Friends,

Living through a second year of pandemic-related restrictions and hardships, the children and youth in East Harlem and beyond were dedicated more than ever to being active outdoors, exploring their neighborhood, and engaging with their friends and community. Concrete Safaris was right by their sides to provide them with opportunities to thrive. Throughout 2021, the children and youth in Concrete Safaris’ programming developed their skills and confidence by riding bikes, taking photographs of their experiences and showcasing their work in a Photo Expo, learning how to grow food for themselves and community members in Concrete Safaris' gardens, advocating for the services they and their community need, and beautifying their neighborhood by planting a Streetscape along Second Avenue. Over 200 youth also secured paid internships in the Outdoor Leadership Academy, and Concrete Safaris served as a work and training site for youth and adults aiming to beautify the city. In the fall, after school re-opened for the first time since schools closed in March 2020.

As we move into 2022, the children and youth in East Harlem will have even more opportunities to lead healthy lives and shape their environment. It will be an incredible 15-Year Anniversary, and you are invited to be a part of the adventures!

In Health,

Mac Levine, MPH
Founding Executive Director

Michael Woolley
Board Chair

Letter from the ED & Chair
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 Mission

Shared Values

Adventure
Bravery
Creativity
Curiosity
Discipline
Safety
Healthy risks

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.
1 **GREEN EXERCISE DAYS**

Our garden-based field trip program, was on pause in 2021. Instead, local residents and volunteers participated in our Adopt-A-Bed program, growing food for themselves and the community while beautifying our gardens at Jefferson and Washington Houses. The gardens and people who love them also attracted a tight group of volunteers that came to assist with whatever was needed.

2 **CITY SURFERS**

Concrete Safaris' after-school program's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. In September 2021, the program returned to serving 72 children in-person for 15 hours each week, Monday – Friday, from PS 57 in East Harlem for the first time since March 2020.

3 **OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

Nearly 300 youth (ages 14 – 24) interned in the Outdoor Leadership Academy in 2021, participating in a 6-to-12-week Gardening, Outdoor Play, or Health Promotion program. In the summer and fall, youth and adults joined as part of the City Cleanup Corps.

4 **JUNGLEGYM**

JungleGym 2021 was an opportunity for community members to play outside at a social distance on East 106th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues for two dates in July and August.
Concrete Safaris’ after-school program’s primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. After a year and a half stuck inside their homes and with no after school programs at their school, 2nd – 5th graders were ready to get back to “normal.” In September 2021, City Surfers reopened and once again children gardened, cycled, took photos, and went on field trips and nature adventures. Of course, getting to make new friends and meet new instructors that took them outside was the best part!

**PARTNERS:**
NYC Public Schools 57 | Office of Council Member Diana Ayala | New York City Department of Youth

**CITY SURFERS**

“Concrete Safaris helps me with my homework. The teacher teaches me to problem-solve, and helps me come up with a better answer. I learned how to bike ride, and how to balance. This program is helping me grow and learn new skills.”

MAYA, 5th grade

“Concrete Safaris helps me with my homework and takes me on trips. Gardening is my favorite because it’s easy, and I learn so much. We can plant different things. I like to garden, and we put hay around the plants and make holes to put the seeds in the soil.”

ALFREDO, 2nd grade

“At Concrete Safaris, I learned how to bike ride. In the past I didn’t like riding bikes because I wasn’t good. I learned how to ride a bike and to be steady.”

LYAM, 3rd grade
OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Nearly 300 youth (ages 14 – 24) interned for 6-to-12-weeks of Gardening, 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.

OUTCOMES:

- 211 Summer Interns
- 40 School Year Interns
- 10,788 Internship hours for 14-15-year-olds that generated nearly $103,850 in summer stipend income for OLA Interns
- 8,130 Internship hours for individuals, ages 16+ that generated $121,946 in school-year and summer hourly wages for OLA Interns
- Summer youth participated in weekly, 3-hour, career readiness sessions in financial and environmental health literacy, professionalism, leadership, wellness, and other topics.
- Cleanup Corps Members serving between July and August 2021 earned $360,508 in wages

PARTNERS:

Columbia University | Deloitte | El Barrio’s Operation Fightback | Getting Out & Staying Out | NYC Department of Youth & Community Development | NYC Housing Authority | NYC Department of Health | Verizon Media | SCOR Reinsurance | Morrison & Foerster
Throughout 2021, a collective of local volunteers adopted raised garden beds, grew food for their households or to distribute to neighbors for free, and built relationships with each other. Mad Fun Farm and Jefferson Gardens were the place that the volunteers went to feel connected, to quell loneliness, to do something meaningful with their time when so much around all of us felt so uncertain. The community gardeners tended their plots multiple days per week. Saturday Garden Volunteer Sessions were held from April - December, and new volunteers found our gardens and returned month after month to support food production and to beautify the spaces.

COMMUNITY GARDENING

Quotes:

“I like working in gardens, and providing food for a community is a bonus”

“An organized and high-impact volunteering event”

“Supporting NYCHA residents in their efforts to improve their quality of living”

Garden Provided:

Open Hours, 7-days/week for Community Gardeners & Adopt-A-Bed.

