



VILLAGE PRESERVATION

GREENWICH
VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION



2020
2021
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

VILLAGE PRESERVATION

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Village Preservation

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Preserving Our Past, **ENGAGING OUR FUTURE**

Founded in 1980, **Village Preservation** works to document, celebrate, and preserve the special architectural and cultural heritage of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.

Village Preservation has successfully advocated for the landmark designation of more than 1,250 buildings in our neighborhoods, and has helped secure zoning protections for nearly 100 blocks. Each day we monitor more than 6,500 building lots in our neighborhood for demolition, alteration, or new construction permits, to notify the public and respond if necessary.

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



A Note from THE PRESIDENT

I was deeply honored in June of this year when my fellow Village Preservation trustees elected me President of the Board. I have big shoes to fill. Art Levin, my predecessor, had served as President for over a decade, helping to steer the organization through tumultuous and triumphant times. Everyone at Village Preservation owes Art a deep debt of gratitude for his leadership over the years, myself especially. I am particularly gratified that we will continue to benefit from his vast experience and wise counsel as he serves on the Board as a President Emeritus.

As a longtime member of Village Preservation, Preservation Committee member since 2013, trustee since 2015, and Vice President for the past five years, I've seen the organization meet a growing number of challenges. This past year has been no exception. The Mayor's last-gasp spree of measures seemingly designed to destroy, diminish, or give away critical elements of the city and neighborhood we love, while adamantly resisting preservation measures, has been one such challenge. The massive and precedent-setting proposed SoHo/NoHo upzoning is but the latest egregious example. And like everyone else, we have felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenges continue. A largely new city government takes office in January. This means a new set of decision-makers with their own priorities and plans, not all of which may align with a preservation ethos. And we face a growing confederacy of real estate, government, and upzoning advocates who are hell-bent on rolling back if not entirely eliminating the historic preservation and other zoning protections that help preserve historic buildings and the irreplaceable characteristics of our unique neighborhoods.

We're meeting this challenge, and so many others. We're forging alliances with affordable housing and



tenants groups, showing how preservation can help preserve rather than destroy affordable housing, and how upzoning plans can harm not only neighborhood scale and character but also reduce affordability, equity, and diversity.

At Village Preservation we're reimagining our programming, resources, and events to utilize new technology and modes of communication, while making them accessible to the broadest possible audience. And we're pursuing bold new efforts to document, celebrate, and protect not only the wonderful architecture of our neighborhoods but also their proud history as places of innovation, acceptance, and welcome, and birthplaces of social transformation.

These are turbulent but exciting times. I look forward to working with our extraordinary Executive Director, Andrew Berman, and our amazing team at Village Preservation, and with all of you as well.

Trevor Stewart

Trevor Stewart
President



Preservation and **ADVOCACY**

Our preservation advocacy was focused on four main areas: extending landmark protections to vulnerable and significant unprotected parts of our neighborhoods; seeking appropriate enforcement of landmark designations already in place in our neighborhoods; fighting proposals for inappropriate developments or to weaken the landmark

and zoning protections we have; and helping to promote healthy, small, independent businesses and local cultural institutions that are good neighbors.

We had some significant preservation victories this past year. We got the City Council to reject a requested air rights

transfer for a new office tower on St. Mark's Place and 3rd Avenue, which would have made it 20% larger than zoning allows. After we pushed back on the practically useless hotel special permit plan for the area South of Union Square, which the Mayor and Councilmember Carlina Rivera had put forward as a toothless response to our demands for real neighborhood protections for the vulnerable area of Greenwich Village and the East Village South of Union Square, the plan was quietly dropped. We helped stave off yet another version of a planned development next door to the Merchant's House Museum that would have threatened the beloved historic landmark and institution. And after a three-year campaign, we won landmark designation for 70 Fifth Avenue,



The planned new office tower at 3 St. Mark's Place.

Top: The huge and united turnout at our press conference opposing the Mayor's SoHo/NoHo rezoning plan before Community Board 2 held its public hearing on the scheme.



