



# Annual Report

## 2018

*Youth Transforming The World  
Starting In Their Own Backyards*



# Letter from ED/Chair

Dear Friends,

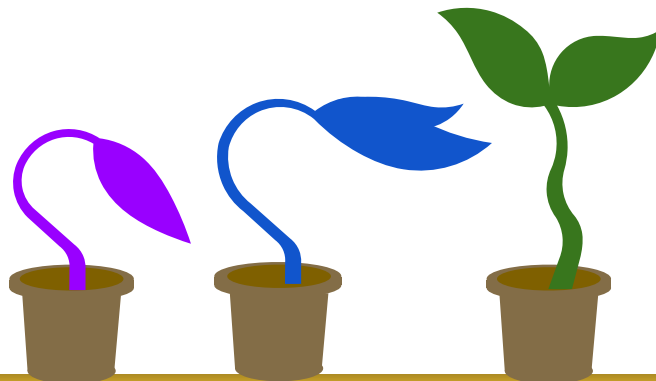
August 4, 2019

2018 was a year of deep reflection at Concrete Safaris. After ten years of operations, we celebrated our accomplishments, with a view to the future of how to most positively support the success of the youth of East Harlem. We updated our mission, vision, and theory of change to reflect what we had learned about youth development and community change. Of course, we continued our proven track record of getting kids outside to play – in our gardens, in bike lanes we helped advocate for, in local playgrounds, and in open spaces across the city.


In each of these outdoor activities, the youth in Concrete Safaris' programming improved their community while learning skills, and building their independence and confidence.

In 2019, we look forward to seeing you at a number of outdoor events throughout East Harlem. We will have a new website to keep you better apprised of our events and programs and we can't wait to partner with you in new and better ways!


We invite you to be a part of our adventures!



Sincerely,

  
**Mandy DeRoche**  
Board Chair

In Health,

  
**Mac Levine, MPH**  
Founding Executive Director



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### Respect, 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.*

### Fun, Friendship

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

### 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.*



## Our Vision:

Youth transforming the world  
starting in their own backyards

## 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.

### Uniqueness

*We show the world our best selves.*

### Exercise + Eating Healthy = Energy

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

### 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.*



# Concrete Safaris

## Theory of Change

**Start**  
Youth have the curiosity and parental permission to participate in outdoor activities

Youth are aware of issues impacting the community

Youth develop soft professional skills to address issues and develop themselves (communication, citizenship, advocacy, interns trained in policy, etc.)

Youth apply their learned citizenship to collaborate with community and policy makers to get permission to create spaces for non-traditional play (e.g. street closures).

Outcome:  
Access to Space

**Finish**  
Concrete Safaris prepares youth in East Harlem and beyond to lead healthy lives and shape their environment through outdoor education, play, exploration, and community engagement.

Youth have gear/tools at their disposal

Youth learn the hard skills and related knowledge to use available tools to make healthier decisions (developing athleticism gardening, bike riding and exploration)

Youth have the opportunity to exercise their skills and take action in the community, and in doing so, get their community to pay attention

Outcome:  
Transform spaces into safe, clean, respected areas in their community; reduced violence

Youth utilize spaces for community building event, forming areas that their community comes to respect and utilize.

Outcome:  
leadership experience, maturity etc.

Youth are involved in leading/running events

Youth are sought after for their leadership (and can affect change in their community)

Outcome:  
can get hired, community feels safe outdoors

Healthy lifestyle achieved!  
Positive socialization, more exercise, nutrition, neighborhood safety



## City Surfers

Concrete Safaris' after-school program's primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children. It engaged 39 children for up to 15 hours each week from PS 57, 83, and PS 182 in East Harlem.

## Green Exercise Day

More than 700 second to fifth grade children participated in garden-based field trips, held from Earth Week through Thanksgiving, that involve gardening, urbanism, outdoor play and exercise, and environmental health.

## JungleGym

Through this annual activity, held in East Harlem, elementary school children and youth interns transform city streets into an obstacle challenge and active living fair. Children participate in obstacle race design, construction, promotion, and healthy competition. Youth learn how to promote and lead the events for 3,500 children and families.

