

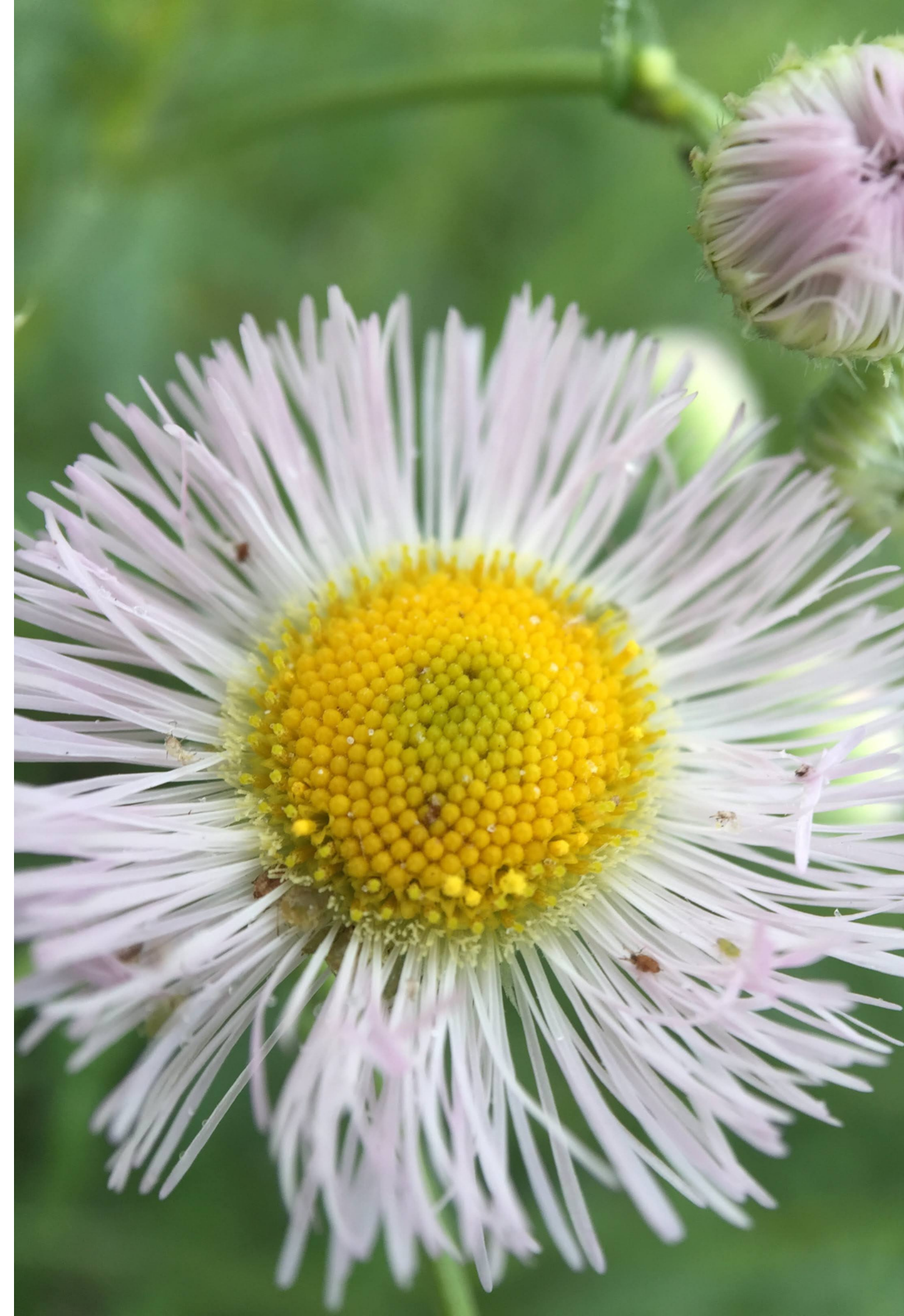
LOWER EAST SIDE ECOLOGY CENTER

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



Outstanding Renewal Enterprises, LLC
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2022 was a bittersweet year. While we celebrated 35 years of community-based environmental programs and activism, the year started on a sad note when we lost our co-founder, Clyde Romero, in January.

