

GOVERNORS ISLAND

2024 Year In Review

As we reflect on an incredible year and look ahead towards 2025, which will mark 20 years of public access, we are grateful for the community of New Yorkers that hop on the ferry each day to work, learn, eat, play, relax, research, and create on Governors Island.

The Trust for Governors Island works together with its fundraising partner the Governors Island Foundation and in close collaboration with the National Park Service/Governors Island National Monument to ensure the Island is a beloved destination for New York City.

THE TRUST FOR
GOVERNORS ISLAND

GOVERNORS
ISLAND
FOUNDATION



From Our Leadership

Dear friends,

It's been a remarkable year here in New York Harbor. In 2024, Governors Island welcomed 970,000 individuals—the most people to travel to the Island in a single year since we opened to the public—and we marked several historic milestones:

- **Making progress on restoring historic buildings and growing our tenant community.** We broke ground on a transformative expansion for the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School and announced the team behind longtime seasonal Island vendor Taco Vista was selected to transform Building 140 into a new year-round food and beverage destination.
- **Expanding our role as a leader in accelerating climate solutions.** We showcased innovative climate tech through our piloting program and fostered a collaborative community of tenants and partners working in climate.
- **Delighting visitors with singular cultural experiences.** We presented New York Times Critic's Notebook pick *Other of Pearl* by Jenny Kendler and curated an exciting season of free performances and programs.

We were also thrilled to announce that the Friends of Governors Island is now the Governors Island Foundation, allowing for increased collaboration in securing philanthropic support to further strengthen the Island as a vibrant resource for our city. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without our valued visitors, advocates, and supporters.

As we look ahead to our twentieth year open to the public, we are excited to continue to deliver on our shared mission to realize the full potential of Governors Island for the inspiration and enjoyment of all New Yorkers. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey and for making a lasting impact.

Sincerely,



Clare Newman
President and CEO



Patti Davis
Executive Director

THE TRUST FOR
GOVERNORS ISLAND

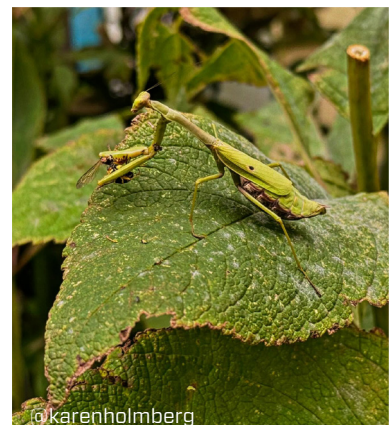
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UNPARALLELED OPEN SPACE & RECREATION



Through Your Lens

Visitor Photos



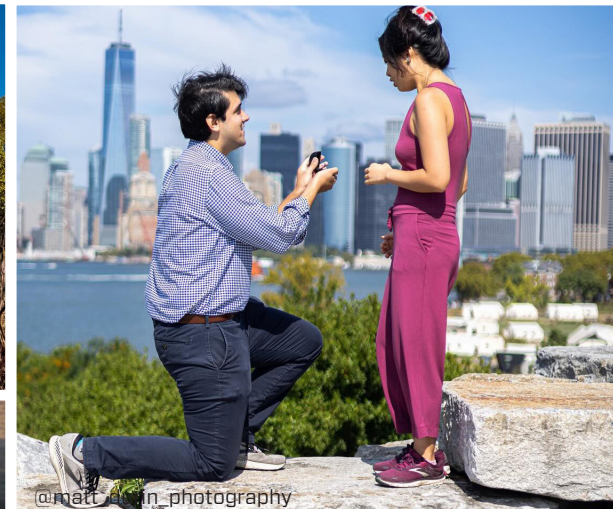
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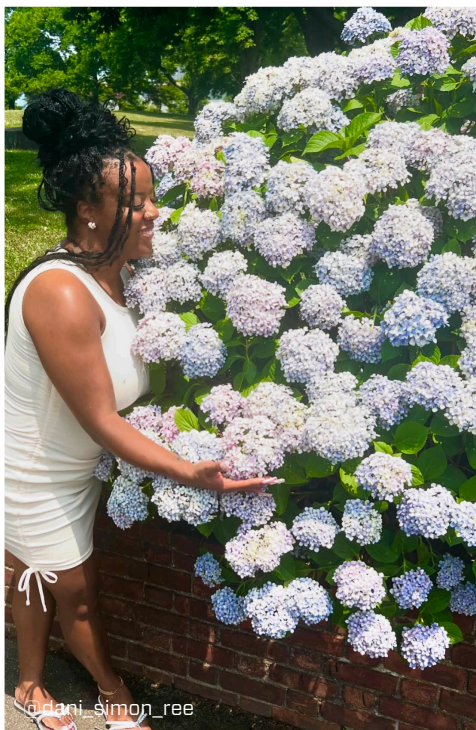
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Our Visitors

In 2024, Governors Island welcomed 970,000 individuals over twelve months—the most people to travel to the Island in a single year since the Island opened to the public.

