



BIG APPLE GREETER NEWS

FALL 2007

Dear Friends,



It is wonderful to be settling in to our new, spacious quarters on the 23rd Floor of the Municipal Building, thanks to the hard work of the Manhattan Borough President's office and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

In addition, on April 18th, we welcomed Audrey Eisman to our staff as our new Development Director. Audrey brings to us several years of very successful fundraising experience on behalf of nonprofit organizations throughout the country. Now she is part of our very strong team of staff, volunteers and board.

We applaud Honoree Tim Tompkins and Greeter of the Year Al Riggi at the Big Apple Greeter 15th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast, and are most grateful to Event Chair Michael J. Stengel, the Benefit Committee, Chair Paul Insalaco and the Board of Directors, Founder Lynn Brooks, and the Big Apple Greeter staff and volunteers for all their hard work.

Alicia Pierro, Executive Director



It's our 15th anniversary – the year of crystal – and it is crystal clear that Big Apple Greeter's impact on New York City continues to grow, while we continue to maintain the high quality of our services. That is due to the incredible work of the volunteers, staff and dedicated Board of Directors.

We are also very grateful to our friends in the media: to WNYW/Fox 5 and WWOR/My9 television for producing and airing public service announcements in prime time.

Congratulations to Big Apple Greeter 15th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast Honoree Tim Tompkins and Greeter of the Year Al Riggi, and our sincere thanks to Event Chair Michael J. Stengel, the Benefit Committee, the volunteer Board of Directors, Executive Director Alicia Pierro and Founder Lynn Brooks, the Big Apple Greeter staff and volunteers for all their hard work. Congratulations to Elizabeth Holmes on her elevation to Special Events Manager and for producing a winning event.

Paul Insalaco, Chair, Board of Directors

A 2006 Snapshot of Visitors and Volunteers

Big Apple Greeter organized 2,920 visits during 2006, meeting a total 7,553 visitors. This represents an increase of 8% more visits and 12% more visitors than in 2005, and twice as many visits and visitors than 10 years ago. Since starting in 1992, Big Apple Greeter has hosted 29,158 visits and 72,604 visitors.

Who Visits?

International visitors make up 79% of all Big Apple Greeter visitors. One-quarter (24%) of all visitors come from the United Kingdom, making it first on the list of all places from which our visitors hail. Visitors from Western Europe, mostly Germany and France, account for one-third (32%) of all visitors. Fifteen percent (15%) of all visitors come from the South Pacific, virtually all of them from Australia. Visitors from Australia doubled from 2005 to 2006, largely in response to a Big Apple Greeter appearance on a nationally aired travel show, *The Great Outdoors*.

- Visitors from the United States make up 21% of all visitors, and with most visitors coming from California, Texas, Florida, Illinois and Georgia.
- Nearly 700 children accompanied adults on Greeter visits in 2006, and 14% of all visits were family visits.
- One out of five visitors requested a Greeter who speaks a language other than English, with German, French and Spanish being the most in demand.
- Our visitors love food! Food has become visitors' most frequently mentioned interest, with history and shopping rounding out the top of the list of specific interests given by our visitors.

Where do they go?

About 60% of all visitors say "Greeter's Choice" and leave the choice of neighborhood up to the Greeter. Very often visitors will tell us that they are interested in seeing "the real New York" and the "less touristy places." Greenwich Village is the most visited neighborhood, followed by Chinatown in Manhattan.

Do Greeters make a difference?

Yes! Nearly all visitors (97%) said their Greeter made a difference to the success of their New York City visit and made them feel welcome, and 92% said they felt more comfortable exploring New York City after their Greeter visit. Nearly nine of ten visitors used subways or buses on their visit.

Who are the Greeters?

At the end of 2006, there were 296 active Greeters, 40% of whom have been a volunteer Greeter for more than five years. Greeters conduct an average of 11 visits per year. Among the Greeters, there are 21 languages represented, and 41% of Greeters speak a language in addition to English.

As you would expect, Greeters know New York City very well, with 70% of Greeters available to show more than one borough.

