Community Relations in Central Park
Community Relations is Conducted on an Organization-Wide Basis
Operations
Community Relations in the Field

- Arm field staff with knowledge
- New staff learn by example
- Give staff a resource to turn to for difficult matters
Field Staff Engaging with Park Visitors

- Have a solid base of knowledge about the Central Park Conservancy and Central Park
- Know Central Park and Conservancy history
- Be aware of current and future programming in the Park
- Be aware of current CPC policies and practices in the Park
- Know applicable rules and regulations
- Stop and listen
- Call for assistance
Communication Skills

• Understand your audience
• Ability to communicate with non-English speakers
• Communicate a sense of understanding
• Respond promptly to complaints and questions
• Spend whatever time is needed to address or respond to a situation so that the person(s) inquiring or expressing an interest or concern gains an understanding of the answer or the steps to be taken in resolving an issue
• Validate Park patrons’ concerns and make sure that promises to act are followed up on
• Provide a contact name if appropriate
Offer Assistance
Recognize a Teachable Moment
Conduct Outreach Before Major Initiatives
Regular Park User Groups

- Identification and outreach
- Frequent communications
- Before-season meeting
- Educate about impact of use on Park
- Help site locations and assist with permit process
- Monitor activities
Youth Camps and After-School Programs
Ball Leagues
Lawn Bowlers & Croquet Players
Recreation Round Table

Central Park Drives
Improvements for Pedestrians & Cyclists
PAWS
Less Organized User Groups
The Unknowns
EAST MEADOW
PERMIT AREAS

1. Clay Oval for Permitted Activities
   A ("Bowl") 200-300 Groups (schools, field days)
   D & E Woodchipped Areas 50-100 Each (picnics)
   C ("North Lawn") Flat Area 50-100 (1 Group)
Relationships with ancillary organizations, groups, and agencies
Community Boards, Neighborhood Associations and NYC Council Members
Our Partners in Community Relations
NYPD
NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Central Park Conservancy
Central to the Park
Community Relations Best Practices

BASICS

• Address known individuals by name
• Be accessible
• Respond promptly
• Create a sense of partnership (if appropriate)
• Encourage Park-wide user groups to create active and invested communities
• Practice a pro-active approach
• Grab that teachable moment
Challenges

- Handling increased demand for space
- Working with businesses that rely on the Park for income
- Contentiousness between user groups
- Identifying and reaching out to groups that are not well defined
- Instilling a sense of pride