



For Immediate Release

THE HIGH LINE'S NEIGHBORS COUNCIL SELECTS THREE LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR GRANTS TO SUPPORT NEW MIGRANTS TO NEW YORK

PS11, Quest to Learn, and UnLocal Receive a Total of \$25,000 from the High Line's Neighbor to Neighbor Fund to Provide Aid to Recent Immigrant Families on Manhattan's West Side

New York, NY (March 7, 2024) — The High Line today announced the three local recipients of \$25,000 total in grants selected through its Neighbors Council, a body of community members that advise and collaborate with the nonprofit on efforts to support and engage the neighborhoods surrounding the park. Chelsea public schools PS11 and Quest to Learn will each receive \$10,000, and UnLocal, a New York City-based immigrant legal aid, education, and advocacy nonprofit, will receive \$5,000 from the High Line's Neighbor to Neighbor Fund for their respective efforts to support families who have newly migrated to the US within the communities they serve.

"As an anchor institution and community hub on Manhattan's West Side, the High Line's mission is devoted to reimagining the role public spaces have in creating connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities," said Preeti Sodhi, Senior Director of Community and Government Relations at the High Line. "Given this, we constantly ask, 'How can we be a good neighbor?' We heard from our Neighbors Council that our partners at PS11, Quest to Learn, and UnLocal have made an important impact in welcoming our newest neighbors into Chelsea, and we want to help them continue that work to foster a sense of belonging for everyone in our community."

New York City has seen a significant influx of immigrants in recent years, and Manhattan City Council District 3—which also includes the High Line and the neighborhoods of Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, and portions of Greenwich Village—has welcomed thousands of recent newcomers. Hundreds of families, many of whom are staying at temporary shelters in these neighborhoods, have enrolled in District 3 public schools throughout the school year, including PS11 and Quest to Learn, the latter of which saw its population of students newly learning English as a secondary language nearly double. These schools have embraced these new New Yorkers, upleveled their support to educators to accommodate newly needed skills and language sets, and been quick to identify the ways in which these new families enrich



their existing communities.

[Quest to Learn](#) responded to the influx of new students by adjusting their curriculum and staffing to include classes for learning English and culturally-sustaining Spanish language support in academic and after school programs; the school also organized a free store of clothing and basic needs items. Parents at elementary school [PS11](#) similarly responded by reigniting mutual aid networks organized to address food insecurity and other needs during the most challenging periods of the COVID-19 pandemic. These mutual aid efforts have fostered friendships and connections, helping ground newcomers socially in their new home.

“The High Line is more than just our backyard—it has been our ongoing partner in providing educational enrichment, engagement, and support to students and their families, whether they’ve been here 20 years or 2 weeks,” said Marina Galazidis, Principal of Quest to Learn School. “Quest to Learn is grateful for the ways our partnership has allowed us to support our students’ growth, and this grant will go a long way in helping us continue to respond to their needs. With the funds we receive, we intend to add support for language services and additional donations of toiletries, clothing, and food for our free store and food pantry. We’ll also be able to bolster our activities and clubs that help bond our student communities.”

“We are honored to be selected as a recipient of this grant by the High Line Neighbors Council,” said PS11 parent Jeffrey Gardner. Gardner, Michael Walsh, and Lori Nebrikow are the parent organizers of the PS11 Aid Foundation. Gardner continued: “Families at PS11 have been coming together to support each other in the face of immense challenges. The PS11 Aid Foundation plans to use the funds from this grant to broaden the support we are able to give our shelter family community and continue providing the families in shelters with grocery store gift cards that allow them to shop for food for themselves. As the city’s policies change and more new students arrive, this influx of funds will allow us to remain flexible in how we respond to the needs of this community.”

[UnLocal](#) offers similar support on a broader scale across the city: In addition to free community closets for people in need of warmer clothes and other necessities, UnLocal organizes resource and information sessions for new arrivals, trains other organizations and institutions in how to support of immigrants, and connects immigrants and asylum seekers with legal services and other vital resources. Their work has been especially critical in Chelsea—in 2023, they provided essential legal services for 23 new New Yorkers to the neighborhood, in addition to helping thousands more through their programming and other services.

“UnLocal is proudly dedicated to serving New York’s undocumented immigrant community through legal and community education services,” said Eva Mayhabal Davis, Director of Community Programs & Engagement for UnLocal. “Our central Manhattan location ensures accessibility for our community, making it easy for recent asylum seekers to reach us. With funding from Friends of the High Line, we will not only enhance our services but also connect to the High Line, a thriving space where community is built by exchanging stories and the city

can be transformed."

The Neighbor to Neighbor Fund, a participatory grantmaking initiative first launched in 2021, is an initiative of the High Line Neighbors Council. Each year, the Neighbors Council works to identify critical community issues that the High Line can support through the fund. The High Line Neighbor to Neighbor Fund grant recipients in 2022 were New Victory Theater/New 42 Youth Corps and Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen.

First formed in 2014 and relaunched in February 2021, the High Line Neighbors Council is a group of committed stakeholders who live, work, and study in Chelsea or on the West Side of Manhattan. The council is an intergenerational group that includes local residents and business owners, High Line Teens staff and alumni, and representatives from community-based partner organizations. The Neighbors Council provides an opportunity for the High Line to develop and maintain connections with community members, discuss ideas and insights that inform areas of focus, and collaborate on community-based initiatives.

SUPPORT

Lead Support for High Line Accessibility, Education & Programs is provided by the Ford Foundation. Major support is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

ABOUT THE HIGH LINE

The High Line is both a nonprofit organization and a public park on the West Side of Manhattan. Through our work with communities on and off the High Line, we're devoted to reimagining public spaces to create connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.

Built on a historic, elevated rail line, the High Line was always intended to be more than a park. You can walk through the gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food or beverage, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.

Nearly 100% of our annual budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and we operate under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

For more information, visit thehighline.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Janelle Grace | PR & Communications Manager | the High Line
646.774.2536 | janelle.grace@thehighline.org

HIGH LINE