- The Island remains a top destination for all New Yorkers; **every residential zip code in New York City** was represented by our visitors this year.
- We partnered with **367** community-based organizations, public schools, and NYCHA communities across the city to emphasize the Island’s accessibility.
- Governors Island representatives fanned out across the city, tabling at **community days, block parties, and resource fairs** across Brooklyn and Manhattan and directly engaging New Yorkers in their neighborhoods.

Arrival at Soissons Landing



Stewarding an Immersive Open Space

With 120 acres of open space, including a 43-acre climate-resilient park, 12 acres of athletic fields, 7 miles of car-free bike paths, and unique natural areas, Governors Island is a remarkable outdoor resource.

Through state-of-the-art ecological horticulture practices, we have created a resilient, immersive, thriving open space for wildlife and New Yorkers alike. Horticultural highlights from 2024 include:

- Making progress on our Community Forest Management Plan by planting **70 new trees** around the Island.
- Propagating and planting **6,000 different perennials, grasses, and other plants**, continuing to grow our native habitats to support wildlife and pollinators.
- Removing **4,000 cubic yards of harmful invasive plants** using sustainable methods—including soil solarization and landscaping sheep—to ensure our ecosystem has space to thrive.
- Holding **20 public programs** through Governors Island Nature, including drop-in volunteer days, ecological celebrations, nature walks, and community science events.

We invited all New Yorkers to engage in the close connections between native plants and wildlife this year through our Year of Milkweed initiative, celebrating this important plant that supports monarch butterflies. We planted more than 3,500 milkweed plugs across the Island, including in our new demonstration garden in Liggett Terrace (pictured), to help visitors to witness the power of native plants in action.



South Island Park



Plant identification on a Governors Island Nature Walk

The Year in Events

Along with partners and organizers from throughout the five boroughs and around the world, we hosted nearly 95 events on the Island this year—the majority of which were free to attend.

- 2024 kicked off with the **3rd Annual Governors Island Ice Sculpture Show**, co-presented with Times Square Arts, featuring celebrity judges, ten artist teams carving their creations to life, DJs, carving workshops, and more.
- In February, the Trust partnered with A Safe Space Mentor to hold **Returning to Self: A Black History Month Culmination** at LMCC's Arts Center, closing out Black History Month with a reflective and celebratory day of wellness-centered activities.
- Governors Island Arts and Rooftop Films presented the **New York Premiere of *In a Violent Nature*** outdoors in Nolan Park, welcoming more than 700 cinephiles for one of the most highly anticipated horror films of the year.
- The **Mubadala New York Sail Grand Prix** delivered two days of action-packed racing and entertainment, with sailing's best athletes flying over New York Harbor at 60+ mph in front of the SailGP Race Stadium on Governors Island.
- The **17th Annual African Film Festival Family Day** honored communities from the African diaspora through storytelling, double-dutch, dance and drum workshops led by world-renowned instructors, arts and crafts, and film screenings.
- **Pumpkin Point** drew a crowd for two days of fall-themed fun, including performances, crafts, costume contests, trick-or-treating, and—of course—one of the city's largest pumpkin patches.



Mubadala New York Sail Grand Prix



African Film Festival Family Day



3rd Annual Ice Sculpture Show

New Yorkers Give Back

Volunteers play a vital role in caring for Governors Island year-round. 2024 broke volunteer records, with more than 2,900 individual and corporate volunteers contributing 14,500 combined hours of service across two key areas:

- **Visitor Services** - Leading walking tours, staffing the Island's Welcome Centers, and supporting the Island's free public programs.
- **Horticulture** - Helping our teams clear invasive species and care for the Island's landscapes through regular gardening and ecological horticulture projects.