This year, we achieved landmark designation for 70 Fifth Avenue, a key site in civil rights and social justice history South of Union Square, as the former headquarters of the NAACP and home of W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Crisis* magazine, the first African American magazine.



a 1912 architectural gem South of Union Square that played an enormously important role in civil rights and social justice history, housing the former headquarters of the NAACP during key early battles against racism, and so much more. Designation not only protects that history, but also prevents the construction of a supertall tower on the site — one of the only locations in any of our neighborhoods where a lack of landmark protections and tower zoning would have allowed such an oversized development. This adds to the more than 1,250 buildings Village Preservation has gotten landmarked and the nearly 100 blocks for which we have won zoning protections.

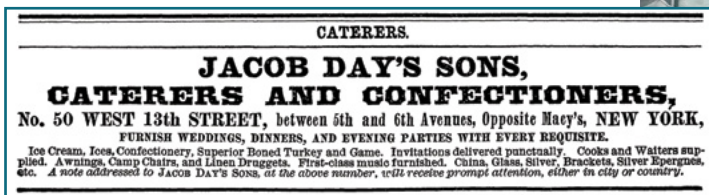
This success reflects an increasing focus Village Preservation has had on highlighting and protecting history connected to marginalized and underrepresented groups, and civil rights, social justice, and transformative cultural movements. This has been an especially strong focus of our work to protect the area South of Union Square, where unbridled development spurred by the recent 14th Street Tech Hub upzoning is destroying buildings, many with rich connections to African American, Women's, and LGBTQ civil rights movements, as well as trailblazing figures in music, literature, art, dance, and commerce.

Fighting for this kind of history hasn't only been part of our work South of Union Square. When the City rejected our bid for landmark designation of the threatened 50 West 13th Street, home of the 13th Street Repertory Theatre, we uncovered that one of 19th-century New York's influential African American leaders lived in and owned the house for decades. And we've highlighted the special African American and women's history connected to sites we've sought to protect in the East Village as well.

Not all the news was good this year. In spite of ample evidence we provided that 14-16 5th Avenue in the Greenwich Village Historic District was connected to some of the most important figures in American history, the Landmarks Preservation Commission approved demolition of the 170-year-old former townhouses by the narrowest of votes — 6 to 5 — though our advocacy did result in a 42% reduction in the height of the planned replacement tower.

And the City pushed forward with a massive upzoning proposal for SoHo and NoHo, which is now undergoing the seven-month public review

Earlier this year, we rallied with the Save Our Storefront (SOS) coalition to call for state legislation to save rent-burdened COVID-19-affected businesses throughout our neighborhoods.



In addition to serving as home for the 13th Street Repertory Theatre for decades, 50 West 13th Street was also home to Jacob Day, one of 19th-century New York's leading African American leaders, which we learned in our work to get the historic building landmarked.

and approval process, saying that they hope to make it a model for similar changes in historic neighborhoods throughout the city. We've been on the frontlines in opposition to this bait-and-switch giveaway to developers, issuing reports and analyses that demonstrate that the plan would likely destroy more affordable housing than it creates and actually incentivizes building without affordable housing, and instead promotes huge big-box chain stores, high-end corporate offices, hotels, luxury condos, and dorms or other facilities for institutions like NYU. We've forged alliances with affordable housing and tenant groups as well as community leaders in Chinatown, which will also be deeply affected by the plan. And in the East Village, we continued to fight a developer seemingly determined to destroy the landmarked former



PS 64/CHARAS-El Bohio Community Center, and an intransigent City that is doing all too little to stop him and return the building to community use as promised.

We worked hard to educate the public about the positions and records of candidates for local, boroughwide, and citywide offices ahead of the all-important June 22 primary elections, holding candidate forums, distributing candidate questionnaires, organizing pro-preservation petitions, and gathering candidate statements on important issues to help inform voters when they made their choices.

And we sought to provide a lifeline to struggling small businesses in our neighborhoods by advocating for the "Save Our Storefronts" (SOS) legislation in Albany, which would help both COVID-burdened small businesses and property owners to make up the shortfall in meeting rent. While we welcomed outdoor dining in the early months of the pandemic as a way to help struggling restaurants and enliven an otherwise bleak cityscape, we urged city officials not to make such emergency accommodations uniformly permanent, as a necessary temporary measure like this would not make sense in every location in perpetuity.



