



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Marine Park Alliance provides cultural, environmental, and volunteer programming in Marine Park for the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am delighted to share this annual report, reflecting on my first full year as Executive Director of Marine Park Alliance. It has been an exciting year of growth, impact, and community connection, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside so many dedicated supporters, partners, and volunteers.

Parks are one of New York City's greatest tools for affordability and quality of life. In accepting her new post in January, NYC Parks Commissioner Tricia Shimamura declared NYC Parks "the agency of affordability." Since our inception, Marine Park Alliance has been committed to ensuring that cost is never a barrier to participation in public programs. We continue to offer free programs, events, and opportunities that welcome everyone into Brooklyn's largest park.

In fact, 2025 was our biggest year ever. Marine Park Alliance reached approximately 8,000 participants through more than 90 programs and events. From environmental education and volunteer stewardship to cultural programming and workforce development, we expanded our presence both in the park and online while serving more people than ever before. We also celebrated the graduation of our inaugural Teen Leadership Program class and welcomed an even larger second cohort. Their enthusiasm for service, environmental stewardship, and nonprofit work gives me great confidence in the next generation of green civic leaders.

None of this would have been possible without your support. Together, we are ensuring that Marine Park remains a vibrant, welcoming, and accessible resource for all.

Thank you for being part of our work and our community.

With deep gratitude,



Scott Middleton

Executive Director



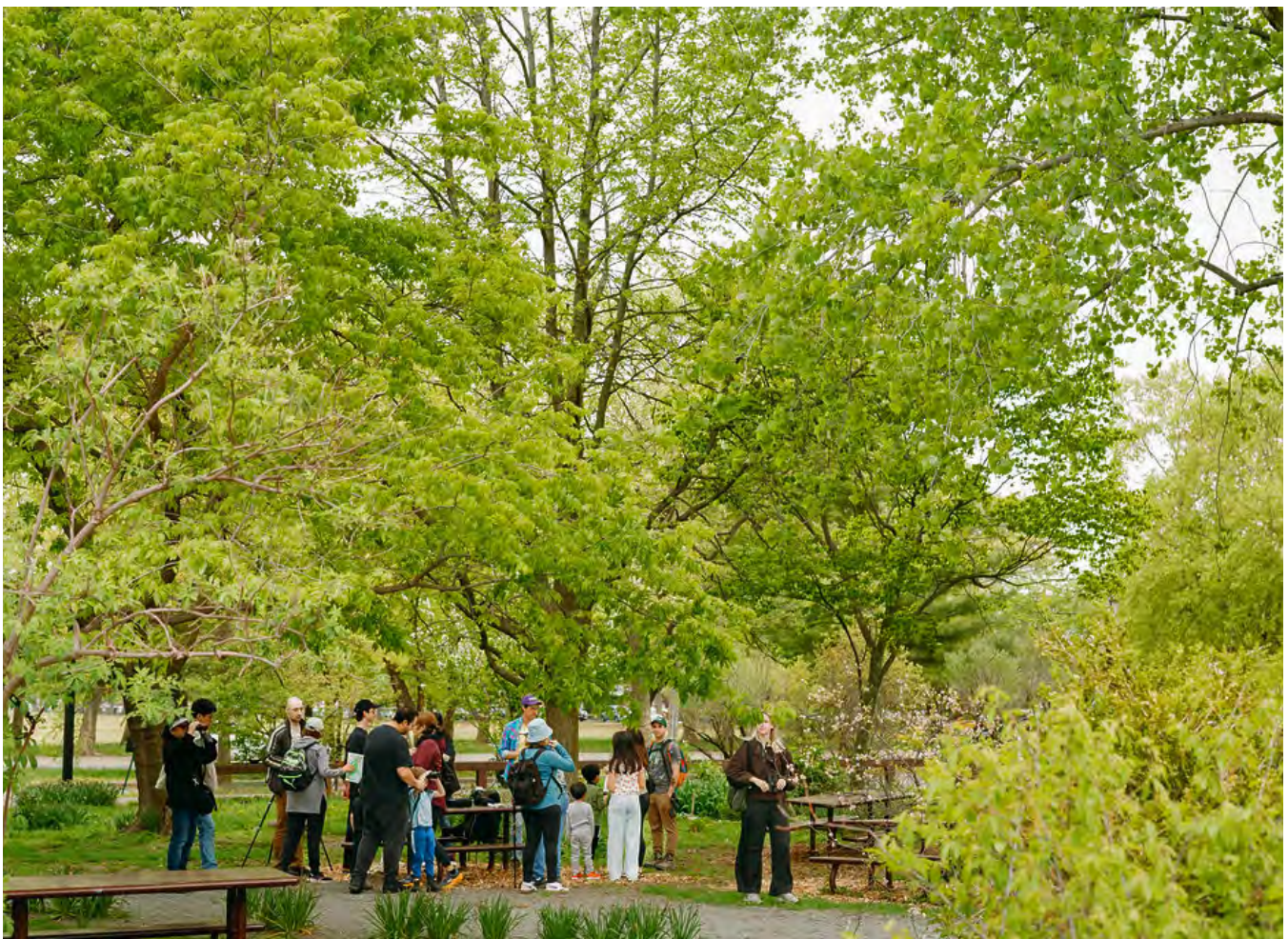
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7,911 MARINE PARK EXPERIENCES