Volunteers pass out candy at Pumpkin Point



Volunteer-led tours



Corporate volunteers in Hammock Grove

TRANSFORMATIVE ARTS & CULTURE



A Year of Growth for Governors Island Arts



Jenny Kendler with *Whale Bells* (Jenny Kendler and Andrew Bearnot), as featured in *Other of Pearl*

In March 2024, the Trust welcomed **Lauren Haynes** as Head Curator, Governors Island Arts, and Vice President, marking an exciting step forward for the Island as a cultural destination.

The New York Times
Governors Island Taps New
Head Curator



"We have fantastic examples of public art throughout the city, but what makes Governors Island unique is really our location and the fact that it's an experience to get here," Haynes said. The idea of disconnecting from the city, while still visible, and reconnecting to nature on the island, she continued, "feels like where the opportunity is."

The New York Times, March 2024



The Open Orchard, Sam Van Aken

The program presented one of its most ambitious projects to date: **Jenny Kendler's *Other of Pearl***, an immersive installation inside the depths of the historic Fort Jay magazine. Co-presented with NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), *Other of Pearl* spread across seven subterranean rooms with a series of delicate works that confronted contemporary environmental issues while pointing towards the cultural structures that have allowed these catastrophes to occur.

Governors Island Arts debuted a curated self-guided tour through the Island's public artworks on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app, this year. The Island's 172 acres are dotted with site-specific public art meant to prompt contemplation and encourage visitors to engage with our varied landscapes and histories, with several works on view year-round:

- *The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist*, Mark Dion
- *Yankee Hanger*, Mark Handforth
- *Church*, Shantell Martin
- *Not for Nutten*, Duke Riley
- *The Open Orchard*, Sam Van Aken PICTURED
- *Cabin*, Rachel Whiteread

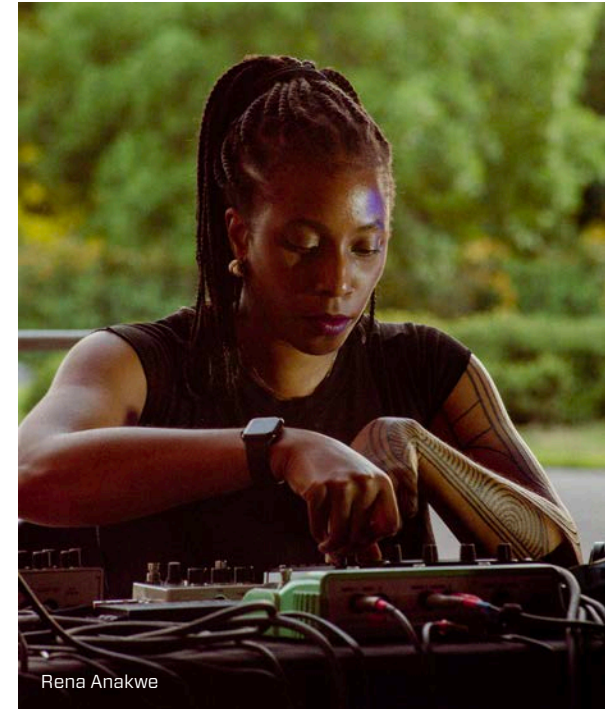
INTERVENTIONS 2024

Governors Island Arts presented the second year of this site-responsive performance series with several groundbreaking productions that were either created or adapted for the outdoors.

- **Dance Heginbotham, *You Look Like a Fun Guy*:** Open rehearsals of this choreographed piece exploring the compositions of John Cage along with the astonishing nature and behavior of fungi.
- **Rena Anakwe:** Sonic performances underneath the Liggett Hall arch featuring an untitled "work in progress" inspired by the element of fire.
- **Inua Ellams, *Search Party*:** The first-ever outdoor iteration of the internationally acclaimed poet and playwright's chaotic, audience-led event prompted by verbal suggestion and open conversation.
- **Lenio Kaklea, *Analphabètes*:** Dance performance consisting of three distinct levels of spectatorship—near, far, and very far away—that blended the environment with choreographic image. Co-presented with L'Alliance New York as part of the Crossing the Line Festival.



Dance Heginbotham



Rena Anakwe



Inua Ellams



"The Greek-born choreographer Lenio Kaklea made her American debut at Governors Island, a fitting spot for work about the boundaries between nature and culture."

