CONTENTS

MISSION & BOARD 2
LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD 3
UNAUDITED FINANCIALS 4
GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS 5
EDUCATION 6
GREENHOUSE 8
GREENTEAM 10
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAZA PROGRAM 12
SPECIAL EVENTS 14
DONOR & SPONSOR LIST 16
The mission of the Horticultural Society of New York is to sustain the vital connection between people and plants. Our social service and public programs educate and inspire, growing a broad community that values horticulture for the many benefits it brings to our environment, our neighborhoods, and our lives.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

I take great pleasure in writing at the end of my first year as The Horticultural Society of New York’s Board Chairman. During that time, I have gotten to know well our wonderful staff and have familiarized myself with the wide range of our exceptional programs. I inherited a healthy, vibrant organization, and am happy to report that things continue very positively in terms of our activity and growth.

Over the past year, The Hort has accomplished a great deal: we doubled the size of our Rikers Island horticultural therapy program; we opened a public greenhouse and teaching garden at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park; and we completed the first year of our 3-year contract with the Department of Transportation to provide care and maintenance services in 15 public plazas. The Hort has grown exponentially, and to meet all our expanded commitments we have hired 11 new horticultural therapists, educators, gardeners, and administrators. Presently, 15 Hort therapists and instructors at Rikers Island work with more than 500 incarcerated individuals, helping them move forward in a positive direction. Hort educators continue to provide nutrition education and help create learning gardens in more than 30 schools in some of our city’s neediest communities. Since its opening in October, our new greenhouse at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park has been on target to serve more than 10,000 children and parents living in areas without easy access to healthy foods. And our GreenTeam now provides horticultural services in all 5 boroughs, giving formerly incarcerated and homeless individuals work experience caring for plants in more than 35 plazas, public green spaces, and supportive housing sites.

Furthermore, well-attended were our Annual Fall Luncheon (which honored our longtime supporter Huguette Hersch as well as chefs Joseph “JJ” Johnson, Seamus Mullen, and Bill Telepan) and our springtime New York Flower Show Dinner Dance (at which Awards of Excellence were given to retiring trustee Sharon Casdin and architect Gil Schafer). All these activities are central to our core mission. For 116 years, The Hort has been a leader in promoting the vital connection between people and plants. We thank all our supporters – members, individuals, corporations, foundations, and government partners. Your generosity allows us to remain wholeheartedly dedicated to this ideal.

Jared Goss

Chairman
UNAUDITED FINANCIALS
FY 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)

INCOME

Total: $4,428,970

GREEN TEAM: $1,172,720
GREENHOUSE: $1,167,706
NPP: $1,032,374
EDUCATION: $438,582
SPECIAL EVENTS: $367,780
UNRESTRICTED INCOME: $249,808

EXPENSES

Programs & Membership: $2,996,109
Rent & Utilities: $428,120
Fundraising & Special Events: $304,237
Administrative: $258,264

Total: $3,986,730
GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

In the last fiscal year, The Hort secured grants and contributions totaling more than $1.1 million to support and grow our social service programs.

Government: $639,436
Foundations: $437,400
Other: $116,452

Total Secured: $1,193,288

“The GreenHouse is my sanctuary. I have mental health issues. When I’m in the garden, my anxiety goes away, I calm down and feel proud of my work.”

— 37-year-old woman working with the GreenHouse program on Rikers Island
The Horticultural Society of New York  Annual Report  FY 2018

EDUCATION

“The Hort has exposed our students to green spaces, urban gardens, landscape architects (on construction of public open space), and an understanding of the natural environment available within Brooklyn, showing them the endless possibilities their city has to offer.”
- Cara Tait, Brooklyn Green School Principal

The Education Program offers hands-on curriculum-based classes, garden visits, workshops, and trainings for the general public, members, students, and their teachers.

101
Teachers trained in botany, nutrition and experiential outdoor learning

5,000
Children provided classes in-school or at The Hort’s new education center

20
Learning gardens constructed or improved, maintained, and activated

BRIDGING THE SUMMER LEARNING GAP
In July and August of 2017, our dedicated education staff hosted programs for young naturalists at McGolrick Park in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In total, The Hort educators provided 40 workshops and 160 service hours. 800 young park-goers and their families learned about insects, birds, botany, gardening, and art. At Denny Ferrall Riverbank State Park, Hort educators served 200 summer campers and provided them daily opportunities to grow and harvest plants, share fresh salads, and cultivate their love of nature.
OUR NEW GREENHOUSE AND KITCHEN PROGRAM OPENS AT DENNY FARRELL RIVERBANK STATE PARK

The Hort officially opened NYdigs, its greenhouse and kitchen program at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park, in partnership with New York State Parks, and with support from Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, NYC Council Member Mark Levine, The Department of Environmental Conservation, The Burpee Foundation, The Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, Whole Foods, as well as other Hort supporters. The education center has already served over 3,000 children, parents, and seniors from the Harlem community through a wide variety of opportunities, events, and classes. The nearly 4,000 sq. foot facility and gardens provides a beautiful home for The Hort’s public programs and education classes.