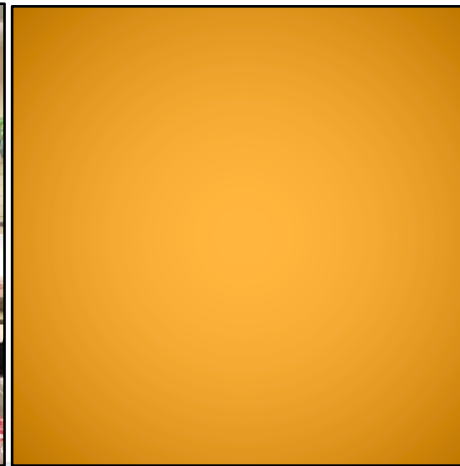
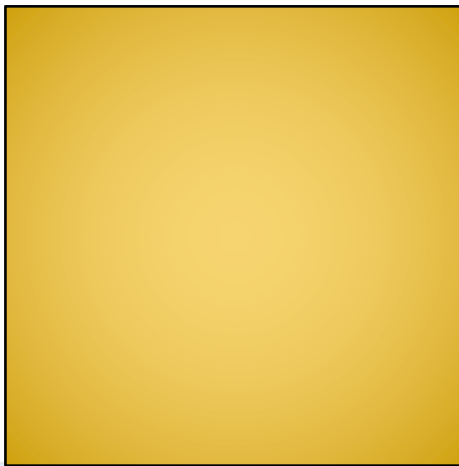
## Outdoor Leadership Academy

This year, 75 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.

# Four Key Programs



# City Surfers After-School Program



City Surfers' primary goal is to improve the health and fitness of East Harlem children during hours when youth are most at risk from 3 - 6 p.m. Thirty-nine City Surfers gardened, cycled, took photos and held an exhibition, went on field trips and nature adventures, and designed and promoted JungleGym 2018.



**Partners:** Office of Diana Ayala, The Pinkerton Foundation, NYC Department of Health, NYC Department of Youth & Community Development.





# Green Exercise Days



# of children: 731  
**1,462 fitness hours**

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. At our gardens, 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. A majority of teachers have returned with their classes for ten or more field trips.

Concrete Safaris changed its format for Green Exercise Days from half-day, seasonal programming to weekly visits from local schools.

**Partners:** NYC Housing Authority, Public Schools 38, 57, 83, 96, 155, 182, Bartlett Tree Experts, Deloitte & Touche, Manhattan Borough President's Office, NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.



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. **3,500 children** and families participated in obstacle race design, construction, promotion, volunteerism, and healthy competition.

The events took place on 116th Street between Lexington and Second Avenues, and on 115th Street between Park and Third Avenues on five Saturdays in July and August, respectively.

The Active Living Fair included games, arts & crafts, bouncy houses, face painting, FDNY, health promotion booths with educational materials, backpack and school supply giveaways, and more!

Partners: NYC Department of Transportation, Community Board 11 Manhattan, the Mayor's Office, NYPD, & Many Community Organizations.



Organizations:



# JungleGym 2018

*a DOT Weekend Walks Event Sponsored by Tahl Propp  
Equities & HSBC*







# Outdoor Leadership Academy

This year, 75 youth (ages 14–24) participated in a 6-to-25-week summer internship program. Through OLA, youth were exposed to environmental health employment opportunities, provided with programming to develop their leadership skills, and responsible for leading local children in healthy activities. Select interns completed a 4-module certificate in environmental health and science called Roots of Success.

**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, Union Settlement Association







# Outdoor Leadership Academy *outcomes*

“I learned that I am capable of doing things even when I struggle at first.”

Outdoor Leadership Academy interns co-led summer school groups in the gardens and obstacle races at Playstreets with Harvest Home, the DA’s Night Out, NYPD’s East Harlem Night Out, Harlem RBI Day, and back- to-school fairs. They promoted CS’ outdoor activities through social media, learned how to manage online event systems, and developed interpersonal skills while engaging the public at and around our events.

“I realized that most people are much easier to talk to then I originally thought. I found out that I had fun organizing and holding events. I realized that a lot goes into running a business. I found out that I enjoyed taking notes.”

*of surveys answered:*

**86%** of interns say that their internship helped them with self-understanding and professional development

**97%** reported an improvement in at least one positive skill or quality (e.g. time management, teamwork, leadership, etc.)