Clyde, a multi-talented artist who mostly worked on wood sculptures, was a longtime resident of the Lower East Side and cared deeply about our community. Together, we founded the Lower East Side Ecology Center, and Clyde was involved in the organization's day-to-day operations from the start. You could find Clyde at our first recycling drop-off at the 6th Street & Avenue B Garden, where he managed the overflowing bags of bottles, cans, and plastic and ensured recyclable materials were separated correctly.

By 1994, Clyde became a fixture at the Union Square Greenmarket. A talented woodworker, he designed a “worm condo with a view” (a wooden worm bin with a sliding window to look inside), which became a perennial showstopper at the market. In the aughts, Clyde started to curate sculpture shows and live music events in our community garden on E 7th Street. Clyde guided the Ecology Center from its infancy to the flourishing organization it is today, and he is deeply missed. His legacy lives on through the Ecology Center.

I'm incredibly proud of how the organization has grown over its 35-year history, and I can see how our work inspires equity, resiliency, and sustainability in our community. For example, through our compost and food justice programs, we're now working to address all facets of the food cycle. This has come about through expanding access to composting with food scrap drop-off sites, as well as teaching cooking workshops on how to reduce food waste and empower food sovereignty.

This last year also presented an opportunity to grow our stewardship work to include other green spaces in the Lower East Side. We've been hosting regular volunteer stewardship days at Tompkins Square Park, where we're cleaning up garden beds, weeding, and applying mulch. We've also partnered with Gouverneur Gardens, a Mitchell-Lama coop, to create a COVID memorial garden for the community.

I would like to thank our friends, supporters, and collaborators for supporting the work of the LES Ecology Center, allowing us to overcome obstacles and be resilient so we can continue on our path toward a greener and sustainable future.

-Christine Datz-Romero



Clyde at Union Square Greenmarket with the worm condo with a view

MISSION

The Lower East Side Ecology Center has pioneered community-based models for urban sustainability since 1987. We provide unique e-waste and composting services, environmental stewardship opportunities, and educational programming for all New Yorkers to create an equitable, resilient, and sustainable city.



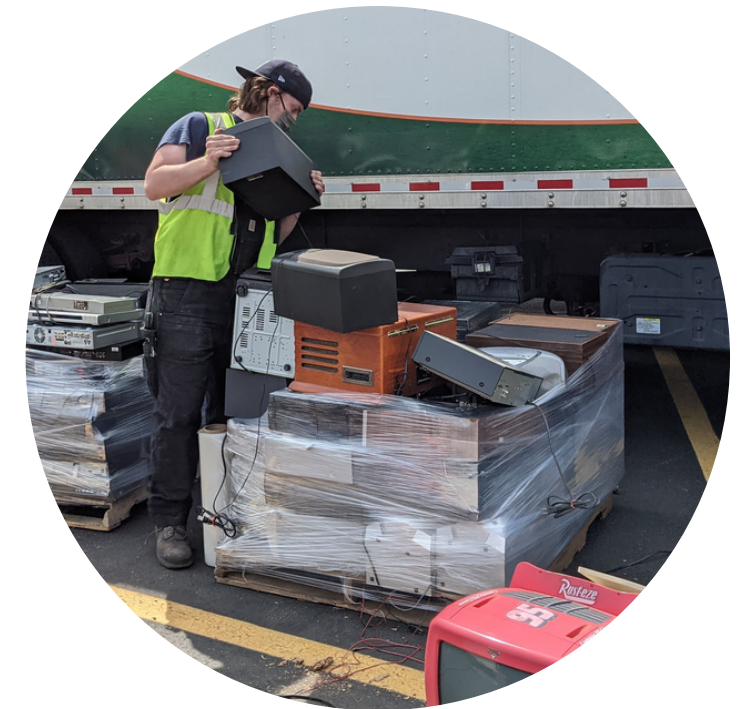
Community
Compost



Stewardship



Environmental
Education



Electronics Recycling

COMMUNITY COMPOST

In 2022, we:

- Composted 1,343,084 pounds of food scraps
- Operated 21 food scrap drop-off sites
- Provided technical support for 22 groups stewarding compost programs in their communities
- Donated 25 cubic yards of finished compost to community greening groups

The Ecology Center has been providing community composting programs since 1990. Throughout the 32 years we have carried out these programs, we've experienced periods of growth, expansion, and change. During 2022, we settled into the operational changes brought about by the displacement from East River Park and the loss of a compost processing site. Amidst these changes, we continued to operate 21 food scrap drop-off sites (serving about 3,690 participants weekly) and deliver the food scraps to the Staten Island compost site for processing.

