How We’re Curbing Climate Change in New York

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THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

The New York Community Trust is a public charity and New York City’s largest community foundation.

We connect generous people and institutions with high-impact nonprofits making the city and its suburbs a better place for all.

We build stronger communities, influence public policy, foster innovation, improve lives, and protect our environment.

We’d like to hear from you.

Please contact us with questions or comments: (212) 686-0010 or info@nyct-cfi.org

Announcing Our Next President

Following a national search, The New York Community Trust announced on April 4th that Amy Freitag will become its fourth president. She will begin her new role this coming summer.

Freitag is currently the executive director of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, a New York-based family foundation. She previously led the New York Restoration Project and the Tortora Sillcox Family Foundation following her tenure as deputy commissioner for New York City Parks & Recreation during the Bloomberg administration.

“Amy is a dynamic and proven leader who is the right person to lead The Trust into its next century,” said Valerie Peltier, chair of The Trust. “Her expertise and relationships, paired with her passion for New York, make her uniquely qualified to guide The Trust through its work to improve the quality of life for our entire community.”

“I am deeply honored to serve as president of The New York Community Trust at a critical moment in our city’s history,” Freitag said. “The Trust’s team is outstanding, and I look forward to working with them and the many New Yorkers who generously support the city’s greatest needs.”

She succeeds Lorie A. Slutsky, who has served as The Trust’s president since 1990. Under Slutsky’s leadership, The Trust grew its assets and its influence.

Look for more from Freitag in the months ahead.
Bringing Chamber Music to New Audiences

“One of the first orchestras I played with was the New York City Housing Authority Symphony Orchestra, which was mostly composed of Black and Latino musicians. It played at public housing developments and really opened my eyes.

I remember seeing all these talented musicians who looked just like me and it was so refreshing, fun, and felt so welcoming.

I met a violist there and we organized a series in Harlem in 2008. A handful of people came to the first concert, including my parents and friends. By the time we got to the third, we had about 50 people, which we were excited about. People really enjoyed seeing a lot of Black musicians performing classical music. It gave a sense of pride to the community.

The Harlem Chamber Players started off performing Beethoven and Bach, but we began exploring music by Black composers to make the music more culturally relevant. As a community-based organization, we have to bring it home for people in our own neighborhood.

For instance, our artistic advisor, Terrance McKnight, did this cool project where he juxtaposed Beethoven’s piano music with Langston Hughes’ poetry, and that really resonated. Last year, we marked the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre with a piece by the Black composer Adolphus Hailstork. Everyone was moved because we were paying homage to people who endured such an atrocity. I think there can be a healing process to this work. We are addressing racial injustices in our own way, trying to do something positive.

There are a few things that I really love doing more than anything else. I love bringing people together and to celebrate being with each other. I love seeing people of all types of backgrounds coming together. I love bringing joy to people, because we just need it. We’ve all been through a lot these days.”

LIZ PLAYER
Liz Player is the founder and executive and artistic director of the Harlem Chamber Players, which recently received a $180,000 Trust grant to help diversify audiences for classical chamber music.

Photo by Simbarashe Cha

Financial information about The New York Community Trust can be obtained by contacting us at: 909 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, New York 10022, (212) 686-0010, at www.nycommunitytrust.org, or as stated below: Florida: SC No. CH9514. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA OR AT www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. Maryland: For the cost of postage and copying, from the Secretary of State. Michigan: MICS No. 22265. Mississippi: The official registration and financial information of The New York Community Trust may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State’s office by calling 1-888-236-6167. New Jersey: INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHARITY DURING THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD THAT WERE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING (973) 504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charfrm.htm. New York: A copy of our most recent financial report is available from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General’s website at www.charitiesnys.com or, upon request, by contacting the NYS Attorney General, Charities Bureau, at 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271 or at 212-416-8401. North Carolina: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at (888) 830-4999 (within N.C.) or (919) 814-5400 (outside N.C.). Pennsylvania: The official registration and financial information of the organization disclosing assets, liabilities, fund balances, revenue and expenses for the preceding fiscal year will be provided to any person upon request. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW. REGISTRATION IN A STATE DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST BY THE STATE.
Curbing Climate Change in New York

Over the 45 years she has lived at the Red Hook Houses in Brooklyn, Juana Narvaez has seen a lot of flooding, but nothing like what happened after superstorm Sandy in 2012.

“There was a lot of destruction,” she said, recalling the muddy floodwaters pushing cars around, wrecking basement boilers, and damaging bodegas and churches. At the nearby Gowanus Houses, more than 2,000 people lost heat and power for more than 10 days. Water poured in from all three sides of the small peninsula, causing sewage overflows and worrying residents that the industrial chemicals buried in the area would get dislodged.

