

PortSide's Pandemic Pop Up minipark – summer 2020

<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/red-hook-harbor-group-opens-pandemic-pop-up-park-at-atlantic-basin/>

Community praise for PortSide's Pandemic Pop Up minipark

PortSide has received a torrent of thanks and praise for this small minipark. It is just 4 parking spaces along the fence alongside our flagship MARY A. WHALEN. It feels much bigger since a view of the water is on one side and an inland sea of asphalt on the other. This was one of our mutual aid responses to the pandemic, seeing that sad and anxious people seeking socially distant outdoor space were roughing it by eating, playing and resting directly on the asphalt. Gratitude has been expressed many ways, including two little kids donating their piggy bank as part of Yom Kippur observances. Below is some other feedback.

From: Shannon Hummel <shummel@coradance.org>

Sent: Saturday, December 12, 2020 9:26 AM

To: Chiclet <Chiclet@portsidenewyork.org>

Subject: Pandemic Pop Up

Dear Chiclet,

My name is Shannon Hummel and I am the Artistic Director of Cora Dance, a Red Hook arts-based service organization that provides pay-what-you-can dance training, afterschool and performing arts services to hundreds of Red Hook youth with priority given to families in NYCHA public housing. Cora Dance was so grateful to use the Pandemic Pop-Up park this summer. Our professional dance company was completely cut off from any place to rehearse, make art, or physicalize how we would reimagine our education programming that serves 600+ local youth as in person indoor arts continued to be shuttered in NYC. Virtual meetings and rehearsals cannot take the place of in-person connection for dancers and the pandemic pop-up allowed us to sustain our commitment to dance and to the community in a time that has been catastrophic to the performing arts field. The space gave us a place to move, brainstorm, strategize, plan, and physicalize what may or may not work for outdoor programming as well as indoor offerings once we are allowed to return to the studio. The ability to socially distance while still moving fully in fresh air next to a beautiful view of the city gave us all hope at a time where so many of our fellow artists are leaving NYC, unable to survive here without their income from dancing. I wish all dancers and performing artists had access to this space as it gave us a safe "laboratory" to test out how to move forward. The passersby, the children in the play area, the patrons lining up to take the ferry became our informal audience as we worked out curricula and phrase material, adding another benefit as NYers craving live performing arts experiences could witness artists continuing to push through, make art and sustain the craft of dance. Beyond our uses, we witnessed the pop-up serving neighbors, parents and caregivers whose children were aching to move freely, feel a sense of openness, relax, breathe and feel comforted by finding a space that could support safe communing. The space was a lifeline to sustaining the morale of Red Hook and I hope it lasts throughout the pandemic and beyond. I am so grateful to Carolina for meeting this need in our community and all the work that she and PortSideNY do to support the neighborhood.

Many thanks,

Shannon Hummel

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Shannon Hummel
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PortSide comment: 4 rehearsals of Cora Dance. 10/22 - 10/25. See some [HERE](#)

From: Nancy Mandel <nbm327@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2020 5:03 PM
To: Chiclet <Chiclet@portsidenewyork.org>
Subject: PortSide's pandemic year value

Dear PortSide NY (Carolina, Chiclet, and all involved),

Despite the cancellation of all your usual events and programs, PortSide and the Mary A. Whalen provided so much energy and connection for our neighborhood this year, with your FB and Twitter reports from the maritime world, all those lovely sunsets, and the occasional shot of Chiclet, roaming when it wasn't too hot. And especially with your stupidly ingenious invention of the Pandemic Pop-Up Park. Out on the asphalt, an oddball find on the way to or from the ferry or a deliberate destination, with donations of time and toys and flowers; it was inspired and inspiring.

The Brooklyn shapenote singers are particularly grateful that we could sing there in August and September, spaced and masked of course, and shaded from the heat by your umbrellas (swaying in the virus-dispersing breeze). We had nice encounters with other park users who came by to listen or ask a question, while others let us be the background to their talk or play or quiet reading.

This year you made something beautiful out of almost nothing. Maybe next year you can get just a few more resources and make it even better. I hope these words help; feel free to pass them along, or I can write directly to anyone you suggest.

Very truly yours,

Nancy B. Mandel

PortSide comment: One of the two Sacred Harp shape note singing events is [HERE](#)

Comments made on Facebook

RED HOOK HUB

I think this was a great idea. Especially since we lost a few of our parks in the houses. Also it gives parents a reason to bring the kids over more often.

Vanessa McKnight

The open space was wonderful, my grandchildren love it there, the little one says can we go to the red boat, she'll be 4yrs old.....my grandson still speaks of the story of Fannie Lou Hamer n his experience, he was able to share with his classmates.... I've been there on several occasions without them just to sit back n enjoy the view at sunset n beautiful evenings.... I definitely would love to see this CONTINUE at Portside, huge shout out to Carolina Salguero for giving us a safe open space outlet to ease the trials of COVID19 times, thank you Carolina you CONTINUE to be appreciated for what you bring to the REDHOOK COMMUNITY 🇺🇸🍪🍪🍪

Tiffany Rung

The pop up park was an amazing relief during COVID times. Carolina Salguero provided a safe place to get out of the house that supported the community in an amazing way!

Debbie Ann Hayter Ford

Yes you must continue it next year. The live sunset stream and pandemic portside pop up was a blessing through this. Great job , great work!

Mark N Sue Sardzinski

The pop up park was a blessing to many for several different reasons. A respite of sights and sounds of the sky , sunset and sea view and Statue of Lady Liberty the Freedom towers in the distance were so important to me during our pause. I still have not left my property except for my one time visit to you to donate items with a grateful heart. I live in a wooded area out east on Long Island so sunsets and sunrises have to be seen if possible through trees. Once the leaves filled out view was totally blocked. Watching the videos of children playing ,people picnicking , or reading a donated free book to a child! Watching traveling on the ferry as given me so much joy as I have been home due to type 2 diabetes and other chronic illnesses to avoid COVID 19. The Joy of watching the daily comings and going's of children laughter playing and others, concerts, folk music,operas, was a blessing for me to get through another day of staying at home. I hope they allow you continue as an educator about the, waterfront, sea animal life, currents, clouds, movement of the setting sun left to right then return, environment,and history of our maritime past and present. It's importance to the city and community. Watching the loaded barges going out or being unloaded shows how important NY Harbor still is today in trade and commerce with the world. Thank You Carolina for all your enthusiasm, joy,education that has inspired and informed so many from young to Old. I am so grateful! 🇺🇸🍪🍪🍪

Mauritius Nagelmüller

While Sonia and I were not able to come to New York this year, looking at the pictures and videos of the park posted made us miss New York even more. It looks like such a gem in the middle of difficult circumstances and is a beautiful example of the resilience of a community in our favorite city. We hope that the park will be there in the warm months whenever we make it back to New York, as Portside NY and the Mary Whalen and her crew are the first address for us to visit anyway. AND THE VIEWS !!! 😊