



Roosevelt Island  
Operating Corporation

# RIOC News

Volume 9, Issue 2: February 2026

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RIOC Winter Warriors Clear the Island's Snow

# Letter from the President & CEO

## Letter from the President & CEO

Dear Roosevelt Islanders:

The February RIOC Newsletter is here, with updates from RIOC featuring a review of our recent PSD Awards Ceremony, a salute to RIOC's Winter Warriors, reminders about proper AVAC use and cleaning up after our four-legged friends, and more. We've also included information about the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD)'s continued efforts to demolish the city's old steam plant, located just south of Firefighters Field adjacent to the Tram. For those who may be unaware, the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) issued an emergency demolition order for the plant, citing safety concerns with the facility's structure. HPD is the agency tasked with carrying out that order and engaged a vendor to begin the work at the end of 2025.

RIOC has taken steps to help

facilitate communication between the City and residents regarding the work, including asking HPD to set up an email account where residents can send their questions and concerns. That email address is [Rldemolition@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:Rldemolition@hpd.nyc.gov). We have also set up a new page on our recently redesigned website where we will share information from HPD and other government agencies regarding the demolition work. That page can be found at <https://www.rioc.ny.gov/news-and-events/steam-plant-demo>.

Speaking of our recently redesigned website, I hope you'll take the time to explore it. We've strived to make it easier to receive updates, learn about the island's history, and find important documents and meeting recordings. I especially encourage you to register to use our Brightly system to report issues and help us continue to maintain the neighborhood.

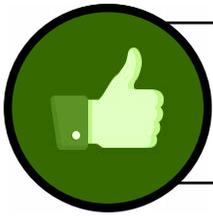
The RIOC team has been particularly busy dealing with one of the harshest winters the City has seen in years. Heavy snowfall compounded by bitter cold kept our teams busy, particularly the Grounds, Maintenance, Transportation, and Public Safety Departments. To everyone who worked diligently through the storm and its aftermath, I want to once again offer a sincere thank you and congratulations on a job well done. I also want to thank Island residents, particularly our motorists, for working with us to help clear Main Street in advance of the storm, which made a meaningful difference in the cleanup effort.

As always, Roosevelt Island works best when we work together, and I appreciate the continued cooperation and engagement from residents across the Island.

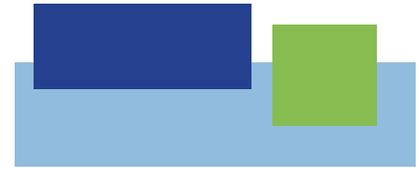


RIOC President & CEO B.J. Jones speaking at the Public Safety 2025 Awards Ceremony.

# Employee Spotlight



## Employee Spotlight



**Isaiah Holman**

Youth Center  
Assistant Director

### 1. Can you tell us a bit about your background?

I'm a graduate of CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Culture and Deviant Studies. I was a four-year collegiate basketball player and team captain, and later played professionally in the U.S. and internationally. I'm honored that my accomplishments as captain led to my induction into the John Jay Athletics Hall of Fame, Class of 2025.

Throughout my athletic journey, I remained committed to youth development — creating sports training programs, promoting healthy living, organizing clothing and sneaker drives, and supporting workforce development efforts for underserved communities. I'm also a musician, producer, and songwriter, and I see creativity as another powerful way to connect and inspire.

### 2. How did you end up at the Roosevelt Island Youth Center?

I came to the Roosevelt Island Youth Center through my longstanding commitment to youth and community work. After years of mentoring young people and using sports and the arts as tools for growth, this role felt like a natural fit.

With more than 12 years in youth development, I've focused on building strong programs that empower young people to explore their passions and reach their potential. I began as an activity specialist and group counselor before moving into leadership roles designing innovative programming.

Before joining RIOC, I served as Senior Director of High School and SYEP Programming at Roads to Success, overseeing programs across all five boroughs. Prior to that, I was a Program Director with FEDCAP Rehabilitation Services, expanding access and opportunity for youth.

### 3. For those who don't know, can you briefly tell us about the YC?

I'm proud to be part of a Youth Center team serving a diverse group of young people from the Roosevelt Island community. We work with youth ages 7–18, providing a safe, supportive space to learn and grow.

We currently have 120 youth enrolled. Programming includes academic support, sports and recreation, creative arts such as music production and photography, leadership development, and enrichment activities that build confidence and skills.

