

Red Hook Boaters

P.O. Box 24403 Brooklyn, NY 11202-4403

FINAL REPORT

PROJECT: Brooklyn Waterfront: Free Kayaking

I Summary of Program and Organization

The Red Hook Boaters is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization that runs free kayaking and beach clean-up programs at Louis J Valentino Park in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn. All our programs are completely free and open to the general public. We are one unit of the Gowanus Dredgers, which promotes human-powered boating and harbor awareness throughout Brooklyn and Queens.

II Summary of Project

The Red Hook Boaters have successfully expanded our free kayaking and beach cleanup programs this year, thanks in large part to the additional equipment acquired in the course of this project.

Background:

The Red Hook Boaters began in the summer of 2005 with a few donated boats and a simple idea: People in the community (the Red Hook section of Brooklyn) did not have access to the waters at their doorstep, and kayakers could help. Since that year we have offered free use of our kayaks to the public at Valentino Park, a New York City park whose beach is one of the city's designated human-powered boat launch sites. The launch site abets a protected embayment in which kayaks are safe from boat traffic, wakes, strong currents and other hazards. Safety is further assured by experienced volunteers, at least one of whom is always on the water during "walk-up kayaking."

In addition to the regular schedule of "walk-up" kayaking, we participate several times a year in community events, as part of a larger program. In 2010, these events were "It's My Park Day" (May 15, 2010, sponsored by the New York City Parks Department); "Red Hook Fest" (June 5, 2010), sponsored by Dance Theatre Etcetera; "Paddle for Autism Awareness" (August 31, 2010), sponsored by the Global Autism Project; and (projected) "Food Flotilla" (scheduled for October 9), sponsored by Added Value, an urban farming project.

For the summer festivals, we offered our standard free-kayak program. In the "Food Flotilla," kayakers will transport locally grown produce from a farm on Governors Island to Red Hook, to promote sustainable living and awareness of nature in New York City.

In addition to kayaking, we have provided bags, gloves and rakes and asked people to show their appreciation by helping us to keep the launch site clean and free of debris.

Both the kayak experience and clean-up work provide many occasions for people to learn about the waters of New York harbor. Questions we have answered this season ranged from the maritime ("what kind of a ship is that?" "what do the different color buoys mean?") to the oceanographic ("why does this stuff wash up here?" "why is the current pushing north when the tide seems to be going out?") to the biological ("what kind of bird is that?" "where do the turtles go in winter?").

At first, our programs were scheduled at irregular intervals to align with slack tides and limited volunteer availability. In May 2009, we switched to a regular schedule: Sunday afternoons from May until early October, and Thursday evenings in late June, all of July, and early August.

About Brooklyn Waterfront: Free Kayaking Project:

On August 17, 2009 Red Hook Boaters contracted with NEIWPC to expand our waterfront programs. All funds were to be disbursed on equipment, as all labor for our activities is donated by volunteers.

In fulfillment of this agreement, the Red Hook Boaters purchased the following pieces of equipment:

- (A) One (1) two-person Ocean Kayak Malibu XL (Lime Green)
- (B) One (1) two-person Ocean Kayak Malibu XL (Yellow)
- (C) One (1) one-person Necky Chatham Kayak (Green)
- (D) Two (2) Werner Tybee Paddles
- (E) Three (3) Personal Flotation Devices
- (F) Five (5) Aquabound Kayak Paddles

We have also acquired as donations

- (F) One (1) one-person sit-on-top kayak
- (G) One (1) two-person sit-on-top kayak
- (H) Five (5) kayak paddles

This equipment has been used throughout the 2010 paddling season, with the following effects:

- (a) With the additional 8 seats available for the public, we have served nearly 400 more members of the public in 2010 than we did in 2009.
- (b) The expanded capacity reduced waiting time and crowding.

Measured Impact:

By counting numbers of signed liability waivers, we can measure the number of people served by our programs. These figures show that we have served 400 more people in 2010 than we did in 2009. Scheduled kayaking events have risen from 32 in 2009 to 50 in 2010.

2005 40 people
2006 375 people
2007 450 people
2008 600 people
2009 800 people

2010 1173 people (with two Sunday programs (September 26 and October 3) still to come)

III Contract Fulfillment

Organizational Note

Our parent organization, the Gowanus Dredgers, promotes human-powered boating and harbor awareness in multiple Brooklyn neighborhoods. The Dredgers are a designated 501 (c) non-profit organization, and we operate as one of their units -- as described in our project proposal (see application Section 4 and application Budget, which describe the Gowanus Dredgers as our "parent organization"). One bank account, in the name of the Gowanus Dredgers, serves all its constituent groups -- Red Hook Boaters included. Payment should therefore be made to the Gowanus Dredgers.