The Hort has offered over 100 free learning opportunities for all ages, ranging from the benefits of herbal tea to an 8-week gardening course for seniors and kids. All programs are rooted in The Hort’s mission: to sustain the vital connection between people and plants. Additionally, low-cost garden workshops and cooking classes on topics like kombucha, soil science, and international breads leverage The Hort’s expertise or that of local artisans to provide an immersive learning experience.

The facility also allows for teachers and students to participate in hands-on workshops, to learn about botany and real-life applications of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) education, and to explore the world of nutrition through the growing and preparation of fresh vegetables. Local chefs visit the site for cooking demonstrations. The Hort’s accredited Teacher Training now takes place at the center, with educators experiencing in-ground planting, picking fresh ingredients, and running their own farmers market. The Hort expects that the new facility will enable our education programs to serve at minimum an additional 1,000 school children annually. The Hort will also host service learning opportunities and internships for teenage students at the center.

400+ Attendees at seasonal festivals

100+ Free programs for children, parents, and seniors
NEW COLLABORATIONS

The GreenHouse has partnered with the New School’s Metrics and Evaluations class to develop an integrative assessment tool and database that will help us to do formative and summative evaluation of the impact of our program on participant behavior, emotional well-being, and attitude. The GreenHouse staff will test the efficacy of the assessment tool in early FY19. The Hort is also in the early stages of collaborating with the Fortune Society, one of the city’s largest reentry institutions, to create a seamless pipeline from the GreenHouse on Rikers to the GreenTeam workforce program, with Fortune providing residential aftercare and support.
GROWTH IN YOUNG STUDENTS AND NEW GARDENS
Historically, GreenHouse has primarily served adults. In FY18 however, 70% of GreenHouse participants were between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, 126 of which were pursuing either high school or General Equivalency Diplomas at the jail’s East River Academy. To serve these young participants, two new gardens were started in the summer of FY17. Under skillful guidance from instructors, our motivated participants transformed hard-packed, bare pieces of land into beautiful gardens.

EXPANSION
In FY18, our GreenHouse team of five increased three-fold to 16 full-time staff members as part of the Mayor’s Plan to expand rehabilitative services at the Rikers Island Correctional Facility. The new staff members were hired to serve young adults, including those who are under mental observation, in several new garden sites.

UPCOMING
The Hort’s GreenHouse team will continue to build out the expanded programs in FY19, and will grow to serve 500+ participants. We will build our partnerships with community based organizations specializing in reentry to create more formal, intentional, and transitional options for our participants’ aftercare, further reducing the chances of recidivism and increases opportunities for a successful reintegration into society.

PLANNING FOR CHANGE
The Hort has been an active part of the discussions with both the Department of Correction and the Department of Education in regards to changes on Rikers Island with the city’s detention and prison system. The Hort will continue to plan for and implement the transfer of our therapeutic programs to new sites either on or off Rikers Island and will continue to serve the many individuals who are or will be incarcerated in our city and need our care.
Greenteam provides dual mission services: high quality in-field vocational training for men and women overcoming barriers to employment, and garden design, installation, and maintenance service at below-market prices to ensure that New York City residents living on limited incomes can enjoy greenspaces.

40+
Greenteam participants received practical training in high-end horticulture

20
Supportive housing gardens were installed, renovated, or maintained

250+
Horticulture workshops offered to supportive housing residents

A Force for Planting
Across all five boroughs, the Greenteam converts barren public spaces into green oases. For residents and community members, the Greenteam also provides workshops informed by our horticultural therapy expertise to enhance the benefits of the gardens we build. From public plazas (see NPP), to tree beds in low-income commercial districts, to supportive and affordable housing, we provide spaces for people to gather, socialize, and enjoy the plants. The impact of the Greenteam’s work is apparent; as we work – plant, weed, mulch, and water – local residents regularly ask us about our organization and our work. And they say “thank you.”

“Yesterday morning I left my apartment to discover a group of people planting in the planters at the intersection above. I took a few pictures, with their permission, and asked them who was sponsoring the planting. They told me it was you. I’m writing to check if this is true and then to send a check. Thank you.”

- Ani Hurwitz,
  Lower East Side resident
The Horticultural Society of New York Annual Report FY 2018

GARDENS FOR GOOD
The GreenTeam installed 40 raised beds for supportive housing organization, CAMBA. These beds will be planted and cared for by residents, under the guidance of the GreenTeam. This project offers long-term positive impacts on community, health, and well-being.

A WORKFORCE TRANSITIONING TO INDEPENDENCE
Many GreenTeam participants are hard-to-employ individuals who are transformed by working with plants during their time with us. One of our partner organizations, Getting Out Staying Out (GOSO), serves justice-involved men, and many become our hardest-working, most dedicated participants. This year, GOSO honored The Hort at their 2018 gala with their Employer of the Year Award. Of the 70 GOSO participants who completed the GreenTeam internship, nearly 100% moved on to full-time employment or to advance their education.

