



# CONCRETE SAFARIS

Annual Report

2023



## 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.

## Why Concrete Safaris?

Young people do not play outdoors as often as they once did. Three barriers preventing children and youth in East Harlem from playing outside on a regular basis are fear of perceived or real violence, lack of supervision, and supplies with which to play.

Adventure

Bravery

Creativity

Curiosity

Discipline

Safety

Healthy Risk Taking

**Shared Values**



# SKILL & KNOWLEDGE BUILDING COHORTS

**Outdoor  
Play**

**Urban  
Gardening &  
Landscaping**

**Health  
Promotion**

**Outdoor  
Photography**

## How We Teach & Learn

**Daily participating children**, ages 7 - 11, are active in all Cohorts.

**Weekly or single-day participating children** are introduced to one or more Cohorts per program.

**14-15-Year-Olds** learn to specialize in a particular Cohort.

**16-24-Year-Olds** learn to specialize in a particular Cohort, and gain exposure to at least one additional Cohort, leading activities for children, youth, and community.





## City Surfers

City Surfers After School and Summer Camp's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children.



## Outdoor Leadership Academy

Outdoor Leadership Academy Interns (ages 14 - 24) participate for 6-to-12-weeks in Gardening, Landscaping, Outdoor Play, Public Health, or Outdoor Photo Cohorts.



## Green Exercise Days

Green Exercise Days, our garden-based field trip program, returned in Spring and Fall 2023 to serve over 200 children per week from local schools.



## JungleGym

JungleGym 2023 was an opportunity for community members to play outside at on East 116th and 106th Streets between Lexington and Third Avenues for two dates in July – August.





Concrete Safaris' after-school program's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. City Surfers gardened, cycled, took photos, and went on field trips and nature adventures throughout 2023, during our 10-month after school our 6-week summer camp.



Chrissaily, 3rd Grade

"I like it when we go play outside. It makes me happy to do it. I am learning about the Earth. I learned that you have to recycle. We also learned about rain and tornadoes. I haven't cooked before summer camp. I learned how to make fruit and salads. Now I can make them at home. I also go on field trips and do activities."



Daniela, 2nd Grade

"I like learning about the water cycle and learning how to ride a bike on Tuesdays. I enjoy field trips on Fridays to explore different places. I love gardening because we learn so much about plants and we paint. We are learning how to take pictures with cameras. This Summer is making me stronger and less shy because I am waking up early and staying healthy by not eating junk food."





"I like playing with my friends at camp. We go outside and do activities, we also go on a trip and have fun. I really like when we take pictures with the cameras."

- Itzayana, 2nd grade

**96% of City Surfers said that playing outside is important.**

**84% of City Surfers would describe CS Summer Camp as Fun, Cool, or Amazing**



"I have learned to be nice, kind, and most importantly to behave. We went on a lot of trips and I really loved the trips that we went to. Our teachers are really nice. We usually always go to play outside but on Fridays we go on field trips. I have a lot of fun at Summer Camp."

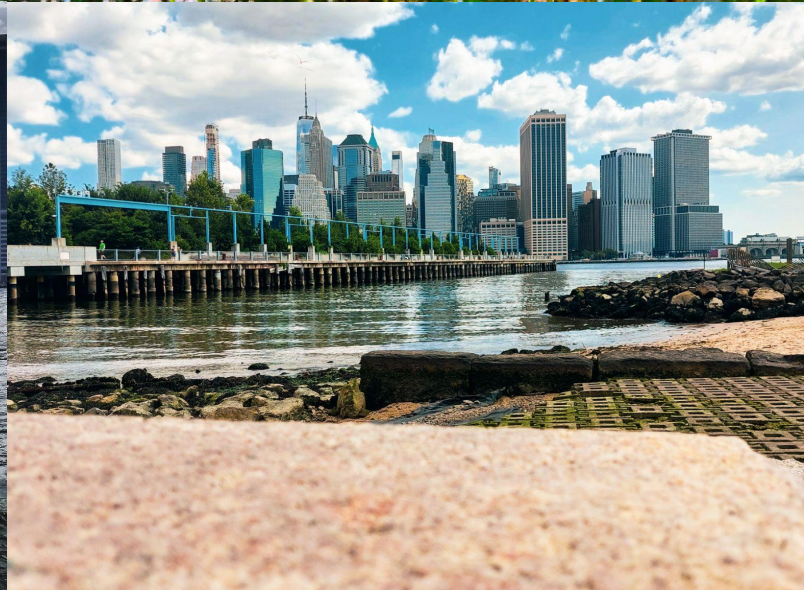
- Kayla, 2nd grade





BROAD FINANCIAL CENTER

EAST'S





Landscaping, Outdoor Play, Health Promotion, and Outdoor Photography at CS' Outdoor Leadership Academy between January – August 2021. The goals are to expose youth to environmental health employment opportunities, develop their leadership skills, and involve them in leading the community in healthy activities.