Annual Benefit: **VILLAGE VOICES**



The Village Voices box honoring John Draper, pioneering photographer and scientist, to be placed in Washington Square Park.

We are creating Village Voices as a tribute to our community and the rich heritage of innovation, exploration, and social and cultural progress we share, value, and steward. The exhibition will be on view for four weeks to discover and enjoy. Benefit Day will be Sunday, September 12, 2021. This very special tour day will

Village Preservation's annual benefit this year is called Village Voices. It will be an engaging installation of exhibit boxes displayed throughout our neighborhoods, featuring photographs, artifacts, and recorded narration that will provide entertaining and illuminating insight into the artistic, social, and cultural heritage of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.

offer maps to all exhibitions sites, printed catalogs, audio guides, and live performances. The day will culminate in an exclusive outdoor Gala event at Jefferson Market Garden where we will gather to salute our history and our future.

VILLAGE VOICES

VILLAGE PRESERVATION



Stems in the City



Village Preservation members enjoyed exclusive events over the last year, including Art and Artists of the Village, an Earth Day Floral Arrangement Workshop, and a celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month.

MEMBERSHIP

By the Numbers

Individual membership contributions continue to be the single largest source of support for Village Preservation, constituting about two-thirds of our annual support. The number of our members grew by 9% last year to 1,838, our most ever, and the

1,838

PAYING MEMBERS

\$878,711

IN MEMBER SUPPORT IN LAST COMPLETED
FISCAL YEAR

1,430%

MEMBER SUPPORT GROWTH SINCE 2001

585%

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH SINCE 2001

support they gave grew by just under 5%, in spite of the hardships many faced and the various other places they could have focused their attention. This allowed us to do more research, create more public programming, and lead more advocacy efforts than ever before, and to show that we represent a broad cross-section of our neighborhoods and city. While we had many very generous donors, the median contribution we received was about \$70, showing that our members and supporters come from every strata of our neighborhoods, city, and even country. About one-third of our members live outside of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, with some on the other side of the globe, but all sharing a love and appreciation for our neighborhoods' incredible architecture and history.

Our members-only programs this year explored the jazz greats of our neighborhoods, the art of floral arrangements, local landmarks that inspired great art, and a holiday celebration with some of our neighborhoods' most inspiring playwrights and performers. Our dedicated members also showed up throughout the year for countless rallies, press conferences, and public hearings (in person and virtual).

Congratulations! **VILLAGE AWARDS**



Award winners Casa Magazines, managed by Mohammed Ahmed (left), and Mercer Street Books, owned by Wayne Conti



Each year we honor just some of the people, places, and institutions which contribute to the special quality of life of our neighborhoods. This year we again staged our Annual Meeting and Village Awards virtually. Several hundred people participated in the event on June 16, hosted by poet Bob Holman.

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

Casa Magazines, 22 Eighth Avenue

For over 30 years of service in keeping the printed word alive and providing an unrivaled array of magazines from around the world.

Mercer Street Books and Records, 206 Mercer Street

For 31 years of offering an unbeatable curated selection of books and records, and limitless opportunities for browsing and exploring.

Newsbar Café, 107 University Place

For 23 years of unmatched personal service and care, creating a collective living room with fantastic food, drink, and reading options to keep you coming back.



Staff at the Hudson Park Library heading to Oz on Halloween



Newsbar Café (left), and East Village restaurateur Bon Yagi (with daughter Sakura Yagi)



Pangea Restaurant and Cabaret, 178 Second Avenue

For serving up great Italian cuisine since 1984, and more recently for providing a venue for artists and performers to help keep the East Village's creative tradition alive and thriving.

Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street

For serving as an essential free and public resource to neighborhood children and adults alike since 1906, evolving with the times, including COVID-19, to keep offering the most needed services in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.

Bon Yagi, East Village restaurateur and civic leader

For mixing and introducing cultures and traditions in the East Village for 37 years, serving as a mentor and humanitarian while offering the finest Japanese cuisine at his many restaurants.

