



Sixth Street Youth Program (SSYP) returned back in person this past summer after a year plus hiatus! Our summer program, Summer at Sixth Street, served over 50 kids during the months of July and August through four successful summer sessions.

## Summary

Back in March 2020, when the COVID 19 pandemic was rapidly spreading across New York City, Sixth Street Community Center (SSCC) decided to preemptively pause its in-person programming on March 13, 2020. Entering the vast unknown of the devastation that would unravel within our community and across the globe, our organization faced some of our greatest challenges since our founding. Heavily reliant on program fees and events to sustain our operations, pay our staff and pay our mortgage, we've struggled financially. Our dedicated team of staff remained committed to the work, waiting on Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding and facilitating workshops online for the Sixth Street Youth. We recognized the shifting needs within our community and in response, pivoted our work. In April 2020, we launched an Emergency Food Distribution Program and opened up our kitchen doors to function as a Mutual Aid Kitchen in partnership with local Mutual Aid Groups like East Village Loves NYC. In the summer of 2021, SSYP returned back! We hired a Teen Program Director, Youth Program Director and two new Youth Educators to join our team. And in September we launched our Teen Climate Justice Program!



SSCC's Emergency Food Distribution.



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# Sixth Street Community Center | Annual Highlights

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## Teen Climate Justice Program

Sixth Street's Teen Climate Justice Program currently engages a core group of 15 high school students who live or go to school in the Lower East Side. The majority of our teens are BIPOC and represent low-income families. In the inaugural three months of the Teen Program, our students developed a deeper understanding of root causes of the climate crisis through critical discussions, group activities, and power mapping. We address topics around capitalism, settler colonialism, and the ecological impacts of unsustainable industries across the various geographies of environmental disasters. Conversely, our teens have also begun to explore solutions to the climate crisis by analyzing key concepts in environmental justice movements, such as mutual aid, solidarity economies, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and community land trust (CLT) models. The program has introduced teens to local ongoing campaigns, such as protests against the construction of the North Brooklyn Pipeline, the gentrification and displacement of Chinatown residents, and the demolition of East River Park.



SSCC Teen Program meeting in our 3rd floor sanctuary.



SSCC Teens roundtable and poster-making workshop.



Participating in protests against the new mega-jail planned for Manhattan's Chinatown.

Throughout these early discussions, the Teen Program has incorporated community stewardship activities into workshop agendas where they related to our critical content. Our teens have supported communities on the ground by delivering meals from our mutual aid kitchen to local schools, working with Diana Carulli to repair the Labyrinth in East River Park, and collaborating with artists from Art Against Displacement to complete a new mural outside the centers of the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops and Chinese Staff and Workers Association. Our teens have also participated in mutual aid events, such as our emergency food distribution here at Sixth Street and holiday letter card writing to incarcerated people who are LGBTQIA/HIV+. They have assisted in the planning and preparation of protests at East River Park and outside the Museum of Chinese in America, and they have led strategic planning sessions to identify issues and projects where they would like to enter into the climate justice movement themselves. Upcoming for the remainder of 2021, our teens plan to organize their first direct action in relation to mutual aid and local community campaigns. SSCC Teen Climate Justice Program is led by Teen Program Director, Megan Lee.



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## Sixth Street Youth Program

The Sixth Street Youth Program returned back in person in July 2021 after a year+ hiatus due to COVID-19 with a deeper focus on exploring urban sustainability and climate justice with an anti-racist lens. Our program is committed to developing strong community, expressive creative skills, mindfulness, and social and environmental awareness and activism among our youth. We offer a unique curriculum that uses the arts as a vehicle for kids to learn about urban sustainability, climate justice, and issues that affect our local community. Our mission is to cultivate a warm and inclusive atmosphere that honors each student's unique strengths.



SSYP Kids watercolor painting in our After School Program.