Since that time, Narvaez completed the Trust-supported “Turning the Tide” training by the Fifth Avenue Committee and has become a climate change activist, preparing herself and neighbors for the next catastrophic event, while trying to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.

Sandy caused unprecedented flooding across the region’s coastal areas, killing 44 residents and causing almost $20 billion in damages in New York City, with many saying it was a wake-up call to address climate change and rising sea levels. Then last year, flooding from Hurricane Ida’s rainfall killed more than a dozen New Yorkers trapped in basements in neighborhoods nowhere near the coast. It was a grim realization that human-driven climate change is an increasing threat to all.

“It’s finally dawning on people, what the scope of climate change means for this town,” Eddie Bautista, executive director of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, told The New York Times days after Ida.

Most climate experts—97 percent—agree that the rapid global warming we have seen over the past few decades is due to human activity. While some groups continue to deny or discount this threat, the need for collective and individual actions to confront the cascading consequences of inaction is clear.

To address climate change effectively, said Arturo Garcia-Costas, The Trust’s program officer for the environment, “We need public and private sector...
leadership on clean energy, green transportation, and climate resilience. We need philanthropy to support innovative and sometimes risky solutions. And we need individual action.”

The Trust has supported efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change for decades. Like the work in Red Hook, we have bolstered the region’s preparedness for climate disasters, and funded advocacy campaigns that helped move the city and state to become national models for comprehensive climate action.

Our grantmaking pursues three main strategies both nationally and locally: influencing policies and practices, adapting to the destabilized climate, and reducing emissions of the gases that are trapping solar energy and warming the atmosphere. In addition, we have supported nonprofits that are ensuring that people of color and low-income New Yorkers, like those in Red Hook and Gowanus, participate and benefit fairly from government actions to address the growing crisis.

Much of our environmental grantmaking is made possible by the Henry Phillip Kraft Family Memorial Fund, which was established in The Trust in 1996 by Kraft’s daughter specifically for “environmental protection and improvement, wildlife protection, conservation of natural resources, and the preservation of land, water, and air.” The fund has allowed The Trust to make more than $78 million in grants to effective nonprofits, many of which are addressing climate change.

**STRATEGY 1: INFLUENCING POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

Because of the enormous scale of climate change, many of The Trust’s grants are aimed at making progress that can only be realized through big systems change. We support groups urging government to adopt policies to better protect flood-prone neighborhoods, for example, and to make cleaner energy more widely available. And we help nonprofits working with the private sector to reduce the carbon footprint of companies and increase their energy efficiency.

New York State became a global climate change leader with the passage of the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act in 2019. It puts the state on the path to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, with 35 percent of the government’s spending toward this ambitious goal directed to help historically underserved communities. That legislation passed after an advocacy campaign led by the NY Renews Education Fund and Environmental Advocates of New York. To make sure the law fulfills its promise, The Trust is also funding nonprofit efforts to monitor and support its implementation.

For several reasons, climate change often deals its hardest and most lasting blows to low-income communities. Historically, low-lying areas underserved by mass transit were developed for high-density public housing across the city. Similarly, polluting industrial facilities and infrastructure were often sited in areas with little political clout. In fact, the city’s first federal Superfund site was the Gowanus Canal, which was once a busy industrial byway, but fell into disuse, becoming infamous for its polluted sediments and foul odor.

Ten years after Sandy, the Red Hook and Gowanus areas are still recovering from the historic storm surge. In an area with few street trees, a years-long construction project cut down 450 trees to make room for enclosed, above-ground boilers to replace the basement ones knocked out by floodwaters. Much of the development has been, and will continue to be, a fenced-off construction zone.

To address the needs of residents in these embattled areas, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance organized grassroots campaigns to ensure that government includes and considers these communities in climate and clean energy policies.

“The support of The Trust and other funders for our campaigns has led to transformative wins,” said Bautista of the Alliance. “Working in coalition, we were able to secure reforms to the commercial waste system that will eliminate millions of diesel truck miles and slash greenhouse gas emissions. And years of climate justice advocacy led to the passage of city laws in 2020 that will help protect New Yorkers from future heat waves.”

In the private sector, more and more business leaders understand the threat of climate change and that new approaches are needed. Hundreds of large corporations, including major New York-based companies such as Goldman Sachs and Bloomberg LP, have committed to switching to 100 percent renewable energy as a result of the Climate Group’s advocacy, technical assistance, and consultations.