In 2025, Marine Park Alliance programs engaged 7,911 participants—a 79% increase from the previous year. This growth demonstrates our continued ability, like a magnet, to draw new people into Marine Park through innovative programming and partnerships. Alongside returning favorites, we introduced several new programs, including *Forest Bathing*, *Intro to Cricket*, *Field Sketching*, and *School of Fish: Gyotaku Printmaking*, offering fresh opportunities for visitors to explore nature, culture, and creativity. We continued strong programs with our long-time partners like Assemblymember Jaime Williams, Councilmember Mercedes Narcisse, and NYC Bird Alliance, while also expanding our network of collaborators, welcoming new partners such as Open House New York, the Municipal Arts Society, the Waterfront Alliance, the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP), and the National Park Service. From environmental education and cultural events to hands-on volunteer days, our programs created free opportunities for people of all ages to connect with neighbors, engage with the park, and strengthen their sense of community. Read on to discover the many ways we built community in 2025.

Photo Credit: Cameron Blaylock



NEW VIEWS ON NATURE

Marine Park Alliance offered a robust slate of environmental programs designed to connect people of all ages with the park's rich biodiversity.

Many programs built on previous successes, including our 12-part Intro to *Birding* walk series, led by expert guides from NYC Bird Alliance. We also hosted another community Astronomy Night at the Salt Marsh Nature Center, a fascinating *Bats! Night Walk* event in partnership with Gotham Bat Conservancy, and two Angling for Fish workshops with New York State DEC. Our signature fall event, *Raptorama*, once again drew more than 400 visitors for a close encounter with native birds of prey, thanks to partners American Littoral Society, NYC Bird Alliance, and Wildlife In Need of Rescue and Rehabilitation. Other returning favorites included our *Monarch Watch* butterfly banding event, our *Wildflower Walk* with the Torrey Botanical Society, and Terrapin Stations, our annual diamondback terrapin education event.

In 2025, we also introduced new ways to experience the park's ecosystems. A two-part Introduction to *Kayaking* series with the National Park Service allowed participants to paddle Gerritsen Creek and observe the marsh from a waterfowl's perspective. Our new *School of Fish: Gytaku Printmaking* program combined art and science, inviting participants to investigate fish anatomy and learn how aquatic species are adapted to life underwater. Children also had fun new ways to explore plants and pollinators through creative hands-on activities like Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy's *Park Pals Pop-up*. Additional new offerings included *Forest Bathing* on City of Forest Day, a discussion of cherry trees with NYC Parks Director of Street Tree Planting Navé Strauss, and a walking tour of Four Sparrow Marsh with retired NYC Parks Chief Naturalist Mike Feller during Open House New York weekend. Together, these programs encouraged visitors to see Marine Park's natural resources through fresh eyes and deepen their understanding of the ecosystems that make the park unique.



