

NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT



BIENNIAL REPORT
2002-2003



DEAR FRIENDS,

Environmental stewardship begins as a matter of principle and develops into a personal habit. It spurs New Yorkers to climb a tree for a flyaway plastic bag or chase a blowing newspaper halfway down the block.

But the hard, nitty-gritty work of environmental stewardship on the large scale required by New York City takes a sustained and cooperative effort. No single person, organization, or city agency can tackle this enormous challenge alone.

Fundamentally, caring for New York City's open spaces is a matter of partnership among individual citizens, community groups, government agencies, corporate interests, and private philanthropy.

NYRP operates on the principle of partnership and can only accomplish its work in parks and community gardens in cooperation with a coalition of vested interests. Building these coalitions around our goals and projects ensures their effectiveness, appropriateness, and sustainability.

We are very grateful for the faith and trust our coalitions have placed in NYRP's efforts. Many individuals, corporations, and private foundations have been extremely generous throughout our history and particularly over the last two years. With financial support, time and labor, and passionate encouragement, these contributors have justified and emboldened our vision for a greener New York City.

Our redevelopment initiatives underway in northern Manhattan, the Harlem River corridor, and the South Bronx are truly exciting investments in the quality of life for all residents and visitors. NYRP is proud to be a continuing catalyst and partner in the long-term improvement of neighborhood parks, community gardens, and ultimately the lives of New York City's least-served residents.

Together, we can "clean, green, and dream" a healthier, more beautiful environment for all New Yorkers. We hope you enjoy this summary of NYRP's accomplishments over the 2002 and 2003 fiscal years.



Bette Midler
Founder, NYRP

Bette Midler
Founder

Benjamin F. Needell, Esq.
Chairman

Hon. Adrian Benepe
Commissioner,
City of New York Department
of Parks & Recreation



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

AN INTRODUCTION

The New York Restoration Project (NYRP) reclaims, restores, and develops under-resourced open space in New York City's five boroughs. As "the conservancy of forgotten places," NYRP rescues public parks and community gardens that are most threatened by the challenges facing underserved communities—environmental damage, city budget cuts, and criminal activity. We began our work in the historic parks of northern Manhattan and have since expanded into community gardens in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island. Our newest efforts focus on city and state parks in the South Bronx. NYRP's goal is to sustain lasting change in these locations by nurturing community involvement and building long-term partnerships.

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Since Bette Midler founded NYRP in 1995, we have steadily "cleaned and greened" some of New York City's most blighted public areas. We've removed over 75,000 tons of garbage and debris from project sites and have raised over \$18 million for the restoration and development of parks and community gardens throughout New York City.

We've cleaned and made safe more than 375 acres of historic Fort Tryon, Fort Washington, and Highbridge Parks, much of it overgrown from decades of nonuse. We opened the New Leaf Café in Fort Tryon Park, where all net restaurant profits will aid the beautification and maintenance of the park.

NYRP transformed an illegal dumping ground on the Harlem River into Swindler Cove Park, New York City's newest public park and home to the Rilev-Levin Children's Garden and Peter Jay

March 11, 2002



Dear Bette,

Your exceptionally effective and energetic commitment to improving the open spaces, parklands, roadsides, and waterfronts of New York City has proven to be an invaluable asset to the quality of life of all New Yorkers... New York Restoration Project and the New York Garden Trust have shown what one citizen's concern and actions can do to bring about positive change and to advance the well being of all.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. E. Pataki".

Governor George E. Pataki

Sharp Boathouse. Both public amenities are integral to NYRP's free environmental education and recreation programs, which have provided enriching in-school and after-school activities for over 5,000 at-risk youth since our founding.

We helped save scores of community gardens from commercial development and established the New York Garden Trust to maintain and preserve over 60 of these gardens in perpetuity. In 2002, NYRP balanced its budget and raised \$3.9 million for general operating expenses.

WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE

NYRP is more than an advocacy group. We function as a permanent working partner with local communities and city agencies, supplying labor, materials, project design and management, and program development. NYRP builds sustainable partnerships with public schools, community cen-

ters, city agencies, corporations, foundations, private philanthropists, and the state and federal governments. In the parks and gardens where we work, we meet changing needs as surrounding communities change.

And changing they are! NYRP community garden improvements are fostering new optimism and regeneration along city streets. Likewise, NYRP's work in parks has prepared the way for the City of New York's redevelopment plans for northern Manhattan. City-funded projects such as the Manhattan Greenway—which links to and through NYRP projects—and the \$700,000 Old Croton Aqueduct Trail initiative in Highbridge Park could not have proceeded as planned without our reclamation efforts in Highbridge Park and environs. NYRP has jumpstarted revitalization through the conservancy of "forgotten places."

Highbridge Park before...



...and after!



PARK RECLAMATION & DEVELOPMENT

In FY02 and FY03, NYRP transitioned from Phase I reclamation work in northern Manhattan parks—and the adjacent Hudson and Harlem River shorelines—to the more in-depth Phase II work of intensive site development and beautification. Throughout 2002 and 2003, our daily work crews kept Highbridge Park, Fort Washington Park, and Fort Tryon Park clean, safe, and flourishing. In addition to “cleaning and greening,” NYRP crews repaired pathways, stonework, park benches, and public lighting as a regular part of maintaining these open spaces. As Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, has stated: “Parks and the New York Restoration Project share the common goal of great parks for northern Manhattan.”

