



## 2020 Season Report

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A PROJECT OF RED HOOK INITIATIVE

**RED HOOK  
FARMS**



**Red Hook Farms works to increase access to healthy, affordable produce and nurture the next generation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) green leaders. We operate two urban farms, and our programs include a teen farm apprenticeship, weekly farm stands, a CSA, Fresh Food Box and a school workshop program.**

## Our Mission

At Red Hook Initiative (RHI) we believe that social change to overcome systemic inequities begins with empowered youth. In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people in Red Hook to be inspired, resilient and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society.

Together with Red Hook Farms, RHI impacts the lives of over 6,500 residents of Red Hook each year through an interconnected model of youth development, community building and local hiring.

Last year, we joined farmers around the world to continue the essential work of feeding and nourishing our neighbors. We began the 2020 farm season by transforming almost overnight into a hub for food security in Red Hook, coordinating a new weekly produce distribution to feed hundreds of families. This summer, we were thrilled to see so many of you come out for the fresh veggies and fresh air — a kind of solace and respite that only our city's treasured green spaces can provide. From preparing the soil to our first frost, we are proud to share the results of our 2020 season with you in the report ahead.

## A right to healthy food

The farms play an important role in fighting climate change, promoting environmental conservation and offering alternatives to feed people both literally and spiritually. In connecting to the land, we ground our claims to space, to sovereignty, to our own dignity. Red Hook Farms believes in the right to healthy food and that community level action can and does build a better world for ourselves, our neighbors and the earth. Last season we were proud to further our vision:

- Harvested 20,567 pounds of 56 different vegetables across two farms
- Distributed an additional 70,716 pounds of produce over 32 weeks during the height of Covid-19
- Offered apprenticeships for Youth Farmers who collectively took home \$82,057 in wages
- Hosted 235 school children and teachers through virtual visits to our outdoor classrooms







## Growing a Local Movement

Red Hook Farms stewards two sites in the neighborhood, transforming once vacant land into vibrant, resident-led green spaces.



### THE FARMS PRIORITIZE:



#### Youth Empowerment

Employ and train BIPOC Youth Farmers from Red Hook

#### Community Engagement

Provide opportunities for residents to learn about healthy food and hold space with the natural world

#### Fresh Food Access

Grow and distribute 20,000+ pounds of produce





RHI's intergenerational team operated the Emergency Fresh Food Box Program for 32 weeks, distributing 7,853 boxes of produce.



## Responding to Covid-19

In March 2020, when New York City became a global epicenter of the Covid-19 crisis, Red Hook Farms responded to an overwhelming neighborhood need for food access. Our deep roots in Red Hook, our culturally and linguistically competent staff and our history of working with neighborhood partners, government agencies and local elected officials, uniquely positioned the farm team, in collaboration with RHI colleagues, to coordinate a local response.

*"Fruits and vegetables freshly harvested taste so much better than what we can get from the supermarket. The work done on Red Hook Farms has a positive effect on the community and helps a lot of people live a healthier lifestyle."*

—Jawad, Youth Farmer



**Distributed**  
**70,716**  
**pounds of**  
**produce**





**Served 915  
community  
members and  
their families**



**More than  
90 volunteers  
devoted  
548 hours**



**RHI created a community-based screening tool and surveyed 697 residents to identify medically vulnerable and food insecure households. We used the findings to advocate for community needs and to connect residents to the newly launched Emergency Fresh Food Box Program, telehealth screenings and counseling services.**

Two weeks after NYC ordered a shelter in place, Red Hook Farms started a free, Emergency Fresh Food Box Program. Over the next 32 weeks, the farm team:

- Distributed 70,716 pounds of produce, sending home 7,853 boxes, of which 2,571 were delivered to elderly and homebound residents through our partnership with Red Hook Relief
- Served 915 community members and their families; approximately 75% of the boxes went to Red Hook Houses residents

More than 90 volunteers devoted 548 hours to the program, along with the help of local partnerships with Dig, GrowNYC, the Miccio Community Center, Red Hook Container Terminal, Red Hook Relief and Red Hook Transfer Co.





# Youth Empowerment

## Youth Farmers Apprenticeship Program

Our apprenticeship program hired, trained and mentored budding BIPOC green leaders from Red Hook in urban agriculture skills while cultivating their leadership, career and job skills. The program offered three cycles aligning with the growing season: spring, summer and fall.

From seed to sale, 21 Youth Farmers participated in production and apprenticeship, such as:

- Sustainable urban farming techniques
- Weekly farm stand operations
- Food justice advocacy and collective learning
- Street tree stewarding
- DIY farm videos and virtual guest speakers

## Farm Based Learning

When New York City school children began learning from home, the Red Hook Farms team worked with teachers from P.S. 15, P.S. 676, Arts and Letters and The International School of Brooklyn to offer Farm Fridays. Virtual visits gave students the chance to see what was blooming and growing, explore the seasons on the farm and peek inside the chicken coop.

Student questions guided the visits and prompted spontaneous discoveries such as insect eggs on the underside of leaves. Each session concluded with information about our weekly produce distributions and farm stand.