Photo Credit: Sean Lenehan

TOGETHER THROUGH CULTURE

Marine Park Alliance continued its tradition of offering a diverse slate of cultural programs in 2025, creating opportunities for neighbors of all ages to celebrate the many traditions, stories, and artistic expressions that make Brooklyn unique. The year began with a vibrant Lunar New Year celebration featuring NYC's oldest Chinese Lion Dance Club, bringing color, music, and movement to the park.

Throughout the year, we introduced new cultural experiences that invited participants to explore history, creativity, and community. Highlights included a quilting workshop led by Dr. Myrah Brown Green that explored African Adinkra symbols and their cultural significance through hands-on sewing, a *Tu Bishvat Parsley Giveaway*, and a Women's History Month event honoring local women whose leadership, mentorship, and service have strengthened our community. We also launched new Just for Kids programming, beginning with the Crab Moon Summer Reading Event with Brooklyn Public Library, which encouraged young visitors to connect with books, storytelling, and the natural world.

The warmer months also featured beloved traditions including our annual *Easter Egg Hunt* and *Fall Festival* events with Assemblymember Jaime Williams, as well as the biannual *Arts & Crafts Showcase*. We were also proud to support Assemblymember Williams' annual summer programming, including concerts by Regina Opera and the Caribbean Month Concert.

The year concluded with our multicultural *Festival of Lights* series. Alongside our annual celebrations of Christmas, Diwali, Chanukah, and the Winter Solstice, we were proud to offer a new Kwanzaa Drumming workshop in partnership with Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora Dance. Through these programs, Marine Park Alliance continued to honor the people of Brooklyn while creating welcoming spaces for learning, celebration, and community connection.



INSPIRING EXPERIENCES: THE JUST FOR KIDS SERIES TURNS FOUR

Now in its fourth year, Marine Park Alliance's *Just for Kids* series continued to grow as one of our most popular family programs. Held primarily in the park's playgrounds and open spaces, Just for Kids combines hands-on educational experiences with unforgettable entertainment, helping children build connections with nature, their community, and one another. In 2025, we expanded the series with new programs including *Wuffy & the Magic Lintball*, a reading and craft event with local author Helen Rogosin, and Park Pals Pop-up, a new early-childhood nature program presented in partnership with Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy.

Other highlights included a Father's Day visit from the Gerritsen Beach Volunteer Fire Department, where children explored a firetruck and ambulance while learning about community safety in English, Spanish, and Russian. Families also enjoyed the outrageous *The Choose-Your-Own Adventures of Turtle Boy* with Haitian-American puppeteer Emmanuel Elpenord, a visit from live reptiles with *Uncle Tony's Reptile Show*, and a summer reading kickoff celebration with Brooklyn Public Library. The season once again featured the laughter-filled return of *Summertime Sillies with Looney Louie*, a perennial favorite among park families. Together, these programs transformed Marine Park into a place where young visitors could play, learn, imagine, and discover throughout the year.



CHEERS TO VOLUNTEERS

In 2025, Marine Park Alliance celebrated a record-breaking year of volunteer engagement, with 937 dedicated volunteers contributing more than 5,000 hours of service to Brooklyn's largest park. From longtime park advocates to first-time participants looking for meaningful ways to give back, volunteers played an essential role in caring for Marine Park's natural and recreational spaces. Together, they removed graffiti, collected litter, planted native species, bagged leaves, and supported countless stewardship projects throughout the year. Volunteers joined together to fight erosion on Marine Park's trails, to support NYC Parks' annual Mulchfest tree recycling event, and to participate in the decennial NYC Tree Census. Their commitment demonstrates the extraordinary impact that community-driven action can have on a public space.

At our annual *Giving Thanks Luncheon*, we recognized individuals whose dedication went above and beyond. Among those honored was Teen Leader Erin Liu, who contributed an impressive 136 hours of service across park stewardship projects, cultural events, and organizational support.

