Affordable Healthy Homes

In June, The Home Depot Foundation gave a \$25,000 grant to involve local company employees in NYRP's efforts to create sustainable, accessible native forests in neighborhood parks. NYRP will use the grant to support the reclamation of the Sherman Creek area of Swindler Cove, to remove construction debris from Bridge Park and plant native trees there, and to continue expanding the restored acreage of Highbridge Park. This award will help NYRP "increase awareness among all New Yorkers and the corporate community in particular about the ongoing plight of underserved parks and the effects of forest neglect on the well-being of the city," notes The Home Depot Foundation.

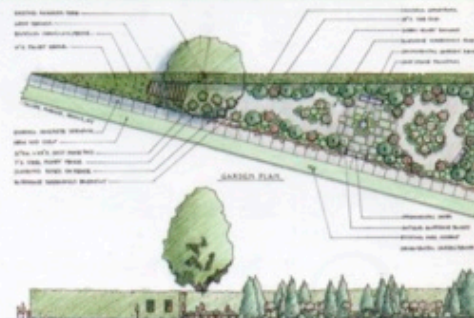
FLORAL ARRANGING FOR THE HOLIDAYS MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 6:30 P.M.



Learn how to make elegant and distinctive wreaths, garlands, and centerpieces for the holidays with Gotham Gardens' Dan Dahl, one of New York City's top floral designers, at our fourth annual Floral Arranging for the Holidays demonstration.

For more information about Garden Club membership and events, please contact Breanne Scanlon at (212) 333-2552, or bscanlon@nyrp.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BETTE!...A ROSE GARDEN FOR MISS M



What do you give a diva who has everything? A rose garden! To honor NYRP Founder Bette Midler on her 60th birthday—and NYRP's 10th anniversary—the Trustees of the New York Restoration Project have funded the restoration of a lovely rose garden in the South Bronx in Bette's honor. The 1,500 sq. foot, wedge-shaped plot is located at Teller Avenue, between E. 164th and 165th Streets, near Yankee Stadium. Bette's Rose Garden sits across the street from the Roberto Clemente Intermediate School—NYRP has consulted with the school to provide an outdoor "classroom" for students to study the environment, grow vegetables, and create a butterfly garden. Celebrated landscape architect Brian Sawyer provided the garden design for the space. To visit Bette's Garden, take the B or D train to the 167th Street/Grand Concourse stop and transfer to the Bx2 bus to Teller Avenue and East 165th Street.



Maria Rodale's Organic Gardening (Your Seasonal Companion to Creating a Beautiful and Delicious Organic Garden)
368 pages, 1998, Rodale Press

Maria Rodale is the "go-to" expert for organic gardening—her family founded Rodale, Inc., publisher of *Organic Gardening* and *Prevention* magazines, among others, and a long list of health and fitness books. Readers of her 1998 reference will be hard-pressed to find a topic she does not address, from garden design, to natural pest control,

to a plentiful array of easy-to-follow family recipes for homegrown produce. What makes this volume such a useful and enjoyable reference is its wealth of practical gardening tips for the novice, attention to garden planning and aesthetics, and generous photographs on almost every page of this lovely and well-designed book.