

# HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST OF NEW YORK CITY

WHAT  
WE  
DO

## 2010 & 2011 Annual Report

The



is a nonprofit organization

that operates in tandem with the



City of New York  
Parks & Recreation

+ to aid in and insure the

preservation of **23** city-owned



located in parks in all **five** boroughs.

We believe



are not static antiquities

– they are living institutions uniquely

poised to address



while retaining

their connections to the past.



is

therefore dedicated to



the



protecting their



engaging diverse

educating



and sustaining

the nonprofit organizations that



the historic houses.

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830 Fifth Avenue  
The Arsenal  
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NY, NY 10065  
212 360-8282  
f 212 360-8201

## STEEPED IN HISTORY... AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A MESSAGE FROM FRANNY EBERHART, BOARD CHAIR



Annual reports are usually just that, reviews of the last completed budget year. You may have noticed that this one is different, covering TWO fiscal years, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. There are practical reasons for that, but also some provocative programmatic reasons. Quite conspicuously, much of the most important work we do—restorations of the historic houses—requires a tremendous amount of lead time for planning, and proportionately lengthy execution.

One such conspicuous restoration has just finished—the exquisite Edgar Allan Poe Cottage in The Bronx. The tiniest house in the Trust's collection has been the focus of a large team of devoted supporters, including conservators and project managers from the Trust and the New York City Parks Department, preservation contractors, a structural engineer, landscapers, and of course generous funders, most notably New York City Council Member Joel Rivera and The Bronx County Historical Society, which received a Save America's Treasures matching grant for Poe Cottage. The planning for this work began more than five years ago, with construction taking a year. The Trust's collection may be steeped in 350 years of history, but its focus is very much on planning for the future.

Eleven other restoration projects are in the planning stages now, even as four others are in construction. In all of these, the Trust's dedicated small staff is in the center of the action, coordinating the various teams, and directing the very best care we can to these irreplaceable houses. Look for news about those in our next "annual" report!

Our donors are indispensable to our work, and we are very grateful for your generosity. Please take a careful look at the descriptions on the following pages of the Trust's Five Essential Funds to see how gifts can be directed to the team of your choice!

Franny Eberhart, Board Chair

## FLEXIBILITY DEFINES OUR FUTURE

A MESSAGE FROM FRANKLIN D. VAGNONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I believe that historic houses are not static antiquities—they are living institutions that have been and will continue to be full of life. They are uniquely poised to celebrate our past while engaging with and responding to the needs of today's communities.

We are proud to support these community institutions, great landmarks that they are. Together with our nonprofit partners, we engage in preservation and capacity building efforts to protect the sites and bring our city's history to life for 800,000 visitors a year. Through social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, and publicity in *Time Out New York* and *Edible Queens* magazine, well over 500,000 additional people throughout New York and around the world have been able to read about our work.

The catch is, it's not easy to run a house museum. And, while our nonprofit partners do a fantastic job, they face a lot of challenges. That's why we have initiated the **Essential Funds for Historic Houses**. Each of these restricted funds is aligned with, and provides support for, one of our five program areas. In the following pages, we summarize our program areas and their corresponding Essential Fund. Contributions to these funds bolster efforts to preserve the sites, protect their collections, engage diverse audiences, educate visitors and sustain the nonprofit organizations that operate the historic houses.

This innovative fundraising rubric isn't just about raising money—it's about inspiring and engaging our friends and donors who have their own unique interests. Are you an architecture buff? A connoisseur of collectibles? A fashion aficionado? A lifelong learner? The houses have something for everyone, and the five funds allow donors to support causes closest to their hearts, with broader effects that radiate through neighborhoods across the city. I invite you to learn more about the Essential Funds for Historic Houses on the following pages, and to find your passion.

Franklin D. Vagnone, Executive Director

# PRESERVE

## HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

**T**he Trust's most basic effort is to "stop the water" that threatens to wash over the historic landmarks in our collection. The Trust's Architectural Conservators consult on and manage restoration projects at the sites, ranging from small repairs to large-scale capital projects. There are currently 15 capital projects either in design or in construction throughout the five boroughs. This year there have also been four "emergency" repairs—projects that complement the Trust's capital work and which are funded through private contributions to the Trust. In addition, the Trust's dedicated Preservation Crew works on small restoration projects at the sites to prevent burgeoning issues from becoming major problems.