Respectfully submitted,

David Berreby
Red Hook Boaters



Photo by Ted Deignan



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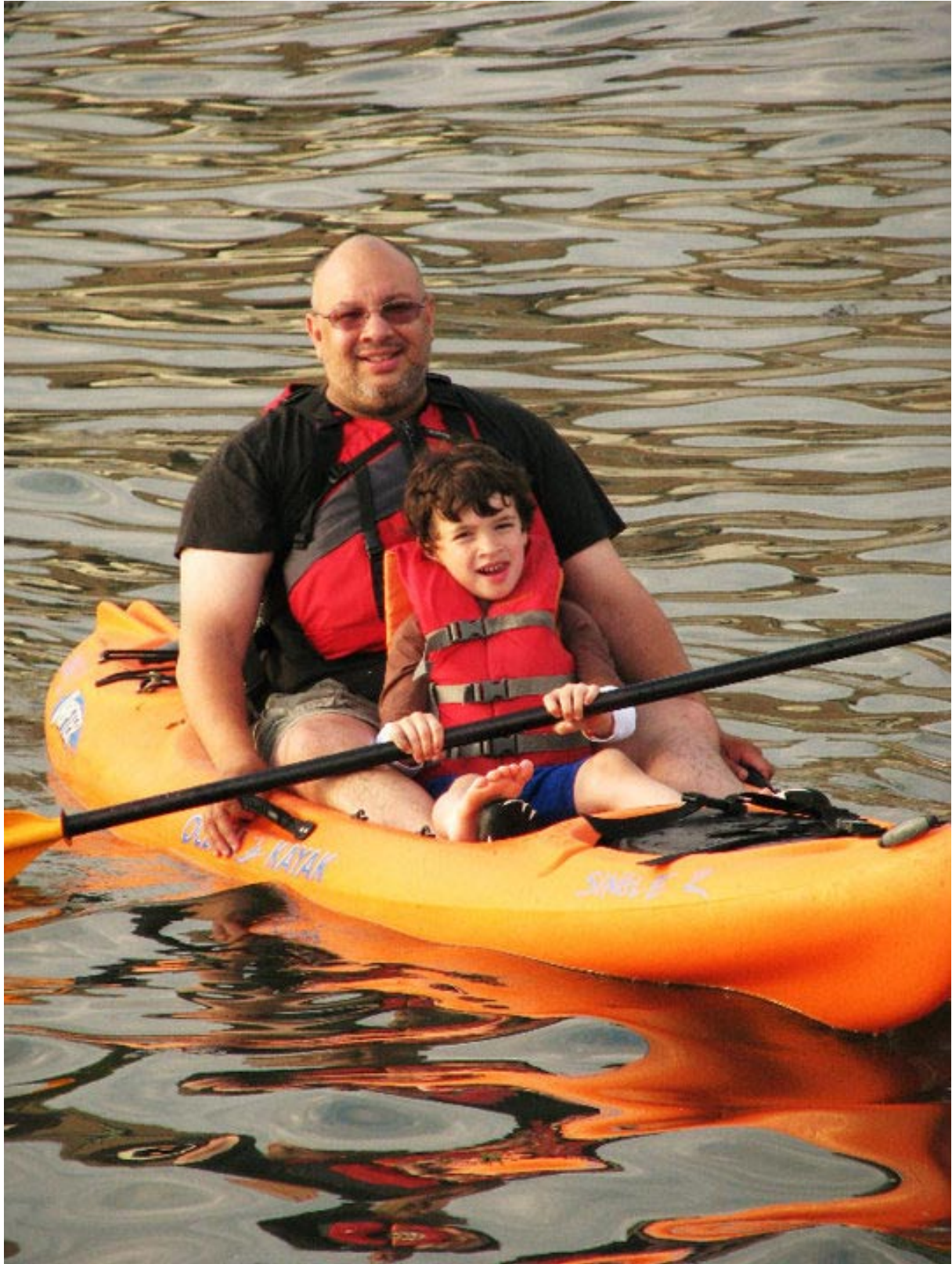


Photo by Todd Seidman