

**CONCRETE
SAFARIS**
WORK OUT YOUR
ADVENTURE



Annual Report 2017

**Youth Transforming The World
Starting In Their Own Backyards**

Letter from the ED/Chair

May 10, 2018

Dear Friends,

In 2017, youth transformed the world starting in their own backyards, which happens to be Concrete Safaris' new vision statement. We shut down city streets for outdoor play and community building, grew lots of vegetables and herbs at Jefferson and Washington Houses to supplement our diets, and increased the numbers of active children, employed interns, and engaged volunteers.

Our City Surfers after-school program focused on gardening, cycling, photography, nature adventures, race design and outreach, and field trips, which included visits to NYC landmarks, museums, and parks. After schoolers delivered heart-felt speeches at the Community Board 11's Permits meeting to secure street closures for our annual race series. In each of these outdoor activities, they explored their community, learned life skills, and developed independence and confidence.

Concrete Safaris' Outdoor Leadership Academy grew 30% with 127 interns developing job skills in the gardens, on city streets, in the community, and at the office.

We hosted 61 outdoor events in our gardens and on New York City streets in 2017, which drew 1,119 volunteers and 4,750 children, youth, and families.

Our roster of board members and advisors expanded as well. Our new volunteers have helped Concrete Safaris to revise its mission and vision, to improve its governance, and to establish safer and healthier outdoor spaces in order to help the organization reach more children and youth in the neighborhood.

Amazingly, 2018 will be our tenth year of operation. We look forward to seeing you at a number of upcoming anniversary events including celebration dinners, photo exhibitions, and community volunteer days in our gardens, a 5-date summer race series, and more.

We invite you to be a part of our adventures!

Much appreciated,



Mac Levine, MPH.
Founding Executive Director

Sincerely,



Mandy DeRoche
Board Chair

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Our Values

V

Value, Respect and Responsibility

We respect ourselves, each other, the land, all living things within the land, and our personal and group belongings. We take responsibility for our personal and group actions.

U

Uniqueness

We show the world our best selves.

A

Amicability, Fun, Friendship

We love to have fun outside every day! We are friends through good and bad, helping each other to succeed.

E

Exercise + Eating Healthy

We exercise regularly and eat healthfully every day to create positive energy for ourselves and to meet life's challenges with a clear mind.

L

Listening, Learning, Leadership

We listen to each other. We learn to build our skills, knowledge and character. We are healthy leaders, during and outside of workshop hours, in our community and beyond.

S

Sharing, Safety

We share our ideas for the benefit of the group and all the supplies available to the group. Without greed or entitlement. We practice safety and are aware that what we do impacts individuals around us

Our Mission



To prepare youth in East Harlem and beyond to lead healthy lives and shape their environment through outdoor education, play, exploration, and community engagement.

Our Four Key Programs

City Surfers After School

Concrete Safaris' after-school program's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. It currently engages fifty children for 15 hours each week from PS 83 and PS 182 in East Harlem.

Outdoor Leadership Academy Internships

In 2017, 127 youth (ages 14 – 24) participated in a 6- to 25-week internship program. The goals are to expose youth to environmental health employment opportunities, develop their leadership skills, and involve them in leading local children in healthy activities.

Green Exercise Day Field Trips

Since 2008, more than 13,000 2nd - 5th graders have participated in garden-based field trips held from Earth Week through Thanksgiving, involving gardening, urbanism, outdoor play and exercise, and environmental health.

JungleGym 2017 Summer Series

Through this annual activity held in East Harlem, elementary school children and 14-24-year-old interns transform outdoor spaces not traditionally used for play. All participate in obstacle race design, construction, promotion, and healthy competition. Youth learn how to lead the events.



City Surfers After School Program



Concrete Safaris' after-school program's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. Seventy City Surfers gardened, cycled, took photos and held an exhibition, went on field trips and nature adventures, and designed and promoted JungleGym 2017.