We also worked with 22 community groups, assisting them with their composting efforts. In particular, we worked with three groups to build composting equipment, including a compost trommel and composting bins. Additionally, we provide groups with training, in-kind resources, and access to a food scrap hauling service if they are not able to compost their materials on-site.

Throughout the past year, we have also been planning for our future growth. We have been working with the Department of Sanitation on the design and future build-out of the Rockaway Avenue composting site, which will serve as our processing site until our return to East River Park.



“When we needed to replace our composting unit, LES Ecology Center provided the materials, from the sand and gravel for the foundation to the lumber, wire mesh, and hardware. They also helped us recruit volunteers for the build-out. We now have two two-bin composting units at the garden, that people comment on how great they look, which we’re actively using to process bokashi-treated food scraps. Additionally, as in previous years, they set up visits for Master Composters to learn about bokashi and volunteer with our composting efforts.”

–Shig Matsukawa, Down to Earth Garden



“Environmental sustainability is at the core of our mission. Thanks to our partnership with the Lower East Side Ecology Center, we are better able to promote environmental sustainability to our local communities here in Queens. We are proud of the work we have been able to do together thus far and hope to continue our partnership for many years to come.”

- Jatna Ramirez, Queens Botanical Garden

Since 2011, we've partnered with Queens Botanical Garden on 21 collection events, collecting over 350,000 pounds of unwanted electronics.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

In 2022, we:

- Hosted 40 electronic waste recycling events
- Collected 304,562 pounds of electronic waste

The Ecology Center has diverted over 11,000,000 pounds of unwanted electronics from the waste stream since 2003. In 2022, we held 40 collection events in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens and collected 304,562 pounds of unwanted electronics from 5,455 households. We service Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan with pop-up events and work with EcoTech Management and Walter as our recycling partners.

Free e-waste collection is a much-needed service, and we are committed to continuing to bring this important program to diverse neighborhoods of New York City. However, we truly miss having a permanent space to carry out other crucial elements of e-waste recycling. The loss of our Gowanus e-waste warehouse in 2020 brought an end to one of the most cherished and important aspects of this program: reuse. The reuse part of our work had included refurbishing electronics to be used again and providing access to affordable devices, a prop library for film/media rental, and an artist-in-residence program. We are exploring ways to bring back these parts of the e-waste program.





STEWARDSHIP

In 2022, we:

- Engaged more than 912 volunteers in stewardship activities at East River Park, Tompkins Square Park, and Gouverneur Gardens
- Continued to beautify Tompkins Square Park by planting more than 5,000 bulbs
- Worked with 117 volunteers to care for over 120 street trees in the Lower East Side

The Ecology Center has always placed a high value on stewardship, as we believe that maintaining green spaces is essential to our city’s health.

Throughout 2022, over 900 participants volunteered with us in Tompkins Square and East River Park, providing 2,879 hours of volunteer time. Our volunteers join us in this work for many reasons—they might want to pitch in and get their hands dirty, learn more about native plants, or participate in community or team-building activities with their colleagues. Whatever the motivation, the end result is better maintained green open space and growing awareness about our natural environment.

We also partnered with residents from Gouverneur Gardens, a Mitchell Lama development, to develop a pollinator garden on an underutilized green space along Montgomery. A nutrient-deficient, mostly empty space filled with buried bricks, rocks, and glass was gradually transformed into a vibrant, uplifting garden. The garden that we planted will also serve as a memorial to those impacted by COVID-19.

We would like to thank the Greenacre Foundation for their generous support and Frank Avila-Goldman for his tireless advocacy, organizing and coordination with the residents and Board of Gouverneur Gardens to make this project a reality.