A major highlight of the year was the continued growth of our Teen Leadership Training Program. Created in response to community feedback and supported by Con Edison, City Parks Foundation, the Valentine Perry Snyder Fund, and CitizensNYC, the program expanded from seven students in its inaugural cohort to 16 public high school students from across Brooklyn. Co-created by our Executive Director and a Marine Park Alliance board member with extensive experience in education and youth development, the program combines environmental literacy, leadership development, and hands-on conservation training.

Teen Leaders earned stipends while supervising volunteer groups, assisting with public programs, and developing practical skills in communication, teamwork, and project management. They also played key roles in cultural events, including our multicultural *Festival of Lights* series, gaining firsthand experience in the responsibility, adaptability, and perseverance that effective leadership requires. Their growth throughout the year offers a glimpse of the next generation of environmental stewards and civic leaders.

Returning Teen Leader MD shares, **"I'm back because last year I learned how to lead — now I want to build on that and help others grow, too."** For new participants like Chloe, the program is a chance to connect with the natural world: **"I'm excited to learn more about nature and how I can help take care of it."**



Marine Park Alliance was also fortunate to host two outstanding college interns in 2025. Amanda James of Long Island University strengthened our capacity through program marketing, event coordination, and research examining the relationship between volunteerism and environmental stewardship. Max Gilyutin, a Brooklyn native and graduate of the University of Michigan, helped develop environmental lesson plans for the Teen Leadership Program and created new systems to organize our tools and equipment. Their contributions enhanced our work throughout the year, and we are grateful for their time, talent, and dedication.



Left: Intern Amanda James, Middle: Intern Max Gilyutin

AFTER THE WILDFIRES

In 2025, Marine Park Alliance launched an ambitious wildfire recovery initiative with support from City Parks Foundation/NYC Green Fund following a series of wildfires that burned over 20 acres of Marine Park in October and November 2024, including a single fire that burned across six acres. Working in partnership with NYC Parks and the Natural Areas Conservancy, we began restoring damaged natural areas through volunteer planting events and ecological rehabilitation projects designed to strengthen the park's resilience for years to come.

Restoration efforts focused on reestablishing native plant communities in burned areas, including species such as beach plum, winged sumac, and northern barberry. These native plants support local wildlife, improve biodiversity, stabilize soils, and help reduce future wildfire risks. In addition to restoration work, the FDNY selected Marine Park as one of the first locations for a new network of solar-powered fire detection cameras. Installed at the Marine Park Golf Course, this new system provides 24/7 monitoring and real-time alerts when smoke or flames are detected, allowing emergency responders to reach incidents more quickly before they can spread. The initiative reflects growing recognition of Marine Park's ecological importance and vulnerability to wildfire conditions, particularly during periods of drought and high winds.

These efforts attracted significant public attention, with coverage from *CBS New York*, *New York Post*, *Canarsie Courier*, and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. Most importantly, they have brought together volunteers, community partners, and park lovers who are committed to helping Marine Park recover and thrive. We are grateful to the NYC Green Fund, City Parks Foundation, NYC Parks, the Natural Areas Conservancy, and the many volunteers whose efforts helped write the next chapter in the park's recovery.



GARDEN OF GIVING GALA CULTIVATES COMMUNITY SUPPORT

On May 22, Marine Park Alliance's Garden of Giving Gala brought together community leaders, supporters, elected officials, and park advocates for an unforgettable evening celebrating the people who help Marine Park thrive. Held at the Marine Park Golf House, the event honored two extraordinary champions of the park and the broader Brooklyn community: Assemblymember Jaime Williams and Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Randy Peers.

The evening raised \$32,660 to support Marine Park programs, environmental stewardship initiatives, youth leadership development, and community events. Beyond its fundraising success, the gala provided a unique opportunity to strengthen relationships among Marine Park's diverse network of supporters, fostering a deeper sense of shared purpose and investment in the future of Brooklyn's largest park.

One of the evening's most memorable moments came when honoree Randy Peers received a heartfelt introduction from his daughter, Leslieann, whose remarks highlighted his longstanding commitment to community service and leadership. We were also grateful to receive special pledges of support from the Marine Park Lions Club and the Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club, reflecting the broad coalition of organizations invested in the park's success.

