

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ENGAGING OUR FUTURE

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been another very busy year for Village Preservation on a number of fronts. As our Executive Director Andrew Berman described at our Annual Meeting in June, it has been a year of exciting progress and tough challenges. Our advocacy continues to focus on the struggle to preserve the very heart and soul of our communities, and continues to grow in scope, intensity, and urgency.

NEW YORK CITY

is in the midst of a massive expansion by a powerful tech industry. While there has been a tech presence in the city for several decades, the number of relatively new startups, boutique and specialty firms now number close to one thousand. Industry giants such as Google are planning major expansions of their operations in the city. This unprecedented growth of the tech sector has focused on our and other nearby neighborhoods between Midtown and the Financial District. City leaders, understandably excited to see our economic base expand and employment opportunities improve, seem enthralled by every announcement of a tech-related expansion, no matter the potential negative effect on the integrity of our unique, historic communities in terms of out-ofscale or out-of-character new development.

Meanwhile developers have become more outspoken in their criticism of our hard-won landmark and zoning protections. They claim they are the "enemy" of economic growth, better jobs, and higher incomes for New Yorkers. Despite evidence to the contrary, they also claim that they contribute to our city's affordable housing crisis. Sadly, these efforts to denigrate preservation and landmarking protection as an "enemy of the people" have found willing allies in our Mayor and other key elected officials.

Our organizational challenge now, and for the foreseeable future, is making sure that Village



Preservation is ready and able to mount strong opposition to this impending tsunami of downtown commercial development.

With this challenge in mind we made the decision almost one year ago to undertake a brand update.



Our home in the historic St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Rectory.

Our new identity and "look" is designed to unify our messaging across the many platforms we use to educate, inform, and to rally public support for our mission, which remains unchanged.

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In the coming months, we will be launching our updated and redesigned website. It has been upgraded

to enable staff to more easily improve and expand content and to make the site more user-friendly. And its appearance will be consistent with our overall rebrand designs.

I want to close by acknowledging the vitally important contribution of our generous and growing membership, our wonderful friends, colleagues, and neighbors, our talented, hard-working staff, and the generosity and dedication of our Trustees in advancing Village Preservation's mission.

Art Levin

President, Board of Trustees



PRESERVATION AND ADVOCACY

THIS WAS AN INCREDIBLY BUSY YEAR as we fought preservation battles at City Hall, and in our neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.

A prime focus was the section of Greenwich Village and the East Village south of Union Square, from 5th to 3rd Avenues. Mostly lacking landmark or zoning protections, this area has come under increasing development pressure, especially since a recent commercial upzoning on 14th Street by the Mayor and City Council to facilitate construction of a 'Tech Hub' being built by the Mayor's campaign donors. Councilmember Carlina Rivera broke her campaign pledge to condition her support for the rezoning on the provision of zoning and/or landmark protections for this surrounding area, to ensure the Tech Hub did not increase such pressure. Over the course of the year we issued several stinging reports, picked up by multiple media outlets, highlighting both the Mayor and the Councilmember's broken

promises, the shady arrangements behind the Tech Hub deal, and highlighting the special and endangered architecture and history of the surrounding area which warrant protection.

We also led a campaign for landmark designation for the interior of the White Horse Tavern on Hudson Street, a 140 year old literary landmark whose future has been in doubt since the building's purchase by a notorious slumlord and convicted felon earlier this year.

We finally made progress on important LGBT landmarks when the City designated three sites we had fought to protect – the LGBT Community Center at 208 W. 13th Street, the former Caffe Cino at 31 Cornelia Street, and the former Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse at 99 Wooster Street.

We began a conversation with the Landmarks
Preservation Commission about expanding landmark
protections in the East Village, and hope to see some
forward movement on that front by late 2019.

We closely scrutinized the process for considering zoning changes for SoHo and NoHo begun by the City, Borough President Brewer, and Councilmember Chin, pushing back against the possibility of any changes that would increase allowable development density, drive out long-time artists, or increase the maximum allowable size of retail.

We continued to push for measures to protect local small businesses, making headway on measures that would limit chain store expansion in certain areas, make it easier for shop owners to renegotiate lease renewals, and penalizing retail spaces being kept empty by owners for extended periods of time. We also released a study and analysis showing the positive correlation between landmark designation and retail health.

We were part of the coalition which successfully fought for rejection of a zoning change for a hotel next to the Merchant's House Museum which could endanger the historic institution; that application was turned down by the City Council at the direction of local Councilmember Rivera. We are urging her to do the same for an air rights transfer application on St. Mark's Place that would increase the size of a planned office tower, which the Council will consider later this year.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission adopted a revised version of its proposed rules changes that eliminated the sections we fought against, which would have cut the public out of the landmarks public review process for important applications. We also helped push the City Council to eliminate a loophole the Mayor had inserted into new legislation intended to address the abuse of zoning restrictions by developers who have inflated the size and height of buildings with fake 'mechanical voids', but also demanded the City do much more to attack this growing problem.