Celebrate New York 2007 Cocktail Party and Auction

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

6:00 – 8:30 pm

Club 101

101 Park Avenue at 40th Street, NYC

Honoring

Amanda M. Burden

Director of the New York City, Department of City Planning and Chair of the City Planning Commission

EVENT CO-CHAIRS:

Tim Zagat

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*For further information contact Elizabeth Holmes, Special Events Manager
212.669.3146 or events@bigapplegreeter.org*

Our Visitors say... What a wonderful way to demystify the city and dispel the myth that all New Yorkers are rude and unfriendly (quite the contrary!)...Made us feel like "insiders" rather than "outsiders"... She was very passionate about living here in New York and was willing to pass on to us her experiences over the years.... I cannot speak too highly of a group of volunteers who regularly donate time and energy to total strangers...

Greeter Of The Year Al Riggi



Photo Credit: Jerry Ruotolo

Greeter of the Year Al Riggi with his granddaughter, Nikki Padilla, who is also a volunteer Greeter.

In 2004, native New Yorker Al Riggi joined Big Apple Greeter at the suggestion of his nephew, who had gone out with a Greeter. Born in Manhattan, and residing in Astoria, Queens since 1941, he began his career at Bloomingdale's while still in high school and retired from the world-famous store in 1991. As a Big Apple Greeter, Mr. Riggi has been able to share his knowledge and love of New York with visitors from around the world. "These people have become part of my family."

Mr. Riggi has demonstrated an exceptional level of service taking visitors out each week around Manhattan and Queens while still finding time to volunteer elsewhere. In one of the many visitor comments in praise of Mr. Riggi, a visitor from Ham, Germany, wrote, "An extraordinary walk, full of information and interesting stories for all ages... [given] by a very friendly, lively and well informed person! There is no better way of exploring the town. To many places on the walk, we will return and see them once more! Many thanks, Al. We were lucky to meet you."

Reflecting on his career as a Big Apple Greeter volunteer, Mr. Riggi said, "This is one of the best things I've ever done." We here at Big Apple Greeter are glad he made that decision.

15th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast

Passion was the word and spirit of the day on May 10, 2007, as Big Apple Greeter celebrated its 15th Anniversary with its annual Recognition Breakfast at the New York Marriott Marquis. Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance, was honored with the Good Corporate Citizen Award, and Al Riggi was honored as the Greeter of the Year. Michael J. Stengel, Market Vice President & Area General Manager for NYC Marriott Hotels, was the Benefit Chair.

As Board Chair Paul Insalaco welcomed Big Apple Greeter's extended family, he said how proud he was to continue his father's legacy in service to this organization that symbolizes the spirit of New York City. Founder Lynn Brooks welcomed members of the first Board of Directors and former staff members, and looked back upon 15 years of achievements and friendships. Noting that Big Apple Greeter started as an initiative of the Office of the Manhattan Borough President, Lynn shared a heartfelt message from Ruth Messenger who said she "was lucky enough to have been Borough President when a good idea came along." Honored guest Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer added, "Greeters represent the real New York, with Moxie, attitude and a difference." Executive Director Alicia Pierro thanked Big Apple Greeter staff and volunteers for all their hard work throughout the year and introduced Fox 5's sparkling video about Big Apple Greeter. In the video, Greeter Julia Compton said it best: "A Big Apple Greeter is a friend you haven't met yet."

Benefit Chair Michael J. Stengel, who is Board Chair of the Times Square Alliance as well as Area General Manager and General Manager of the New York Marriott Marquis, introduced honoree Tim Tompkins, lauding him for his dedication to New York City and to the Times Square

neighborhood that is the city's heart. "Tim is always exploring new and unusual ideas for our neighborhood, things people have never tried before. That is why he is so successful as the president of the Times Square Alliance."

Alicia Pierro introduced Greeter of the Year Al Riggi as a Greeter who always receives the highest accolades and makes visitors a part of his "family." Al remarked that he was born in New York City, "It's my city, and it's the greatest city in the world." Mr. Stengel took the opportunity to praise Al, saying that his heart showed through when he spoke about New York City.



Photo Credit: Jerry Ruotolo

Honoree Tim Tompkins accepts his award from Benefit Chair Michael J. Stengel.



Photo Credit: Jerry Ruotolo

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.

15th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast

Good Corporate Citizen Award: Tim Tompkins, President, Times Square Alliance
Greeter of the Year: Al Riggi
Benefit Chair: Michael J. Stengel, Market Vice President & Area General Manager, NYC Marriott Hotels

Thank You...