Partners: BlackRock Foundation, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Office of Melissa Mark-Viverito, The Pinkerton Foundation, NYC Department of Health, New York City Department of Youth



Parent Feedback

This is such a wonderful program in our community. My child has gained so much knowledge about gardening, loves biking and strives to eat healthier because of this program. It is a privilege to have this program in our community for our kids. Thanks Mac for making this program available to our kids. - Mom

69% of parents say that their child asks to go outside more often on weekends and outside of program hours after participating in Concrete Safaris.

50% of parents say that their child asks for fruits and veggies since participating in Concrete Safaris.





61 Events
4,784 Fitness Hours

**City Surfers played,
learned, and
explored outdoors
for 11,774 hours**

**16,558 Total
Fitness hours**

**4,750 Children, Youth &
Families Got Active at
Concrete Safaris' outdoor
events in 2017**

**3,000 Volunteer
Service Hours**



Green Exercise Days

Concrete Safaris hosts 2nd-5th graders from NYC School District 4 at its gardens, Mad Fun Farm at Washington Houses and Jefferson Gardens at Jefferson Houses, where children learn about the connections between city infrastructure and healthy eating and green space, conduct research around what changes they and the community may want to see in the gardens, and then commit to making those changes a reality. Concrete Safaris changed its format for Green Exercise Days from half-day, seasonal programming to add weekly visits from local schools PS 57, 102, 182, and Mosaic.



Partners: NYC Housing Authority, Public Schools 7, 50, 72, 83, 102, 155, 182, & Amber Charter School, Bank Street Summer Camp, Central Park East II, Bartlett Tree Experts, CIT Group, Deloitte & Touche, Hardware NY, Harlem RBI, New York Junior League, Petsky Prunier, SCOR Reinsurance Company, Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, TAG Young Scholars, YMCA.



The Benefits of Outdoor Play

“Sunlight hitting the skin begins a process that leads to the creation and activation of vitamin D. Studies suggest that this vitamin helps fight certain conditions, from osteoporosis and concert depression and heart attacks.”

-Harvard Health Publishing

“Studies show that children who spend time in natural outdoor environments have a reductions in attention fatigue and children diagnosed with ADHD show a reduction in symptoms.”

-(NYS)Department of Environmental Conservation

Spending time in nature gives people an increased feeling of vitality, increasing their energy levels and making them feel more animated. Their performance levels are, in turn, increased by this improved state of mind.

-Agriculture and Life Science
Texas A&M University

JungleGym 2017

~A DOT Weekend Walks Event Sponsored by Tahl Propp Equities ~

Through this annual activity held in East Harlem, elementary school children and 14-24-year-old interns transform outdoor spaces not traditionally used for play, learning obstacle race design, construction, promotion, volunteerism, and healthy competition.



The race took place on Third Avenue between 115th - 117th Streets and 116th - 118th Streets, and 116th Street between Second and Third Avenues on the last Saturdays of June, July, and August, respectively. The Active Living Fair included games, arts & crafts, bouncy houses, face painting, the FDNY Smoke House, health promotion booths, backpack and school supply giveaways, and more!



Selected as the only East Harlem based NYC Department of Transportation Weekend Walks program in 2017, closing 5-blocks of commercial corridors for outdoor play and health education activities.

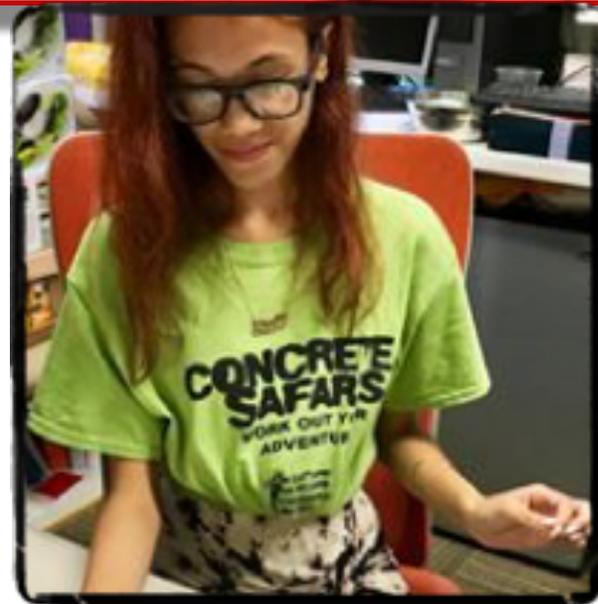
Partners: NYC Department of Transportation's Weekend Walks Program, the NYPD's 23rd and 25th Precincts Community Affairs, NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Tahl Propp Equities, Boriken Neighborhood Health Center, Citi Bike, NYC Community Board 11, Edible Schoolyard, Harlem Art Collective, Open Architecture / New York, El Barrio's Operation Fightback, PS 83 and 182, NYC School District 4, East Harlem, FDNY, SMART.