The New York Times, October 2024

2024 Organizations in Residence



AnkhLave Arts Alliance resident artist Damali Abrams in her Governors Island studio



Taiwanese American Arts Council exhibition

This year, 21 arts, cultural, educational, and environmental nonprofits utilized space in the historic houses of Nolan Park and Colonels Row to host residencies, exhibitions, performances, and public programs that directly engaged Island visitors. Together with these organizations, we also held monthly THIRD Saturdays and the 3rd Annual House Fest to celebrate our cultural community. Highlights from the cohort include:

- **AnkhLave Arts Alliance**, an organization dedicated to advancing BIPOC artists in the contemporary art realm, presented six artist residencies, a curator residency, open studios, and several outdoor sculptural installations.
- **Climate Imaginarium** served as a community center for climate and culture, with galleries and spaces for exhibitions, performances, film screenings alongside events that responded to the climate crisis with visions for hope and justice.
- The **Filmshop** House hosted weekly film screenings, industry Q&As, and hands-on workshops led by their community of filmmakers.
- **The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Art (MoCADA)** brought its contemporary, dynamic art to the Island's audiences with a multimedia group exhibition featuring artists exploring the Black Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Nonconforming (TGNC) experience; film screenings; installations; and community gatherings.
- **New Art Dealers Alliance** presented the sixth edition of NADA House, bringing together 17 exhibitors showing work from 21 artists.
- **Taiwanese American Arts Council** presented exhibitions, outdoor performances, and artist residencies that looked at commonalities between islands around the world.

ACCELERATING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



Inside is the future of farming.



Inside, this container is bursting with food. It has everything a plant needs to grow—light, water, and nutrients. It's ultra-energy and water efficient. The food is grown right where we need it.



Smart Garden



Thank you.



THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND

EPRI

GROW!

A Living Laboratory in New York Harbor

Governors Island is creating a community to accelerate climate solutions for cities and their populations. Anchored by the soon-to-be built New York Climate Exchange, in addition to programs presented by the Trust and the Island's tenants and partners, this work supports the research, development and demonstration of equitable climate solutions by expanding research opportunities, growing high-quality green jobs, and creating space for New Yorkers to engage with advocacy and action.

Highlights from Trust-led programs in 2024 include:

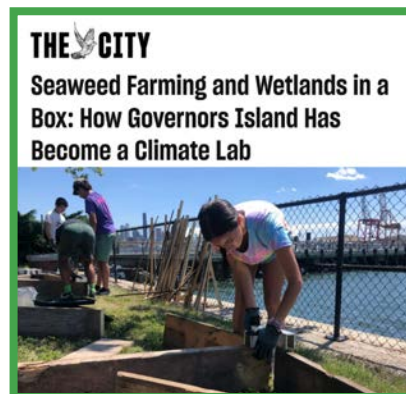
- Our climate piloting program welcomed its **inaugural cohort of 10 projects**, which include innovations in greywater treatment, living shorelines, air and water quality monitoring, urban help farming, and other products. The program hosted three public engagement events, allowing Island visitors, industry professionals, and funders to directly engage in the future of climate solutions for New York City.
- We restored the interior of historic **Building 309**—a deconsecrated former military chapel located in the Island's Historic District—to serve as a community convening resource for climate organizations from across the city.



2024 piloting partner RETI Center



2024 piloting partner Seaweed City



THE CITY

Seaweed Farming and Wetlands in a Box: How Governors Island Has Become a Climate Lab

"Using Governors Island's waterfront, parkland and facilities as a lab enables the inventors to see their ideas in action to tweak and ultimately scale the projects.

Taken together, the projects represent a 'much more optimistic vision for how a city can look when it's truly sustainable and truly resilient,' said Trust President and CEO Clare Newman [at] the island's first climate demonstration day."

The City, July 2024



Building 309

Highlights from our Climate Community



- **The New York Climate Exchange** grew their team and held regular programming, including their first-ever Climate Tech Showcase.
- The Island celebrated its largest and most highly attended **Climate Week** yet, with 43 events hosted across seven days by the New York Climate Exchange, the Trust, and over 30 partners.
- The New York City Department of Education held their annual **Youth Climate Summit** on Governors Island, bringing hundreds of students from across the city together to learn about environmental justice and develop climate action plans for their communities.
- **GrowNYC** donated more than two tons of fresh, locally grown produce from their Governors Island Teaching Garden to NYC-based community groups and engaged more than 5,500 community members through volunteering and garden visits.
- The Island served as a model for urban composting, with composting partner **Earth Matter NY** processing hundreds of thousands of pounds of organic material from all Island tenants, vendors, partners, and event operators.
- **Billion Oyster Project** celebrated their 10th anniversary year by engaging more than 40,000 students from across the five boroughs and growing their total number of oysters restored to 140 million.