### 2010-2011 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**1** Completed the \$40,000 stabilization of nine rare decorative keystones at the c. 1748 Van Cortlandt House Museum (with support from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission).

**2** Oversaw a major \$350,000 interior and exterior restoration at Edgar Allan Poe Cottage (with support designated by City Council Member Joel Rivera and a grant from Save America's Treasures through The Bronx County Historical Society).

**3** Initiated a \$544,000 interior and exterior restoration at Merchant's House Museum that includes selected upgrades to the heating, plumbing, and electrical systems (with support designated by City Council Member Rosie Mendez).



## THE EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE FUND

provides support for immediate structural concerns and repairs that arise at the historic houses in the Trust's collection. The Fund is separate from the public dollars that underwrite our capital projects. Projects funded by the Emergency Maintenance Fund can include small repairs that, if left untreated, may weaken the building's architectural fabric, or larger problems that pose an immediate threat to the structure as a public venue.



Fall 2009 Newsletter

### FUN FACTS

Dozens of items from everyday life in the past were found within Poe Cottage's walls during the restoration.

The Preservation Crew tackles all kinds of repairs to windows, doors, and more. The Crew recently restored and installed 24 shutters at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum as part of a public workshop.

### THE FUND AT WORK (2011):

Installation of a tarp to secure the roof of the Bowne House from water infiltration until the roof is replaced during the full exterior restoration



Repair of the floor at Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum (with support from the New York City Landmarks Conservancy)







Spring 2010 Newsletter

## FUN FACTS

With skills gained from its Board Governance workshop, the Lott House Board held an event to introduce potential new members and elected officials to the organization and plans to expand the Board from 7 to 20 people in the coming years.

## THE FUND AT WORK (2011):

Provided annual general operating support to the houses

Hosted a "Considering Contemporary Art" Roundtable, bringing house staffs and partner organizations from across the country together to explore possibilities for placing contemporary art at historic houses (with support from Museumwise and the New York State Council on the Arts)



Offered capacity building opportunities for the House Directors such as Quarterly Roundtable meetings, where they share best practices

# SUSTAIN

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Once the buildings are stabilized, the Trust helps the leadership at the houses operate the sites in an efficient manner. Community-based nonprofit organizations, with budgets ranging from \$42,000 to \$3.3 million annually, operate the historic houses. The Trust works to strengthen these organizations through annual financial support and capacity building opportunities including Board Governance workshops, Quarterly Roundtable meetings with House Directors, and oversight on strategic planning and fiscal management. There are over 600 volunteer Board members involved in the stewardship of the Trust and its member houses.

### 2010-2011 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 1 Conducted a Board Governance workshop (led by Trust Board member John Gustafsson) with the Hendrick I. Lott House Preservation Association to review Board roles and responsibilities, update their by-laws, expand their Board, and increase their marketing and events.
- 2 Worked with the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance, King Manor Museum, and Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum on recruiting new Board members.
- 3 Held a Strategic Planning Workshop (led by Trust Board Chair Franny Eberhart) for the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance to help them craft a mission statement for the organization. This will help the organization create priorities and ultimately aid in their fundraising efforts.
- 4 Distributed general operating funds to the houses. One of the most fundamental concerns for our sites is acquiring financial resources to cover their daily operating costs. These all-purpose funds provide support for areas such as staffing costs, supplies, and education programs.



Courtesy of Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum

## THE ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FUND

provides unrestricted support to the nonprofit organizations that operate the historic houses in the Trust's collection. The Fund will also assist with professional development and capacity building initiatives for the staff and Board members at the houses.

# ENGAGE

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With the buildings secure, the Trust works to increase the relevance and visibility of the individual sites and to promote visitation to the collection as a whole. Through citywide events and programs, the Trust oversees activities that promote public engagement in local communities and invite residents and tourists to explore the City's history. The Trust shares information with the community through marketing and social media efforts including its award-winning newsletter and website, and through Facebook and Twitter. Through its Roof Raisers Brigade and Edward I. Koch Intern and Fellow Program, interested individuals in the community can volunteer their time and talents with the Trust and its member houses. Currently, there are over 1,000 volunteers involved with the 23 houses.