Outdoor Leadership Academy

This year, 127 youth (ages 14 – 24) participated in a 6- to 25-week summer internship program. The goals were to expose teenagers to environmental health employment opportunities, develop their leadership skills, and involve them in leading local children in healthy activities. Select interns completed a 4-module certificate in environmental health and science called **Roots of Success.**



100% of interns said that they took away one or more valuable job skills sought by employers



87.5% of interns said they used or improved on at least 2 job skills (professionalism/ work ethic, and communication) sought after by employers in the professional realm.

Partners: El Barrio's Operation Fightback, Getting Out & Staying Out, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, NYS Office of the District Attorney, NYC Housing Authority, NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

Outdoor Leadership Academy Outcomes

Outdoor Leadership Academy interns co-led summer school groups in the gardens, obstacle races at Playstreets with Harvest Home, the DA's Night Out, NYPD's East Harlem Night Out, Harlem RBI Day, back-to-school fairs, & festivals, three JungleGym events, and spread the word about and co-led active carnivals in the backyards of local schools.

100% of interns felt valued throughout their internship and felt as if they played an important role.

93.75% of interns felt like they observed or were a part of a full range of operations and learning opportunities.

87.5% of interns said that this internship enhanced their self-understanding and professional development in important ways.



Named the Outdoor Leadership Academy as “the world’s best summer job” by The New York Times’ Sunday Metropolitan section.

Intern Quotes

“Concrete Safaris has helped me develop and thrive as a young man, and has given me the opportunity to meet and become great friends with the other interns”-Bryan

“I felt comfortable in the work space that was created for me, it was a safe and enjoyable.” - Noreese

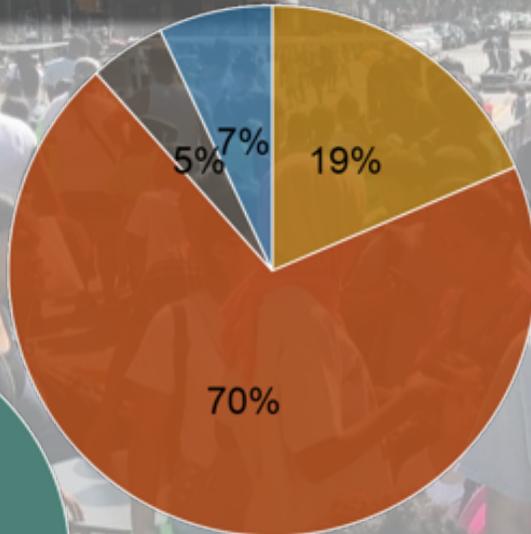
“I really enjoy working with the other interns and we grow into great friends even after the summer is over. So, yes, I'm very happy I chose this job.”- David

“Each of us are doing our part to help Concrete Safaris grow in one way or another so more people can live happy and healthy lives.” -Tiara