Regina Kellerman Award Winner:

Linda Pagan, South Village small business owner since 1995

For serving as an outspoken and singularly effective advocate and leader for her fellow local small businesses and her historic neighborhood.



Pangea Restaurant and Cabaret



Linda Pagan

PROGRAMS

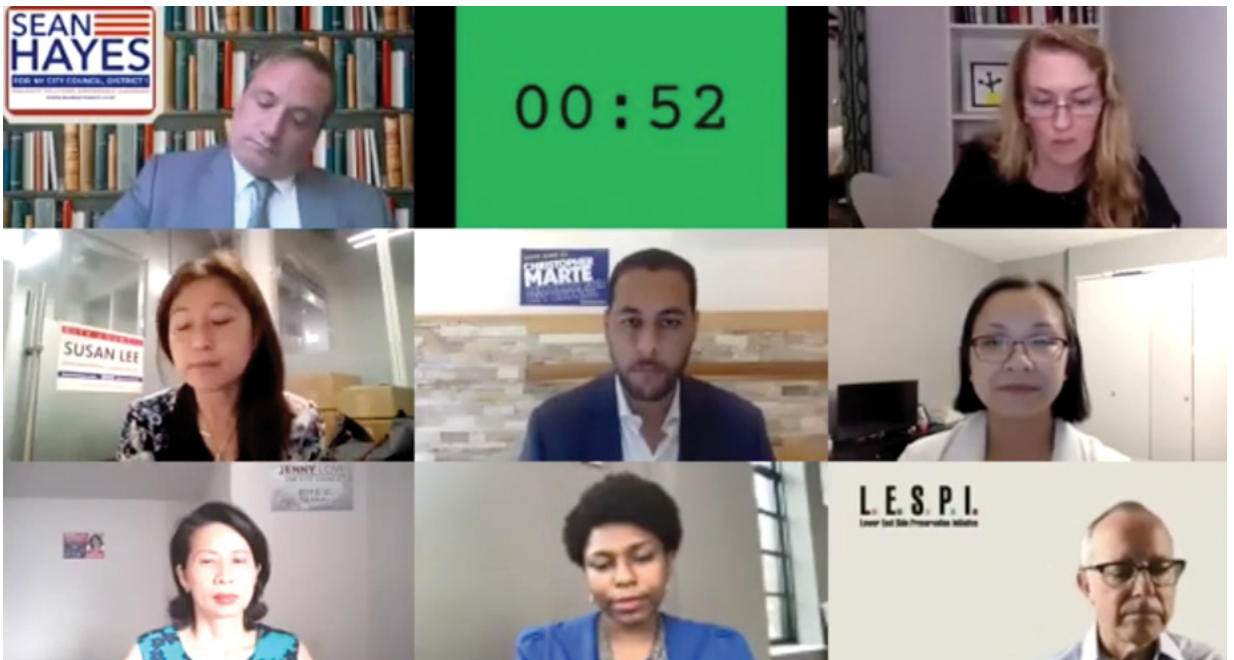
In Our Community and Around the World

We hit yet another record high over the last year, serving 11,187 people with 79 programs — an almost 10% increase over the prior year, which was a 68% increase over the year before. Still mostly virtual, our programs included 14 with speakers from different time zones, with one, about the Women's House of Detention, gathering speakers from Brooklyn, Illinois, Florida, and Australia.

Among our most well-attended programs were a talk about Ada Louise Huxtable, which welcomed 600 attendees, and our book talk celebrating Roberta Gratz's *A Helluva Town: Joan K. Davidson, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the Fight for a Better New York*, in which 478 guests participated. Our lecture "The Birth of Punk in the East Village" was not far behind at 400 attendees, and our virtual unveiling

of our new historic plaque marking the former home of Jane Jacobs at 555 Hudson Street welcomed viewers from around the world.

As always, our programs are largely free and open to the public, though we do conduct about a half dozen exclusive programs for our members. This wide range of programming focused on Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, and on historic preservation, is made possible by the support of our members as well as several generous public and private funders. Programming this past year focused on our neighborhoods' history fighting censorship, forums with candidates for our three City Council seats, immigration, and the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune and its impact on our neighborhoods, among many others.