Our programs are offered at no cost, ensuring access for all island families.

### 4. When working with the youth, no day is typical. What does an average day look like for you?

As Assistant Director, no two days are the same, but there is a rhythm. I start by connecting with staff, reviewing partnerships or grants, and ensuring programs run smoothly.

Once youth arrive, I focus on being present — checking in with students, supporting staff, stepping into activities, and helping manage the flow of the day. Mentorship is central to my role, whether guiding youth through challenges or supporting staff growth. I also coordinate with families and manage logistics behind the scenes. It's a balance of leadership and problem-solving focused on creating the best experience possible.

### 5. Is it fair to say the work is incredibly rewarding? What's the best part of the job?

It's incredibly rewarding. The best part is watching young people grow — gaining confidence, discovering new interests, and feeling safe and supported in our space.

Knowing I can help a young person see their potential is what makes this work so meaningful.

### 6. Finally, what's your favorite part about working on Roosevelt Island?

The sense of community. Being part of a close-knit neighborhood allows you to see the impact of your work not just on individual youth, but on families as well.

I love building lasting relationships and helping create spaces where young people feel safe, supported, and inspired.

# Community Leader

## Arya Shirazi

Executive Director, Roosevelt Island Sports

**Can you tell us a little bit about your background?**

I'm a lifelong New Yorker - born and raised Uptown. Organized sports was an important part of my life from the time I was very young, and I played team sports through high school and into college.

**How did you first get involved in youth sports on Roosevelt Island?**

In 2016, the Roosevelt Island Baseball League began play and I registered my older son to participate. During that first year, I became a Coach and Umpire in the League, and in 2017, I was asked to become Director of the program. Thus began the journey.

**Tell us a bit about your new non-profit; how did the thought come about and what are your plans for it?**

After years of running sports programs seasonally (Baseball/Basketball/Soccer), I wanted to create an institution that combined those sports, while also creating Island-based athletics programs that don't currently exist. I have been very fortunate to have received support from the community in making that vision a reality. Roosevelt Island Sports is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing affordable year-round athletic opportunities for the youth of Roosevelt Island and the surrounding communities. With the increasing costs to families for organized sports, the need for affordable sports options for children has never been greater, and Roosevelt Island Sports seeks to combat that trend by offering well-organized, competitive and instructional athletic programs that will not be cost-prohibitive.

**So how can families get involved with the new group?**

Roosevelt Island Sports is an inclusive organization that encourages volunteers from the community to get involved! Please visit our [website](https://risports.org) (<https://risports.org>) to learn more about us, contact us regarding interest in becoming involved and to make a donation to support our mission. Contributions of any size are 100% tax-deductible, and extremely valuable towards ensuring that Roosevelt Island Sports is able to provide organized and safe sports programs for our kids year-round.

**And the new little league season is starting soon. If you could, tell us about how that's organized and if kids want to join, how can they do so?**

Our Spring Baseball season runs from April through June. There are three age divisions for players 5-15 years old. Games are played on Saturdays with the occasional weekday game. The league is free for all players and registration will open the first week of March. Please visit our website to learn more about the league and to let us know if your child(ren) are interested in participating this season.



**Finally, what's the best part about living on Roosevelt Island?**

I actually do not live on the Island - I live in Astoria, about ¾ of a mile away. However, since we became involved with baseball 10 years ago, my family and I have been enthusiastically welcomed and my relationships with Island residents are some of the most meaningful in my life. I'd say that coming from off-Island has given me an even greater sense of the warmth, diversity of cultures and genuine sense of community that make this a very special — and unique — place.