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Zagat Survey

Movin' On Up: Big Apple Greeter Now on 23rd Floor

On February 2, 2007, Big Apple Greeter realized a 15-year dream by moving into newly renovated and more spacious quarters on the 23rd floor of the Municipal Building. Our deepest thanks go to Commissioner Martha Hirst and her staff at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and his staff for their hard work on our behalf and their steadfast belief in the Big Apple Greeter program. Our appreciation also goes to the New York City Council for their capital grant that made it all possible.

Fifteen years ago, when Big Apple Greeter was just a germ of an idea for founder Lynn Brooks, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger gave Lynn a desk and chair in her office on the 19th floor of the Municipal Building. Within the year, the fledgling operation outgrew the space, so Lynn and her small team moved one floor up – to space on the 20th floor allocated to the Office of the Manhattan Borough President.

Those quarters proved a cozy home for Lynn and her growing number of staff and office volunteers, but, as the years flew by and the program became more successful, office space became tight with 20 people sharing



Big Apple Greeter's spacious new office

the work space for ten.

A much-needed office redesign had been in progress when, over Thanksgiving weekend 2005, a fire broke out on the opposite end of 20th floor, heavily damaging many offices, but leaving the Big Apple Greeter office unharmed. Big Apple Greeter's plans were put on hold while DCAS decided how best to reorganize the city offices displaced by the fire and how that reorganization would affect Big Apple Greeter.

The staff was thrilled when DCAS offered the large office space on the 23rd floor. The excitement grew while the gut renovation took place over many weeks. The office move went smoothly on February 2nd, with the greeter program off-line for only a few days.

On Thursday, April 12th, Big Apple Greeter held an open house to celebrate our dream-come-true office move. Members of our board of directors, volunteers, staff and representatives from the City Council, Manhattan Borough President's office and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services helped us celebrate new quarters.

Visitors who come to our new quarters after having experienced our previous space are delighted to see spacious working areas, a comfortable conference room, and a kitchen/dining room that allows staff and volunteers to gather for lunch breaks and good conversation. Best of all is the awe-inspiring view from the 10 huge windows that bring in the brilliant afternoon sun.



Queens Councilman Tony Avella, Founder Lynn Brooks, Executive Director Alicia Pierro, Brooklyn Councilman Vincent Gentile (L-R).

Our Greeters say... Visited a farmer's market where they tasted hot apple cider for the first time... Took visitors to 16th St and First Ave because the mother of one visitor was born there... They enjoyed Whole Foods as much as any of the other stops... Loved that the city "is in your face." Every neighborhood then became their favorite... The soup dumplings at Shanghai Joe's were a hit...

About Big Apple Greeter...

Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the City experience for its visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the US and the world, Greeters take visitors on informal, unscripted walks through one or more neighborhoods in any of the five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. Over 300 volunteer Greeters speak almost 25 languages and enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter – a free public service – has welcomed over 75,000 visitors and been featured in thousands of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience of over one billion potential visitors to New York City. Big Apple Greeter is proud to partner with NYC & Company, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Metro New York.

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Lynn Brooks

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Audrey Eisman

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Contributing Editor
Joan Briller

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Joseph Briller

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Big Apple Greeter

One Centre Street, New York, NY 10007
(212)669-2896, Fax (212)669-3685,
TTY (212)669-8273 www.bigapplegreeter.org
information@bigapplegreeter.org



Surf the Web and Benefit Big Apple Greeter

Did you know that you could donate to Big Apple Greeter every time you search the web? GoodSearch, a Yahoo-powered search engine, will make a donation from the proceeds of their advertising sales when you have designated Big Apple Greeter as your preferred non-profit agency. Go to goodsearch.com for information on making GoodSearch your default search engine.

Access Program

Chris and Carol Brown of Wales were planning to spend 2 days in New York City after their transatlantic cruise. Chris, a wheelchair-user, asked The Sunday Times of London Q&A travel column if Big Apple Greeter "would be a good idea to show [them] the sights of New York for a few hours without having to find [their] own way around." Travel News Editor Ginny McGrath answered that Big Apple Greeter "is great for disabled and non disabled travelers," adding "with any luck, you'll find some gems off the tourist trail."