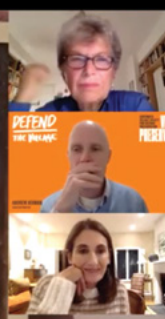


Jane Jacobs

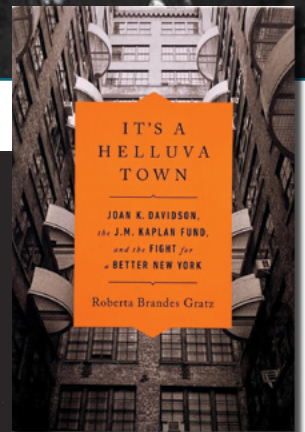
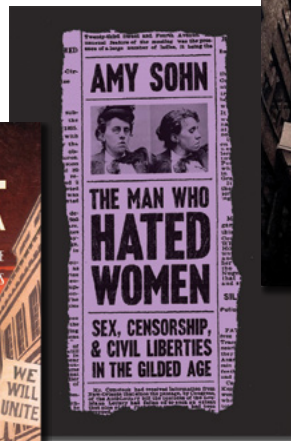
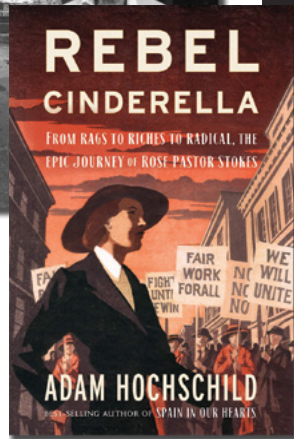
May 4, 1916 - April 25, 2006

The author and urbanist bought this 1842 rowhouse in 1947 and remained until 1968. While here, Jacobs helped lead successful campaigns to ban cars from Washington Square, to defeat Robert Moses' planned Lower Manhattan Expressway, and to stop his plans for "urban renewal" demolition in the West Village. She wrote *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* while living here.

PLAQUE PLACED BY VILLAGE PRESERVATION



Programs this past year included (clockwise from top) the virtual unveiling of a plaque honoring Jane Jacobs at her 555 Hudson Street home (photo at right from our historic image archive courtesy of the estate of Fred W. McDarragh), a discussion about the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire on the 110th anniversary of the tragedy, book talks, *Titanic* sites in the Village, and forums for our local City Council candidates prior to this June's primaries (here, the First Council District).



Online Resources AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This past year saw tremendous growth in our virtual engagement. Our new website saw close to a quarter million visitors, with just shy of a million page views. Our blog, *Off the Grid*, with 299 new entries over the past year, was viewed more than 90,000 times. Our Facebook and Twitter followings grew by 12% each, with our tweets reaching 3 million people. Our Instagram following increased by 63%, and our YouTube subscribers by 73%, with our videos garnering more than 113,000 views — up 32% compared to the prior year — with nearly 100 new videos added.

