

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Shalini Ramaswamy | shalini@risaheller.com | 609-802-5593

HUDSON RIVER PARK FRIENDS ANNOUNCES CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO BUILD PIER 26 EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE PLAY AREA

Campaign will raise \$3.5 million to fund construction of Play Area, aimed at raising awareness and education about the Hudson River Estuary

NEW YORK (July 12, 2021) — Today, Hudson River Park Friends announced the public launch of its \$3.5 million Pier 26 Science Play Area Capital Campaign for a new marine science-focused play area adjacent to Pier 26 for children to explore and learn about the Hudson River Estuary. Designed by OLIN, the 4,000-square-foot play area will help teach children about the importance of the Hudson River habitat and surrounding ecology while also offering a fun and exciting place to play. With construction set to begin in 2022, the Pier 26 Play Area will become Hudson River Park's fifth play area. Hudson River Park Friends Board Chair, Michael E. Novogratz, has pledged a challenge match of \$1.3 million to help raise the remaining funds needed for this campaign by October 7, 2021. Said Novogratz, "My family has grown up two blocks from Pier 26. To be able to contribute to this extraordinary park brings me great joy."

Upon completion, the Pier 26 Science Play Area will feature larger-than-life play structures in the shape of native and endangered sturgeon species, along with a perimeter seat wall, safety surfacing, climbing nets and other state-of-the-art play elements. The Atlantic Sturgeon will showcase unique opportunities to explore fish anatomy, while the Shortnose Sturgeon will include accessible, interactive features that teach about the Hudson River habitat. With water features, play equipment and great views of the Hudson River and city skyline, the Park's play areas offer something for kids and parents alike.

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson allocated \$1 million to the play area in the city's new capital budget, bringing the total left to be raised by Friends to just over \$600,000. Speaker Johnson has been a huge supporter of Hudson River Park and has also allocated \$1 million towards an ambitious redesign of Chelsea Waterside, including an expanded dog run, new comfort station and new sports field, and more than \$500,000 to several other HRPK capital projects.

"As the Council Member representing the West Side of Manhattan, I know how important it is to prioritize open space for the community. I am thrilled to be supporting Hudson River Park with funding in this year's budget because I believe in its mission: improving the quality of life for all of my constituents and a strong commitment to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. I know the Pier 26 Science Play Area, the Chelsea Waterside renovations and the public areas around Hudson River Park will bring joy and beauty to generations of New Yorkers, and I am so proud to be a part of it," said Speaker Corey Johnson.

“Hudson River Park is committed to educating the public about its unique Estuarine Sanctuary, which is home to 400 acres of protected waters and 70 various species of fish,” said Connie Fishman, Executive Director of Hudson River Park Friends. “The Pier 26 Play Area will expand this mission, offering children a new, exciting and interactive place to explore and learn about the Hudson River’s exceptional ecological habitat while advancing their interest in marine science. We are calling on Hudson River Park users to support this important addition to our environmentally-focused resources and to help us bring another educational space to our community.”

The Play Area will be the latest ecological addition adjacent to Pier 26, which represents Manhattan’s native ecosystem with indigenous plants and a habitat walk that leads visitors through its five ecological zones: woodland forest, coastal grassland, maritime scrub, rocky tidal zone and the Hudson River. The Pier also features a first-of-its-kind tide deck, offering students direct access to the estuary and hands-on learning opportunities. The science-themed Play Area will complement the Pier’s sunning lawn, sports area, Downtown Boathouse, City Vineyard, and future Park Estuarium, a center for marine science research and public education on river ecology. The playground will offer a new recreation area for children and families to play, learn, explore and relax in Hudson River Park.

Hudson River Park Friends is the Park’s nonprofit advocacy and fundraising partner dedicated to the enhancement, care and completion of Hudson River Park. Through exciting learning opportunities, hands-on programs and the newly announced Pier 26 Play Area, Friends remains committed to educating students and the community about the rich, diverse ecology found throughout the Park’s four-mile stretch and in the Hudson River Estuary.

To support Hudson River Park Friend’s Pier 26 Science Play Area Capital Campaign, please visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/pier26-science-play-area>

###

About Hudson River Park

Hudson River Park extends from Chambers Street to 59th Street along Manhattan’s west side, making it one of the longest riverfront parks in the United States and an important outdoor recreational area for countless New Yorkers. The Park plays a critical role in protecting the Hudson River ecosystem and is committed to educating residents on the local habitat and environment. Hudson River Park relies on private donations and earned income for its operations, maintenance and public programs and is not a NYC-run park.