## Summer at Sixth Street

Summer at Sixth Street (SASS) supported nearly 50 New York City youth through 4 full weeks of summer programming across the months of July and August. With an average daily enrollment of 15 kids per day, Sixth Street Youth Program was able to offer families quality programming while taking COVID safety into consideration. While at Sixth Street, kids participated in twice weekly urban farming workshops at the Fifth Street Farm on the rooftop of the Earth School, visited other farms such as Brooklyn Grange in Long Island City and Battery Park Urban Farm. Students explored the wonders of our Lower East Side community



One of our many urban farming workshops as part of Summer at Sixth Street.

including local visits to El Jardin del Paraiso, 6BC Botanical Garden, La Plaza Cultural Garden and the LES Girls Club Planetarium. Interwoven throughout the program, our kids explored various mediums of art and creativity including textile dye, paint, collage, photography, performance art, improv, dance and cooking! We bolstered our urban sustainability curriculum through local trips to the Lower East Side Ecology Center and ended our summer with our annual trip to Central Park where students got to canoe (first time for many!) in the Central Park Lake.

SASS 2021 sessions were led by our Youth Program Coordinator Noel Sanchez along with Youth Educator Ryan Moore.

## After School Program, Fall 2021

Sixth Street Youth Program (SSYP) After School currently serves 40 students from 6 local public elementary schools and one homeschool representing a diverse cross-section of the Lower East Side community. We provide daily pick-up service from the 6 public schools, a nutritious snack from our Center's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program, homework support, community building playtime, and a daily enrichment workshop. 62% of our enrolled families benefit from our reduced sliding-scale program fees, with 20% of students attending the program free of cost. We are especially proud of our daily enrichment workshops which focus on environmental sustainability, climate justice, urban agriculture/food sovereignty, visual arts, expressive arts, social justice, and other creative offerings through our local neighborhood partnerships.

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## SSYP Fall Season Highlights

Weekly "Sustainability Tuesday" workshops developed and facilitated by our Youth Educators. This series featured learning about "The 5 R's" of sustainability and introduced students to the well-known concepts of 'reduce, reuse, recycle' and new concepts such as 'refuse' and 'rot' a.k.a. composting. Each week the Sixth Street Youth Program's sustainability workshops focus on one of the 5 R's and were packaged with an art activity to help the students engage with the concepts of sustainability on a personal, creative, and introspective level.

Cooking workshops! The Sixth Street Kids have cooked and baked healthy and diverse dishes, most featuring our CSA fruits and vegetables. This season, we've taught the kids how to make: three-ingredient cookies using only oatmeal, banana, and chocolate chips, apple pie, pumpkin pie, vegetable soup, tostones, apple and sunflower seed butter monsters, 'compost' cookie cups, and lollipop spiders (a variety of halloween snacks!).



Sixth Street Youth Program getting a private viewing of Ruth Asawa's work at the David Zwirner Gallery in Chelsea.

Students regularly engage in an exploration of different cultures through our art gallery visits, food workshops (tostones and banan peze in Haiti), learning about and creating their own Alebrije (Mexican folk-art), mindful community walks (noticing what they love about their community and what they would change), reflection-based Circle Times (during which they learn about each other through inquiry and reflection-based check-in questions), and engaging in acting/performance activities using creativity and critical thinking. We use creative mediums as a vehicle to express emotions, process current events, and honor our diverse community.

Maintaining our long-time partnership with Wide Rainbow, a non-profit that offers youth visits with well-known contemporary artists, galleries, and museums. We've visited three different art galleries including the David Zwirner Gallery in Chelsea.



Bianca Valle guest facilitating a workshop with SSYP.

Once a month, we have a cooking workshop with local nutritionist Bianca Valle, who teaches students to make easy and nutritious snacks. Special thanks to Wide Rainbow for supporting our workshops with Bianca Valle, complementary and in alignment with the food access work we already do!