SUCCESS IS IN THE NUMBERS

In 2002, NYRP removed 510,235 lbs. of trash from northern Manhattan parks. We planted 1,460 trees; 6,000 shrubs; 40,000 plants; and 48,500 bulbs. 50% of our plant materials were provided through corporate and private donations. In 2003, NYRP crews removed 655,720 lbs. of trash. We planted 870 trees; 4,200 shrubs; 52,000 plants; and 31,000 bulbs. 67% of plant materials were provided through donations and grant support in 2003.

The Greenacre Foundation was a central partner in this work, awarding NYRP \$55,000 in grants

for the purchase of plant materials. With these, NYRP reforested sections of Highbridge Park, controlled erosion at Riverside Slopes, created new plantings at Swindler Cove Park, and beautified key visitor areas of Fort Washington Park.

NYRP also participated in the citywide Daffodil Project by planting bulbs in and around parks and community gardens in October 2001 in remembrance of the lives lost on September 11th. In spring 2002, the uplifting beauty of nature arrived in the form of 30,000 blooming daffodils and tulips.

PARK HORTICULTURE

In June 2002, NYRP hired full-time Horticulturist Greg Kramer, who brought a wealth of experience as a former Head Gardener in Fort Tryon Park, Director of Horticulture at Tavern on the Green, and Supervisor and Educator of Horticulture for the New York City Parks Career Training Program (PACT).

Under Mr. Kramer’s supervision, our horticultural work in northern Manhattan parks involved replacing invasive, nonnative species like Norway maple with a canopy of large trees such as oak and understory trees such as dogwood. Next we planted shrubs, groundcovers, and wildflowers. Mr. Kramer’s comprehensive plan for Highbridge Park includes plantings of native ferns and perennials such as New England asters, columbines, and goldenrod.

**“All people deserve a place where they can catch their breath.
Nature and parks provide that.”**

Bette Midler, NYRP Founder

We continued to clean and maintain the 159-acre Fort Washington Park. This is where NYRP was launched on July 7, 1995, when Founder Bette Midler and over 100 volunteers carried away 20,000 lbs. of litter, junked cars, and other refuse from a natural stretch of the Hudson River above 155th Street. In 2003, we removed dead oaks, hollies, and invasive species and planted new oak, black-gum, red maple, and ironwood trees, as well as salt-tolerant shrubs, ferns, perennials, and ground-covers to reduce erosion. These projects were completed in collaboration with the Natural Resources Group of the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation.

Over the past two years, Corporate Volunteer Days have been a popular tool to build company teamwork while accomplishing significant projects in Highbridge Park. In FY02, employees of American Express, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and UBS Financial Services participated in planting native shrubs, saplings, and persimmon trees on the Harlem River slopes, among other projects. NYRP is grateful for these long-term relationships with corporate partners, whose eager employee volunteers return season after season.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

NYRP's mission to restore under-resourced parks includes the revitalization of these public spaces with regular events and programs. On June 7,

2003, as a member of the High Bridge Coalition we celebrated National Trails Day in Highbridge Park with a volunteer trail project and festival and partnered with the New York Rowing Association and Empire State Rowing Association in their Championship Regatta on the Harlem River.

On September 6, 2003, NYRP's Discover Highbridge Park Festival entertained and informed hundreds of visitors with tours of the park and Highbridge Tower; hayrides, a storyteller, live music, and craft events. We're planning more projects, including festivals and recreation events, to make the park a welcoming place for thousands of nearby residents.

NYRP's work in Highbridge Park has stimulated renewed interest to revitalize this formerly blighted area. In October 2003, the City of New York and the City Parks Foundation launched a \$25 million, four-year public-private initiative to enhance community outreach, capital improvements, programming, and staffing in 16 under-resourced city parks, including Highbridge Park. NYRP will be a vital part of this coalition effort.

On September 21, 2002, NYRP participated in the Tenth Annual Little Red Lighthouse Festival in Fort Washington Park, and cosponsored the event with the Historic House Trust the following year on September 13, 2003. Several thousand attendees participated in these events. Highlights of the 2003 festival were readings of Hildegard Swift's

The late Billy Swindler, who was NYRP's first Educator and a dedicated environmentalist.



Students engaged in an NYRP Environmental Education program test water quality samples taken from the Hudson River.

NYRP's New Leaf Café
in Fort Tryon Park
opened in August 2001.
All net proceeds support
the park's beautification
and maintenance.



The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge by Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden and *Sex and the City's* Cynthia Nixon. NYRP's Spring into Summer Festival was held on June 28, 2003, in Fort Washington Park and featured a petting zoo, birds of prey, Afro-Caribbean music and dance.

As NYRP's Executive Vice President Amy T. Gavaris notes, "The message that all of us need to champion in this new urban era is that parks are not—and have never been—frivolous luxuries. They are central to the human, economic, and ecological vitality of every city, especially this one."

NEW LEAF CAFÉ

When NYRP won the contract to operate the food concession in Fort Tryon Park for a period of seven years, fine dining turned over a new leaf in northern Manhattan. Opened in August 2001, the New Leaf Café is operated by NYRP with all future net proceeds supporting the beautification and maintenance of Fort Tryon Park. This unique venture brings value to the park, provides income to the City of New York, and creates jobs for community residents.