**58%** specifically saw a growth in their communication skills

**94%** want a stable income in the future (should I change this?)

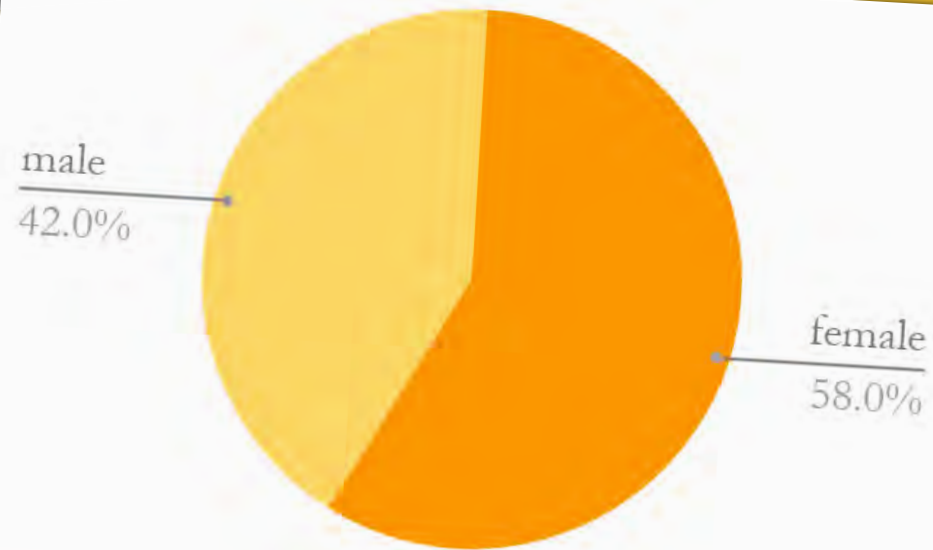
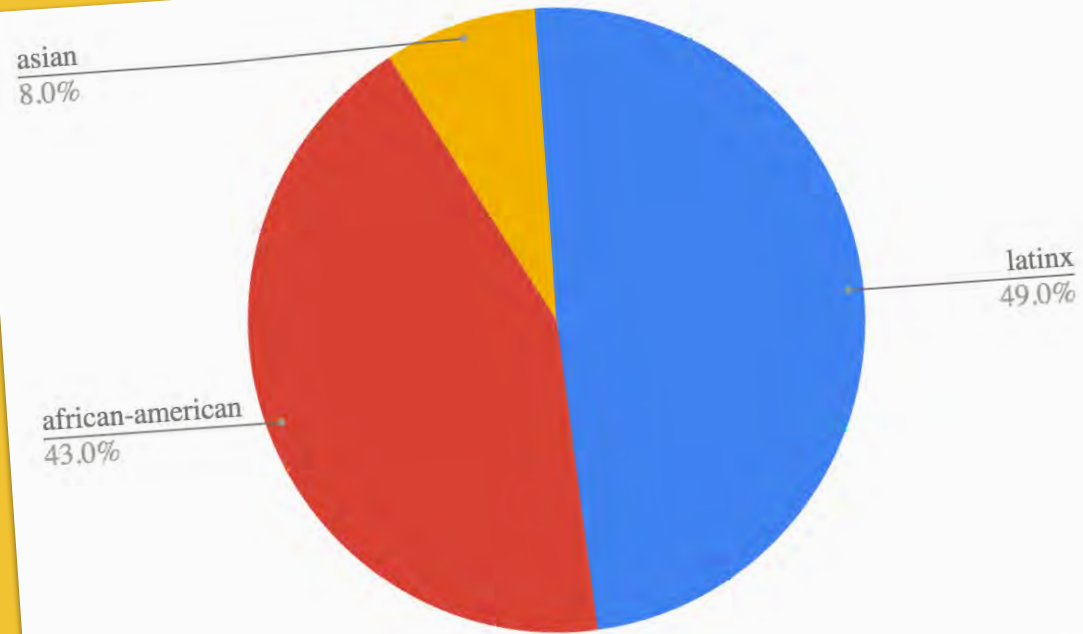
Total professional development hours during  
Outdoor Leadership Academy:

6,609

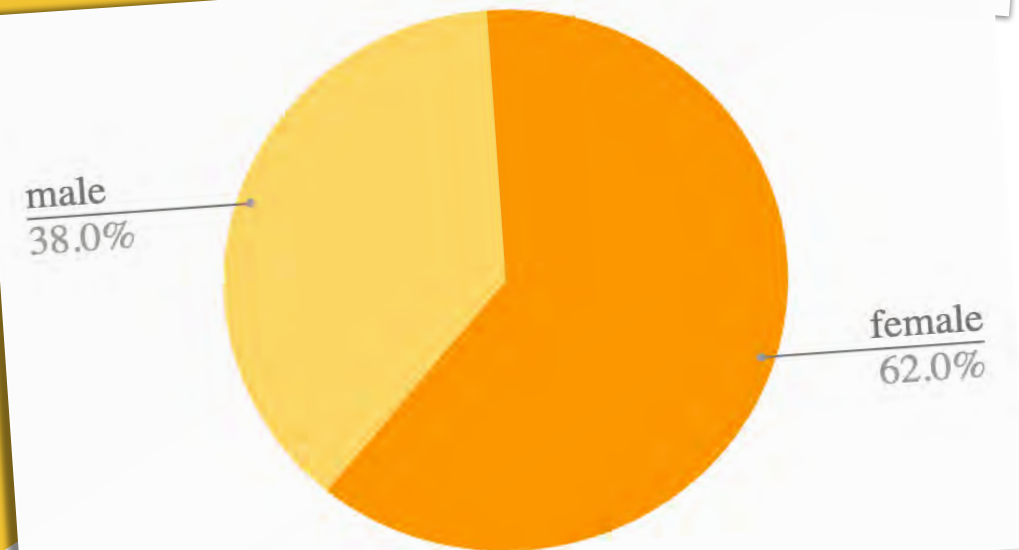
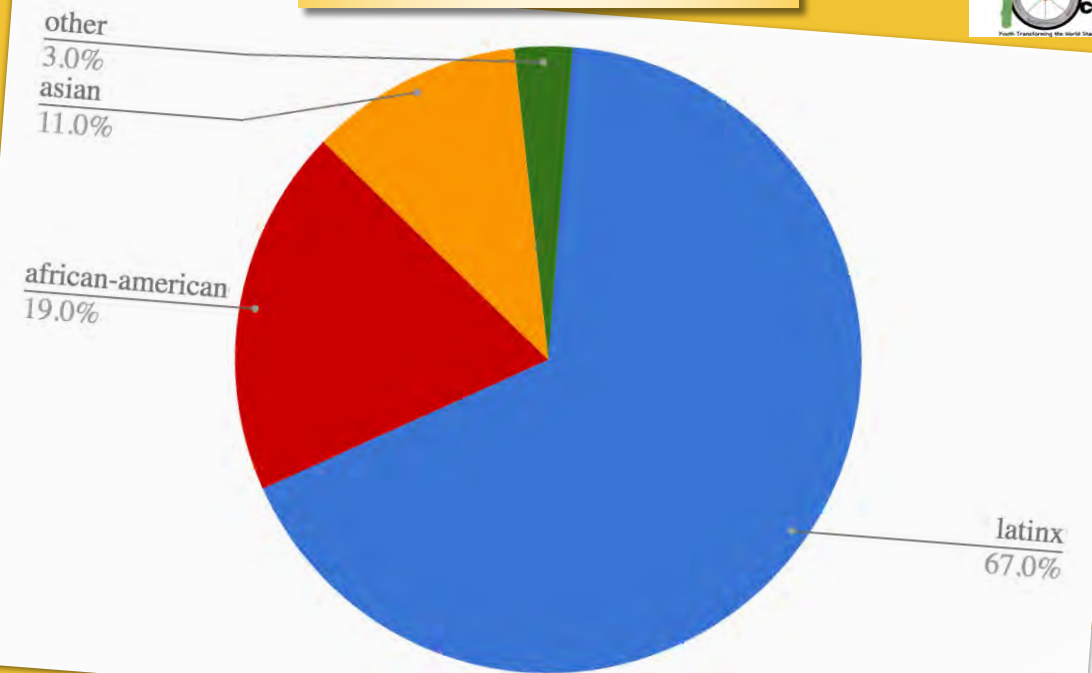
Total wages\* earned by Interns during Outdoor  
Leadership Academy participation: \$96,646

\*Paid to Interns by the City of New York or Concrete Safaris Inc.

## Outdoor Leadership Academy Demographics



## City Surfers Demographics







# Key Partners

**Schools:** Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, NYC District 4 Schools, Northeastern University, and Trevor Day School.

**Individuals:** 1,148 volunteers donated their time in 2018.

**Government:** FDNY, Fund for Public Health in New York City, Harlem Community Development Corporation, 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 Diana Ayala.