The event would not have been possible without the generosity of our sponsors, partners, volunteers, and supporters. We extend special thanks to the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Con Edison, National Grid, the Carro-D'Alessandro Family, Marine Park Golf Course, Ciardullo Architecture & Engineering, Marine Park Funeral Home, Voyager Acquisition, and the Support Center for Nonprofit Management.



Photo Credits: Darren Hinton

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT: SHARING MARINE PARK'S STORIES

Marine Park Alliance continued to expand its digital presence in 2025, using photography, video, and storytelling to connect people with Brooklyn's largest park both online and in person. One of the year's highlights was the first annual Marine Park Photo Contest, which invited visitors to share their favorite images of the park's landscapes, wildlife, recreation, and community life. The contest showcased the incredible talent of local photographers while creating a vibrant collection of images that captured Marine Park through the eyes of those who know and love it best. From stunning wildlife encounters and colorful sunsets over the marsh to family outings in the park, the submissions reflected the many ways people experience and value the park. The contest generated strong community participation and helped introduce new audiences to Marine Park through social media and digital communications.

We also partnered with videographer Darren Hinton of Play NYCe to document the stories of people whose lives have been shaped by Marine Park. Throughout the year, Darren captured footage across the seasons, highlighting the park's natural beauty and the diverse community that gathers here to volunteer, learn, recreate, and celebrate. These videos featured park users, community leaders, volunteers, and program participants sharing their personal connections to Marine Park, creating a powerful record of the park's impact on Brooklyn residents. By combining compelling visuals with authentic community voices, this project has helped

Photo Credit: Keith Michael (First Place)



Marine Park Alliance reach new audiences online while preserving the stories that make the park such a special place. Darren's work highlighting the value of our parks and public spaces through the voices and stories of the people who use them even got him recognized by the David Prize's *What's the Big Idea* series.

Finally, Marine Park Alliance completed a major redesign of our website in September 2025. Our goal for this refresh was simple: modernize the look, streamline the backend, and create a consistent experience across all devices and browsers. The new site now features a revamped, modern design aligned with the Marine Park Alliance brand, including improved layout, typography, color usage, and visual hierarchy—making it easier than ever to find what you're looking for. Users also benefit from mobile-friendly navigation and easier sign-ups for volunteer events, newsletter subscriptions, and more.



Photos, clockwise from above right:
Carol Page (2nd Place), Videographer Darren Hinton,
Michelle Baum (3rd Place)

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Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

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NYC Parks (Retired)

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Photo Credit: Davon Benjamin

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All our work is underpinned by the generous financial assistance support of our donors and funders. We are tremendously grateful to the following donors individuals and organizations:

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NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

Foundation Support Provided By

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Kings Plaza Canarsie Kiwanis Club

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National Parks Conservation Association

Research Foundation/CUNY

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Jeffrey Zweig

PARTNERS

Marine Park Alliance coalesces many nonprofit groups that care deeply about the park. Our partners are listed below alphabetically:

63rd Precinct Community Council
Amateur Astronomers Association
American Littoral Society
Brooklyn Cricket League
Brooklyn Public Library/Gerritsen Beach Branch
Brooklyn Technical High School/
Asian American Club
CUNY Brooklyn College/Africana Studies &
Linguistics Departments
Flossy Organization
Gerritsen Beach Property Owners Association
Gerritsen Beach Volunteer Fire Department
Gotham Bat Conservancy
Historic Hendrick I. Lott House
International Lions Club/Marine Park Chapter
Jamaica Bay Guardian
Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy
Kings Plaza-Canarsie Kiwanis Club
Lawyers Alliance for New York

Madison-Marine Homecrest Civic Association
Marine Park Community Association
Mercy Worldwide
Millennium Development/
Marine Park Older Adult Center
National Park Service/
Gateway National Recreation Area
Natural Areas Conservancy
New York Road Runners
New Yorkers for Parks
NYC Bird Alliance
NYC Parks/Natural Resources Division
NYC Parks/Urban Park Rangers
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Partnerships for Parks/City Parks Foundation
Salt Marsh Alliance
Torrey Botanical Society
Urban Glass

Photo Credit: Davon Benjamin



FINANCES

Over the course of 2025, the Alliance continued to raise funds to support organizational growth, including the addition of a second staff member in 2026. These figures summarize MPA's projected 2025 income and expenses on a cash basis. Future year reportings will present this information on an accrual basis following an accounting transition in our 2025 Form 990.