Weekly gardening workshops at the Fifth Street Farm rooftop garden facilitated by our experienced staff. Through our gardening curriculum, we engage students to think critically about their role in urban sustainability as well as basic garden maintenance such as planting, weeding, and harvesting. Some of the topics/questions we explore are:

- Why are rooftop gardens important?
- Cooking with the food we harvest or the food we source from Sixth Street's CSA
- Where does the food we eat daily come from?
- Why is weeding important?
- What plants are "complementary" with each other?
- How do we maintain an urban garden?
- Recognizing the importance of supporting local food sources
- Waste, how to reduce, reuse and up-cycle

SSYP is led by SSCC's Youth Program Director, Shania Santana, and is supported by our incredible team of Youth Educators: Ryan Moore, Onyx Clarke, Krystal Bydonne, and former SSYP Teen Intern and current Youth Program Assistant: Jhansiris Arias.



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## Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program

SSCC has been committed to expanding food access and food justice for LoIsaida residents for over 25 years. Bringing fresh, organic produce directly from a local farmer in the Hudson Valley to what has long been considered a food desert, SSCC offers their CSA to Lower East Side community members via a sliding scale membership that is based on household income. In this model, low-income households have their membership fees subsidized by higher-income households. Families can also use SNAP (food stamps) or EBT to pay for their CSA share.



A reduced half share during our Summer/Fall CSA season.

Sixth Street's CSA Program supported a total of 125 family and household memberships across both our Summer/Fall and Winter/Spring seasons. As one of the first CSA programs established in New York City, we maintain our 20-year partnership with Hepworth Farms for our Summer/Fall season and our longstanding partnership with Norwich Meadows Farm for the Winter/Spring season. We offer access to farm-fresh, organic produce on a sliding-scale membership based on household income, and we accept EBT and Food Stamps from low-income households. 60% of our households received shares at a reduced sliding scale rate and 10 additional shares were provided at no charge to low-income families and those financially affected by the COVID19 pandemic. Desai Sethi Foundation and generous donations from members in higher income brackets provided funding for the free and low-cost shares.

SSCC's CSA Program is led by our CSA Coordinator, Ryan Moore.

## Emergency Food Distribution Program

In response to growing food insecurity in the Lower East Side due to the COVID 19 pandemic, SSCC organized and launched a weekly emergency food distribution program beginning April 2020. At the height of the pandemic, SSCC supported approximately 500 families weekly. The program operated weekly until July 2021, when we transitioned to bi-weekly distributions as a result of inconsistent funding and food donations. Food sourcing and funding for the program have fluctuated over the past 20 months since the inception of the program. When we began the program, the majority of the fresh produce we distributed was provided by the SSCC CSA program which offers organic produce sourced from Hepworth Farms in the Hudson Valley. Other food donations have been provided through partnerships with other organizations including City Harvest, Beam Living, Judson Memorial Church, Henry Street Settlement and East Village Loves NYC. When Sixth Street Community Center was unable to secure food donations through our community partners, we utilized the funds we were able to raise to buy produce from wholesale distributors and organized a handful of food drives to collect non-perishable food items for distribution. We also opened a community fridge on-site, for all to access during non-distribution hours.



Weekly, the line of SSCC Emergency Food recipients spanned down E 6th St. and wrapped around Avenue C.

During the Summer months of 2021, SSCC launched a matching funds campaign through IOBY with a \$30,000 goal to sustain our Emergency Food Program fully through the end of 2021. SSCC exceeded this goal and will now be able to sustain the Emergency Food Distribution into 2022 using funds raised on IOBY and from the community.



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# Sixth Street Community Center | Annual Highlights

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## Emergency Food Distribution Program (cont.)



Bo Bao and Mark Levy volunteer weekly with SSCC's Emergency Food Distribution.

