



**Wildlife
Conservation
Society**



PPZ Education Programs

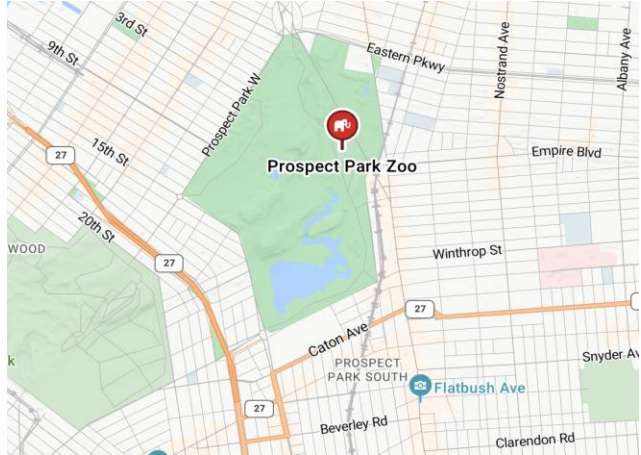
Community Board 14 | Prospect Park Zoo

January 21st 2026

William Elliston

Curator of Education, Prospect Park Zoo

Prospect Park Zoo



Who We Are



OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

Increase scientific literacy and understanding of biodiversity

Foster a connection to wildlife and nature

Empower individuals to take action on behalf of wildlife and the environment

Provide access to STEM careers for NYC youth, creating a pipeline for future conservation leaders