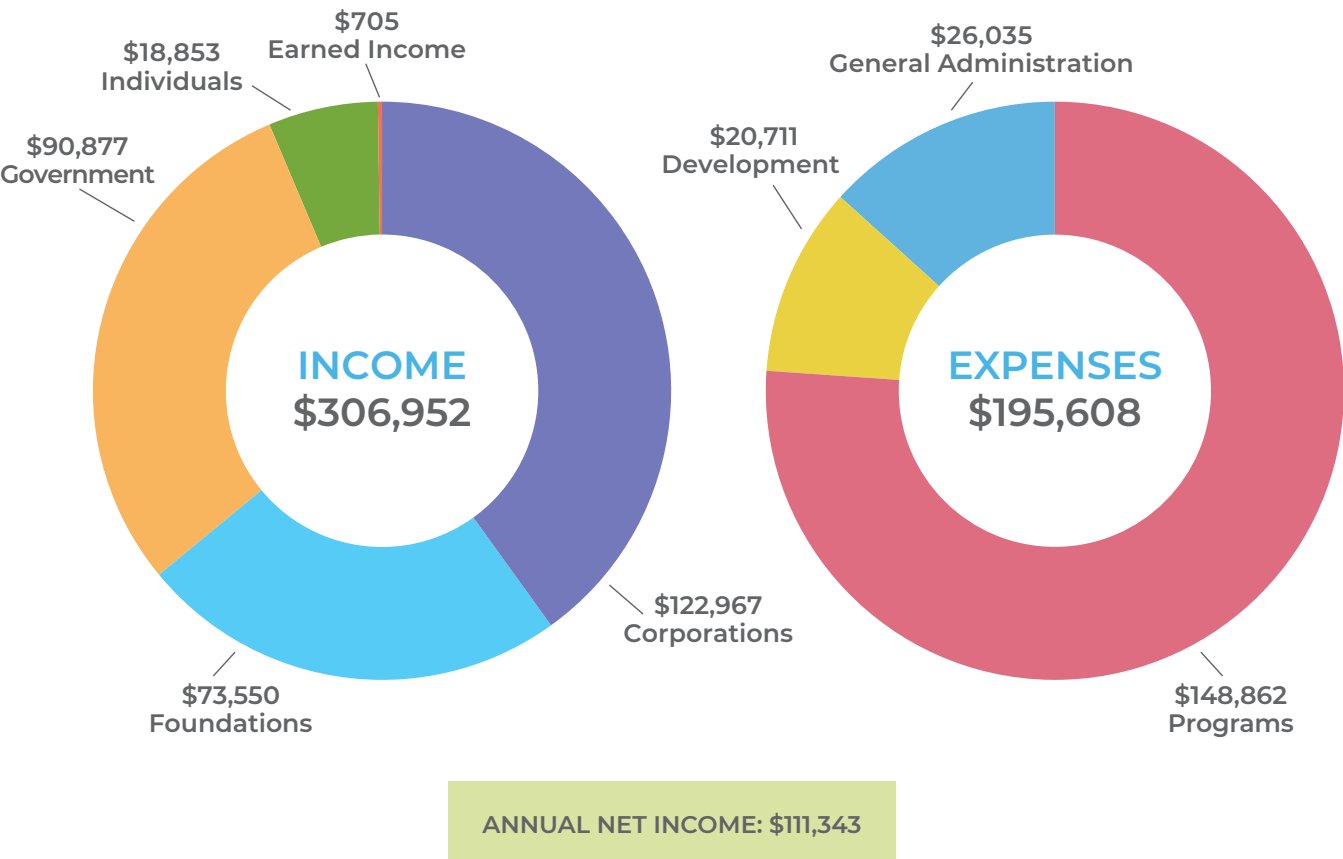


Photo credit: Irina Mednik