Summer youth participated in weekly, 3-hour, career readiness sessions in financial and environmental health literacy, professionalism, leadership, wellness, and other topics.

School year youth participated in weekly, 1-1.5-hour professional development sessions.

Youth were linked to external health, educational, and professional development services on an as-needed basis.



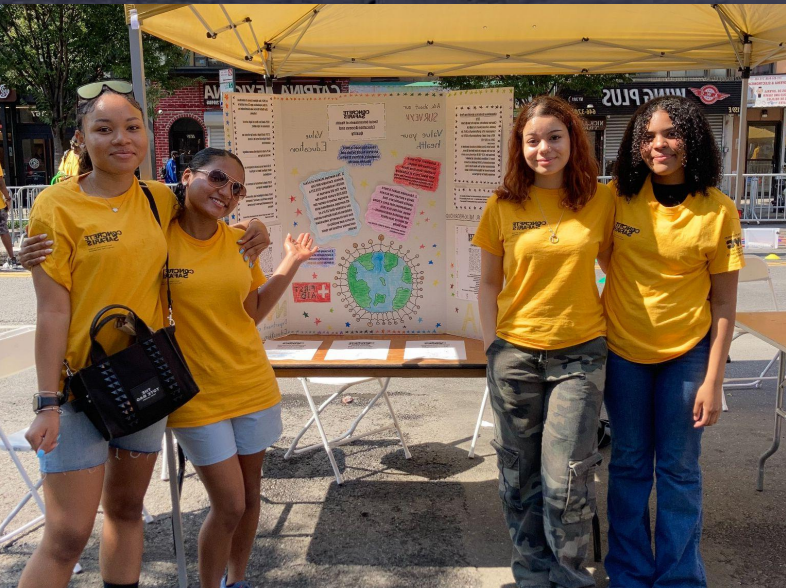
**81% of youth are emerging in the Applied SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) capacity.**



**264 School-Year and Summer Interns**

“My experience interning at Concrete Safaris has been great and I am grateful to be a part of this organization for the summer. We created poster boards and learned about social determinants of health throughout the summer. Usually, we watch videos related to public health and we reflect on what we watched and have a group talk about it. We talked to a lot of people in East Harlem and I learned how to better help my community. I am deeply grateful that I was picked to be in this program for this summer and I hope I have an opportunity to intern here next summer.”

- Jaden, Intern  
OLA-SYEP Public Health Cohort



**Youth earned over \$214,508 in school-year and summer stipends or hourly wages**





Green Exercise Days, our garden-based field trip program, returned in Spring and Fall 2023 to serve over 200 students per week from local elementary schools.



Children in the 2nd - 5th grades studied environmental health literacy and garden sciences. They also learned how to design new places within our gardens at Jefferson and Washington Houses in East Harlem.







JungleGym 2023 was an opportunity for community members to play outside and view child and youth photo expos on July 28 and August 18. Children, families, and neighbors came to play, make art, dance, and spend time outdoors listening to music.



Hundreds of participants attended CS' NYC Open Streets, located on 116<sup>th</sup> Street between Lexington – Third Avenues.





# PlacemakingCorps

PlacemakingCorps, a Public Health AmeriCorps grantee, opened in Fall 2022 with the goals of educating local children and youth in environmental health literacy and creating healthy places in their neighborhood.

PlacemakingCorps, while also connecting children, youth and families with referrals for wrap-around service to meet their health needs.



Jonah, Public Health AmeriCorps Member



Julio, Public Health AmeriCorps Member

Hi, I'm Jonah, Public Health AmeriCorps Member at Concrete Safaris. I've learned a lot while serving in the Outreach Cohort. I was able to grow as a leader by teaching groups of 14-15-year-old OLA-SYEP interns about the social determinants of health. Also, I am proud that we were able to share information and give referrals to participants, staff and families in East Harlem that needed services. I feel like we were able to help many people in the community.

