



Invitation to Cover

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Partnerships for Parks *It's My Park Awards Reception* Manhattan Volunteers to be Honored

Muslim Volunteers for New York will be Awarded for Outstanding Service, Activism and Collaboration

Awards To Be Held Next Wednesday, March 27

March 22, 2019 -- NEW YORK, NY -- Partnerships for Parks is proud to announce its 6th annual *It's My Park Awards Reception*, recognizing New York City park volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to their local parks through service, advocacy, and collaboration. *It's My Park* is Partnerships for Parks' signature program to engage volunteers in hands-on service projects throughout New York City neighborhood parks. The reception will be held next Wednesday, March 27, at the Prince George Ballroom, Manhattan. Partnerships for Parks will present seven awards at the ceremony, including the 2018 Golden Trowel Awards for each of the five boroughs, as well as the Rookie of the Year Award and the Tim Tompkins Leadership Award.

This year's honorees are seven outstanding community groups selected from over 280 that participated in the 2018 *It's My Park* program. Together, these groups amounted to more than 24,000 New Yorkers who organized and participated in over 1,100 park service projects in nearly 340 parks across the city. These volunteers are vital to improving and sustaining New York City's 29,000 acres of green space, from parks and street trees to playgrounds and skateparks. Their dedicated stewardship helps build long-term investment in these public spaces and strengthens the social fabric of their neighborhoods.

The ceremony will include remarks from **Sabina Saragoussi**, director of Partnerships for Parks; **Heather Lubov**, executive director of City Parks Foundation; NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, FAICP; NYC Parks Assistant Commissioner **Sam Biederman**; and NYC Council Member **Barry Grodenchik**, chair of the NYC Council's Committee on Parks and Recreation. All five leaders will be on hand to honor and celebrate these inspiring volunteers for their outstanding service.

The Golden Trowel Award recognizes volunteers' commitment to transforming their parks and green spaces into dynamic community assets. It is presented to a community group from each borough that has led *It's My Park* and other programs, and has demonstrated exceptional organizational growth. **This year's Golden Trowel award for Manhattan goes to Muslim Volunteers for New York, led by Sahar Husain and Mubeen Siddiqui.**



Muslim Volunteers for New York (MV4NY) was created in the spring of 2015 to engage Muslim Americans and the larger community in efforts to give back to New York City. Since April of 2017, MV4NY have been stewards of Ruppert Park on the Upper East Side. Stepping in when the previous parks group disbanded, MV4NY set out to beautify and broaden the capacity of the park for community engagement, teach youth the importance of service, and increase awareness around environmental stewardship in the city. MV4NY began hosting *It's My Park* beautification events in the spring of 2017 and in 2018, brought out over 300 volunteers to two *It's My Park* events to clean, plant, and revitalize Ruppert Park, garnering the attention of elected officials and NYC Parks staff. MV4NY also successfully advocated for programming to bring two concerts to the park last year. MV4NY have been awarded the Partnerships for Parks Capacity Fund Grant this year to continue their work of beautification, community involvement, and service.

For more information on the *It's My Park* Program, please visit www.partnershipsforparks.com

It's My Park award winners were self or peer nominated and vetted by a Partnerships for Parks selection committee that focused on nominees' achievements in the past year. Special regard was given to nominees who overcame a challenge in their park or within their community group, coordinated an It's My Park project, and/or acted as an inspirational role model for NYC community park volunteers.

When: March 27, 2019 / 6:30 pm – 9 pm

Members of the press are invited to attend.

Please RSVP to Tomasia Kastner – Tomasia.Kastner@parks.nyc.gov or (212) 360-8284

Where: Prince George Ballroom

15 E. 27th St., New York, NY 10016

On-Site Contact: Tomasia Kastner / Tomasia.Kastner@parks.nyc.gov

Visuals: Remarks from NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, City Parks Foundation Executive Director Heather Lubov, NYC Parks Assistant Commissioner Sam Biederman, NYC Council Member Barry Grodenchik, and Partnerships for Parks Director Sabina Saragoussi
Amanda Foster and Sara Healey, Social Impact, TD Bank; and Steven Beer, trustee, City Parks Foundation, presenting awards
Seven local community groups taking the podium to accept their awards
200 local NYC parks volunteers networking and enjoying refreshments

About Partnerships for Parks: Partnerships for Parks is a unique public-private partnership between City Parks Foundation and NYC Parks that supports and champions neighborhood volunteers by giving them the tools they need to advocate and care for their neighborhood parks and green spaces. More information about Partnership for Parks is available [here](#).

PARTNERSHIPS *for* PARKS

A joint program of City Parks Foundation and NYC Parks.

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