### 2010-2011 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**1** Welcomed more than 800,000 people annually to the historic houses for tours, workshops, family programs, and other community events. In one workshop, participants from as far away as Florida, California, and France helped to restore Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum's shutters.

**2** Engaged more than 40,000 people in events across the city at the 2010 and 2011 Historic House Festivals, which celebrated New York's agricultural past and culinary traditions.

**3** Hosted a contest to participate in a "Plaster Party" at Poe Cottage. Contestants throughout the world submitted poems, essays, and art inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and winners' works were placed in a time capsule within the Cottage's walls.



## THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FUND

supports initiatives that encourage public engagement at Trust sites and promote visitation to the collection as a whole. The Fund aids the Trust's Edward I. Koch Intern and Fellow Program, sponsors citywide events, and underwrites communication strategies.



Summer 2010 Newsletter

### FUN FACTS

There are 6,500 Facebook "fans" of the Trust and the individual houses. The Trust also helps administer a special Edgar Allan Poe Facebook page with more than 150,000 "fans."

The Trust has mentored 20 Edward I. Koch Interns, who took on projects such as establishing an archeological database for the historic sites and a system for managing government relations.

The 2010 Historic House Festival included our first-ever bike tour, spanning all of Manhattan.



### THE FUND AT WORK (2011):

Provided sponsorship for the Little Red Lighthouse Festival and commissioned a musical in celebration of the children's book, *The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge*

Offered collection-wide oversight and support for the Annual Historic House Festival. The Trust's citywide promotional efforts benefit all of the houses in the collection.



Fall 2010 Newsletter

## FUN FACTS

The Trust participated in the New York City Council's "Respect for All Week" by highlighting how the houses serve as forums for the discussion of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation.

The Historic House Trust Educators Alliance toured the ongoing Poe Cottage restoration for tips on teaching the public about preservation in progress.



Courtesy of Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum

*In Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum's signature program, students participate in a hands-on Native American gardening program.*

## THE FUND AT WORK (2011):

Distributed financial support for nine signature education programs (with support from The New York Community Trust)

# EDUCATE

## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

To enhance the visits of thousands of students and adults each year, the Trust works with each house to develop programming that "teaches the story" of the site and provides a hands-on lesson in history. Each year, the houses collectively welcome more than 800,000 visitors. Through relationships with public schools, thousands of schoolchildren are educated about New York City's history through special programs at the houses. In addition, the sites serve as community centers in their neighborhoods by offering services such as occupational therapy for cognitively disabled adults, preschool and afterschool programs for youth, family engagement programs, and classes in language, science, and art.

### 2010-2011 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**1** Prepared education assessments with each house to identify strengths and opportunities, potential projects, and action planning for implementation (with support from The New York Community Trust).

**2** Hosted Historic House Trust Educators Alliance meetings with the Education Directors of the member houses to share resources, encourage best practices in museum programming, and foster professional development.

**3** Worked with the member houses to develop new or enhance existing signature education programs (with support from The New York Community Trust). Each house's signature program represents its greatest interpretive theme combined with a unique teaching strategy, such as a photography class at the Alice Austen House Museum in Staten Island.



Courtesy of Van Cortlandt House Museum



Courtesy of Alice Austen House Museum

## THE EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS FUND

provides support to the sites in the Trust's collection to help strengthen and develop their public and education programs. It offers assistance with identifying needs and enables the implementation of programs that increase capacity and engage new audiences.



# PROTECT

## DIVERSE MATERIAL CULTURE

To help protect the contents of the houses so that future audiences can enjoy them, the Trust provides curatorial assistance to the sites in its collection. Most of the houses lack the resources to employ a curator, so the Trust is available to provide advice and support on collections management and museum exhibitions. Currently, the Trust assists in the preservation and interpretation of thousands of artifacts in the houses' collections. The Trust provides support for these collections and allows the houses to introduce their visitors to the stories told by these diverse objects.