**STRATEGY 2: ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Because of the threats associated with extreme weather, The Trust

**CONSTANT CONSTRUCTION:** Damage from severe weather has made the Red Hook Houses a construction site for years. Photo by Marty Lipp
has been among the first environmental funders to prioritize climate resilience and adaptation. Part of that effort has been to help the region and specific neighborhoods protect themselves against destructive storms like Sandy and Ida, heat waves, and flooding.

In Red Hook, residents took workshops to discover what they need to do when the next climate disaster hits their coastline community, which is designated as Hurricane Evacuation Zone 1, the city’s highest-risk category. They also learned how to conduct outreach and advocacy for improvements that address the effects of climate change, such as flooding. This is a tough political challenge. Too many city housing units are placed in these precarious areas and the chronically underfunded New York City Housing Authority already is struggling with more than $32 billion of backlogged repairs.

**STRATEGY 3: REDUCING EMISSIONS**

The Trust also targets cutting emissions that trap solar energy, which causes the atmosphere to heat up. The Campaign for Atlantic Offshore Wind promoted the construction of “wind farms” along the Eastern Seaboard, including the Long Island Sound, to create a climate-friendly energy alternative to burning polluting fossil fuels. The campaign led the state and city to make nation-leading commitments to wind power.

One of the most difficult challenges for stabilizing the climate is reducing emissions from the millions of vehicles on the road today. The Trust was a steady grant-maker of the long but successful campaign to enact congestion pricing in New York City; one of the campaign’s goals was to reduce the emissions caused by the heavy traffic in Manhattan.

Another promising way to cut vehicular emissions is to power bus fleets with electricity. This spring, The Trust invested in the Electric School Buses for All Coalition, which will advocate for funding and technical assistance for low-income communities of color and for families of children with disabilities. The goal is to remove any barriers so these communities can obtain the benefits of transitioning to electric fleets.

Many groups have received support from The Trust over the years to help the state move to electric vehicle use. With a grant from our Westchester Community Foundation, the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund advocated for electric vehicle charging stations in Westchester as part of a statewide campaign.

**WE MUST DO MORE**

Climate change is an existential threat for neighborhoods across the city and communities around the world. Nations have pledged to work to keep average global temperatures from rising above the threshold for lasting disastrous consequences. However, temperatures continue to rise and many nations, including the United States, are not on track to achieve their greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The Trust has joined with our donors and grantees to tackle the tough process of stabilizing the climate and protecting our planet and our local communities from further damage. We can and must do more—at every level. Delaying action further will narrow our options and compound our challenges.

In the Red Hook Houses, Narvaez continues to knock on neighbors’ doors and talk to parents at the local school about how to prepare for the next extreme weather event. In 2017, she went to the People’s Climate March in Washington and has already spoken to the newly elected representatives in the neighborhood.

“We’re going to continue the work and continue the fight,” she said. “This is not stopping with the March.”

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**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- **Learn more** about climate change from resources such as documentaries supported by the Redford Center, which tell hopeful stories about how we can address climate change.

- **Speak out** about the crisis with friends and loved ones, and contact your political leaders—you can inspire others to act.

- **Donate** to the organizations listed in this publication or contact us for suggestions at giving@nyct-cfi.org. You can donate to our Community Needs Fund, which responds to local opportunities for change in regard to the environment as well as other needs of the city.
Getting Fresh Food to Families Fast

While food banks and pantries often have canned and boxed food available, there are tough logistical challenges to getting fresh, perishable food to hungry families.

During the pandemic, Caritas of Port Chester/Meals on Main Street became a distribution hub for fresh food going to several small pantries that had limited storage capacity. To expand the model and get healthy food to more people, the group is using a grant from the Westchester Community Foundation to create a regional “hub and spoke” model. It will use a 20-foot refrigerated truck with detachable rolling shelves to quickly expedite the delivery of fresh produce and perishables from local farms and food suppliers.

Caritas will receive fresh produce from farms in Northern Westchester and Putnam counties, and pick up unused food from local retailers and restaurants for quick, refrigerated redistribution, saving it from being thrown out.

The group will hire formerly incarcerated trainees from Hudson Link for Higher Education’s job-training programs at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining.

The new system will deliver several thousand pounds of additional food weekly to local families.

MOBILE MARKET: A grant from our suburban division, the Westchester Community Foundation, is helping get fresh produce to low-income residents in Westchester County. The fruits and vegetables are collected from local farms and restaurants.

Housing Long Island Families

Today and into the future

One in five housing units on Long Island is a rental unit—about half the rate of nearby suburban counties. This has put a significant strain on families with low-to-moderate incomes. Now, an influx of new commuters due to surging remote work policies, rising home values, and coastal degradation is making the area’s affordable housing shortage worse. Over the next 15 years, Long Island will be short at least 100,000 housing units. The Long Island Community Foundation is working to address both the immediate and long-term housing needs on the Island.