We reviewed almost seventy applications for changes to landmarked buildings that require public approval in our neighborhood over the past year. We continued

6,500
BUILDINGS MONITORED

3,500
LANDMARKS UNDER REVIEW

ZO

LANDMARKS APPLICATIONS EVALUATED

to monitor on a daily basis all 6,500 building lots in our neighborhood for demolition, alteration, and new construction permit applications, as well as 3,500 landmarked building sites for applications for approval for changes.





The LGBT Community Center at 208 West 13th Street; the former Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse at 99 Wooster Street

BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR

















50 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

ON MAY 5, 2019, VILLAGE PRESERVATION held its 21st Spring House Tour Benefit. This year's house tour raised about \$200,000 to support the critical work of the organization. The tour was made possible by the hard work of more than one hundred thirty volunteers, more than a dozen hard-working Benefit Committee members, and of course the incredibly generous families who opened the doors to their homes for the tour and reception that followed.

\$200,000
RAISED BY THE TOUR BENEFIT

This year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Greenwich Village Historic District by featuring seven completely unique and different homes throughout the historic district.

The tour began in the gorgeous garden of St. John's in the Village Church, where the flowers were in full bloom. The collection of homes contained lush gardens and peerless private art collections, and ranged from painstaking restorations to innovative and imaginative renovations.

The post-tour reception was held at the Urban Zen Center, also in the Greenwich Village Historic District,

giving many of our most generous supporters the treat of spending the remainder of the afternoon in the glorious former art studio of Stephan Weiss.

Thank you to all who contributed and participated in this time-honored spring tradition.







Village Preservation members enjoyed a Vintage Neon Signs of the West Village walking tour, along with other special members-only events. Members also have access to advance registration to all of our programs

MEMBERSHIP

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS continue to be the single largest source of funding for Village Preservation and its work, constituting more than two-thirds of our annual support. Membership support for Village Preservation grew steadily over

1,783
PAYING MEMBERS

\$816,000
IN MEMBER SUPPORT

1,100%
GROWTH SINCE 2001

500%

our last fiscal year, with 1,783 paying members giving over \$816,000 in membership support—both a high-water mark for the Society. Since 2001, total membership support for the organization grew by over 1,100%, while the number of Village Preservation

members increased by more than 500%, greatly increasing our capacity for education, research, programming, and advocacy.

Our 'Members Only' programming serves as a thank you to existing members for their support and to encourage new membership support for the organization. Members-only events over the past year included a special tour of the Whitney Museum's Exhibit 'Andy Warhol: from A to B and Back Again,' a pierogi-making lesson at Veselka, a holiday celebration at the Salmagundi Arts Club, a special talk on the newly-released book "Fred W. McDarrah: New York Scenes," and a Vintage Neon Signs of the West Village walking tour.

By far the majority of our membership support continues to come from local residents. But we also receive support from across the city, country, and world, from those who believe in preserving the special character and legacy of the Village, East Village, and NoHo, and in historic preservation. New members came from a variety of sources over the past year, including programs, continuing education, advocacy, our Annual Awards and Spring House Tour Benefit, interaction with our website and online resources, social media, and newsletters.

VILLAGE AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS!

EACH YEAR, WE HONOR just some of the people, places, and institutions which contribute to the special quality of life of our neighborhoods.

A near-capacity crowd filled the 500-seat historic main auditorium at The New School in June for our Annual Village Awards, hosted by writer and humorist Calvin Trillin.

This year's awardees, chosen by our Awards Committee from scores of nominations from the public, were:

- The Christopher Park Alliance, for caring for and improving a vital historic park at the center of Stonewall50 celebrations
- The Source Unitd Print & Copy Shop, for almost 40 years of supporting fellow businesses and residents in the East Village
- The Brant Foundation and Gluckman Tang Architects, for renovating the former Con Ed substation at 421 E. 6th Street and turning it into a magnificent art showcase open to the public
- Tea & Sympathy, for almost 30 years serving as New York's go-to spot for a taste of England
- The Bitter End, one of the world's premiere music venues since 1961
- Hettie Jones, the celebrated poet, teacher, writer, and activist
- The Estate of Fred W. McDarrah, for sharing the work of the incredible photographic chronicler of late 20th century downtown life, and using that legacy to support worthy causes including historic preservation and civil rights.