*"I farm because it helps me connect to the earth and my ancestors before me...Our work on the farm is about the community it brings together and how it changes our perspectives on the way we eat in such a positive way."*

—Airiell, Youth Farmer

**5,471 hours worked**

**\$82,057 earned**

**235 students hosted  
through 14 virtual visits**

**A group of Youth Farmers, Youth Organizers and Local Leaders participated in the Red Hook Climate March to call attention to the removal of 457 trees from the Red Hook Houses this year and highlight the campaign to #FullyFundNYCHA.**





# Meet the 2020 Farm Team



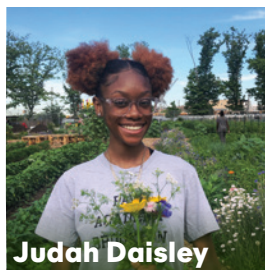
**Jawad Almansouri**



**Nefratia Coleman\***



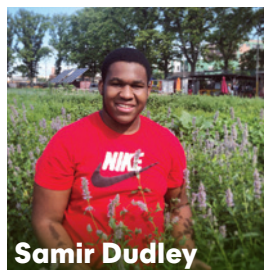
**Justin Craig\***



**Judah Daisley**



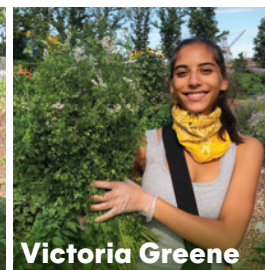
**Jenibel De La Rosa**



**Samir Dudley**



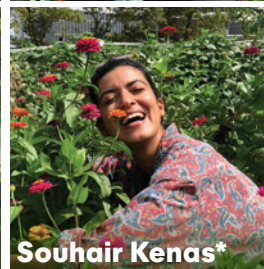
**Lauren Duran**



**Victoria Greene**



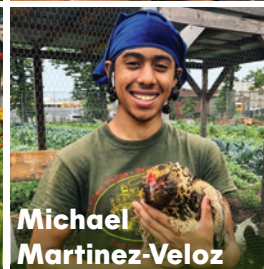
**Alex Isidoro**



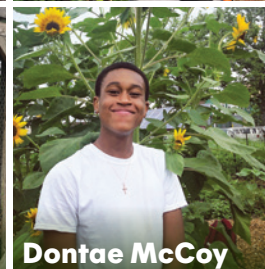
**Souhair Kenas\***



**Airiel Martinez**



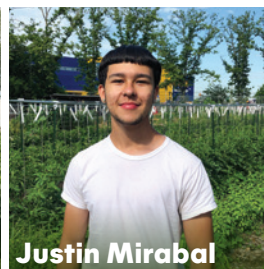
**Michael Martinez-Veloz**



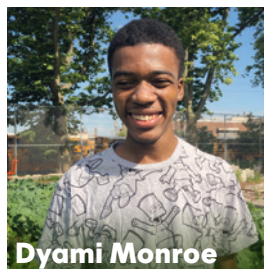
**Dontae McCoy**



**Destiny Mirabal**



**Justin Mirabal**



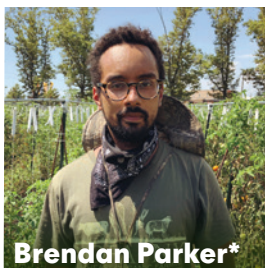
**Dyami Monroe**



**Saara Nafici\***



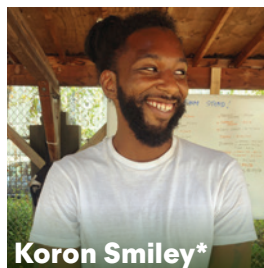
**Qa'deer Oden**



**Brendan Parker\***



**Will Ramos**



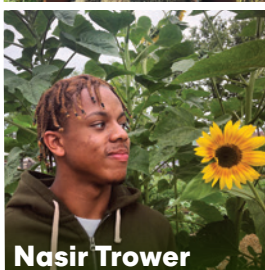
**Koron Smiley\***



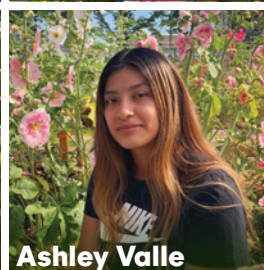
**Andrew Tiburcio\***



**Robert Torres**



**Nasir Trower**



**Ashley Valle**



**Joshua Valle**



**Chane Wright\***

**And last but not least,  
Tymani Kizer and  
Leval McClellan.**

\* Adult Staff





# Community Engagement

## Nourishing Local Gardens

Due to COVID-19 shelter in place and subsequent City budget cuts, the NYC Compost Project on the Columbia Street Farm site was closed this year. Operated in partnership with NYC Department of Sanitation and Brooklyn Botanic Garden, this community resource diverted 150 tons of organic material in years past, and even now continues to welcome volunteers who maintain the site and sift finished compost for community gardeners and local greening projects.

Despite the loss of funding and staff, the farm team plus a crew of dedicated compost volunteers were able to offer monthly compost giveaways, July-November, so local gardeners could access the rich compost to nourish their own gardens and support food production beyond the farms and across the borough.