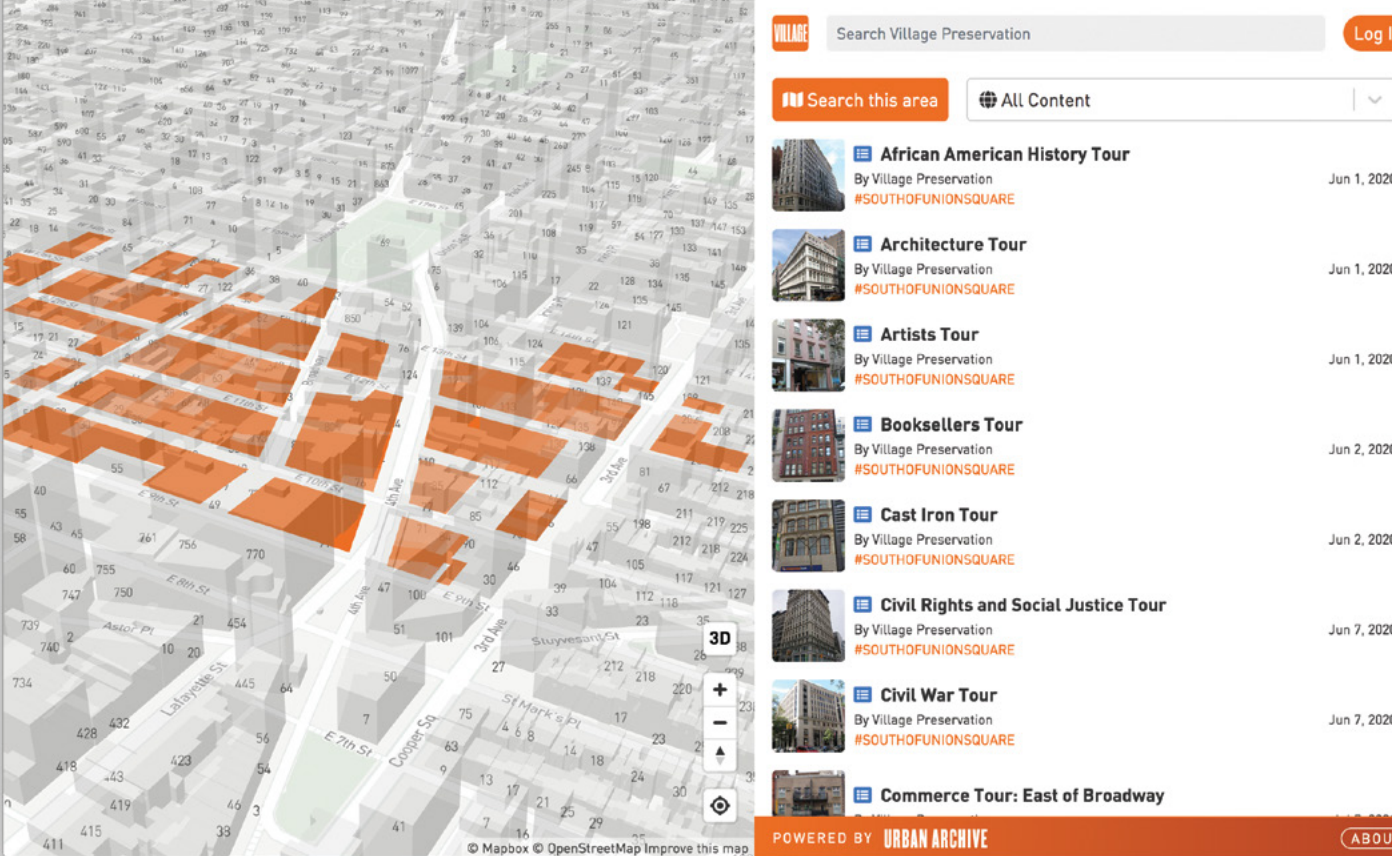
We created a wealth of new content to share via these media and to educate and engage the public around the rich history of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo. This included our new South of Union Square Map, linked to that ongoing advocacy effort, with histories of 200 buildings in this vulnerable area and 40 tours built around themes such as civil rights and social justice movements, architecture, artists, writers, and more. We celebrated the Centennial of the 19th Amendment with a map and tour of critical sites and events in our neighborhoods connected to the Women's Suffrage Movement, and marked the Bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence with a map and

tour of scores of sites in our neighborhoods from the early 19th century in the Greek Revival style — a defining architectural style of our neighborhoods which was inspired, in part, by that event. We celebrated Village Preservation's 40th anniversary with a new StoryMap showing four decades of expanding landmark and zoning protections, and otherwise improving and preserving the landscape of our neighborhoods. We added several new donated collections of photos to our online historic image archive, from a range of slice-of-life photos of Greenwich Village and the East Village of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, to images of the cast iron landmarks of SoHo, NoHo, and Tribeca in the 1960s as they were threatened with demolition