SSCC has since developed a partnership with Tay Shing/ Purvey'd Corp to secure fresh produce at a discount. Tay Shing has also donated nearly 100 cases of produce in addition to providing a discount for the Program. Since the onset of COVID19, SSCC has distributed a total of over 28,000 bags/boxes of fresh produce and food via our Emergency Food Program. The Program currently supports an average of 150-175 families per distribution with 100% of the participants low-income and BIPOC. An estimated 95% of our Emergency Food Distribution participants are immigrants, elders, and seniors who reside in public and supportive housing just a few blocks from SSCC. To learn more about SSCC's Emergency Food Distribution, watch, "[On the Line](#)," a short 10-min documentary about the program. The film was directed and Produced by Naomi Schiller and Dan Fethke with support from the CUNY Graduate Center, The Center for Humanities Andrew W. Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research. SSCC's Program Director created a [zine](#) to accompany the film and unpack the issues surrounding food access, food justice, and heightened food insecurity due to the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. To watch the film and view the zine, visit: [www.sixthstreetcenter.org/on-the-line](http://www.sixthstreetcenter.org/on-the-line).

SSCC's Emergency Food Distribution Program is organized and led by SSCC Program Director, Jen Chanttrtanapichate. The Program is made possible thanks to the love, labor and financial support of our incredible community members and volunteers.

## Mutual Aid Kitchen Project

Sixth Street's Mutual Aid Kitchen Project provides space for Mutual Aid groups to cook and provide free meals for food insecure New Yorkers.



Volunteer cooks in our Mutual Aid Kitchen.

At the onset of the COVID19 crisis, Sixth Street Community Center witnessed a steep increase in food insecurity in our community and across the city. We responded by launching an Emergency Food Distribution and Pantry, a Free Community Fridge and opened up our kitchen and cafe space as a Mutual Aid Kitchen. For the past 18 months, we have been operating our kitchen and cafe exclusively as a Mutual Aid Kitchen, partnering with various mutual aid groups to cook and prepare free meals for food insecure families and individuals who are unable to prepare their own meals. The Mutual Aid Kitchen Project has been operating weekly since June 2020 and prepares around 2,000 meals per week. To date, we have prepared over 160,000 free meals out of our kitchen.



Volunteers packaging meals in our ground floor studio.

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## Mutual Aid Kitchen Project (cont.)

Meals are then packaged and distributed via our on-site Emergency Food Distribution Program to other community-based organizations and local community fridges across the city particularly in neighborhoods that have been hit hardest by the pandemic.



EV Loves NYC and Volunteers loading up the truck with meals to be distributed to other CBOs across the city.

Our main partner in the Mutual Aid Kitchen Project is East Village Loves NYC along with other mutual aid groups including Angry Papaya, The People's Bodega NYC, and End Food Insecurity. Our partnership with these groups is aimed at expanding access to our free kitchen space and equipment. Operating our facility and the commercial kitchen comes with a large expense that has put a strain on our small 501c3. SSSC recently received support from Just Fund's Omidyar Network to operate and scale up our Mutual Aid Kitchen Project well into 2022. In the coming year, we look forward to developing complementary community education programs as part of the Project. These workshops and events will focus on unpacking the systemic root causes of food insecurity and develop a collective organizing framework for addressing these issues from a sustainable community-based perspective.

The SSSC Mutual Aid Kitchen Project will be able to continue into 2022 thanks to the generous support of the Omidyar Network.

## Organizing and Advocacy

### Fighting Displacement, Supporting Workers and Small Businesses

Sixth Street Community Center continues to be an active member in the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side. The Coalition is organizing against the city's upzoning and racist displacement of our communities, particularly low-income and working-class BIPOC, and fighting for the passage of the Chinatown Working Group Plan which will control luxury and commercial overdevelopment and mandate construction of affordable housing in the neighborhoods south of Houston Street. We have also joined with the Coalition in protests



SSSC Teens join the picket with the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side this past month.

opposing the construction of a new mega-jail in Chinatown and the closing of the historic Jing Fong restaurant, the largest in Chinatown, and the firing of all its 180 restaurant workers. In the East Village, Sixth Street has joined with the Latinx community and elected officials to stop the rent gouging and



SSSC Executive Director (Howard Brandstein) with Luis Rivera (Casa Adela owner & Adela's son) at a recent rally to Save Casa Adela.