(Top to bottom) Hettie Jones; Christopher Park Alliance; Tea and Sympathy owners Nicky Perry and Sean Kavanagh-Dowsett; The Brant Foundation Gallery









PROGRAMS

WE HAD AN EXTRAORDINARILY busy programming year, with a record-breaking 83 programs attended by over 7,000 people. Almost all of our programs were free and, with the exception of our members-only events, open to the public. We conducted multiple programs throughout the year marking the

83
PROGRAMS

7,000ATTENDEES

"Our programming educates the public about historic preservation, and provides new insights and perspectives on the unique architectural and cultural heritage of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo."



50th anniversary of the designation of the Greenwich Village Historic District, including a weekend-long Open House throughout the historic district in conjunction with local businesses, houses of worship, theaters, and schools, along with a large day-long gathering and musical celebration in Washington Square. Other programs marked the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots and the designation of the East Village's St. Mark's Historic District, while still others explored our community gardens, Walt Whitman's 200th Birthday and Village connections, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, and our neighborhoods' immigrant heritage.

We also added two new historic plaques in the neighborhood. One honored writer Alex Haley where he lived and wrote at 92 Grove Street in the 1960s. A second on Westbeth (Bethune Street between Washington and West Streets) honored that complex's history as the former Bell Telephone Labs, where many great technological breakthroughs of the 19th and 20th centuries took place, and its transformation into groundbreaking affordable housing and workspace for artists in 1970.

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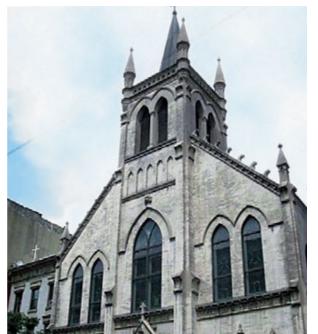






(Clockwise from top I.) The St. Mark's Historic District; celebrating the Greenwich Village Historic District 50th Anniversary; Village Preservation and speakers at the Alex Haley plaque unveiling, including Haley's niece and Malcolm X's daughter; the plaque.

ONLINE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT





Two of the over two thousand historic buildings found on our East Village Building Blocks website – www.qvshp.org/buildingblocks.

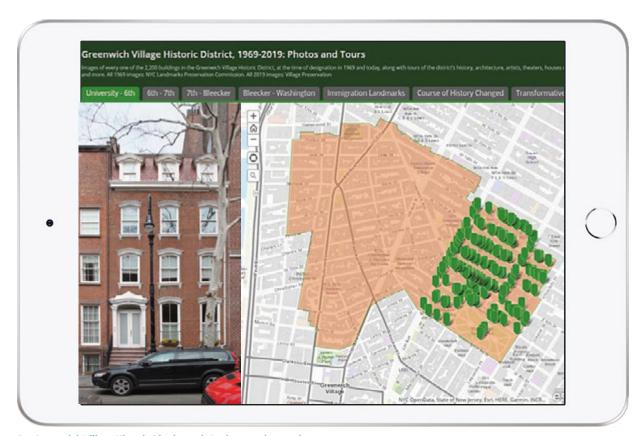
AS PART OF OUR CELEBRATION of the 50th Anniversary of the Greenwich Village Historic District, we created an interactive online map and tour of the entire historic district at gvshp.org/GVHD50tour. This multi-layered tool shows images of all 2,200 buildings in the district when designated in 1969 and today, as well as providing two dozen tours of the district, including African American History, Notable Women, LGBTQ Sites, Churches, Immigration Landmarks, Homes of Writers, Artists, and Musicians, Wood Frame Houses, and more, including nearly 1,000 sites.

We also launched our East Village Building Blocks website at gvshp.org/buildingblocks. This tool shows each of the over 2,000 buildings in this neighborhood, giving the building's history including architect, date of construction, original purpose and builder, and changes it's undergone over time. It also shows

historically significant events or people connected to the building, past and present images, and related historic documents. The site also provides tours of the East Village's Jewish, Ukrainian, German, African American, LGBTQ, punk, squatter, music, and shipbuilding history, among other facets.

1,000
HISTORIC SITES
2,200

We also issued a 235-page report by noted architectural historian Francis Morrone, *A History of the East Village and Its Architecture*. Funded by Preserve NY, a grant program of the Preservation



Our Greenwich Village Historic District 50th Anniversary interactive map

League of NY State and the NY State Council on the Arts, the report looks at the history of the East Village from the 17th century to the present, analyzing hundreds of buildings and discussing the neighborhood's many eras of development, from merchant and shipbuilder district, to immigrant quarter, to musical and artistic mecca.

We released a report by another noted architectural historian, Tony Robins, *Finishing the Job: The Unprotected Architecture and History of Greenwich Village & the East Village below Union Square,* which examines the rich history of our neighborhood between 5th and 3rd Avenues, 14th and 9th Streets. This area was New York's premier hotel and commercial district in the 19th century, then became a center for printing and garment manufacturing, and in the 20th century was ground zero for the New York School of artists and the city's book sellers and

antique dealers. It's also an area facing tremendous development pressure and almost entirely lacking in landmark protections, making the report timely and necessary.