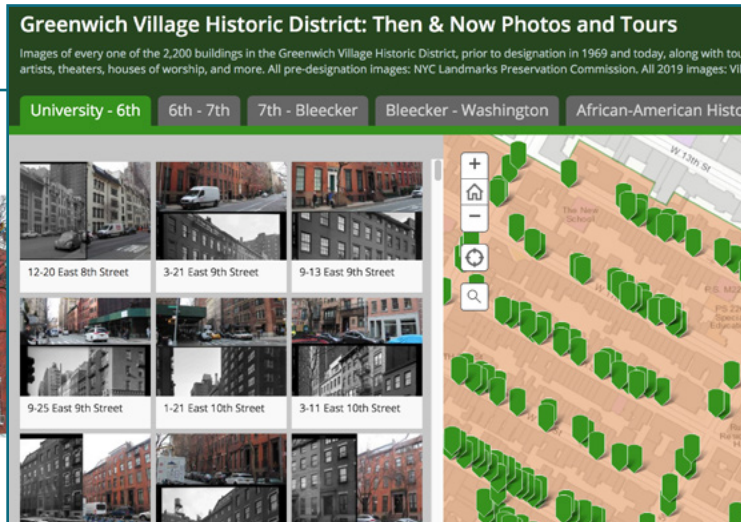
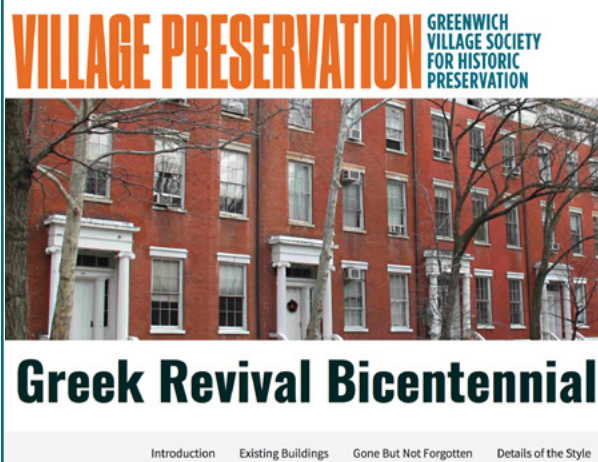
OFF THE GRID

VILLAGE PRESERVATION BLOG



and being saved from destruction by urban artist pioneers, to images of the semi-abandoned Hudson River waterfront in the 1970s and '80s (see page 17). We added new oral histories with renowned food critic Mimi Sheraton; beloved local guitar business owner Rick Kelly; Rob Mason, the man behind of one of our premiere recording studios; and activist and planner Mike Levine, who participated in the creation of SoHo as an artists' district, Greenwich Village as a historic district, and the Stonewall Riots as a turning point in civil rights history.

Village Preservation launched new maps and broadened existing ones this past year, including (from top) the South Of Union Square map, with Urban Archive NY; the Greenwich Village Historic District tour map; and the Greek Revival Bicentennial map.



BLACK HISTORY IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

SESSION ONE

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
VILLAGE PRESERVATION



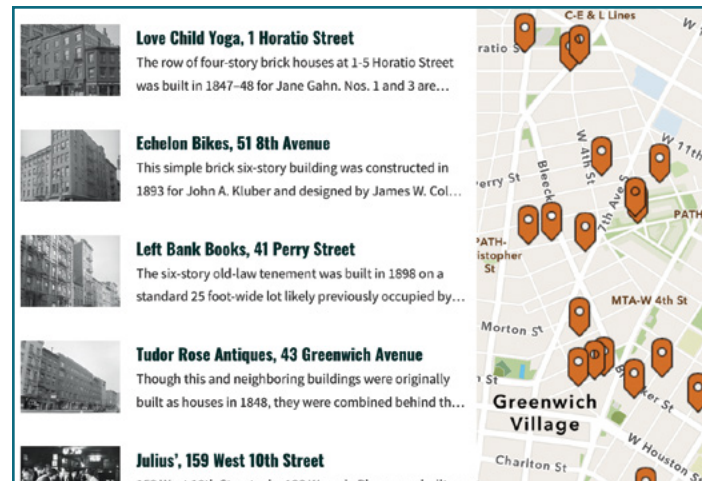
Public EDUCATION

Village Preservation saw high demand for our new African American history curriculum of our Children's Education program, and for the program in general. In spite of the limitations of remote learning, we served 954 students in 43 classes in schools in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, and 437 virtually.