Housed in a 1930s stone building original to the park, the New Leaf Café is a distinctive and romantic setting. NYRP raised \$900,000 in private monies for the restora-

tion and development of this site, with architectural plans provided by Armand LeGardeur and interior design by Fernando Santangelo. We undertook a major capital renovation of the structure including a new kitchen, gas line, new wiring and plumbing, and restoration of the cathedral ceiling, windows, and doors. Future capital improvements include renovations to the public restrooms, outdoor terrace, and air conditioning, recently made possible by a \$355,000 appropriation from City Councilman Robert Jackson.

The New York Times called the New Leaf Café "...a cool, airy oasis" (August 22, 2001) and in *Time Out New York's* 2002 Eat Out Awards, the New Leaf Café was a "Critic's Pick" for "Best Reason For A Walk In The Park." In addition to an ongoing Thursday night jazz series, the café was the setting for NYRP's "I Like New York in June" Spring Picnic on June 11, 2003, and serves attendees at our annual Spring Family Festival.

SWINDLER COVE PARK

After three years of planning, NYRP opened Swindler Cove Park on August 13, 2003. Designed in collaboration with NYRP—and funded and constructed by the New York State Department of Transportation—this five-acre emerald jewel is New York City's newest public park and a hallmark of what NYRP endeavors to accomplish in the overlooked green spaces of underserved communities.

NYRP has been designated official caretaker of Swindler Cove Park by longtime partner, the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation.

Built from the ground up and named for the late William R.C. Swindler—a dedicated educator, environmentalist, and one of NYRP's founding forces—Swindler Cove Park sits on the Harlem River at Sherman Creek, just yards from P.S. 5. Previously, the park site had been a polluted dumping ground for garbage, rubble, and sunken boats. Today, Swindler Cove Park is a pristine but accessible place of gracious pathways, native plantings, restored wetlands, and scenic viewpoints overlooking the Harlem River.

To help NYRP accomplish this transformation, the New York State Department of Transportation invested over \$8 million in the project, and NYRP raised an additional \$5 million in private monies. Swindler Cove Park is part of a larger NYRP visioning effort for the neighborhood and the Harlem River.

On September 26, 2003, the U.S. Department of the Interior's prestigious *Take Pride in America* program acknowledged the clean-up and creation of Swindler Cove Park by presenting NYRP with one of 15 annual awards for outstanding volunteer projects at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. Fittingly, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and City of New York commissioners held a press conference in front of Swindler Cove Park on September 30, the last day of NYRP's 2003 fiscal year, announcing the reopening of the Harlem River Greenway, which runs alongside our new park and is part of the city's larger Manhattan Waterfront Greenway plan.

RILEY-LEVIN CHILDREN'S GARDEN

The Riley-Levin Children's Garden—an "outdoor classroom" in Swindler Cove Park—was made possible by a generous \$1 million gift from NYRP Trustee Barbara Riley Levin. The Garden opened in August 2003 and was officially dedicated on November 1, 2003, at a special ceremony with Bette Midler and a proclamation from the City of New York delivered by Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation.

The Garden features 18 planting beds, where students from nearby P.S. 5, P.S. 176, I.S. 218, and Dyckman Houses tend flowers, herbs, berries, and a butterfly garden. The outdoor learning center, designed by prominent landscape designer Billie Cohen, also includes a large teaching circle with a teacher's podium. Nearby, Jonathan's Pond is stocked with native fish and features wetland plantings such as cattails, water iris, and giant hibiscus.


PETER JAY SHARP BOATHOUSE

The Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse was designed by Armand LeGardeur in association with Robert A.M. Stern Architects and named in honor of a \$2.25 million leadership gift from The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation. Under construction since spring 2003 in Norwalk, Connecticut, the boathouse sits atop a Canadian-built barge and was towed in spring 2004 through the Long Island Sound, around the island of Manhattan, to its final anchor at Swindler Cove Park, becoming the Harlem River's first new community boathouse in more than a century. "This is an important and historic place, and an exceptional facility for the community," says Amy T. Gavaris, NYRP's Executive Vice President.

Magnificent Fort Washington Park, the site of NYRP's first major clean-up effort in 1996.



A gracious pathway in Fort Tryon Park, where NYRP has maintained a daily presence for almost a decade.



The Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse will be the hub of a community rowing program, to be conducted in partnership with the nonprofit New York Rowing Association (NYRA), the oldest rowing association in the U.S. (founded in 1866). With NYRA, our ultimate goal is to help underserved teens take advantage of the over 3,000 rowing scholarships offered annually by the more than 100 American universities and colleges with varsity rowing programs.

The Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust generously provided a \$500,000 grant, which helped to fund the creation of a magnificent promenade leading to the boathouse. Additionally, NYRP received a \$400,000 matching grant from the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This award was announced by Governor George E. Pataki at the 2002 Governor's Parks and Preservation Award Dinner honoring Bette Midler, held June 6, 2002, in Fort Washington Park.

NORTHERN MANHATTAN PARKS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In 2002, NYRP commissioned a land-use planning study entitled *Visions for the Harlem River Waterfront, Manhattan Edition*, generously funded with a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Prepared by Vollmer Associates and distributed to neighborhood leaders and community groups as a tool for urban planning, this master plan for the Harlem River corridor proposes an open space network linking the river shoreline with Highbridge Park, bikeways, esplanades, access points, bridges, overpasses, and—most of all—the people who use them.

Restoring vitality and beauty to northern Manhattan parks is a worthy goal only if they are made safe and accessible to all visitors. As Founder Bette Midler says, "Parks are not meant to be islands. They are part of neighborhoods and part of people's lives. We need to be in nature, and I believe that a beautiful environment encourages people to behave beautifully."