“Commitment to equity, stewardship, and ecological justice [has been] at the forefront of the Lower East Side Ecology Center’s DNA for decades, but there is no greater time or need to support their initiatives both in this community and citywide. The LES Ecology Center, under the direction of Christine Datz-Romero, has helped activate formerly impoverished spaces at Gouverneur Gardens into a memorial for our residents and a teaching model of how resilient nature and this community can be when provided an opportunity to work with the natural environment in the face of climate change.”

–Frank Avila-Goldman, on behalf of Gouverneur Gardens

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In 2022, we:

- Engaged 947 youth participants in environmental programs
- Had 2,820 attendees participate in 103 public education and outreach activities
- Led 21 field trips for schools and camp groups, reaching 894 young students
- Built and planted 16 new raised-bed planters at the Food Justice Garden

The education programs at the Lower East Side Ecology Center aim to provide urban environmental education for New Yorkers of all ages through meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities.

In 2022, we were awarded a Community Impact grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to support our Food Justice Program. This funding allowed us to build 16 new raised-bed planters in our food garden at the Henry Street Settlement (HSS) headquarters, where we grow fruits and vegetables for local community fridges. In addition to our older youth cohorts and school group offerings, we led three food and gardening workshops for the older adults of the HSS Senior Companion Program. Our Food Justice Program served 135 youth and adults. This program was even featured on [PIX11 local news](#).

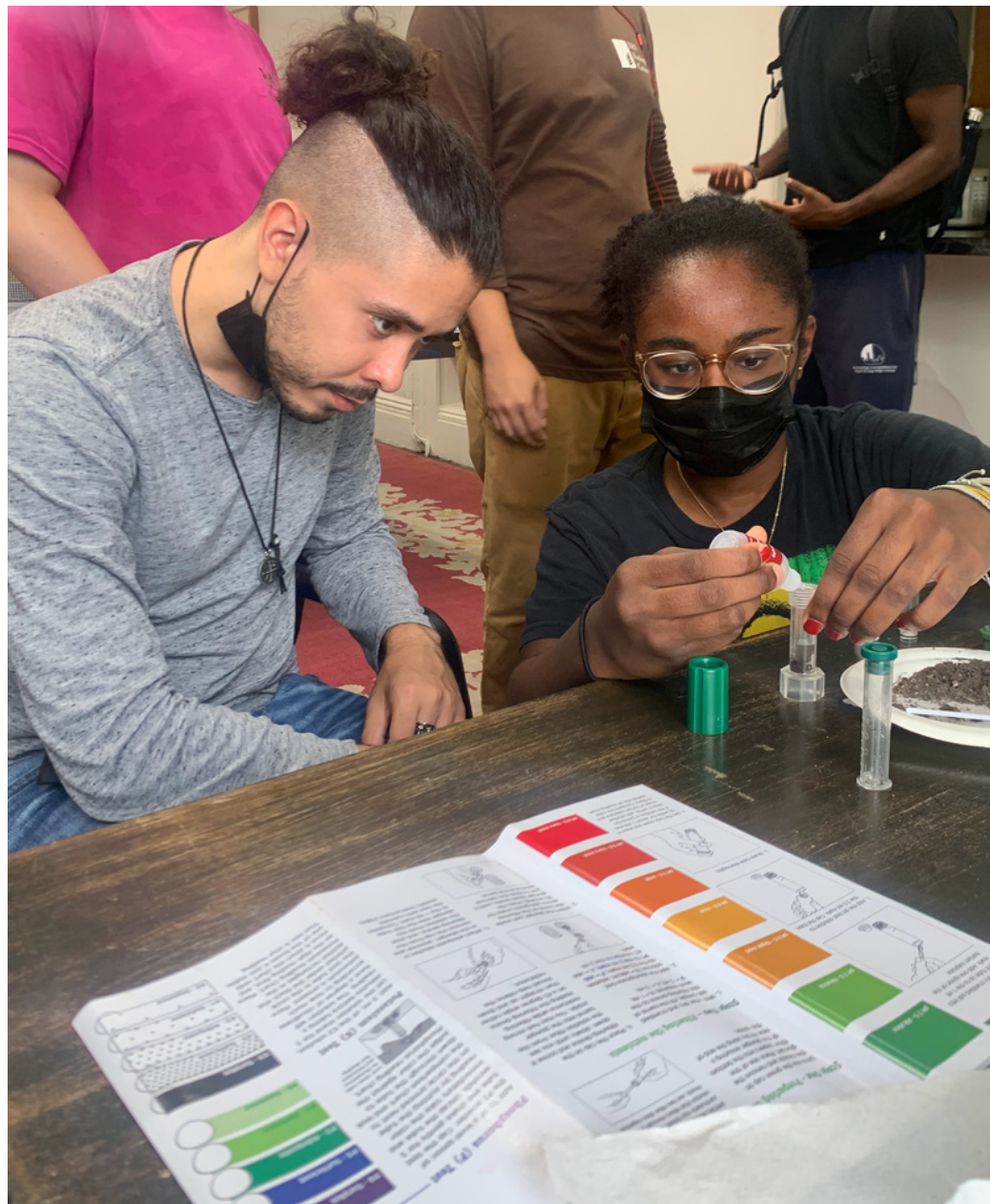
In the summer of 2022, we were invited to partner with the African Burial Ground National Monument on a National Park Service initiative, Parks for Every Classroom. Through this partnership, we created a new professional development program to help classroom teachers integrate equity-centered climate change education into the curriculum. In the fall, we facilitated the first sessions of this pilot program with Peck Slip School.