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## Organizing and Advocacy (cont.)

closing of the much loved Casa Adela, which for 35 years has offered the finest Puerto Rican cuisine at its 66 Avenue C location. As part of this campaign, we are supporting passage of commercial rent control legislation to save our community's small businesses from displacement.



SSCC Staff (Onyx Clarke, Megan Lee, Shania Santana, Krystal Bydonne & Ryan Moore) at one of our favorite neighborhood establishments, Casa Adela, for a team luncheon.

## Community Land Trust (CLT) Housing Development

In collaboration with Cooper Square Committee, Sixth Street Community Center is moving forward with our proposal to develop 50+ units of low-income housing and expanded community space on E6th Street within the newly formed This Land Is Ours Community Land Trust. We had a series of successful community meetings between September and November with dozens of community members, neighboring NYCHA residents, and tenant association leaders. We look forward to continuing to build robust community support for this project which is slated for the publicly-owned under-utilized parking lot next door.



September's community meeting at SSCC regarding the E6th St. site.

## Fighting the Climate Crisis and Opposing New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

Just across the East River lies our neighboring community of North Brooklyn, where for-profit, private energy utility National Grid is going ahead full steam on constructing a new pipeline. The brand new fossil fuel infrastructure will carry fracked gas through primarily poor, working-class BIPOC communities in North Brooklyn. We know that if we want to address the root causes of the climate crisis, save our planet from climate destruction and preserve the future for our people and the planet, we can't continue to build new fossil fuel infrastructure. SSCC joined the No North Brooklyn



SSCC Program Director (Jen Chanttrtanapichate) and SSCC Summer Program Coordinator (Noel Sanchez) at a protest and rally at National Grid's HQ in Downtown Brooklyn.

Pipeline Coalition back in November 2019 and has been active on the ground to resist this pipeline since. In November of 2020, SSCC Program Director, Jen Chanttrtanapichate, was arrested in a series of direct actions alongside 11 other water and land protectors for putting her body on the line to stop construction of the pipeline. SSCC is committed to this fight and has joined in a dozen of events and actions.



Jen Chanttrtanapichate (SSCC Program Director) getting arrested for shutting down the construction of the North Brooklyn Pipeline.

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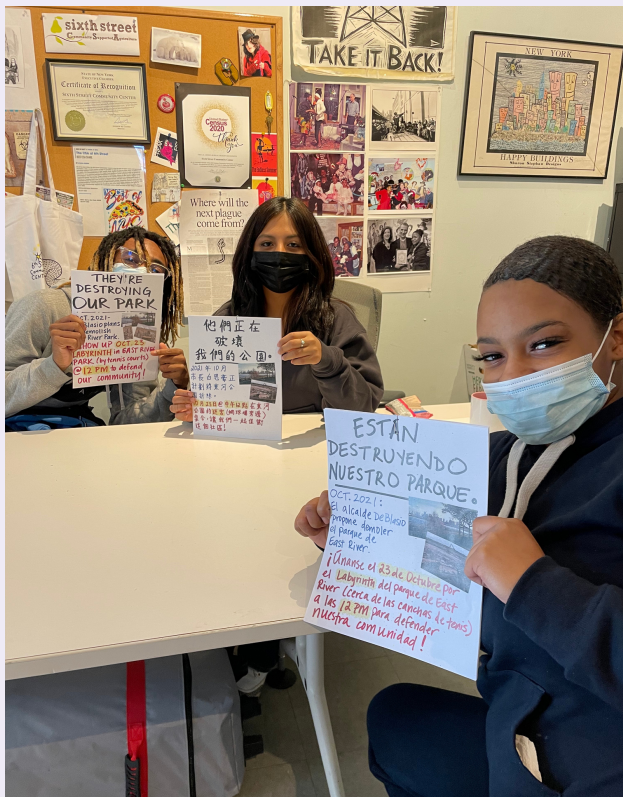
# Sixth Street Community Center | Annual Highlights