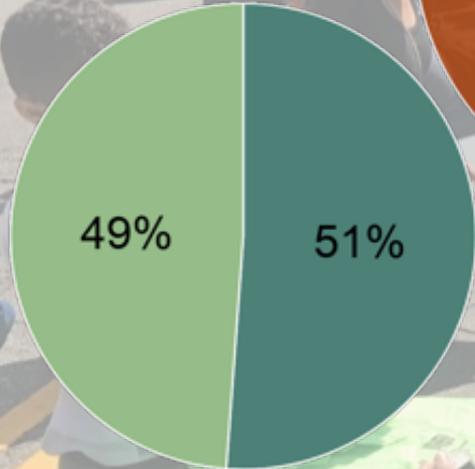


Demographics

City Surfers

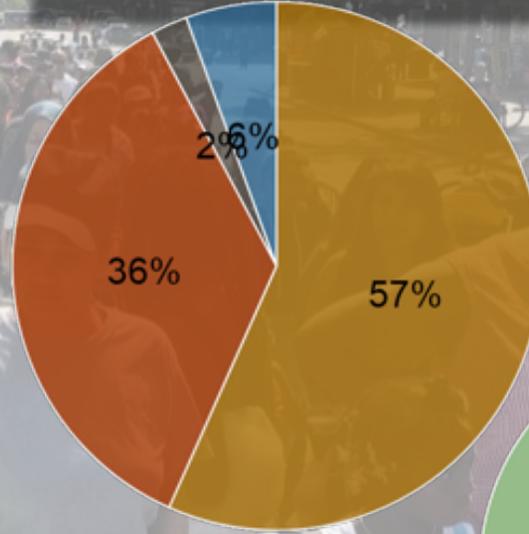


- Latino
- African American
- Asian
- Other

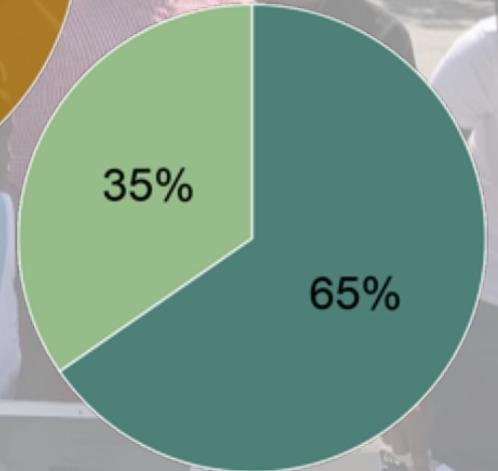


- Female
- Male

Outdoor Leadership Academy



- Latino
- African American
- Mixed
- Other



- Female
- Male

Growing CS Programs

Thanks to these key partners for helping to grow our programs in East Harlem:

\$60,000

From the Pinkerton Foundation for support of City Surfers and the Outdoor Leadership Academy

\$47,707

A 3-year grant from the NYS Department of Conservation to improve air quality and reduce gun violence through the creation of a Streetscape within Jefferson Houses in East Harlem

\$25,000

Support from Deloitte for the Green Exercise Day program, volunteering with children in the gardens

\$20,000

A grant to grow its Outdoor Leadership Academy from Merck Family Fund, a Community Food Justice Funder

2017 Partners

Schools PS 83, 182, Amber Charter School, The Association to Benefit Children, Children's Aid Society, City-As-School High School, Columbia University, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Mosaic Prep Academy, Voice Charter School, Parsons School of Design, Public Schools 7, 38, 50, 57, 72, 96, 101,102, 146, 155 and 375, Northeastern University, Pratt Institute, and The Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center.

Individuals 1119 volunteers donated their time in 2017.

Government FDNY, Fund for Public Health NYC, Manhattan Borough President's Office, Materials For the Arts, NYC Department of Health, NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Department of Youth, NYC Housing Authority, NYPD, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Office of the District Attorney, and Office of Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.

Foundations The Hyde & Watson Foundation, Merck Family Fund, The Morrison & Foerster Foundation, and The Pinkerton Foundation.

Non-Profit Organizations Appalachian Mountain Club, Open Architecture / New York, BoardLead, El Barrio's Operation Fightback, Exalt, Getting Out & Staying Out, Harlem RBI, Harvest Home Farmer's Market, Junior League, Lawyers Alliance for NY, New York Cares, New York Common Pantry, Partnership for After School Education, Union Settlement Association, and Youth I.N.C.

Corporations BlackRock, Deloitte, The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, Lowenstein Sandler LLP, Petsky Prunier, SCOR Reinsurance Company, Blumenfeld Development Group, Ltd.