We've continued our estuary education efforts, offering three public fishing clinics in the fall, in addition to fishing activities with NEST+m for Day in the Life of the Hudson River. We also piloted a new women's fishing initiative with Battery Park City Authority to promote gender inclusion in the angling community.



"In 2022, I had the wonderful privilege of working with the LES Ecology Center, alongside my team, in building an absolutely stunning garden filled with plenty of herbs and vegetables. Previously, I participated in distributing groceries at local pantries as well as cooking meals at an older adult center. Now, I am actively involved in educating others about sustaining and cultivating these plants, which has strengthened my belief in the significance of food justice. I firmly advocate that every family, regardless of their background, should have equal access to affordable and nutritious food for the betterment of the minds and bodies of our community."

-Timothy, Food Justice Program participant



MASTER COMPOSTER CERTIFICATE COURSE

In 2022, the Master Composter Certificate Course returned after a short hiatus. This advanced compost education and outreach program is offered through a partnership with the NYC Compost Project. It is designed to build a citywide network of educators, advocates, and community composters to support NYC Department of Sanitation composting initiatives.

The Ecology Center acts as the centralized administrator of the course, working closely with the Department of Sanitation on this work. Over the year, we facilitated conversations with NYC Compost Project partners to redesign and relaunch the course. Besides the LES Ecology Center, project partners include Big Reuse, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Earth Matter NY, New York Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, and Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden.

Starting in March 2022, Master Composter activities such as workshops, field trips, and volunteer work days have been offered across the city. New Yorkers were incredibly excited at the relaunch of this program, and many activities sold out instantly. Since the course was re-launched, the Ecology Center has ensured that citywide activities are scheduled year-round, communicating with Master Composter course participants, tracking program data, and facilitating course feedback. In the fall, we hosted a graduation ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of the first group of graduates from the Master Composter course.



Reaching over 500 participants, the Ecology Center carried out many Master Composter activities in 2022:

- 24 workshops
- 8 field trips
- 53 volunteer workdays

These activities were hosted in community spaces with groups such as LOISAIDA, LES Girls Club, Seward Park Library, The Brotherhood Sister Sol, La Plaza Cultural, 9th St Community Garden and Green Oasis.



FALL Social

— *Thriving at 35!* —

**A BENEFIT COMMEMORATING
35 YEARS OF COMMUNITY-BASED
URBAN SUSTAINABILITY**

At our 2022 Fall Social—with the theme of “Thriving at 35”—we celebrated a big milestone as an environmental nonprofit founded in 1987. At this event, we honored the Community Compost Leaders who helped expand access to composting for more New Yorkers.