“I feel like I am getting good at this. I think this is my calling.”
- Saut, GreenTeam participant, planting at Fordham Plaza

New raised beds for residents of supportive housing

Davon McLane, former GOSO intern, and Hort staff at the GOSO award ceremony
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAZA PROGRAM

"In order to make the neighborhood safe and make it better, we need to create a bridge between each other, where people come and sit and interact."

- Misba Abdin,
  Executive Director,
  Bangladeshi American Community Development & Youth Services

Neighborhood Plaza Program (NPP) helps communities transform reclaimed streets into vibrant public spaces by cultivating clean, green, active pedestrian plazas in 15 high-need neighborhoods across New York City.

14,000
Annuals and perennials planted four times a year

200,000
Square feet of public space

6,000
Square feet of planted space: containers, raised beds, in-ground areas, and treepits

WITH EACH PANSY, PLAZA STEWARDSHIP GROWS

Four times a year, the GreenTeam brings seasonal horticulture to the plazas. Passersby stop to say thank you, pose for photos and ask for advice ("Will those pansies grow in the Dominican Republic?") and they offer their opinions. Plaza visitors are often self-appointed horticulture guardians, protecting the plantings after the GreenTeam has moved on. At Diversity Plaza, local resident Leonardo fastens his hand-made “please don’t sit down on the flowers” signs to the planters. With every flower the GreenTeam plants, waters, or prunes, The Hort demonstrates care, encouraging community attention and stewardship.
HELPING PLAZA PARTNERS HELP THEMSELVES

In 2015, five Brooklyn residents came together to form the Parkside Plaza Committee. Together, they turned the neglected, litter-strewn concrete space in front of their subway station into a vibrant plaza that gives their neighbors a place to sit, relax, and come together for concerts, art shows, community resource fairs, and a weekly farmers market. Behind the scenes of this huge public success was NPP. NPP provided the advice, resources, and collaborative problem solving that enabled these volunteers to become efficient public space managers.

#PLAZASMEAN...OPEN SPACE, SAFETY, FLOWERS, HISTORY, FUN

NPP has been a voice for neighborhood plazas. Following a social media workshop for all Plaza Partners in 2018, NPP launched a campaign to profile each plaza, showcasing the partner organization, the neighborhood and some unique aspect of the site – giving the partners a way to increase their own social media metrics. Currently, The Hort’s social media platforms highlight the many ways in which plazas benefit the city – from public safety to civic engagement. The posts in this #PlazasMean campaign are typically “liked” and “shared” by NYCDOT, enhancing our relationship to the agency. In between these campaigns, the work of the GreenTeam and ACE are featured as they improve neighborhoods across the city every day.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead
SPECIAL EVENTS

“The Horticultural Society of New York hosted its 21st Annual Flower Show Dinner Dance honoring Sharon Casdin and Gil Schafer. At the annual celebration of floral arts, which presented 20 different designers, guests enjoyed a festive cocktail hour...and a preview of the exquisite and ethereal designs.”

- New York Social Diary, April 27, 2018

The Hort organizes Special Events throughout the year that bring together our supporters to celebrate our mission and to raise money for our social service programs.

300 Attendees at the Annual Fall Luncheon

110 Children enjoyed the 6th Annual Green Bean Bash

200 Attendees at the New York Flower Show Dinner Dance

ANNUAL FALL LUNCHEON

On Tuesday, October 24th The Hort held its Annual Fall Luncheon at The Metropolitan Club in support of our NYdigs program. Huguette Hersch received the Award of Excellence for her 15-year leadership of The Circle of Friends, and for her distinctive floral artistry and arrangements. New York Times Best Selling Author Veronica Chambers presented the Barbara A. Margolis Award to Culinary Honorees Chef Joseph “JJ” Johnson, Chef Seamus Mullen, and Chef Bill Telepan for their work in food security, sustainability and healthy living. Nearly 300 affluent and philanthropic members of the New York community attended.
6TH ANNUAL GREEN BEAN BASH
The 6th Annual Green Bean Bash took place on Saturday, February 3rd at 583 Park Avenue from 12:00 - 3:00 pm. With 90 adults and 110 children in attendance, the event raised awareness and support for our newly opened Greenhouse & Education Center. The event was promoted on popular family websites such as Avenue, Red Tricycle, Mommy Poppins and The New York Times’ Children’s Events. Children and adults alike enjoyed the green-focused activities and crafts, dancing in an interactive DJ set with Mr. Green Bean himself, and making special creations to take home.

“...is an ideal occasion for one set of rapid growers — children — to meet another: plants.”

NEW YORK FLOWER SHOW DINNER DANCE
On Tuesday, April 24th, The Hort held its 21st Annual New York Flower Show Dinner Dance at The Pierre, with nearly 200 attendees celebrating 21 years of floral and garden design. Renowned architect Gil Schafer received the Award of Excellence, and former Trustee, Sharon Casdin received the Legacy Award. Sharon’s 20-year commitment to The Hort’s work has made an incredible impact on the progress and growth of our social service programs, and she has inspired many others to support our mission.
DONOR & SPONSOR LIST

We would like to thank all of our donors, sponsors, and special event attendees for their support of the Hort and its programs.

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