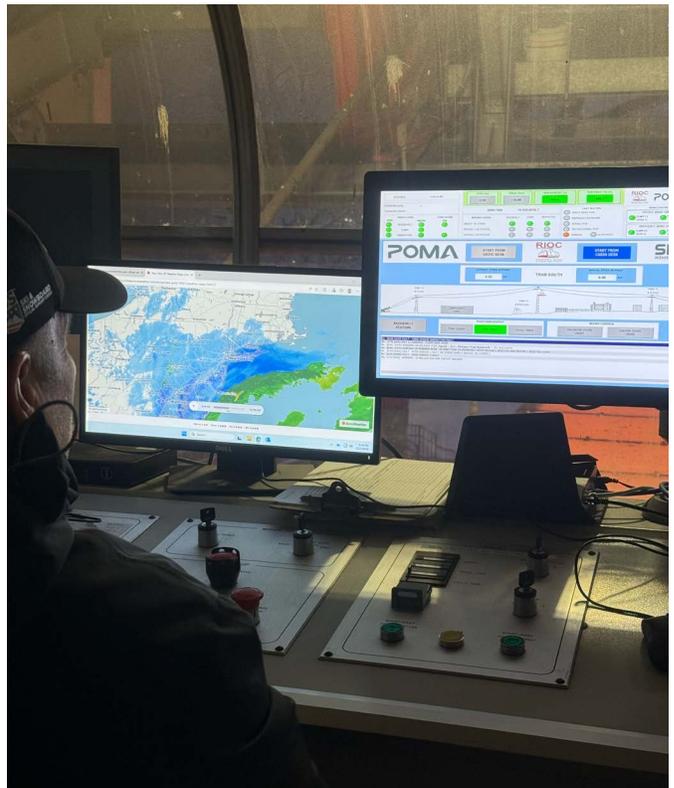


# Updates from RIOC

## RIOC Winter Warriors Clear the Island's Snow

A huge thank you to our RIOC Winter Warriors! As we continue to endure the snowiest winter to hit the island in years, RIOC's Grounds, Transportation, Maintenance, and Public Safety teams have worked around the clock to clear roads and sidewalks, keep Red Bus service moving, and ensure the safety of our community. Special thanks as well to the Leitner-POMA team for riding out these big storms (literally) on the Tram.

We're incredibly grateful for their dedication, teamwork, and tireless efforts to keep Roosevelt Island safe and running through the storms.



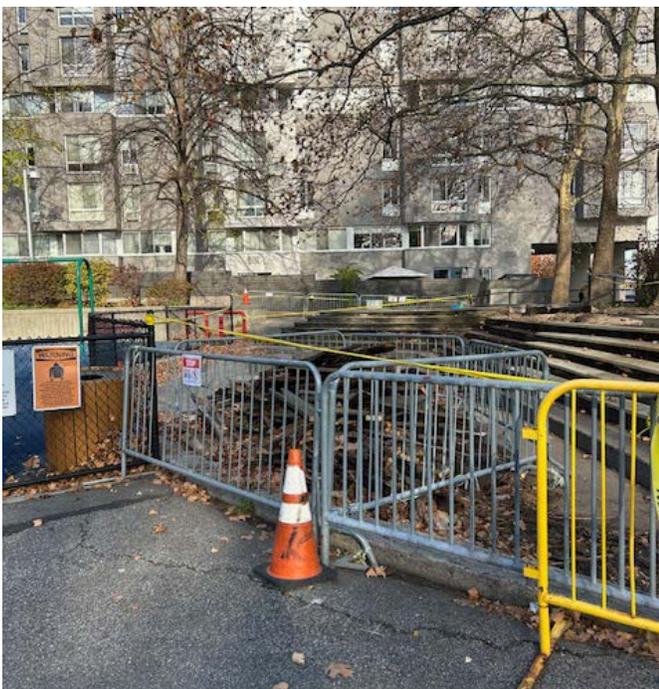
## New Improvements to the Roosevelt Island Tram Station

In late January, RIOC began making several improvements for Tram travelers at the Roosevelt Island Station, including relocating the boarding countdown clock to outside the turnstiles (where the old Metrocard machines were) and adding a new map of the island in Tram Plaza to help visitors explore the island. Make sure to scan the QR code on the map and check out [visitri.nyc/](http://visitri.nyc/)!



## Blackwell Playground Steps Repair

Repair work on the Blackwell Playground steps is now complete! The steps had deteriorated over time, so RIOC Maintenance ripped out the rot and replaced it all with new wooden planks, making the area much safer and more enjoyable for park goers.



## Senator Krueger Hosts Free Legal Services March 13th

State Senator Liz Krueger is sponsoring a Free Legal Services Intake event to support Roosevelt Island residents in accessing civil legal help. The event will take place on Friday, March 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in front of Good Shepherd Chapel (543 Main Street).

The New York Legal Assistance Group's (NYLAG) Mobile Legal Help Center will be on site to provide free civil (non-criminal) legal services for people who cannot afford an attorney. Legal advocates will be available to speak with participants about a wide range of issues, including housing (tenants only), immigration, public benefits, employment, family law, consumer rights, and more — all at no cost and regardless of immigration status.