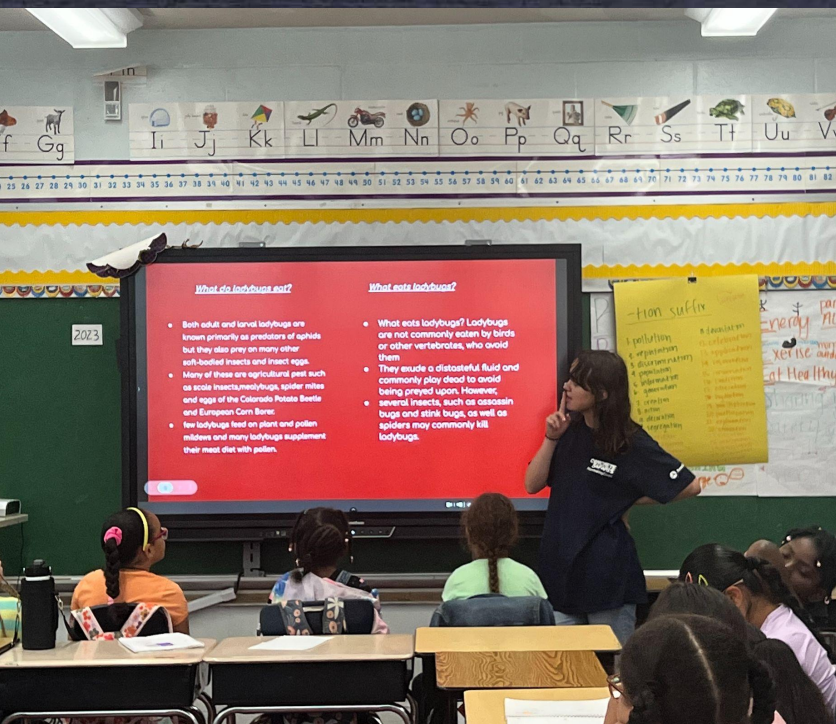
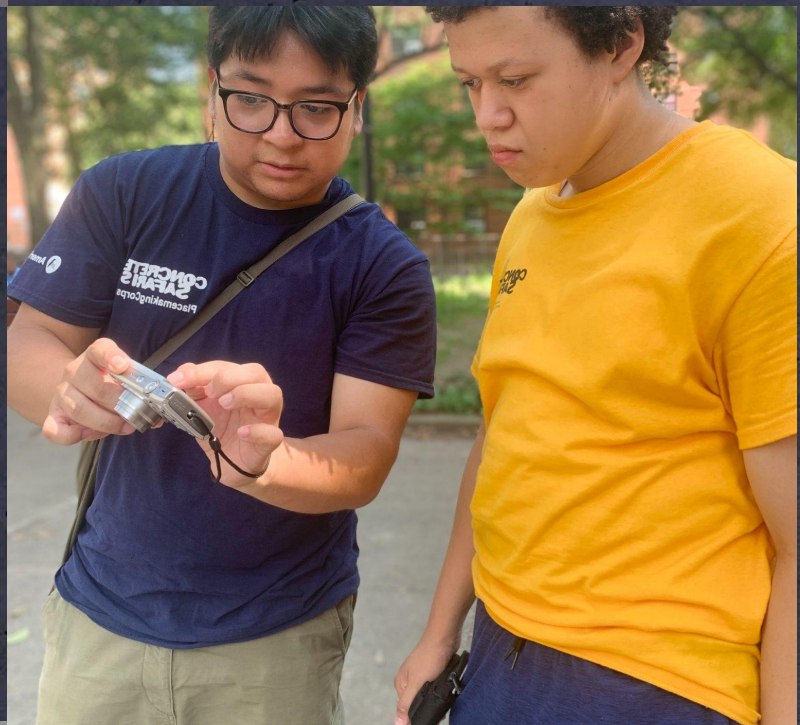
Hi, I'm Julio, Public Health AmeriCorps Member at Concrete Safaris. Serving in the Outdoor Play Cohort this year, I taught youth how to ride bikes, build and play in obstacle courses, and play sports outside. I've taught many children in our programs how to ride bikes on their own when they had never been on a bike before. We encourage the youth to be brave, trying new things, safety and responsibility. I've gained a better understanding on how to be more organized, creative and how to be a leader.



**There were 15 Public Health AmeriCorps Members in the first year of PlacemakingCorps.**

“Serving in the Photography Cohort, I taught the students and interns about the buttons on a camera, camera angles, lighting and how to capture the perfect shot while taking trips all over New York City. By the end of the summer, many of the interns were a lot more interested and enthusiastic about photography and wanted to apply what they learned to their own lives.”