Big Apple Greeter launched its Access Program in 1993 to serve the needs of travelers with disabilities and to provide volunteer opportunities for New Yorkers with disabilities. Today, Big Apple Greeter holds Sensitivity Awareness Sessions for volunteers and staff, and has recruited over 50 volunteers who themselves have disabilities. Each session includes a discussion of various disabilities, the etiquette of communicating with persons with disabilities, role playing and Q&A.

"A visitor may have a disability that is visible or invisible such as diabetes that will impact a visit. We want Greeters to be sensitive to and comfortable with all our visitors," said Director of Volunteers and Access Patricia Ryan. "Our goal is for all our visitors to get the most from their Greeter visit."

Big Apple Greeter welcomes all visitors and volunteers without regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

BIG APPLE GREETER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Updated 9/19/07

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Executive Committee*

The Greening of Alphabet City

Big Apple Greeter Helene Matlick Sees New Wonderlands in her Old Neighborhood

Greeter Helene Matlick loves the Lower East Side. Over the years she has watched the transformation of the East Village of Manhattan as the once economically-depressed and dangerous area has gentrified into a hip neighborhood of young residents, restaurants and shops. However, nothing has surprised her more than to find out that Alphabet City (Avenues A through D), historically identified as part of the Lower East Side, is a neighborhood of gardens.

Helene was one of a dozen Greeters who participated in a Greeter Outing to the Lower East Side Community Gardens on Saturday, August 11. The Greeter Outing was underwritten by the Agri-Tourism Grant program of the State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets. The visit to Alphabet City was led by Gerard Lordahl, Director of Open Space and Greening for the Council of Environment for New York City. Tour highlights included “vest pocket” gardens enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The Miracle Garden, on Third Street between Avenues A and B, is rich with dogwood and willow trees, magnolias and a lily pond. The Creative Little Garden, on Sixth Street between Avenues A and B, was started after the producers of “The Godfather” film paid residents of the area for the inconvenience they caused during filming. The gardeners created rock sculptures and other design motifs. Six BC Botanical Gardens, on Sixth Street between Avenues B and C, contains a botanical lending library, picnic areas, a large variety of plants, shaded areas, a pond and rock garden. Children’s Garden, on Fifth Street between Avenues B and C, includes a picnic area, performance stage, grape arbor and organic plants.

The Agri-Tourism Grant program will underwrite 10 to 12 Greeter Outings before the grant ends in late April 2008. In addition to the community gardens of the Lower East Side, this year Greeters have enjoyed trips to the Brooklyn Brewery, Wyckoff Farmhouse and the Red Hook neighborhood with its organic Community Farm and Farmer’s Market in Brooklyn; the Chelsea Greenmarket and Dyckman Farmhouse in Manhattan; Queens County Farm Museum in Queens; and the Decker Farm in Staten Island. Research and planning continues for greeter trips for the winter and early spring.

Agri-Tourism Grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

In October 2006, Big Apple Greeter was awarded \$24,000 under the Agri-Tourism Program, a matching grant program sponsored by the State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets. The Agri-Tourism grant program was designed to encourage tourism and tourism partnerships as a means of promoting New York State-grown food and agriculture to visitors and residents alike. Realizing that most visitors think of New York City as a “concrete jungle,” Big Apple Greeter will use the grant to enhance two existing programs and introduce one new website feature, designed to familiarize visitors with New York City’s deep agricultural roots and contemporary farming life, aspects of the city unknown to most visitors.

Big Apple Greeter currently has 15 Neighborhood Information Profiles covering all five boroughs available on its website. Each Neighborhood Information Profile features a single New York City neighborhood and is researched, written and edited, photographed and graphically designed by volunteers. The Agri-Tourism grant award will underwrite the production of five new Neighborhood Information Profiles: two traditional, one-neighborhood Profiles having an agricultural focus; and three new,

multi-neighborhood, multi-borough Profiles with an agricultural theme.

The Greeter Trips are a type of “train the trainer” program, enhancing Greeters’ knowledge of neighborhoods or sites that can then be incorporated into future visitor walks. The grant will underwrite a minimum of 10 Greeter Trips to sites rich in New York City agricultural history, such as farm museums and historic farmhouses, as well as current agricultural sites, such as community gardens and stores that feature New York State agricultural products.