Appointments are required, and participants must live in Senator Krueger's district to receive services.

To schedule an appointment, please contact Senator Krueger's office at (212) 490-9535.



## New York State Senator Liz Krueger

### NYLAG's Free Legal Services Intake Coming to Roosevelt Island\*

NYLAG's Mobile Legal Help Center provides free civil (non-criminal) legal services for people who cannot afford an attorney. Everyone is eligible to receive free legal services, regardless of immigration status.



Friday, March 13  
10:00AM-3:00PM

In front of  
Good Shepherd Chapel  
543 Main Street

For appointments please contact  
the office of NYS Senator Liz  
Krueger at (212) 490-9535

\* You must live in Senator Krueger's District to participate. Two additional sessions will be held in Manhattan on April 27<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Our legal advocates are ready to speak to you about any of the following issues:

Immigration	Housing (Tenants Only)
Intimate Partner Violence	Homeowner Rights
Divorce	Public Benefits
Custody	Disability Benefits
Employment	Healthcare Benefits
Advance Planning	Identity Theft
-(Including Simple Wills)	Debt Management
Workers' Rights	Consumer Credit

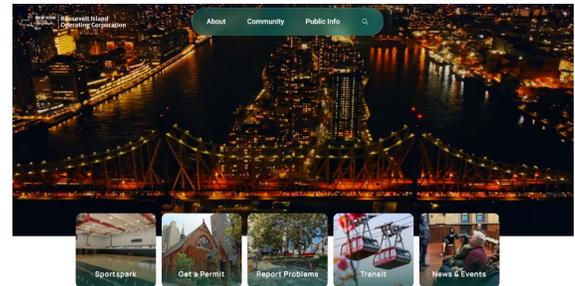


New York Legal Assistance Group



## RIOC Launches New Website, Faster and Optimized for Mobile Use

RIOC has recently launched its redesigned website, [RIOC.ny.gov](http://RIOC.ny.gov), an updated online home for Roosevelt Island that is now faster and more user-friendly than the previous site, and is optimized for the mobile experience to meet visitors where they are in terms of device use. The newly redesigned site offers streamlined navigation and improved content organization, making it easier for residents and visitors to quickly find the information they need. Key services, community resources, and operational updates are now presented in a clearer layout, reducing the number of clicks required to access important pages.



“This new platform makes it easier than ever to stay connected with RIOC, access important services, and discover everything Roosevelt Island has to offer,” **said RIOC President and CEO B.J. Jones.** “We encourage residents and visitors alike to explore this user-friendly site to learn more about our organization and the island we serve.”

Some pages worth bookmarking include:

- The [Tram page](#), which includes the popular Tram Station live stream cameras
- The [Sportspark page](#), which includes information about memberships, classes, special events, and more
- The [Youth Center page](#), which includes information about afterschool, Teen Night, and Summer programming
- The [permits page](#), which guides users through how to obtain a permit for special events
- The [“Report Problems”](#) page, which allows users to sign-up for the Brightly portal to report issues for the RIOC team to assess and prioritize
- The [Advisories page](#) with the latest updates from RIOC's Everbridge advisory system

## Clean-Up After Your Dog!

Snow on the ground is NOT an excuse to leave it behind. Please pick up after your dog — even in winter — and please remind your dog walker to pick up as well. There are dog waste stations located throughout the island for an easy clean-up, or you can be like our friend Kirby and bring your poop bags with you on the go! Be a good neighbor and help keep Roosevelt Island clean for everyone.



## AVAC System: When in Doubt, Leave it Out!

In February, a jam in the AVAC system at 505 Main Street required DSNY to take the building offline for remediation. They were able to clear the jam in the line—pocketbooks, clothes, documents, and broken furniture were all pulled from the system. Please be thoughtful about what goes into your building's chutes, and tell your neighbors: when in doubt, leave it out!