These were our 2022 Community Compost Leaders honorees:

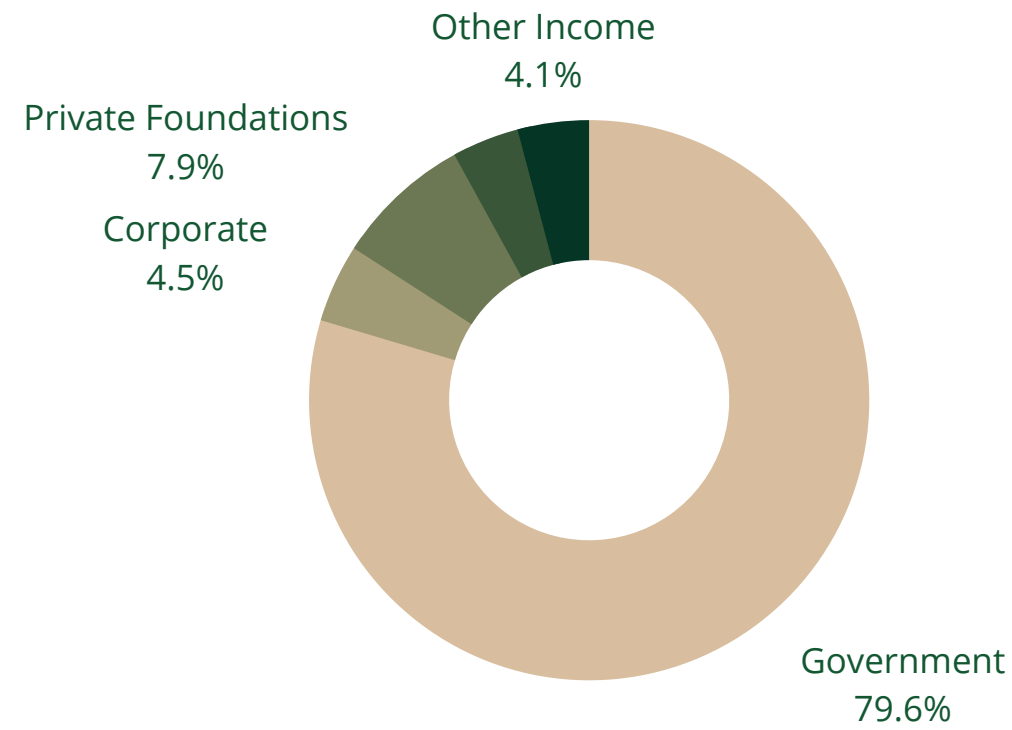
- Brotherhood Sister Sol
- Down to Earth Garden
- Harlem Grown
- Hell’s Kitchen Commons
- La Plaza Cultural
- Pleasant Village Community Garden

We also had a delicious seasonal feast. Farmers from the Union Square Greenmarket provided fresh fruits, vegetables, and other ingredients, and dishes were prepared by Charlie Kiely, Chef/owner of renowned former restaurant The Grocery.

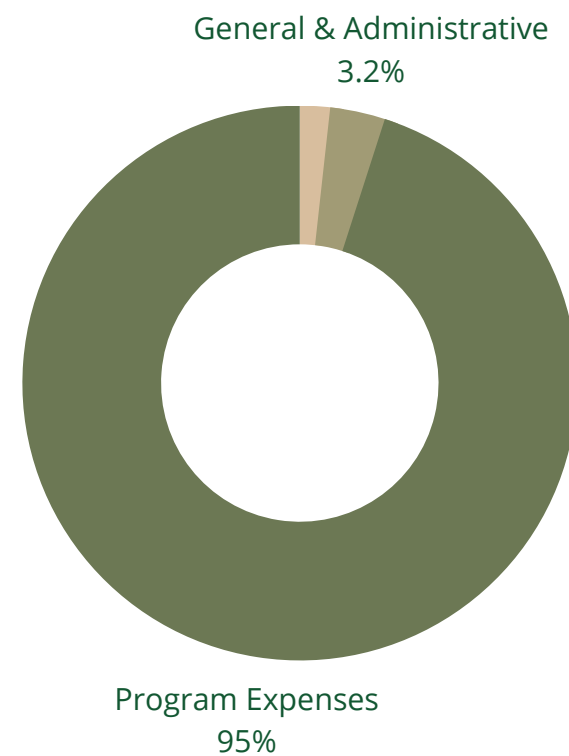
AUDITED 2022 FINANCIALS

January 1, 2022–December 31, 2022

Revenue



Expenses



Revenue

Government	\$1,968,528
Corporate	\$111,747
Private Foundations	\$194,779
Private Contributions	\$95,718
Other Income	\$101,902
Total Revenue	\$2,472,674