We built upon and expanded the new curriculum, which, along with our "Immigration in the South Village" and "Greenwich Village: Past & Present" curricula are available to all NYC students in the first through eighth grades regardless of need (this past year, 100% of participants received the program free or at reduced rates). Over the past year we created new online video versions of the existing program, for classes as well as individual children and parents to access remotely, which several hundred did.

We continued to offer our Continuing Education classes virtually in the spring and fall, serving scores of both real estate professionals and interested individuals. And we began supplementing our very popular "Business of the Month" program

in which we highlight and promote a special local small independent business with our new "Small Business/Big History" program. There we partner with great local merchants to encourage patronage of their businesses while they help promote local history with a joint signage program that's part of a "history trail" Village Preservation has created that can be explored in person or virtually.



FISCAL YEAR 2020

INCOME

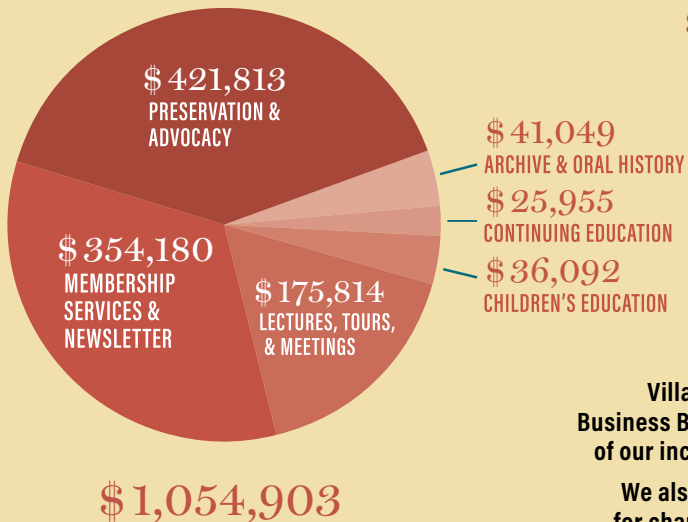
MEMBERSHIP & INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT	\$ 915,543
BENEFITS & EVENTS	\$ 126,190
GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 214,138
EARNED & OTHER REVENUE	\$ 335,603

TOTAL INCOME

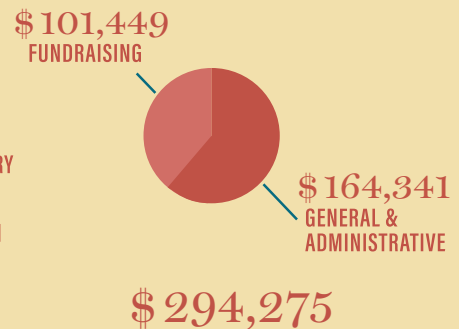
\$ 1,591,474

EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES



SUPPORTING SERVICES



Village Preservation consistently exceeds Better Business Bureau guidelines for charities for the portion of our income which goes towards program activities.

We also consistently fall well below BBB guidelines for charities for the maximum percentage of income that should be spent on fundraising activities.

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$ 1,320,693

FUND BALANCE

\$ 270,781

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Tony Zunino

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Historic IMAGE ARCHIVE

Village Preservation has been fortunate to have gracious neighbors, who over the past year have been helping to grow our Historic Image Archive with new collections and individual additions. Here are just a few:



On this first anniversary of 9/11 volunteers gathered before dawn at Point Thank You, September 11, 2002. From the Lenore Mills 9/11 Memorial Collection of our Historic Image Archive.

Varla Jean Merrman at Wigstock, Greenwich Village waterfront (near West 11th/Perry Streets), Sept 4, 1994. From the Jillian Jonas Collection — Downtown Drag+Performance in the 1990s



Musician in Washington Square Park, with 37 Washington Square West visible behind, May 1967. From the Pryor Dodge Collection

MEMBERSHIP 2020

LANDMARK

Anonymous | Dalio Family Foundation | Richard & Carole Mavity | David & Jennifer Millstone | Colin Moran | Craig & Eileen Newmark | The Rodgers Family Foundation | Leslie & Robert Rylee | Richard & Jane Steadman | Trevor & Margaret Stewart | Stephen & Michelle Stoneburn | Fred Wistow

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