- Ivan Campis, Member Public Health AmeriCorps

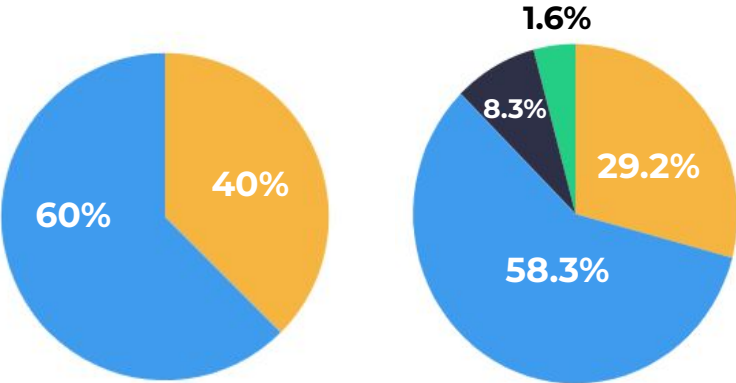


**83% are emerging in at least one Core SEL capacity.**

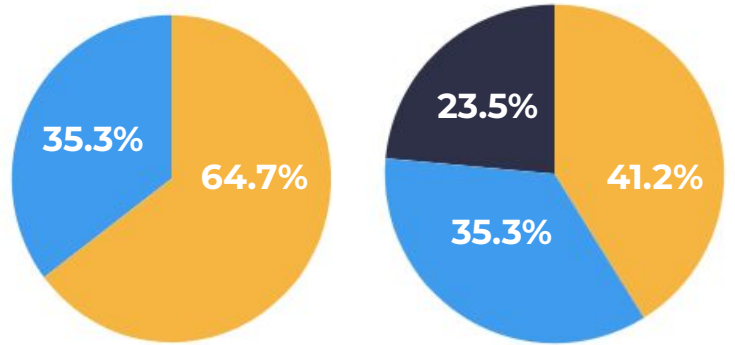


# 2023 DEMOGRAPHICS

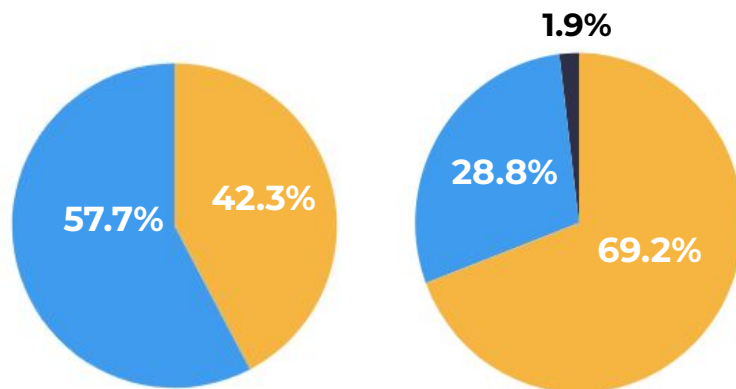
## Staff



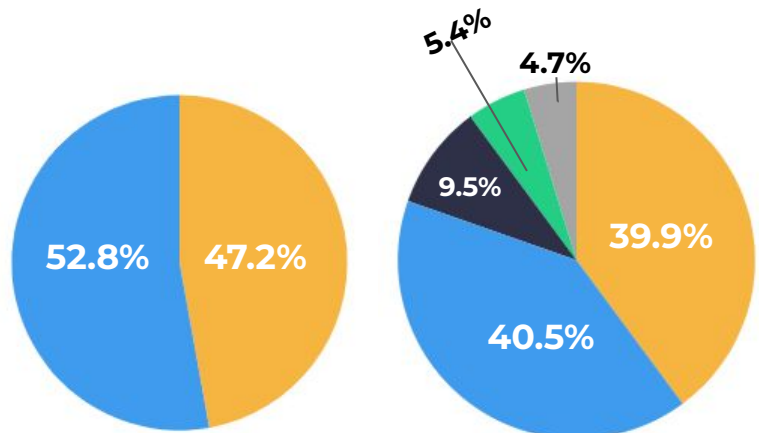
## PlacemakingCorps



## City Surfers



## OLA Interns





# PARTNERS

## Schools

NYC District 4 Public Schools 7, 57, and 102  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
The Lewis & Clark School  
Trevor Day School

## Government

Manhattan Community Board 11  
New York County District Attorney's Office  
NYC Department of Health  
NYC Department of Youth  
NYC Housing Authority  
NYC Human Resource Administration  
NYC Office of Neighborhood Safety  
NYCSERVICE  
NYPD 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & PSA 5 Precincts  
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets  
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
NYS Office of Children & Family Services  
Office of Council Member Diana Ayala  
Office of Senator Serrano  
Public Health AmeriCorps

## Foundations

The City Gardens Club of NYC  
City Parks Foundation  
Clif Family Foundation  
Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC  
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation  
The Pinkerton Foundation  
The Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts

## Individuals

527 volunteers donated their time in 2023

## Non-Profit Organizations

The Association to Benefit Children  
Association of Legal Administrators - NYC Chapter  
Children's Aid Society  
East Harlem Human Services Consortium  
Open Architecture / New York  
El Barrio's Operation Fightback  
Exalt  
Getting Out & Staying Out  
Partnership for After School Education  
Police Athletic League  
The Riverside Church of New York City  
Roots of Success  
SCAN-Harbor  
Union Settlement Association  
Urban Upbound

## Corporations

CAA  
Davis Wright Tremaine  
CP Capital  
Seward & Kissel  
Blumenfeld Development Group, Ltd.  
London Stock Exchange Group / Refinitiv Charities  
Mizuho Group  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Walmart & Sam's Club  
West Monroe





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## *Chair*

**Michael Woolley**  
Retired Attorney

## *Co-Treasurer*

**Jerren Holder**  
CFO, Corporate Client Banking Industries, JPMorgan Chase & Co.

## *Co-Treasurer*

**Lorenz Schmid**  
CISA, Director, Cyber, Risk & Regulatory  
PricewaterhouseCoopers

## *Secretary*

**Nicole Nelson**  
Executive Director, Derivatives Compliance, Mizuho  
Financial Group

## *Events Task Force Co-Lead*

**Christopher T. Consalvo**  
Manager, Government and Community Affairs  
Mount Sinai Health System

## *Events Task Force Co-Lead*

**Brooke Stover**  
Global Partner Manager, Walmart Connect

## *Evaluation Task Force Lead*

**Daniela Morales**  
Analyst, John Snow, Inc., and Outdoor Leadership  
Academy Alumna, Concrete Safaris

## **Mandy DeRoche**

Deputy Managing Attorney, Coal Program, Earthjustice

## *Capital Projects Task Force Lead*

**David H. Kaufman**  
Partner, Morrison Foerster

## **Mac Levine, MPH**

Executive Director

# ADVISORS

## **Leslie Boden, MSUP**

Community Health Planning Consultant

## **Lauren Harness, AIA**

LEED Green Associate, Associate Project Manager,  
About the Work

## **Gloria Lau**

Senior Landscape Architect, Stantec

## **Malisa Mccreedy**

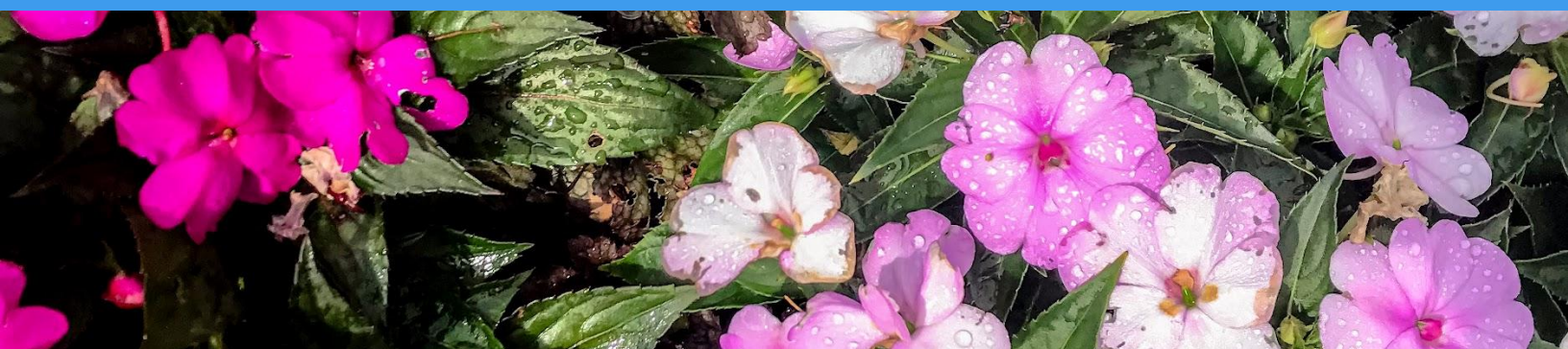
Built Environment Program Manager, Blue Zones

## **Michelle Ramos-Lopez, MPH**

Program Manager, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount  
Sinai

## **Perry Sheffield, MD, MPH**

Assistant Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and  
Preventive Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at  
Mount Sinai





# CONCRETE SAFARIS

## 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.

## Contact Us

Concrete Safaris Inc.  
158 E 115th St, Ste 144  
New York, NY 10029

646.869.1503

[concretesafaris.org](http://concretesafaris.org)

All photos were taken by children and youth enrolled at Concrete Safaris.