The New York Restoration Project received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Quality Award on April 30, 2002, for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to protecting and enhancing environmental quality in our region.

NEW HORIZONS IN THE SOUTH BRONX

In 2003, NYRP looked across the Harlem River to the South Bronx shoreline and saw our next challenge. At the invitation of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, we began cleanup and planting in the 25-acre Roberto Clemente State Park and the area surrounding River Park Towers, home to approximately 6,000 residents at the park's southern end. This was difficult and, at times, dangerous work. Years of trash and debris covered the parking lot, esplanade, and walkways of the residential towers and park.

With hard hats and determination, our crews kept the areas clear and clean and inspired help from the community. Residents are making an effort to maintain the property, with some even joining our work crews as AmeriCorps members. With support from the State and the City,

NYRP is planning future improvements for Roberto Clemente State Park as well as Bridge Park—the undeveloped, 100-year-old shoreline city park on 3.4 acres to the immediate south. Our goal is to improve these parks and program outdoor recreation—particularly boating activities—for residents on both sides of the Harlem River. “Our office has been most impressed by NYRP’s work restoring and revitalizing open space along the Harlem River,” says Bernadette Castro, Commissioner, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

AMERICORPS

The muscle behind NYRP’s success is its long-standing partnership with AmeriCorps, an arm of the U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service. In exchange for one year of national service, AmeriCorps members receive a living stipend, half of which is provided by NYRP. Members also receive health insurance, an education award of \$4,725 (for tuition at accredited institutions), and training in numerous skills, including First Aid/CPR instruction from the Red Cross. Through recruitment and skills training, NYRP is committed to helping low-income residents become more employable and productive members of their communities as a result of working on our AmeriCorps team.

In FY02 and FY03, NYRP maintained work crews of approximately 35 full-time and 40 half-time AmeriCorps members. They performed over 100,000 hours of service, carrying out NYRP’s daily work of cleaning, restoring, and maintaining parkland and shorelines in northern Manhattan and citywide community gardens. AmeriCorps

crews also supervised 2,750 corporate and community volunteers who contributed over 16,500 hours of service.

With effective management and strong leadership from the NYRP Board of Trustees, we were able to weather a sudden and severe funding crisis in the AmeriCorps program in 2003 (federal funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service will increase by 9% in 2005). This challenge helped us to focus our goals even more clearly on projects that make a valuable, long-term contribution. “We are a consistent and positive force for change in the communities where we work,” says Catherine Hall, NYRP’s Vice President of Administration and Operations and AmeriCorps Program Director.

NYRP provides an annual \$2,500 William R.C. Swindler Scholarship Award (and three \$500 runner-up awards) to exemplary AmeriCorps members. Pearl Weatherall, NYRP’s youngest AmeriCorps member, won the Swindler Award in 2002 at age 18 and is pursuing an environmental studies degree. Rose Moore, a Bronx native and mother of two, won the Swindler award in 2003 at age 20 and is pursuing a degree in education. “NYRP gave me a chance when I needed one,” says Rose Moore. “And growing up in a place with no real parks, I know how much our work means.”

Top: NYRP’s crew removed thousands of tons of rubbish and debris from the Harlem River shore at what is now Swindler Cove Park.

Bottom: The Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse, a floating structure, was constructed on a barge in Norwalk, Connecticut.



Our partnership with AmeriCorps is the muscle behind NYRP’s success.



COMMUNITY GARDENS

The roots of community gardening run deep throughout New York City. For residents of all ages, these gardens are oases of tranquility in neighborhoods where concrete otherwise rules. Anchoring these community amenities to local institutions helps to ensure their proper and long-term use.

In 2001, NYRP's subsidiary the New York Garden Trust took title to 51 of the most vulnerable and distressed community gardens in New York City. The New York Garden Trust is dedicated to the restoration and sustained community use of gardens citywide. NYRP has helped these gardens thrive by developing working partnerships with local gardeners, community-based groups, and city organizations. To accomplish this, NYRP has provided: capital improvements, technical assistance, tools and equipment, plant materials, work crews, horticultural expertise, educational workshops, programming support, and community outreach. In 2002, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation awarded NYRP a matching grant of \$350,000 from the Environmental Protection Fund to support the purchase of these gardens.

We also enlisted the help of top New York landscape designers Billie Cohen, Janice Parker, Paula Hayes and Stefania Rinaldi, and Ken Smith to build a portfolio of beautiful and suitable plans for community gardens. We developed programming with local institutions and residents that fits the specific needs of the adults and children who use each garden. Local gardeners were responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance. These community garden managers collaborated with NYRP on all garden improvements.

In FY02 and FY03, we completed major capital improvements in 15 community gardens—such as installing new fencing, implementing planting plans, laying pathways, and building raised vegetable beds. We responded to the needs and requests of community gardeners in the five boroughs, building 40 picnic tables, 19 pergolas, 28 garden sheds, and 150 garden beds. Most importantly, we worked to build effective and lasting partnerships with local residents, breaking the traditional “thrive-or-dive” cycle of undersupported community gardens. NYRP's goal is to complete major capital improvements in at least five community gardens per year. Here are some highlights from the past two years.

Former President Bill Clinton joins Bette Midler and community leaders on September 20, 2002, to cut the ribbon at Maggie's Garden. The garden restoration was made possible by a \$250,000 grant from the Brownstone Family Foundation.