BRONX ZOO



CENTRAL PARK ZOO



NEW YORK AQUARIUM



PROSPECT PARK ZOO



QUEENS ZOO



Core Audiences

Schools

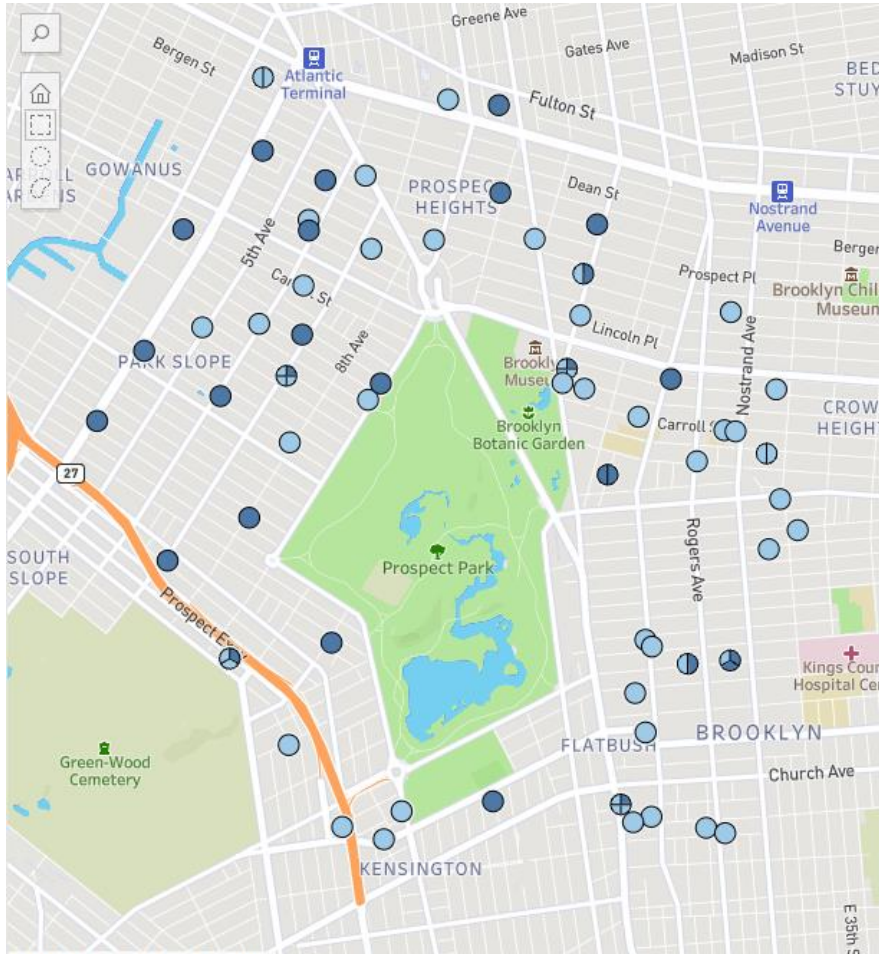
Youth

Children and Families

Zoos and Aquarium Visitors



School Engagement



Classroom Programs
Tours
Scavenger Hunts
Family/Community Days

117 schools attend field trips at PPZ
101 NYC public schools
82 High Needs schools

77 schools in 1 mile ecosystem
34% have engaged with PPZ

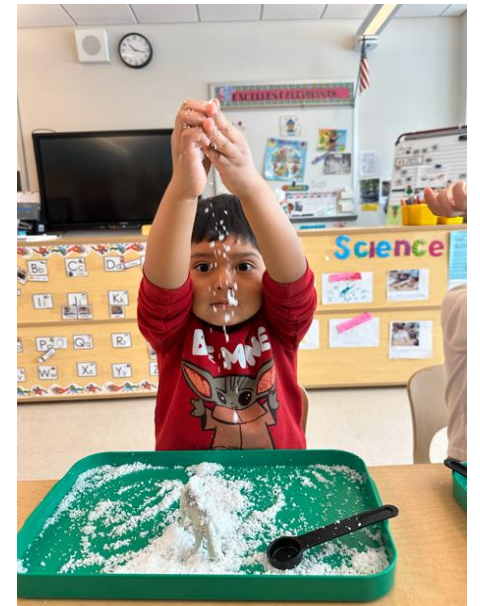


Partnerships & PD's

Teacher Professional Development
[Upcoming Courses](#)

Partnerships:

- Parkside Development Center (STEM Starters)
- Maple Street School
- PS 249 Caton School



Youth: WCS Career Lattice

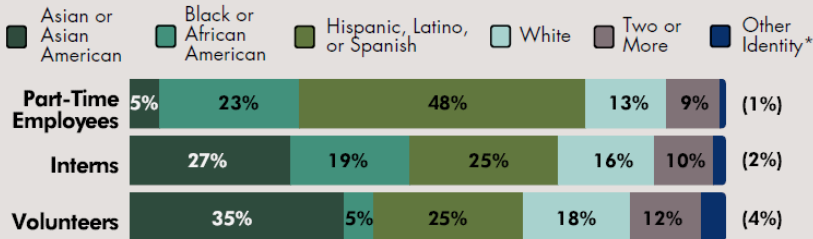
WHO ARE WCS YOUTH?



54%
of youth
identified as
Black or
Hispanic,
reflecting NYC
demographics

319 youth moved into new roles
at WCS between April 2024
and March 2025
including advancing into elevated positions and exploring
different opportunities. We call this "latticing in action."

\$5.5M
earned in stipends
and wages



*The Other Identity category includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and write-in responses.

32%
of youth were
first generation
college
students

90%
live in New York
City's five boroughs

WCS volunteers and interns
represent 317 schools, including
153 NYC public high schools



Lattice Youth at PPZ

Seasonal Employees

11 – Education
11 – Business Services

Internships

21 – Education
5 – Animal Department
4 – Business Services

Volunteers

90 – Teen Discovery Guides



Interns/Volunteers

59 High Schools 36 NYC public high schools

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT



Allison Lam

- PPZ CUNY Intern (2025)
- PPZ Discovery Guide Leader (2023)
- PPZ Discovery Guide (2022 - 2023)

Brooklyn, NY

"Having the opportunity to be an Education Assistant Intern at PPZ through CUNY Cultural Corps helped me to gain insight into the different aspects of educational programming. I loved seeing the look of wonder and excitement on the kids' faces when they were able to extract DNA with a Q-tip and examine it on a petri dish!"