Partners:

- NYC Housing Authority
- Bartlett Tree Experts
- Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
JungleGym 2021, a NYC Open Streets event series, was an opportunity for community members to play outside at a social distance on East 106th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues for two dates in July – August. Children and their families came to play. Local camp groups were not permitted to travel far, so JungleGym became their destination as it was central within East Harlem.

2,000 participants attended CS’ NYC Open Streets, located on 106th Street between Lexington – Third Avenues.

Partners:
- Community Board 11
- NYC Department of Transportation
- NYPD 23rd Precinct
- Community Affairs
In an effort to support gainful employment for New Yorkers and to ensure that our gardens were flourishing during the pandemic, forty individuals (ages 18+) worked a full-time internship between July and December 2021, with some continuing through June 2022. Their primary role was garden maintenance and the installation of the Streetscape along 2nd Avenue between 112th and 115th Streets.
The Virtual Photo Expo at Concrete Safaris is hosted by Youth Interns enrolled in the Outdoor Leadership Academy - SYEP. During COVID-19's "Summer of Recovery" 2021, forty 14-15-year-olds photographed and commented on their surroundings for six weeks in July and August.
STAFF

Programs Director
Christopher Hartsfield
Mr. Chris directs all four programs, ensuring that participants and volunteers learn, play, explore, and socialize safely in the great outdoors of East Harlem.

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

Assistant Group Leader
Duquan London
Assistant Group Leader
Julio Pagan
Assistant Group Leader
Nicole Rainey
Assistant Group Leader
Jonah herren-Lock
Assistant Group Leader
Sumaya Maniram
Assistant Group Leader
Yasmin Simmons
Assistant Group Leader
Nya Rashad
Assistant Group Leader
Renny Rodriguez
Group Leader
Luis Otero
Group Leader
Yasmin Simmons
Group Leader
Nya Rashad
Group Leader
Nicole Rainey
Group Leader
Jonah herren-Lock
Group Leader
Sumaya Maniram
Group Leader
Luis Otero
Group Leader
Nicole Rainey
Group Leader
Jonah herren-Lock
Group Leader
Sumaya Maniram
Group Leader
Luis Otero

Education Coordinator
Christina Castanon
Photography Educator
Edward Lopez
Health Promotion Lead
Heavenly Evangelista

Outdoor Play Educator
Luis Garcia

Garden Cohort Leader
Anthony Chaney

Foundation Executive Director
Mac Levine

Fiscal Manager
Tony Zisa

Photography Educator
Danielle Barrizo-Whitney

Volunteer Project Coordinator
Alexis Tovar

Assistant Group Leader
Renny Rodriguez

Garden Leader
Luis Otero
PARTNERS

Schools
Public School 57, Harvard Business School Club of New York, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Silberman School of Social Work’s Community Navigators

Government
Manhattan Community Board 11
Fund for Public Health NYC
Manhattan Borough President’s Office
NYC Department of Health
NYC Department of Transportation
NYC Department of Youth
NYC Housing Authority
NYPD 23rd, 25th & PSA 5 Precincts
NVCService
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NY County Office of the District Attorney
Office of NYS Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez
Office of Council Member Diana Ayala.

Foundations
First Cornerstone Foundation
Lily Auchincloss Foundation
Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation
New York State Health Foundation

Individuals
273 volunteers donated their time in 2021

Non-Profit Organizations
The Association to Benefit Children
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 Afterschool Education
SCAN-Harbor
Union Settlement Association.

Corporations
Deloitte
The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America
HQ Capital
Intuit
L+M Development Partners
Microsoft Philanthropies
Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects
Oath
Refinitiv
SCOR Reinsurance Company
Seward & Kissel
Blumenfeld Development Group Ltd
Verizon Media
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- Michael Woolley, Chair, Retired Attorney
- Naeemah Ruffin, DPM, MPH, Secretary & Evaluation Task Force Lead, Founder, Bellantz
- Anthony Edgar, Treasurer, Executive Director, Morgan Stanley
- Mac Levine, MPH, Executive Director
- Brooke Stover, Marketing Task Force Lead, Global Client Partner, Walmart Connect
- Mandy DeRoche, Deputy Managing Attorney, Coal Program, Earthjustice
- Ysabel Abreu, Community Liaison, Manhattan Borough President’s Office
- Christopher Consalvo, Manager, Government and Community Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System
- Daniela Morales, Project Associate, John Snow Inc.

ADVISORS
- Leslie Boden, MSUP, Community Health Planning Consultant
- Natalie Chacin, Digital Marketing Manager, O.N.S
- Lauren Harness, AIA, LEED Green Associate, Associate Project Manager, About the Work
- Gloria Lau, Senior Landscape Architect, Stantec
- Malisa Mccreedy, AICP, Director of Transportation & Mobility, City of Gainesville, Florida
- 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
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 East 115th Street, Suite 144
New York, NY 10029

646.869.1503
concretesafaris.org