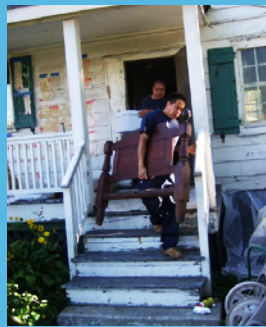
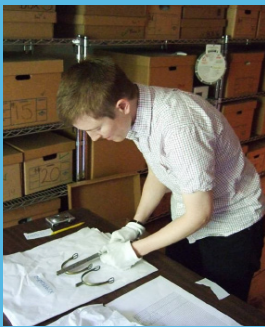
### 2010-2011 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**1** Completed a comprehensive inventory and produced a digital catalogue of King Manor Museum's collection, with the assistance of an Edward I. Koch Fellow.

**2** Consulted on the transfer of archival collections from Lefferts Historic House to the Brooklyn Historical Society and the storage of Poe Cottage's collection during restoration.

**3** Spearheaded a technology upgrade project across the houses in the Trust's collection, including updating collections software and providing laptop and desktop computers and printers (with in-kind support from Time Warner Inc.).

**4** Hosted regular Roundtable workshops for the continuing professional development of house staffs in collections care.



## THE COLLECTIONS FUND

provides basic but essential curatorial support to the houses in the Trust's collection. Currently, the Trust's member houses have over 90,000 objects. The Collections Fund offers assistance with collections management and curatorial needs.



*Spring 2011 Newsletter*

### FUN FACTS

Artifacts at the houses range from a one-of-a-kind 1662 Dutch deed to an original mirror used by Edgar Allan Poe to ceramics uncovered during archaeological excavations across the boroughs.

Participants in the most recent Curatorial Roundtable learned about a member's experiences at the 2011 Attingham Summer School in the UK.

The Trust is providing desperately needed technology upgrades at a value of \$36,500!



*Curatorial Associate Caroline Drabik and volunteers at the Trust's Poe Cottage Plaster Party.*

### THE FUND AT WORK (2011):

Providing computers to houses to assist with collections management (with in-kind support from Time Warner Inc.)

Supplying PastPerfect collections database software for houses (with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies)

Offering on-site curatorial assistance (with support from Colonial Lords of Manors in America)

**DIRECTORS'  
COUNCIL  
2010-2011**

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 Anthony C. Wood  
 Kathy Yohalem

**FOLLOW US  
ONLINE!**


Visit our website for a calendar of events and other activities at the houses.

Become a member online!  
[historichousetrust.org](http://historichousetrust.org)

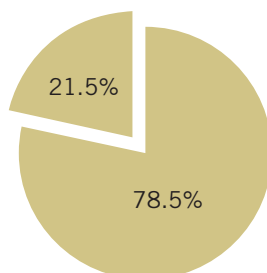
# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

## FISCAL YEAR 2010 (JULY 1, 2009 TO JUNE 30, 2010)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
<b>Public support, revenue and gains:</b>				
Contributions:				
Foundations	\$ 33,870	\$ 203,614	\$ 20,000	\$ 257,484
Government grants	27,999	132,538		160,537
Corporations	22,660			22,660
Individuals	48,989	15,589		64,578
Donated services, materials and facilities	626,398			626,398
Special events (net of expenses of \$105,914)	219,620			219,620
Memberships	28,085			28,085
Investment income	60,207			60,207
Miscellaneous income	413			413
Net assets released from restrictions	296,620	(296,620)		
<b>Total public support, revenue and gains</b>	<b>1,364,861</b>	<b>55,121</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>1,439,982</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Program services	1,044,714			1,044,714
Management and general	176,603			176,603
Fundraising	154,981			154,981
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,376,298</b>			<b>1,376,298</b>
Change in Net Assets	(11,437)	55,121	20,000	63,684
Net assets, beginning of year	299,265	356,560	331,000	986,825
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 287,828</b>	<b>\$ 411,681</b>	<b>\$ 351,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,050,509</b>

FOR THE Statment of Activities for  
 Fiscal Year 2011, PLEASE VISIT OUR  
 WEBSITE ([WWW.HISTORICHOUSETRUST.ORG](http://WWW.HISTORICHOUSETRUST.ORG))  
 AFTER JANUARY 1, 2012 OR CONTACT US  
 AT (212) 360-8282.