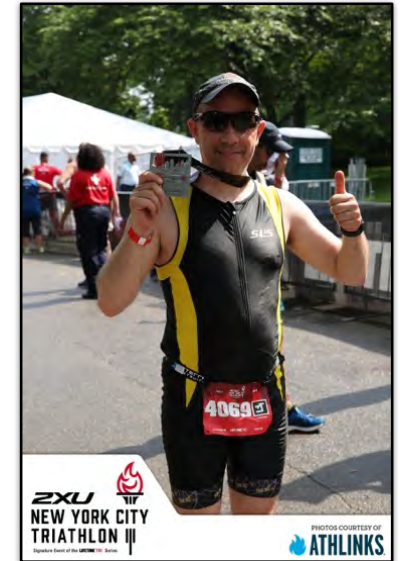
**Foundations:** Merck Family Fund, The Morrison & Foerster Foundation, New York State Agricultural Society, and The Pinkerton Foundation.

**Non-Profit Organizations:** Appalachian Mountain Club, The Association to Benefit Children, Open Architecture / New York, El Barrio's Operation Fightback, Exalt, Getting Out & Staying Out, Harlem RBI, 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, Blumenfeld Development Group, Ltd., Deloitte, The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, HQ Capital, Oath, SCOR Reinsurance Company.

For the past seven 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 \$20,000.

**Team  
Concrete  
Safaris**





# Board and Advisors

## Board of Directors

*Chair* Mandy DeRoche, Assistant Attorney General, Environmental Protection Bureau, Office of the New York State Attorney General  
*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  
Leah Flaunty, Client Service Manager, Thomson Reuters  
Mac Levine, MPH, Executive Director  
Lance Dunbar, Global Search Solution Lead, Google  
Mike Woolley, Retired Attorney

## Youth Advisory Council

These students represent Concrete Safaris at public events, including speaking at conferences and at Community Board meetings:  
William, Laura, Bryan, Alyssa, Weng-Rui, Jason, Andrea

## Advisory

Leslie Boden, MSUP, Community Health Planning Consultant  
Natalie Chacin, Digital Marketing Manager, O.N.S  
Sue Geramian, Client Communications Lead, SapientNitro  
Sandra Gittens, Retired Principal, PS 102  
Alyxie Harrick, Senior Consultant, Corporate Strategy, Deloitte  
Jinny Jeong, Associate Manager, Data Insights at CECF: The CEO Force for Good  
Gary Lynn, Managing Director, Morgan Stanley  
Malisa McCreedy, AICP, Transportation Division Manager, City of Portland, Oregon  
Perry Sheffield, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Preventative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
Keisha Stephen-Gittens, Content Marketing Manager, LiveIntent, Inc.



\*Last names are removed for members who are under 18.

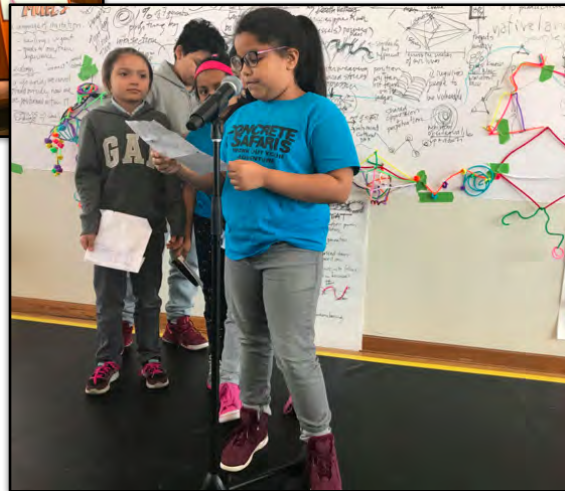
# Youth Advisory Council



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.

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.



They also met after 6 p.m. and on Saturdays to work on special projects in the community.



# Featured Staff



**Christopher Hartsfield**

## Programs Manager

Mr. Christopher manages all four of CS' programs motivating children and youth to learn outdoor skills, share them with the community, and work with key stakeholders to lead programming in the great outdoors of East Harlem.



**Mac Levine**

## Founding Executive Director

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

# 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](mailto:info@concretesafaris.org)

**Online:** [www.concretesafaris.org](http://www.concretesafaris.org) or [www.junglegymrace.com](http://www.junglegymrace.com)

**Join Concrete Safaris' Board of Directors or help start a new Junior Board. Contact [info@concretesafaris.org](mailto:info@concretesafaris.org) for more information.**