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$1,862,586
General and Administrative	\$62,906
Fundraising	\$34,343
Total Expenses	\$1,959,835

Change in net assets

\$512,839

SUPPORTERS

Elected Officials

New York City Council Members:

Adrienne Adams
Joan Ariola
Alexa Aviles
Justin Brannan
Gale Brewer
Erik Bottcher
James Gennaro
Jennifer Gutierrez
Shahana Hanif
Robert Holden
Linda Lee
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Vickie Paladino
Keith Powers
Joseph Rita
Carlina Rivera
Sandra Ung

New York State Assembly Member:

Harvey Epstein

New York State Senator:

Brian Kavanagh

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Bloomberg Philanthropies
CT Charitable Foundation
City Park Foundation
Esther & Morton Wohlgermuth
Foundation

EFAO Schwarz Family Foundation
Greenacre Foundation
Louis & Anne Abrons Foundation
Moore Charitable Foundation
Rockefeller Foundation
Rohit & Katharine Desai Family
Foundation
Schneider Electric Foundation
Schulman Family Foundation
The Gramercy Park Foundation
The La Vida Feliz Foundation

Corporations

Blueland
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Con Edison
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ELEMIS
Franklin Templeton
Gander
Gloat
Martha Stewart & Marley Spoon
McKinsey & Company
Moet Hennessy
Morgan Stanley
NYC Ferry
Patagonia
Riskified

Shiseido
Yext

Program Partners

9th Street Community Garden
A Healthy BluePrint
African Burial Ground National
Monument
Alliance for Kips Bay
Artists Athletes Activists
Bard High School
Battery Park City Authority
Big Reuse
BioBus
BKRot
Brooklyn Botanic Garden
Brotherhood Sister Sol
Cactus Store
Chefs for Impact
Common Ground Compost
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Down to Earth
Earth Celebration
Earth Day Initiative
Earth Matter NY
East River Ichthyological Alliance
East Side Community High School
East Side Outside Community Garden
Essex Market
Fresh Creek Civic Association
Friends of Corlears Hook Park

Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
Good Old Lower East Side
Gouverneur Gardens Housing Corp.
Gowanus Canal Conservancy
Green Oasis
Green Thumb
GrowNYC
GrowNYC Teaching Garden
Harlem Grown
Hell's Kitchen Commons
Henry Street Settlement
Institute for Local Self Reliance
La Plaza Cultural Garden
La Sala de Pepe
Loisaida Inc.
Lower East Side Girls Club
Maggie's Garden
Materials for the Arts
Mulberry Street Library
National Park Service
Nest+m
New York Botanical Garden
New York Harbor School
New York University
Newtown Creek Alliance
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
NYC Department of Sanitation
NYC Parks GreenThumb
NYC Parks Super Steward
Peck Slip School
Pleasant Village Community Garden
PS 110

PS 142
PS 294
Queens Botanical Garden
Queens County Farm Museum
Randall's Island Urban Farm
Rockaway Parkway Merchant Corridor
Association
Rodale Pleasant Park Community
Garden
Samuel's Food Gardens
Save Our Compost Coalition
Scavenger Stories
Seward Park Conservancy
Seward Park Library
Snug Harbor Cultural Center and
Botanical Garden
Solar One
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library
(NYPL)
Sure We Can
Transportation Alternatives
United Nations International School
Waterfront Alliance



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The help you provide allows us to continue protecting, improving, and enriching the city's environment. As a community-based organization, we rely on support from our community of New Yorkers and those who believe in sustainable cities. Donations and financial support allow us to continue to provide free and affordable programming for everyone in our diverse community. Our composting and e-waste programs, environmental education, and stewardship of public green spaces all rely on your contributions. Would you consider giving this year in support of our work to advance and advocate for urban sustainability?

Support the Ecology Center with a contribution today and make your tax-deductible gift by visiting our website.

Thank you for being a partner in fulfilling our mission. We couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,
LES Ecology Center Team

HOW TO DONATE

Visit www.lesecologycenter.org and select Donate on the main menu.