**78.5%**  
 OF EVERY DOLLAR  
 CONTRIBUTED GOES  
 TO MISSION-RELATED  
 PROGRAMS



*The Trust's Board and Directors' Council members experience history first-hand at Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum on this year's Bronx Board Trip.*



THE TRUST IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE the following Founding Members of the Essential Funds for Historic Houses.

American Express

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Bloomberg Philanthropies

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History Channel

The New York Community Trust

New York Landmarks Conservancy

Time Warner Inc.

Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust

These donors have made gifts or in-kind contributions of at least \$5,000 to one or more of the Funds.

#### TRUST STAFF

Rebecca Brainard  
Preservation Crew Member

Caroline R. Drabik  
Curatorial Associate

Sheri Durkee  
Development Director

David C. Mandel  
Director of Interpretation  
& Education

Jonathan Mellon  
Senior Architectural Conservator

Meredith A. Sorin  
Deputy Director

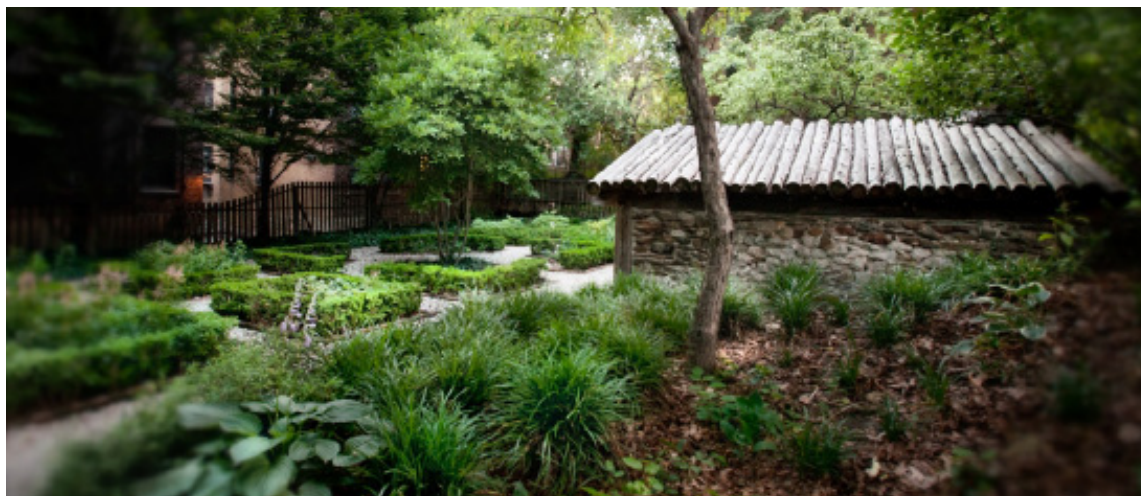
Mikel Travisano  
Architectural Conservator

Franklin D. Vagnone  
Executive Director



Bedroom at Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum in northern Manhattan.

Sara Ross



Hessian Military Hut and reproduction garden at Dyckman Farmhouse Museum in northern Manhattan.

Sara Ross

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO



City of New York  
Parks & Recreation  
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner

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ISSN 1083-379x.

## BRONX

**Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum**

www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org  
718-885-1461

**Edgar Allan Poe Cottage**

www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org  
718-881-8900

**Valentine-Varian House**

www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org  
718-881-8900

**Van Cortlandt House**

www.vancortlandthouse.org  
718-543-3344

## BROOKLYN

**Lefferts Historic House**

www.prospectpark.org  
718-789-2822

**Hendrick I. Lott House**

www.lotthouse.org

**Old Stone House**

www.theoldstonehouse.org  
718-768-3195

**Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum**

www.wyckoffassociation.org  
718-629-5400

## MANHATTAN

**Dyckman Farmhouse Museum**

www.dyckmanfarmhouse.org  
212-304-9422

**Gracie Mansion**

www.nyc.gov/gracie  
212-570-4751

**Little Red Lighthouse**

212-304-2365

**Merchant's House Museum**

www.merchantshouse.org  
212-777-1089

**Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum**

www.morrisjumel.org  
212-923-8008

**Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre**

www.cityparksfoundation.org  
212-988-9093

## OUR FY10 SUPPORTERS

## THE HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES OUR 2010 SUPPORTERS.

**\$50,000 PLUS**

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718-939-0647

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