PLANNING AND INVESTMENT



Creating a More Sustainable Island

In 2024, the Trust made progress on real estate and capital projects that will pave the way for the Island to grow as a year-round resource and a public, physical example of a sustainable and adaptive urban environment. Highlights include:

- Embarking on the most significant sustainability project in the Island’s history: the design and construction of a **new 27kV electrical substation** in the Eastern Development Zone, which will allow the Island to electrify all existing systems that are still using fossil fuels. Once completed, the project will include year-round public amenities and will model sustainable design through passive ventilation, rainwater harvesting, and a green roof.
- Making major progress on the **North Island lighting infrastructure project**. To date, 80 new wood poles have been installed, with approximately 2 miles of conduit laid—providing infrastructure to create a safer, more welcoming environment. Work is expected to be complete in 2025.
- Completing construction on **historic Building 20**, with Billion Oyster Project and NYU Gallatin moving into the newly restored space in early 2025—furthering our vision of a year-round cultural campus in Nolan Park.
- Installing new **all-season water refill stations** across the Island’s open space.
- Announcing the team behind Taco Vista, a longtime seasonal Island vendor, was selected to **transform historic Building 140 into a new year-round food and beverage concept**—which will include an indoor café and full-service restaurant as well as a reimagined and expanded Taco Vista. Upon completion, the building will be one of the first adaptive reuse projects on the Island with 100% electric operations, and construction is anticipated to begin in 2025.



SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF REAL ESTATE LEADERS

The Real Estate Pathways Fellowship program (a collaboration between the Trust for Governors Island and the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation) provides undergraduate students enrolled in the City University of New York (CUNY) with valuable, hands-on experience while working to increase diversity in the New York City real estate sector.

In 2024, participants attended ten different professional development events during their cohort, including enrichment trainings, roundtable discussions with industry professionals, and job shadowing. Since its inception, the fellowship has served 30 students, with 87% of program graduates going on to gain full-time employment in their chosen field.

Fostering a Year-Round Community



Hope is a discipline at LMCC's Arts Center, curated by Meghana Karnik, Eugene Hannah Park, Marina Christodoulidou, and Billy Fowo



Breaking ground on the Harbor School expansion

Governors Island is home to a growing group of educational, nonprofit, and commercial tenants. 2024 highlights include:

- The **Urban Assembly New York Harbor School**, together with the Trust for Governors Island and the New York City School Construction Authority, broke ground on a historic expansion that will double the school's campus size and expand enrollment.
- **QC NY** opened Casa QC Bistro, a brand-new 15,000-square-foot restaurant in the newly restored Building 111.
- **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Arts Center** celebrated their 50th anniversary year with a series of exhibitions from throughout the organization's history, collaborative installations, artist residencies, festivals, and free public programs.
- Brooklyn-based nonprofit **Beam Center** utilized their Maker Space to give participants hands-on opportunities to work on artistic and STEM projects. They also presented *seeAsaw*, an interactive and immersive structure, on the Parade Ground during the peak season months.
- The **Institute for Public Architecture (IPA)** continued to expand their year-round programming, hosting 90 free events, exhibitions, and workshops.

Thank you to our supporters.

Donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations are critical to helping Governors Island thrive as an accessible, vibrant, year-round destination for all New Yorkers.

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Listings are accurate as of December 20, 2024. Thank you to the thousands of additional supporters who made additional donations throughout the year, including while purchasing ferry tickets. For the audited financial statements of the Trust and the Foundation (formerly Friends of Governors Island), please visit govisland.org.

Leadership

THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND

The Governors Island Corporation, doing business as The Trust for Governors Island, is the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization created by the City of New York and charged with the planning, redevelopment, and ongoing operations of 150 acres of Governors Island. The Trust's mission is to realize the full potential of Governors Island for the inspiration and enjoyment of all New Yorkers, demonstrating a bold vision for public space.

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GOVERNORS ISLAND FOUNDATION

The Governors Island Foundation, formerly the Friends of Governors Island, is an independent nonprofit that works to ensure the Island's continued growth and accessibility as a vibrant public resource. The Foundation's mission is to secure philanthropic support to strengthen Governors Island as a vibrant resource for all New Yorkers.

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