The Agri-Tourism grant program will also underwrite the development of a new feature to be added to Big Apple Greeter’s website. Researched and designed by volunteers, two new agricultural walking itineraries will be available on the website. The walking itineraries, unlike the Neighborhood Information Profiles, will follow a specific path and focus on individual historic and contemporary sites rather than a neighborhood.

The grant period is October 2006 to April 2008.

A Good Morning for Greeters at Good Morning America



It may have meant a very early wake up call but, on Tuesday, September 18, Greeters were treated to a special visit to the studios of Good Morning America. The adventure began at 6:15 a.m. when the reserved visitors’ line formed outside the ABC Studio in Times Square. Fortunately, complimentary hot beverages and Rachael Ray’s special date nut bread were available, because the group of 15, including Greeter of the Year Al Riggi, his granddaughter – and new greeter – Nikki

Padilla, and Big Apple Greeter’s Director of Marketing and Public Relations Gail Morse were outside the studios in the nippy, early-Fall air until 7:50 a.m.

Once indoors, Gail introduced Big Apple Greeter to the in-studio audience but, within ten minutes, they were outdoors again for an 8 a.m. welcome from hosts Diane Sawyer, Robin Roberts, who acknowledged the group on-air, Sam Champion and Chris Cuomo. After rejoining the in-studio audience, they danced to the Latin beat of GMA’s musical guest, Gloria Estefan. At the show’s conclusion, the greeters were treated to a tour of the Good Morning America studio and received a special welcome by the show’s news anchor Chris Cuomo.

When the band left the studio, they were ready for lunch – at 10:00 a.m.

Big Apple Greeter on the Air



Greeter Christina Stanton in the Fox5 public service announcement.

It was Halloween day – but no tricks for four of our Greeters. Gustavo Asto, Cynthia Riley, Christina Stanton and Julia Compton were treated to a visit to Fox 5 Studios on East 67th Street, where they were filmed telling their stories of their most memorable visits for four 30-second public service announcements.

Fox5 New York producer Jennifer Hancox and her crew took their stories and incorporated them with footage from the locations mentioned in their narratives. In December, these announcements began to air throughout the day, including prime time, on local New York City Fox5 and My9 television stations.

Fox5 used additional footage of the greeter interviews, location footage, and sequences with greeters and visitors enjoying New York City to create a 3-minute promotional video. This video was shown at Big Apple Greeter's 15th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast on May 10, 2007, and will be used extensively in house throughout the year.

Greeter Bits...

"I've died and gone to tea heaven!" was his visitor's reaction when Greeter Richard Drezen took her to the Ten Ren Tea Store in Chinatown ... While Greeter Judith Mahler walked with her visitors, a call came in from England – announcing the birth of their first grandchild!.. Greeter Lois Kahan reports, "Although rain had been predicted, it was a beautiful, sunny day. I told them BAG once again worked its magic. They were impressed."... Greeter Susan Turok's visitors from Nice happily returned the favor the following week when Susan and her husband vacationed in Nice to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary... Greeter Maury Englander surprised his visitors from Leeuwarden, Holland, when he said he had been to their town "since there is really no reason for tourists to go there. I went for the cattle market. They will probably tell their friends about the strange New Yorker they met who went to Leeuwarden at 5am in the middle of February to see a bunch of cows."

Global Greeter Network Welcomes 3 New Programs

Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter was the first "welcome visitor" greeter program. We are now proud to be part of the Global Greeter Network, a voluntary association of welcoming programs around the world, all based on the Big Apple Greeter model: free and open to all visitors, offer greeter services as an individual or very small group experience, and characterized by enthusiastic, local residents who love their home city and volunteer to conduct these visits. The Global Greeter Network was formed at a meeting in New York City in May 2005, and since then has met in Chicago in May 2006 and most recently in Toronto in June 2007.

The Global Greeter Network is proud to welcome three new programs this year. In May 2007, Thanet Greeters, Europe's first program, started in Thanet District of Kent County, England, followed in June by Paris Greeter and Les Greeters de Nantes in Nantes, France. Completing the roster of cities in the Global Greeter Network are Chicago Greeter; Golden Heart Greeter in Fairbanks, Alaska; Houston Greeters; Cicerones de Buenos Aires in Argentina; Adelaide Greeter and Melbourne Greeter Service in Australia; and Tap Into TO! in Toronto, Canada. Big Apple Greeter acted as consultant in the start-up of the Melbourne, Chicago, Fairbanks and Thanet programs.