MAGGIE'S GARDEN

This small oasis on West 149th Street in Harlem is named for Maggie Burnett, who has steadfastly cared for the community green space since the 1970s. Maggie's Garden was the first of NYRP's gardens to receive capital renovations, including structural amenities, security improvements, and a dedicated water source. The garden's renovation and long-term care were provided for in 2001 by a \$250,000 grant from the Brownstone Family Foundation for capital improvements and to establish an endowment.

Maggie's Garden was dedicated September 20, 2002, in a special ceremony attended by Ms. Burnett, former President Bill Clinton, NYRP Founder Bette Midler, Clyde and Diane Brownstone, community leaders, and hundreds of neighborhood residents. Maggie's Garden is now used by local residents to relax in the shade, barbecue, and celebrate birthday parties. "This garden means everything to us," says Maggie Burnett, "and now it's safe forever."

GROUND FORCE

In July 2002, NYRP partnered with the BBC/America's hit garden makeover series, *Ground Force*, to create a post-9/11 patch of serenity and

goodwill in Lower Manhattan. A community plot on Suffolk Street on the Lower East Side—twenty blocks from the World Trade Center site—was a perfect choice. The beloved but challenged community space was transformed in triple-digit heat in just three days with a new lawn, flowerbeds, herb garden, fruit trees, trellises, and a fresh coat of paint on the garden's *casita*.

Since then, the surrounding community has experienced other dramatic transformations—a nearby playground has been resurfaced, a new restaurant has moved in and refurbished the façade, and a local landlord has cleaned and improved apartment buildings on the block. The neighborhood association unlocks the garden each day for use by a neighborhood church, a day-care center, and local workers. Neighborhood "eyes and ears" keep a vigilant lookout for its well-being. In no small measure, this garden has raised the standards and quality of life in the community.

PLEASANT PARK GARDEN AND RODALE, INC.

Pennsylvania-based Rodale, Inc., publishers of *Prevention*, *Men's Health*, and *Organic Gardening* magazines, made a \$250,000 grant to NYRP in

NYRP Founder Bette Midler and BBC/America's Ground Force team



The Suffolk Street Community Garden after the Ground Force transformation.



An East Harlem resident bags a bountiful harvest of cilantro at NYRP's Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden.

September 2003 to restore and endow Pleasant Park Garden, a popular community garden in East Harlem and one of the most beautiful in NYRP's inventory.

Located just west of Pleasant Avenue, the garden runs the entire length of the block between East 114th and East 115th Streets. In 2003, community members harvested over 1,800 pounds of produce to help feed their families and other local residents. The Rodale grant has made it possible to improve the garden's play areas, seating, pathways, and barbeques, as well as provide for new planting beds, trees and shrubs, and a cooking area. It will also fund a community outreach and educational program to begin in the garden in spring 2004. Environmentally sensitive amenities will include a composting toilet and a garden shed featuring innovative hay-bale construction.

THE FAMILY GARDEN AND TIFFANY & CO.

Also in 2003, luxury goods retailer Tiffany & Co. made a \$250,000 grant through The Tiffany & Co. Foundation to endow and restore the Family Garden on East 114th Street in East Harlem.

Tiffany's legendary Design Director John Loring is preparing a garden design that features a beautiful ironwork gate. The grant will fund full capital

improvements to the garden and provide for its ongoing maintenance. The concept of an endowed and financially secure community garden is a phenomenal gift to local residents and an innovative model for urban philanthropy that NYRP will vigorously pursue.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Throughout FY02 and FY03, corporate volunteers contributed many hours to help NYRP establish specific community gardens, advancing these plots from baseline stabilization with major improvements. These workdays were also a fun way to bring new corporate and individual members into the NYRP family. Employees from Pfizer, UBS, iN Demand, and Goldman Sachs transformed gardens by clearing garbage and weeds, laying new soil, planting vegetable and flowerbeds, and creating pathways from garden designs. These workdays also helped corporations to strengthen team cohesion, and one group even used the experience to flip the standard workplace roles of supervisor and subordinate.

PROGRAMMING...

A STAKE IN THE GARDEN!

In 2002, over 400 Brooklyn students beautified neighborhoods through the Green Apple Gardens Project, a partnership between NYRP and the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment (BCUE). The program brought students and teachers into community gardens across the borough for environmental and urban horticulture projects.

In celebration of Earth Day, NYRP teamed up with the Robin Hood Foundation and Timberland on April 15, 2003, to turn P.S. 19's schoolyard in Corona, Queens, into a children's learning garden. City Year and Student Conservation Corps members helped on this project.

The Chicago-based KaBOOM! awarded NYRP two generous grants to create new playground facilities in Brooklyn and Bronx community gardens. And on several summer evenings in 2003, NYRP enlivened Brooklyn community gardens with an Afro-Caribbean jazz concert and a film festival. As Brian Sahd, PhD, NYRP's Vice President of Community Development, explains, "Making these community open spaces beautiful is only part of our work. Sustaining gardens over the long run requires broad outreach and active community engagement."

