



The Coalition of Progressive Hindus after a successful November beach clean up

Worship and Stewardship in Jamaica Bay

Sadhana: The Coalition of Progressive Hindus, led by Sunita Viswanath, has agreed to clean up specific beaches in Jamaica Bay where Hindus regularly worship. The local Indo-Caribbean Hindu community seeks to address the growing problem of litter left behind when Hindus worship at local beaches. Hindu leaders and park officials have been working to address the issue.

We are pleased to announce a formal volunteer agreement signed between The Coalition of Progressive Hindus and the park to ensure that offerings do not leave litter on the beach. Hindus consider rivers and oceans sacred. Many rituals in this community require making an offering to the water, and Indo-Caribbean Hindus consider an offering to be a crucial part of their worship. The Coalition has formally adopted the beach at North Channel Bridge.

The coalition has committed to raise awareness of the issue of litter on the beaches, and priests will encourage greener rituals. The first Sunday of the month starting in April, from 1 – 4 pm, volunteers will help clean the beach at North Channel Bridge. Gateway will provide kayaking and hiking programs following the cleanups.

We are thrilled to partner with The Coalition of Progressive Hindus, a dedicated community organization. The program launches Sunday, April 6 at 1 p.m. at the North Channel Bridge Beach. Join us for festivities including food, music, a Hindu dance performance, and the inaugural beach cleanup! For more info visit <http://www.sadhana.org/> or contact sunita@womenforafghanwomen.org

Powerful Partnerships: New Volunteer Programs with Gateway's Neighbors

This special Spring Issue of *The Gateway Chronicle* highlights a range of exciting new partnerships between Gateway and the local community. These programs empower our neighbors to improve Gateway and foster civic engagement and community pride.

Partner organizations include, Sadhana: The Coalition for Progressive Hindus, the North Channel Bridge Custodians, Charles Park Conservation Society, and the Jamaica Bay Restoration Corps.

The Gateway Volunteers-In-Parks program is proud to host such a wonderful team of community members committed to improving their park.

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Mike Mullaly (left) with members of the Jamaica Bay Restoration Corps

Jamaica Bay Restoration Corps Hard at Work

Since May 2013, the Jamaica Bay Restoration Corps (JBRC) – a partnership between the National Park Service and New York City Department of Parks and Recreation – has employed hundreds of seasonal workers around Jamaica Bay to clean and restore city and federal parkland. It has been a privilege and humbling experience to be working in such a storm-ravaged area and helping make its parks, playgrounds, beaches and green spaces suitable for the public to enjoy again.

Performing projects such as removing invasive species from the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and Fort Tilden beach, picking up trash from Jacob Riis Park, widening hiking trails at Floyd Bennett Field, and planting Spartina marshland grass on islands in the bay have provided our JBRC crews access to parkland many had never visited or even knew existed.

Our crewmembers have learned that even in the hustle and bustle of New York City, there is a wide variety of amazing parkland around Jamaica Bay to explore. It has been an extremely exciting and rewarding opportunity to work with so many national park rangers on the diverse land that makes up Gateway National Recreation Area. The JBRC and NPS have done some amazing work in both Queens and Brooklyn over the last year, in what is shaping up to be a strong partnership for the future. May the two agencies continue to help restore parkland and make Jamaica Bay more resilient for years to come.

~Mike Mullaley, Crew Chief for the Jamaica Bay Restoration Corps



Edward Spreitzer, Gateway's new North Channel Bridge Custodian

North Channel Bridge Gets Caretakers

Gateway is proud to host civic-minded high school student Edward Spreitzer, who is looking to improve the park. The North Channel Bridge Custodian will perform maintenance and debris removal at the namesake bridge three times each week.

The group's leader, Carolyn Nones, is a teacher at P.233Q in Queens. She looks forward to getting her students active in the local community. The school provides instruction to students with a broad range of significant disabilities. Part of the school's mission is to create meaningful individualized education for its students and to challenge them to participate independently in their community. Volunteers will also participate in environmental education programs. Gateway is excited to welcome The North Channel Bridge Custodians and we wish them seasons of hard work, fun, and education. Thanks for the help!

Charles Park Conservation Society Launched

A group of citizen stewards has formed to care for Frank Charles Park, the much beloved gathering space in Howard Beach. The newly formed Charles Park Conservation Society, Inc. is led by local chiropractor Joseph Campisi. The group pledges to work in cooperation with federal, state, and city agencies, stimulate corporate sponsorships, encourage community involvement and organize local volunteers. To help make Charles Park the beautiful place that our community deserves, contact Charles Park Conservation Society, Inc on Facebook



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