## Update from HPD on the Steam Plant Demo

As the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) continues its demolishing of the city's old Steam Plant, RIOC has set-up a new web page to offer updates from HPD and other agencies involved in the work that are pertinent to the community. In mid-February, HPD released a statement that read in part:

*“HPD is committed to the safe and environmentally responsible demolition of the Roosevelt Island steam plant. We are ensuring that our contractor adheres to all federal, state, and local environmental regulations to safeguard the health and safety of Roosevelt Island residents related to the demolition.*

*“We are implementing a multi-layered protective infrastructure to safeguard residents and existing infrastructure. Licensed environmental professionals will conduct any required remediation work. We are committed to transparent communication about timelines and safety measures as well as continuous monitoring throughout all phases of demolition.*

*“HPD welcomes community feedback and remains committed to keeping Roosevelt Island residents informed throughout this project. We will continue to prioritize community well-being as we work to responsibly demolish this defunct facility.”*

To read the full statement from HPD and more, visit our page at <https://www.rioc.ny.gov/news-and-events/steam-plant-demo>.



# RIOC By The Numbers

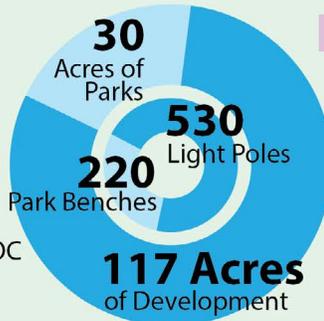
From infrastructure and public safety to youth programming and sustainability, RIOC's work spans every corner of the Island. Our "RIOC by the Numbers" snapshot highlights key metrics and milestones from 2025, offering a data-driven look at RIOC's work and impact across Roosevelt Island.

## RIOC By The Numbers 2025



### Community Infrastructure

- 3 Public Schools
- 4 Cultural Institutions
- 11,998 Residents
- 14 Non-profits Awarded RIOC Public Purpose Funds\*  
\*\$250,000 in Public Purpose Funds



### Work Orders and Services

95.4% Residents' Concerns Addressed

98.4% Work Orders Completed



**Safety** | 33 Index Crimes Recorded on Roosevelt Island

2,304 Index Crimes Recorded in the 114th Precinct

### Programs and Public Art

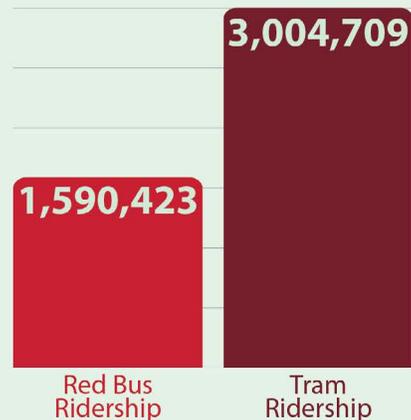


6 Permanent Public Art Installations

### Finances



### Transportation



### Environmental Impact



6 EV Charging Stations | 3,406 EV Charging Sessions | 1,510 Parking Spaces

## PSD Hosts 2025 Awards Ceremony

PSD hosted its annual awards ceremony in February, honoring the brave officers of the Public Safety Department for their outstanding work in 2025. The ceremony recognized the 2025 Supervisor of the Year, Officer of the Year, and all 12 officers of the month. We salute them for their service and dedication to the Roosevelt Island community:

**Supervisor of the Year:** Precious Mack

**Officer of the Year:** Kenan Sabovic

### **Officers of the Month for 2025:**

**January 2025:** Brian Ortiz

**February 2025:** Kenan Sabovic

**March 2025:** David Greene

**April 2025:** Justin Ridgel

**May 2025:** Luis Fonseca

**June 2025:** Christina Genao

**July 2025:** Michelle Farfan

**August 2025:** Gloria Montano

**September 2025:** Ibrahima Bah

**October 2025:** Sharese Samuel

**November 2025:** Bryan DeAza

**December 2025:** Jonathan Neal



# Board Updates

## Board Updates

On Thursday, January 22, the full RIOC Board of Directors met for its first meeting of 2026. During the meeting, the Board approved the purchase of a new hybrid Red Bus, with the Corporation expecting to take delivery by the end of 2026.

On Thursday, February 12, the RIOC Board's Operations Committee met to discuss several ongoing operational issues on the Island, including the ongoing demolition work by the City's Department of Housing Preservation & Development. The committee also reviewed RIOC's 2025 operations metrics and trends and received updates on several ongoing projects, including AVAC repair work, enhancements to the West Promenade, and snow removal efforts.



# YC Highlights



**Castle Wars**  
Participants compete within their groups to create castles just using cardboard boxes. This year's theme: Greek Gods.

## Farewell to YC Participant Jessica



## Black History Month: Family Feud

Staff appears as Steve Harvey.



## YC Valentine's Day "Hearts & Giggles"