## Green Team Gratitude

In 2020, we hosted 201 volunteers who worked 1,679 hours to assemble and distribute food boxes, harvest produce and tackle farm projects big and small. Special thanks to BASIS Independent Brooklyn, Grace Church, Neighborhood Plant Club, Red Hook Relief and Rockets of Awesome for their steadfast partnership.

**201 volunteers  
worked 1,679 hours**





## Fresh Food Access

Every season we grow and harvest a variety of culturally relevant vegetables and herbs using organic and regenerative farming practices. Nearly 60 varieties of vegetables were planted this year, carefully chosen using the results of resident and Youth Farmer surveys. A record number of shoppers picked up produce at the weekly farm stand operated by the Youth Farmers. In 2020, Red Hook Farms changed local health, menus and minds:

- 20,567 pounds of produce harvested on two urban farms
- 7,853 Emergency Fresh Food Boxes distributed to 915 families
- 2,837 shoppers visited the farm stand over 22 weeks
- 73 households participated in our CSA

### Conserving the environment is a core value, and this past season we:

- Collaborated with TrueLove Seeds to grow bitter melon seeds for sale
- Partnered with Carbon Sponge as an affiliate researcher
- Conducted bi-weekly soil testing to measure the capacity of our soil to sequester carbon
- Hosted two workshops at the first annual TUFFS - NYC Farmer to Farmer Conference: Tomato Trellising on Urban Farms and Seed Saving
- Presented an Integrated Pest Management workshop for urban farmers hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Partnered with Brooklyn Botanic Garden and St. Nick's Alliance to host a horticulture training program





# Farm Leaders in the Spotlight

**40 Under 40: The Rising Stars in  
NYC Food Policy, Class of 2020**



**Nefratia Coleman**  
Red Hook Houses  
Farm Manager



**Souhair Kenas**  
Farm Education  
Manager

In June 2020, The Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center released its annual class of 'Rising Stars' — 40 individuals under 40 years old who are working to transform the food system. The Center honored two leaders on the Red Hook Farms team along with their peer policymakers, educators, community advocates, farmers and innovators who are making significant strides to create healthier, more sustainable food environments and to use food to promote community and economic development.

## Urban Farms Work To Get Healthy Foods To Their Communities

**Nefratia and Youth Farmer  
Alex welcomed Craig Melvin &  
The TODAY Show for a new series,  
"Inequality in America"**



Scan me with  
your smartphone  
camera to watch!



Scan me with your  
smartphone camera  
to read Brendan's  
first person profile!

# Men'sHealth

**Featured in the September  
2020 issue of Men's Health:**

## ***I Believe Good Food Is a Right. So I'm Teaching Kids to Farm.***

*"Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter demonstrations haven't changed our mission at Red Hook. They've solidified it. Good food is a right. Farming is political—especially to farm on a small scale, in urban areas, and organically. It's a political act because for so many years the kind of farming our U.S. government supports has been the complete opposite of those things: large, rural, and nonorganic."*

—Brendan Parker  
Columbia Street Farm Manager



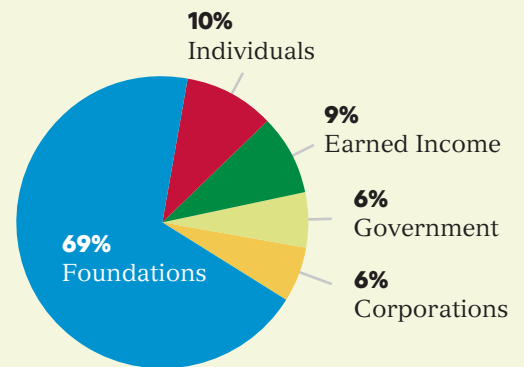


# We are grateful for the generosity of institutional and individual supporters.

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## 2020 Income



**Total expenses: \$720,000**

*RHI relies on general operating support from countless donors who believe in our mission. For a complete list of institutional supporters, visit [rhicenter.org](http://rhicenter.org).*







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Brooklyn, NY 11231



### Red Hook Farms Team

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Chief Strategy Officer

**Saara Nafici**  
Director of Red Hook Farms

**Souhair Kenas**  
Farm Education Manager

**Brendan Parker**  
Farm Manager,  
Columbia Street Farm

**Nefratia Coleman**  
Farm Manager,  
Red Hook Houses Farm

**Corey Blant**  
Interim Distribution  
Coordinator

**Andrew Tiburcio**  
Distribution Coordinator

**Shamira Graham**  
Distribution Assistant

**Dyami Monroe**  
Farm Intern

**Alex Isidoro**  
Farm Intern

**Chane Wright**  
Farm and Distribution  
Assistant

**Koron Smiley**  
Farm Assistant

**Justin Craig**  
Farm Assistant

**Will Suarez**  
Development & Volunteer  
Coordinator

**Xiaochun Sun**  
Census Organizer &  
Distribution Assistant

**Maria Mercado**  
Census Organizer &  
Distribution Assistant

**Eduarda Rocha-Waid**  
Census Organizer

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**Executive Director** Morgan Monaco

## CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

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### Contributing Photographers

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Alden Parkinson

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