## Organizing and Advocacy (cont.)

### Demanding Coastal Resiliency

SSCC has continued in the struggle of fighting for a more sustainable, more resilient future for New York City. That includes advocating for coastal resiliency plans that concretely address the root causes of the climate crisis. Our teens have been learning about the climate crisis, the campaign to Save East River Park and have taken on a role in advocating for a better plan that mitigates the root causes of the crisis.

With support from the Foundation for Renewable Energy and Environment, Sixth Street Community Center made a **short film** about our community's struggle to Save East River Park. Featuring interviews with local residents, community leaders and activists who will be impacted by the City's Plans to destroy East River Park, the film identifies key issues about the City's approach to resiliency planning for our vulnerable waterfront communities in the face of climate change.



Sixth Street Teens making flyers in English, Spanish and Chinese to conduct outreach for our campaign to Save East River Park.



Above: SSCC Teens helping Artists Against Displacement paint a mural on the facade of Chinese Staff and Working Association down on Grand Street. Below: SSCC Teens learning about the East Side Coastal Resiliency Plan at East River Park.



SSCC Executive Director (Howard Brandstein), Illapa Sairitupac and community members marching to Save East River Park.



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# Sixth Street Community Center

## Expresses deep gratitude to all of our 2020-2021 Funders and Supporters

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### THANK YOU!

- \$70,000 **New York Community Trust**. Teen Climate Justice Program
- \$30,000 **In Our Back Yards**, Matching Funds. Emergency Food Distribution Program
- \$30,000 **2020 COVID Relief GoFund Me**. Emergency Food & General **\*\*Thank you to all who donated!!\*\***
- \$25,000 **Assembly Member Harvey Epstein**. Sixth Street Youth Program
- \$20,000 **Community Infrastructure Fund for Mutual Aid- Omidyar Network**. Mutual Aid Kitchen Project
- \$10,000 **Patagonia**. General Operating Funds
- \$10,000 **NYC Civic Impact Fund**. To expand volunteer capacity via Emergency Food Distribution Program
- \$10,300 **Laura Moss**. General Operating Funds
- \$6,000 **Carol Stupore**. 2020 Youth Program Gifts & 2021 Emergency Food Program
- \$5,000 **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development**. Sixth Street Youth Program
- \$5,000 **Desai Sethi Foundation**. Community Supported Agriculture Program 2020
- \$5,000 **Laura Chautin & Masami Hosono**. Emergency Food Distribution Program
- \$8,700 **Sixth Street Comedy** organized by SSCC Board Member **Ali Fischbein**. General Operating Funds
- \$3,700 **Sixth Street Art Coalition** organized by SSCC Board Member **Ali Fischbein**. General Operating Funds
- \$2,000 **CUNY Andrew W. Mellon Seminar via a collaboration with Naomi Schiller**. Emergency Food Program
- \$2,000 **Anonymous Foundation**. Emergency Food Distribution Program
- \$1,560 Artist **Sheryo** via **US Tennis Association Foundation** Art Auction. General Operating Funds
- \$1,500 **Aaron Wiggins**. Emergency Food Distribution
- **Purvey'd** 100 cases of free produce. Emergency Food Distribution

And THANK YOU to the hundreds of community members and others that supported us through individual contributions!



From Top Left Clockwise: SSYP kids gardening at Fifth Street Farm. Masami Hosono Volunteering at our Emergency Food Distribution. SSCC Teens restocking our community fridge w/ veggies from our CSA. SSCC Staff (Megan Lee & Jen Chanttratanapichate) and Teens working the Emergency Food Distribution. Howard Brandstein and Adoniah Dunson (granddaughter of Annette Averette) celebrating our beloved Annette.