SCI NetworkNYC

A NYC Cultural Institution Partnership



American Museum
of Natural History



NYBG



LAUNCHING CAREERS



2024 - Present

New York Botanical Garden,
Manager of Urban Conservation Data,
Tools, and Outreach

Lucinda Royte
@ Brooklyn, NY



"I was drawn to WCS and NYBG because they are large, mission-driven institutions with a real stake in New York City's future. Their deep engagement with the city and commitment to connecting people with nature through innovative urban sustainability work made them ideal places for me to grow professionally."



2023 - Present

Prospect Park Zoo,
Manager of Education

Christine Peralta
@ Brooklyn, NY



"The way I approached my career at the beginning was thinking about the places I loved to visit and finding any available roles in that organization, which is how I found myself volunteering at QBG, while having a service industry job. Sometimes, in order to follow my interests, I would have to supplement my income by getting another, more 'random' role. As a result, I accrued a variety of skills that made me a very competitive applicant for any roles I went for. Ultimately, I was able to combine the varied experiences to become the Manager of Education at PPZ, where I am now collaborating with these organizations and others like them to make connections through our shared goals."

IMPACT

SCI Network NYC internships prepare youth for careers at cultural institutions, in science research, and across industries.

Career Plans

75%

of youth would like to pursue a career in STEM

77%

of youth would like to work for a cultural institution in the future

Learning & Skill Development

In an open-ended question about learning:

53%

of youth described how they developed **workplace skills** like teamwork, time management, and communication.

55%

of youth described learning **position-specific skills** like machine learning, science research, pedagogy, plant identification, customer service, and animal husbandry.



Children & Family Programs

Onsite Programs

Summer Camps
School Break Camps
Birthday Parties
Family & Children Programs

Community Engagement

Prospect Park Alliance
Maple Street Community Garden
Brooklyn Public Library



Zoo Visitors

Quests

Led by youth volunteers
4-8 Stations throughout the zoo
Spring/Fall weekends
5 days in the summer

Exhibit Interpretation

Narration for Sea Lion Training Sessions
Theatrical Performances
Roaming and Subject-specific Engagement

Engagement

Visitor Engagement Assistants & Staff
90 Teen and 32 Adult Volunteers

- 11,500 hours
- Interactions: 166,506 Interactions

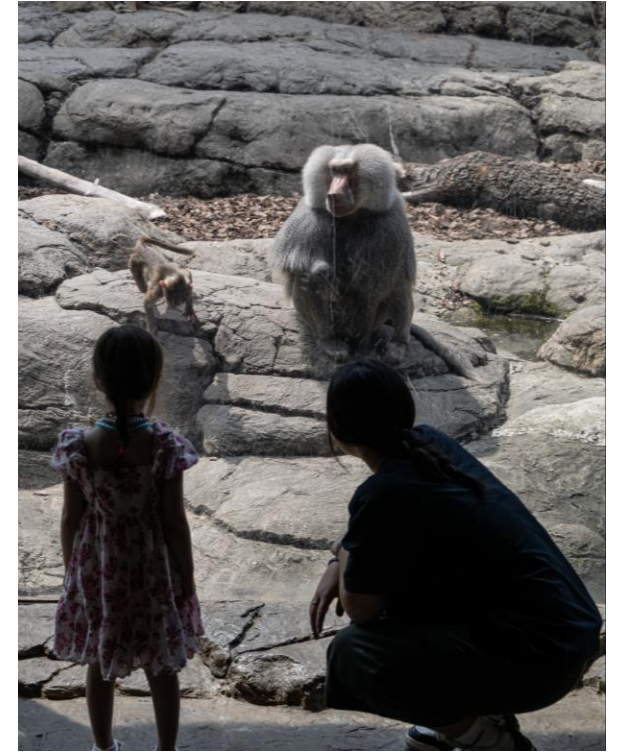


What's Next?

- Expanding School Programs
- Expanding Pre-K Science Learning (STEM Starters)
- Expanding Community Connections



Thank You & Questions





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