GUSHP. ORG

We continued to add to our very popular existing resources, including our Historic Image Archive (archive.gvshp.org), our blog Off the Grid (gvshp.org/blog), our Civil Rights and Social Justice Map (gvshp.org/civilrightsmap), and our Landmarks Application Webpage (gvshp.org/lpc), as well as adding several new oral histories, including with noted preservation architect James Polshek, La Nacional Director Robert Sanfiz, and B&H Dairy proprietors Ola and Fawzy Abdelwahed.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

WE CONTINUED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE our educational programs—Children's Education, offered to first through fifth graders in schools throughout New York City since 1991; Continuing Education, a New York State-accredited program serving real estate professionals since 2011; and our Business of the Month program, begun in 2014.

We continued to offer our Children's Education program to any school in New York City regardless of need or ability to pay. Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, our program served nearly 1,200 students in fifty-two classes in schools throughout Manhattan,



(Above) Our Children's Education program in Father Demo Square; Business of the Month Feast on Us, Hudson Street.



Brooklyn, and Queens. About 88% of the classes received need-based scholarships allowing them to participate in the three-session program for free, while the remainder paid a small administrative fee.

Our Continuing Education program, conducted in conjunction with our Broker's Partnership, reached scores of area real estate professionals over the past year, teaching members of this important industry the value and importance of preservation and history. Participants learned about the history of our neighborhoods' houses, tenements, and apartment buildings; the waves of immigrants from across the

1,200 students

52 CLASSES

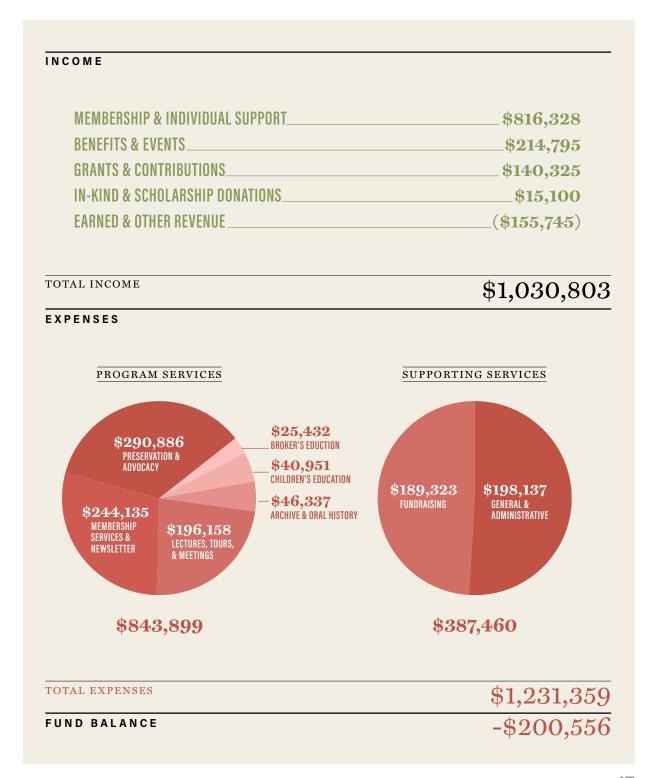
88%

OF THE CLASSES RECEIVED NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

country and world who settled here; and the vital zoning and landmarks regulations which govern and preserve these areas.

Our Business of the Month program showcased twelve new local independent businesses on our website, blog, and electronic newsletter. Local businesses are the backbone of our neighborhoods, and many find themselves in an increasingly tough, competitive environment of rising rents and proliferating chain stores. We invite the public to nominate their favorite businesses for consideration for our Business of the Month, and hope to increase support for and patronage of independent stores that provide vital services or unique amenities in our neighborhoods. Hundreds of individuals have submitted nominations, and our Business of the Month selections have been seen by thousands of viewers. This past year we celebrated a beloved bookstore: a yoga studio for new and expecting mothers, babies, and their families; immigrant-owned shoe repair, catering, magazine, and hardware shops; a tannery; and a big gay ice cream store.

FISCAL YEAR 2018



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IN-KIND AND OTHER SUPPORT

The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Cherry Lane Theatre, The Urban Zen Center, Estate of Fred W. McDarrah, Carole Teller, Salmagundi Club, Rory Callahan, Tom Byrnes of T. Edwards Wine & Spirits, Ancolie, Bus Stop Cafe, Grey Dog, Julius' Bar, The Meatball Shop, The Spaniard, Wilfie & Nell, Murray's Cheese, Veselka, Westside Market

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