ACGA CONFERENCE, RAINWATER COLLECTION SYSTEMS AND GARDEN MAPPING

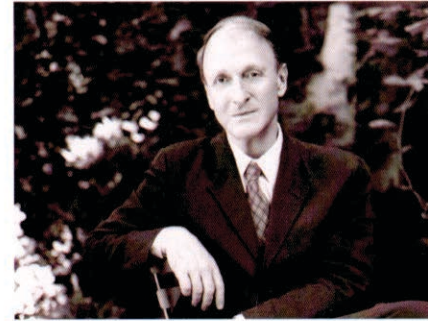
NYRP cochaired the annual American Community Gardening Association conference, held July 25-28, 2002, at Columbia University. In summer 2003, we partnered again with environmental organizations—including Brooklyn Green Bridge, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Green Guerillas, GreenThumb, New Yorkers for Parks, and Trust for Public Land—to install rainwater collection systems in 10 community gardens. These collection systems divert water from the rooftops of adjacent buildings to

garden storage tanks, the first such systems to be used on this scale in New York City. NYRP also assisted the Council on the Environment of New York City's community garden mapping project by verifying the status and measurements of the entire District 16 inventory of gardens in Brooklyn.

Maria Rodale, Vice Chairman, and Steve Murphy, President and CEO, Rodale Inc. inspect the site of the Rodale Pleasant Park Community Garden in East Harlem.



Tiffany & Co. Design Director John Loring has designed our Family Garden in East Harlem. This community garden restoration is made possible by a grant from the Tiffany & Co. Foundation.



NYRP's community gardens provide oases of green in densely populated neighborhoods citywide.





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Getting kids out of the classroom and into the outdoors is what environmental education is all about.

In FY02 and FY03, NYRP successfully partnered with schools and community organizations to make the outdoors a welcoming place for over 3,000 children. We believe that environmental education is the first step toward raising a new generation of park stewardship enthusiasts. Our Founder Bette Midler says it best: "Pay attention to the basics—children and our environment—and the quality of life will improve dramatically."

GARDENING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 2002 and 2003, NYRP educators—many bilingual in English and Spanish—led in-school, after-school, and summer gardening programs with students from P.S. 5, I.S. 218, Casita Maria, and Dyckman Houses. Over the last two years, NYRP's gardening programs served youth aged 6-

14 from the economically disadvantaged Washington Heights, Inwood, and South Bronx communities

NYRP educators incorporated mathematics, biodiversity, and ecology lessons to complement the elementary and middle school Life Science curriculum. During the 2002 and 2003 school years, approximately 50 students per week attended NYRP's gardening lessons on the grounds of P.S. 5, where they planted, tended, and harvested crops such as tomatoes, zucchini, herbs, and flowers. "The hands-on learning that children experience through NYRP not only helps to integrate the education provided in the classroom, but also helps to foster a real commitment and sense of responsibility for the environment," says Myrna Torres, CSW, and P.S. 5 Site Director for The Children's Aid Society.

OUTDOOR LEARNING AND RECREATION

Multidisciplinary environmental education programs with students at I.S. 90, I.S. 218, and P.S. 5 incorporated geography, social studies, arts, and literacy. Community-service activities such as trail maintenance focused on stewardship of natural spaces. Our partnership with the Audubon Society's "For the Birds" program introduced birding to students in the Bronx, Harlem, and Washington Heights, and our estuarine science programs included oyster gardening for kids in partnership with New York-New Jersey Baykeeper. We also offered four teacher training workshops in June 2003, one in Spuyten Duyvil with the Urban Divers. Hosting the workshop on their boat, this innovative organization instructed participants in Harlem River water quality monitoring.

In 2002 and 2003, NYRP's bicycling program helped kids aged 11-14 explore Highbridge Park and other urban greenways, while learning about plant and wildlife habitats, and local geology and history. NYRP's Saturday Biking Club hosted groups of 10 youth from I.S. 90 every weekend through most of the school year, and summer programs served 80 youngsters from Casita Maria in the South Bronx. From May to August 2003, NYRP accompanied groups from I.S. 90 and I.S. 218 to the Children's Aid Society's Wagon Road Day Camp in Chappaqua, New York, and Christodora Inc.'s wilderness education center in the Berkshire Mountains. A smaller group of 15 exceptional students from I.S. 218 were invited to attend an intensive, week-long camp at Christodora in summers 2002 and 2003.

In July and August 2002 and 2003, NYRP and partners at The Bronx River Alliance organized a canoeing program on the Bronx River for a total of 140 youth from Casita Maria.

NYRP's boatbuilding program is steadily growing, with team-oriented activities scheduled during the school year and summer months. In fall 2003, students began the construction of a Whitehall boat—a historic, New York City watercraft—under the guidance of NYRP's Boatbuilding Educator Jeff Weber, hired in July 2003. This team is comprised of local young people aged 11-17 from I.S. 218, I.S. 90, High School for Environmental Studies (through Urban Park Rangers), and Fresh Youth Initiatives in Washington Heights. Manning their own hand-made boats, students are taught how to row on the Harlem River during NYRP's summer rowing program.

Jane Jackson, NYRP's Director of Programming, was hired in April 2002 to oversee the work of our current team of five specially trained educators. A Boston native whose background in environmental education dates to 1988, Ms. Jackson has a M.S. in Conservation Biology and came to NYRP from The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island. Additionally, Philip Coffin, who first worked for NYRP as an AmeriCorps member, was promoted to NYRP Education Director in October 2003 and is skillfully developing our environmental education program. "Among other goals, we are eager to get kids out onto the Harlem River in both Manhattan and the Bronx, and to increase inter-generational programs in our parks and gardens," says Ms. Jackson.

Top: Enthusiastic students from P.S.5 proudly display the vegetables they grew in an NYRP gardening program.

Middle: Children water plants at NYRP's Riley-Levin Children's Garden.

Bottom: Students canoe with NYRP Educators on the Bronx River.





BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

Since our founding in 1995, NYRP has grown from an annual fiscal budget of \$513,000 to over \$4 million for FY 2004. With vigorous leadership from Benjamin F. Needell, Chairman since February 2002, NYRP has successfully expanded its Board of Trustees from four members in 2001 to twelve members by the end of FY03, including five of its most active Advisory Council members. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, joined the Board as an ex-officio member in January 2003.

"We are so lucky to have Ben Needell on our team. Through his efforts we have transformed ourselves from a small grassroots organization into a real powerhouse," says Founder Bette Midler. In FY03, every Board member made financial contributions, which totaled \$1.6 million. The Finance and Audit Committee, chaired by Sarah E.

Nash, Vice Chairman of Investment Banking, JPMorgan Chase & Co., has made significant progress since its first meeting in 2002. Ellen Levine, Editor-in-Chief of *Good Housekeeping*, recently agreed to chair the Development Committee. The Nominating, Programming, and Policy Committees are still being developed and will be fully operational in 2005.

NYRP received major gifts in FY02 and FY03 from The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, Barbara Riley Levin, William and Karen Lauder, Linda Allard and Herbert Gallen, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Brownstone Family Foundation, Rodale Inc., the Tiffany & Co. Foundation, and the Booth Ferris Foundation. NYRP was awarded additional grants from American Express, Gilbert & Ildiko Butler Foundation, ConEdison, Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation, The Louis Calder Foundation, The Dyson Foundation, For All Kids

Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, the International Flavors & Fragrances Foundation, the Merlin Foundation, Newman's Own, Inc., The Pinkerton Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Staples Foundation for Learning, and the Toys "R" Us Children's Fund, among others. In addition to its AmeriCorps contract with the U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service, NYRP received grants for programs and capital projects from a number of State and municipal agencies.

In May 2002, NYRP launched "Bette's Garden Club," a major gifts program, with a special kickoff event hosted by Advisory Council members Mica and Ahmet Ertegun at their beautiful home. Chaired by Trustee Barbara Riley Levin, the Garden Club increased major gift revenues from \$150,000 received in FY01 to \$250,000 in FY02, growth which was sustained in FY03. The highly


popular program includes a yearly roster of special events for members. 2002 events included a tour of Central Park's Conservatory Gardens with celebrated public garden designer Lynden Miller and a visit to the Greenwich Village rooftop garden of renowned contemporary artist Jennifer Bartlett. 2003 events featured lectures by Susan Orlean, distinguished author of *The Orchid Thief*, and Alice Waters, acclaimed chef and founder of Chez Panisse.

NYRP's annual Hulaween and Spring Picnic benefit have been extremely successful fundraising tools. Bette Midler gave her first "Wind Beneath My Wings" Leadership Award to Michael and Sherry Goldstein at the "New York, New York" benefit on October 29, 2001, which raised \$1.3 million. Director Norman L. Peck accepted Bette's leadership award on behalf of The Peter Jay Sharp


Top: Al and Patsy Kahn, Benjamin F. Needell and Michael Goldstein at Hulaween.

Bottom: NYRP Founder Bette Midler and Ahmet Ertegun at the first Garden Club event in May, 2002.





Foundation at Hulaween 2002, which raised \$1.35 million. In June 2002 in Fort Washington Park, Governor George E. Pataki awarded Bette the prestigious Governor's Award for Parks and Preservation at our first Spring Picnic benefit, which raised over \$385,000. In June 2003, our second spring benefit, "I Like New York in June," was held at the New Leaf Café in Fort Tryon Park and raised \$360,000.

 Our membership roster currently includes over 5,700 active members, almost a 28% increase since 1999, with our goal of 10,000 members by the end of FY05. NYRP's membership renewal rate has grown from 41% in FY01, to 45% in FY02, to 60% in FY03. The average membership gift increased from \$65.75 in 2001, to \$76.04 in 2002, to \$95.36 in 2003. A year-end appeal in 2001 generated over \$88,000, a \$50,000 increase from the previous year. The 2002 appeal generated more than \$92,000. Telemarketing and plant-a-tree membership campaigns have also been successful.

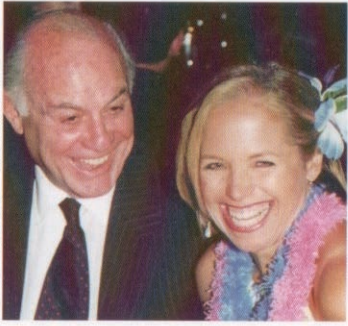
Since 2001, NYRP has put in place a professional development team to manage all aspects of fundraising and donor cultivation under the leadership of Susan Madden, Director of Development, who began work in August 2001.

Our newsletter, *Good Dirt*, was recently redesigned, with added color, regular features, and a new graphic identity. NYRP has begun mailing a membership brochure with the newsletter, which has generated over \$60,000 in new memberships since 2001. Also, NYRP's website, www.nyrp.org, has been improved to provide greater functionality, online giving, and more information on program activities.

With a fully staffed development team, structured and expanded Board leadership, and the continued support of our generous partners, the stage is set to accomplish NYRP's future goals and maintain financial stability. For more information on making a gift to NYRP, please contact NYRP, 31 West 56th Street, New York, NY, 10019 (212) 333-2552, or by e-mail to restore@nyrp.org.

Opposite page:
Springtime tulips in Highbridge Park

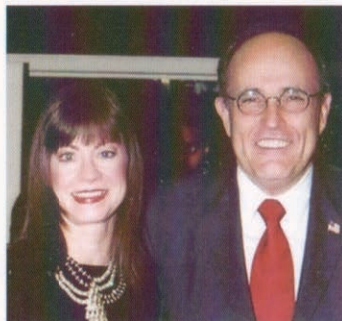




ya gotta have...