Division Winners

Team Concrete Safaris

1st Time



1st Time



6th Time



1st Time



For the past 6 years, racers have competed in the NYC Triathlon on behalf of Concrete Safaris. This year, the racers all finished the race and collectively raised over \$13,000. The NYC Triathlon was the first triathlon that all team members had ever done. All repeat racers improved their times, and team Co-Captain and Board Chair Mandy DeRoche and her partner Emily Moschet finished first in the female relay race. Go Team Go!

Board and Advisors

Board of Directors

Chair Mandy DeRoche, Assistant Attorney General, Environmental Protection Bureau, Office of the New York State Attorney General

Vice Chair Jill Bentley, MPA

Secretary Michelle Ramos-Lopez, MPH, Program Manager, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Treasurer Richard H. Mead, Retired Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Mac Levine, MPH, Executive Director

Lance Dunbar, Global Search Solution Lead, Google

+Completed Youth I.N.C.'s Board Advancement Program, a 15-month program employing custom-tailored assessments, consulting, and mentorship to strengthen nonprofit. The board and advisory have grown 26% in the past 3 years.

Advisory

Leslie Boden, MSUP, Community Health Planning Consultant

Natalie Chacin, Digital Marketing Manager, O.N.S

Leah Flaunty, Client Service Manager, Thomson Reuters

Courtney Fukuda, Associate, BlackRock

Sue Geramian, Corporate Communications Consultant

Sandra Gittens, Retired Principal, PS 102

Alyxie Harrick, Senior Consultant, Corporate Strategy, Deloitte

Jinny Jeong, Associate Manager, Data Insights at CECP: The CEO Force for Good

Gary Lynn, Managing Director, Morgan Stanley

Malisa McCreedy, AICP, Transportation Division Manager, City of Portland, Oregon

Priscilla Ma, Associate Director, Global Banking, HSBC Securities (USA) Inc.

Perry Sheffield, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Preventative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Anna Sczepanski, PR Strategist & Account Supervisor, Mission Partners

Keisha Stephen-Gittens, Content Marketing Manager, LiveIntent, Inc.

Michael Woolley, Retired Attorney

Youth Advisory Council

These students represent Concrete Safaris at public events, including speaking at conferences and at Community Board meetings.

Ysabelle

Papa

Omar

Matheo

Mickelson

William

Ezekiel

Alyssa

Steven

Weng-Rui

*Last names are removed for members who are ages 7-12.

Youth Advisory Council

The Youth Advisory Council is a group of dedicated children and youth who serve as the voice for their peers at community events and for political activities.



Participants practiced public speaking, wrote presentations, and learned how to work as a team. Children met on Wednesdays to plan and promote JungleGym, Concrete Safaris' annual event. This included meetings with Open Architecture / New York, NYPD, community board committees, small businesses, and key partners to plan outdoor activities for families, friends, and neighbors. They also met after 6 p.m. and on Saturdays to work on special projects in the community.

Featured Staff

**Founding Executive Director
Mac Levine**



Ms. Mac manages operations and leads the team with her strong vision of experiential education's power to help children grow as healthy leaders.

**Outdoor Play Coordinator
Christopher Hartsfield**



Mr. Christopher manages all cycling and fitness programming, including our annual obstacle race and active living fair, JungleGym. He also directs staff and internship training.

Get Involved

Concrete Safaris, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, operates thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations, government, and foundations. Make a 100% tax-deductible donation in support of youth transforming the world starting in their own backyards

Mail:

Concrete Safaris
158 East 115th Street, Suite 144
New York, NY 10029

Email: info@concretesafaris.org to contribute stock or in-kind donation

Services Needed: Signage, web design, social media support, outreach (participant recruitment, follow up, and new supporter connections), admin & bookkeeping, accounting, fundraising & grant writing, donation manager, computer repair, IT support, facilities maintenance, video production, program evaluation and alumni outreach, and TLC for the staff. Ask us for the Community Impact Kit 2018 to find out how you and/or your company can get involved in Concrete Safaris' 10-Year Anniversary events.