A grant to the Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation will help move Long Island families and individuals from shelters into affordable housing. The group will provide supportive programming and case counseling, including career advising, financial literacy courses, and home maintenance training.

The Long Island Community Foundation is helping the Regional Plan Association work with Nassau County municipalities and zoning boards to expand affordable housing and improve climate resilience planning. The Association will issue a report and municipal roadmap with strategies for finance options and designs that will make housing more equitable.
Donation Double Wins

Make the most of your gift

Charitable giving provides donors with joy, peace of mind, and satisfaction in knowing you are making a difference in the world around you. Giving also provides ancillary financial benefits. Using particular assets and charitable vehicles can provide you with a double win—or two ways a donor can benefit from a single gift.

The following are three double-win incentives to inspire you to maximize your giving.

1. GIVE STOCK
Stock holdings—especially those that have grown in value in your portfolio—are a great asset to give. By donating shares directly to a public charity, you avoid paying any capital gains taxes at the time they’re sold, and the charity will benefit from getting the full market value of the stock. You’ll also benefit by getting a deduction on the full market value. That’s a double win for your tax bill. **Note:** To reap this tax benefit, you must give the stock directly to charity. If the nonprofit can’t accept it, consider creating a donor-advised fund at a community foundation and then suggest grants from your fund.

2. PUT IT ON A CARD
Giving to charity by credit card has become increasingly popular, and for good reason. Many people make automatic recurring contributions every month, which is easy for the donor, and gives nonprofits steady income. Your double win: you get to rack up points on your credit card, and get a deduction on the full amount of your gift before credit card fees.

3. GIFT YOUR IRA DISTRIBUTION
If you are over 72 years old, giving some or all of your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA directly to charity may provide you with multiple benefits to your tax bill. The IRS allows an individual to give up to $100,000 annually as a “Qualified Charitable Distribution,” which means that the funds can be distributed directly from your IRA to the qualifying public charity or charities, without having to be taken into your taxable income and then deducted as a charitable contribution. Donors love the ease of the vehicle and the tax headache it spares them, not to mention the actual tax savings that sometimes result.

Not all kinds of charitable gifts qualify; notably, donor-advised funds are not eligible to receive Qualified Charitable Distributions. Instead, you can give to many public charities directly, support a fund at a community foundation—like our Community Needs Fund, which supports programs that address urgent challenges facing New Yorkers—or establish a field-of-interest fund to support a particular area that you care about. **Note:** As early as age 70 1/2, you can give a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA, even if you don’t yet have to give a Required Minimum Distribution.
Data and Behavioral Design Help Nonprofits Get Results

There is often a gap between people’s intentions and actions—perhaps they intend to use a nonprofit’s services but don’t follow through, or don’t realize they are eligible for certain benefits. Applying a behavioral design lens has helped nonprofits address these issues and make good programs even more effective. That’s why in 2018, The Trust made a $400,000 grant to ideas42 to create a program called the New York City Behavioral Design Center.

With our funding, the Center has helped dozens of nonprofits with a range of challenges—from getting useful feedback from clients of eviction prevention programs to getting prospective volunteers to follow through with signing up and participating regularly.

At one organization, it helped engage older New Yorkers in virtual activities during the pandemic, redesigning a calendar with simple log-on instructions and easy-to-use tech support.

“Over the past two years, as nonprofits have continued to adapt their programs and outreach to meet continually evolving needs, they have been especially eager for guidance on effective ways to reach and serve those who need their help.” - Laura Wolff

Over the past two years, as nonprofits have continued to adapt their programs and outreach to meet continually evolving needs, they have been especially eager for guidance on effective ways to reach and serve those who need their help. at ideas42. “We’ve been gratified by seeing the impact of the insights and design strategies we’ve shared.”

An additional $200,000 in grants is helping continue this promising work.

There is a lot of useful data available to nonprofits, but they often lack the resources to use it, for example, for setting goals and effectively communicating their impact.

Through a partnership with Nonprofit New York, Measure of America, an initiative of the Social Science Research Council, is using $180,000 from The Trust to help local nonprofits improve their services and track outcomes. Its data tools allow users to compare quality-of-life conditions in the city’s neighborhoods. Additionally, it works with nonprofits to develop short videos and infographics highlighting needs in the areas they serve.