L to R: 1st row: Marshall Rose and Katie Couric; Jerry and Margie Perenchio; Liz Smith; Patsy and Alfred Kahn and Benjamin F. Needell ♦ 2nd row: City of New York Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Bette; the late Lillian Goldman and her daughter Amy ♦ 3rd row: Carole Bayer Sager; Liliane and Norman Peck and Bette; Rosie and Kelli O'Donnell; State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, Governor George E. Pataki, and Bette ♦ 4th row: Marcia Diamond and friend; Ellen Levine; Bette and Clyde Brownstone; Susan Sarandon and Bette.



L to R: 1st row: Yoko Ono, Candice Bergen, and Bette; Barbara Riley Levin and Zezé; Mitzi and Warren Eisenberg; Sarah Nash and Allen Reed ♦ 2nd row: Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion; Hon. Ann Richards; Judith Nathan and Former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; Carmen and John Thain ♦ 3rd row: Linda Allard and Herbert Gallen; Jann Wenner and Candice Bergen; Michael Goldstein and Bette; Kevin Kline and Bette ♦ 4th row: Karen Lauder and Bette; Linda Wachner; Mayor Michael Bloomberg; Ahmet Ertegun.



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NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

AND CONSOLIDATED ENTITIES

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF SEPTEMBER 30

ASSETS	2003	2002
Cash - unrestricted	\$ 911,487	\$ 582,648
Cash & cash equivalents - restricted	1,212,000	1,244,331
Grant receivable	270,265	207,425
Pledges receivable	352,603	1,847,125
Prepaid expenses	150,915	131,966
Other assets	59,665	51,731
Property & equipment - net	4,274,635	2,525,009
Total Assets	\$ 7,231,570	\$ 6,590,235

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities:

Accounts payable, accrued expenses and other liabilities	\$261,081	\$315,721
Deferred fund-raising revenue	313,600	372,450
Grant payable	275,000	275,000
Loans payable - vehicles	60,552	-
Notes payable - banks and other	-	370,000
Total liabilities	910,233	1,333,171
Net assets		
Unrestricted	2,617,591	816,438
Temporarily restricted	1,349,096	3,297,976
Permanently restricted	2,354,650	1,142,650
Total net assets	6,321,337	5,257,064
Total Liabilities and net assets	\$ 7,231,570	\$ 6,590,235

Financial Highlights:

- Swindler Cove Park** - 2003 marked the opening of this new five-acre waterfront public park in northern Manhattan. Formerly an illegal dumping ground along the Harlem River, this site has been transformed through a partnership between NYRP and the City and State of New York. Swindler Cove Park now features restored wetlands, native plantings, gracious pathways, and the Riley-Levin Children's Garden, where at-risk youngsters tend their own beds of vegetables, flowers, and herbs through free after-school programs. The park represents the culmination of NYRP's efforts to reclaim open space for the betterment of under served communities.
- Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse at Swindler Cove Park** - During 2003 construction commenced on the Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse, which is the future home of the New York Rowing Association (NYRA). NYRA will manage various youth and community rowing programs from the Boathouse, which will include free recreational and life skills programs for at-risk adolescents. The Boathouse signifies the beginning of an exciting new era for the historic Harlem River waterfront and will herald a return to the great tradition of rowing that was born, and once thrived, on the river.

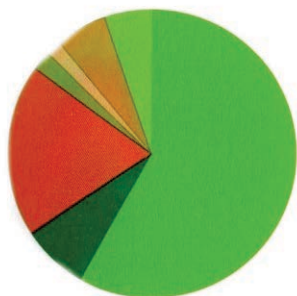
NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

AND CONSOLIDATED ENTITIES

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEARS ENDED SEPTEMBER 30

	2003	2002
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Contributions (net of direct expenses)	\$ 2,545,980	\$ 4,904,890
Grant income	603,544	536,899
Revenue from special events (net of expenses)	1,414,876	861,679
Donated services	166,500	-
Investment income (net of expense)	10,129	10,031
Other income	-	62,650
Total support and revenue	\$ 4,741,029	\$ 6,376,149
EXPENSES		
Program expenses	2,340,801	2,180,266
Supporting services:		
Management and general	907,714	614,433
Fund-raising	428,241	479,567
Total supporting services	<u>1,335,955</u>	<u>1,094,000</u>
Total expenses	<u>3,676,756</u>	<u>3,274,266</u>
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	1,064,273	3,101,883
NET ASSETS-BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>5,257,064</u>	<u>2,155,181</u>
NET ASSETS-END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 6,321,337</u>	<u>\$5,257,064</u>

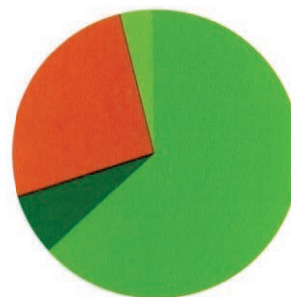
2003



Program Expenses:

■ Parks	58%
■ Educational programs	8%
■ Community Gardens	19%
■ Public events	2%
■ Swindler Cove Park	2%
■ Roberto Clemente State Park	6%
■ New Leaf Café (net operating loss)	5%

2002



■ Parks	63%
■ Educational programs	7%
■ Community Gardens	26%
■ New Leaf Café (net operating loss)	4%



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