For example, New York Common Pantry used geographic data on percentages of SNAP food subsidy recipients to identify areas where its services were most needed, and it used neighborhood-specific nutrition data compiled by the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to document the improved eating habits of people who participated in its Live Healthy workshop.
Children with disabilities often face social exclusion and other educational barriers starting at a very young age. In addition, the city’s education and social-service systems are complicated and can be difficult for families of children with disabilities to navigate. The Trust has recently made grants for systemic improvements and advocacy in a range of areas to ensure young New Yorkers with disabilities can receive appropriate services and thrive.

INTEGRATING CLASSROOMS
American schools have a long history of segregating students with physical and behavioral disabilities in separate classrooms or schools. New York City has often followed this approach and maintains a separate district for children with significant disabilities. However, research has shown that integrating students in general education classrooms benefits all students, both academically and socially. While the city has made progress over the past decade toward that, with two-thirds of students with disabilities now spending most of their day in integrated classrooms, segregation continues—especially for the 13,000 students classified as having an emotional disability. The classification is not clinical, but rather a catch-all designation for students with emotional and behavioral differences. Low-income students of color are disproportionately classified in this category.

The Trust gave $510,000 to the Fund for Public Schools to test an inclusive teaching model that integrates students with emotional disabilities into classrooms with their peers, while providing therapy to students and coaching to teaching staff. The Fund will run the first test in a predominantly Latinx school in the Claremont section of the Bronx, then improve and expand the teaching model in other schools and districts throughout the city.

MAKING SCHOOLS ACCESSIBLE
A 2018 report issued by Trust grantee Advocates for Children of New York revealed that less than one in five
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COLLEGE BOUND: With the assistance of INCLUDEny, Tyrese got into his first-choice college on a full scholarship.

of New York City public schools is fully accessible for people with physical mobility differences. In response, the city agreed to implement the nonprofit’s recommendations to make a capital investment over five years so that one out of every three public schools in each district is truly accessible, and to give preferred admission to accessible schools to middle- and high-school students with disabilities. With a renewal grant of $70,000, Advocates will ensure that the Department of Education fully implements the plans by monitoring the capital spending, making building accessibility information available to parents, and providing guidance to school staff about welcoming students with disabilities.

MODERNIZING REPRODUCTIVE EDUCATION
People with disabilities are three times more likely than their peers to be sexually assaulted. Proactive and positive sex education and counseling can prevent abuse and help people with disabilities form healthy sexual relationships. However, most curricula uses an outdated, abstinence-only approach and sex educators seldom have the training or tools to meet disabled students’ needs. A Trust grant of $180,000 to Planned Parenthood of Greater New York will provide high-quality, accessible sexual and reproductive health education to middle schoolers with disabilities in integrated co-teaching classrooms and offer complementary workshops to support their caregivers. The program also will introduce updated disability-sensitive curricula that moves away from the abstinence-only approach.

The Trust also made the following grants:

- $445,000 to New 42 to improve arts education for public school students with disabilities. The nonprofit will train teaching artists to work with students with disabilities in integrated classrooms, host teaching workshops with the Department of Education for educators and cultural groups, and improve course materials.

- $200,000 to VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired to support the parents and caregivers of blind children by providing skills-training for living independently and connecting caregivers with social workers who can help them access public benefits and services.

- $125,000 to INCLUDEny to teach young people with disabilities and their caregivers how to advocate for themselves and their communities. The nonprofit will provide training in Mandarin, Spanish, and English and promote available services to parents and groups that serve children in foster care and other non-parent care settings.

NAVIGATING THE NEIGHBORHOOD: Michexa, a certified orientation & mobility specialist with VISIONS, helps Clarissa, a girl with vision loss, use a cane to move through the city.
Connect with us!

We’d like to hear from you. Please contact us with questions or comments: (212) 686-0010 or info@nyct-cfi.org

Honoring an LGBTQ+ Legacy

Bruce Dresner was a tax attorney who championed the LGBTQ+ community during his lifetime through philanthropy and board service. In his will, he created a fund in The New York Community Trust to continue helping the LGBTQ+ community.

With his fund, we’ve supported organizations including Callen Lorde Community Health Center, New Pride Agenda, and most recently, the American LGBTQ+ Museum. With a grant of $150,000, the new institution is creating a plan for developing, sharing, and exhibiting LGBTQ+ collections.

“Our goal is to preserve, examine, and celebrate our cultural history in America,” offers Richard Burns, founding board chair of the Museum. “We view the work of this museum as a vital part of the movement for equality.” The new cultural institution will be located on the top floor of the New-York Historical Society’s building after its planned expansion concludes in 2025.

AT RIGHT: Bruce Dresner in 1984.

Champion the causes you care about. For generations.

Contact us at (212) 686-0010 x363 or giving@nyct-cfi.org to jumpstart your charitable legacy today.