The Global Greeter Network will strengthen the Greeter brand, as well as draw more visitors and publicity to each greeter program. A Global Greeter Network page exists on each program's website with links to the other pro-

grams and a Global Greeter Network website is under development. In addition, each program's press releases mention the Global Greeter Network and the Big Apple Greeter program in New York City.

The greeter concept is spreading worldwide. Big Apple Greeter has been contacted by people interested in starting a local greeter program in cities as diverse as Stockholm, Los Angeles, Vienna, Milwaukee, Cartagena, Atlanta, Belfast, Santa Monica, Calais, and Denver.

Members of the Global Greeter Network

North America

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Big Apple Greeter
www.bigapplegreeter.org

Chicago, IL
Chicago Greeter
<http://www.chicagogreeter.com>

Houston, TX
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Buenos Aires, Argentina
Cicerones de Buenos Aires
<http://www.cicerones.org.ar>

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Adelaide, Australia
Adelaide Greeters
www.adelaidegreeters.asn.au
Melbourne, Australia
Melbourne Greeter Service
<http://www.thatsmelbourne.com.au>

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Thanet, Kent, UK
Thanet Greeters
www.thanet-greeters.org.uk

Paris, France
Paris Greeter
<http://parisgreeter.org>

Nantes, France
Greeters de Nantes
<http://www.greeters-nantes.com>



15 Years Old and Going Strong

For anyone involved with Big Apple Greeter – as a visitor, volunteer, donor, board member or employee – it’s hard to imagine New York City’s tourism scene without this popular organization. However, until 1991 there was no Big Apple Greeter, just an idea in the mind of founder Lynn Brooks. “Over the years as I traveled for business and pleasure, I realized that New York was perceived as an intimidating metropolis,” Lynn says. “Movies, books and other media often portrayed our city as crime-ridden, hard to navigate, expensive and unfriendly. I thought that bringing visitors and residents together could personalize New York and show that it is a city of diverse neighborhoods filled with hospitable people.”

What she did not anticipate is Big Apple Greeter’s role in fostering understanding by bringing together people from different countries and cultures. As current executive director Alicia Pierro observes, “After 9/11, breaking down stereotypes has become increasingly important, not just for New York but for the world.”

In 1991 Lynn contacted those in the public and private sectors she thought might be interested in her idea’s potential for improving New York’s image and promoting tourism. The reception was uniformly warm, but most people thought the idea would never work. She ultimately found a champion in Ruth Messinger, then the Borough President of Manhattan, who provided Lynn with a desk, temporary status as a part of her office’s Economic Development Unit and her vocal support. As Lynn notes, “Ruth was our fairy godmother. Without her, Big Apple Greeter would not exist.”

With grants from *The New York Times* and *Newsday*, Big Apple Greeter started recruitment and orientation of city residents as volunteer Greeters and the major task of publicizing the new, free service to visitors. Big Apple Greeter was incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in May 1992.

Since then annual growth has averaged 10% and, in 2006, 7,500 visitors were welcomed to New York’s five boroughs. Over 75,000 visitors from all 50 states and more than 110 countries have seen New York with one of the 300-plus Greeters. Though these numbers are small compared to millions of visitors who come to

New York, Big Apple Greeter has a significant impact on the city’s worldwide image. Print and broadcast stories about Big Apple Greeter have reached over two billion potential visitors worldwide.

Over the years Big Apple Greeter has innovated in several areas of urban tourism, including a partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), who generously provides free MetroCards to visitors accompanied by a Greeter. The visitors go home to spread the word to family and friends how easy, safe and economical it is to use the city’s subways and buses. Big Apple Greeter also partners with NYC & Company, New York’s convention and visitors’ bureau, through the Convention Delegate Greeters Program. Started in 2003, Greeters welcome convention attendees with literature, helpful tips and friendly smiles.

The Access Program, launched soon after Big Apple Greeter’s founding, is designed to help visitors with disabilities get the most out of New York and to recruit volunteers with disabilities. In addition, in 2002 Big Apple Greeter teamed up with the Make-a-Wish Foundation to provide specially selected Greeters for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families who come to New York City as part of their wish fulfillment.

In May 2006 Lynn assumed a newly-created, active role as senior advisor, focusing on Big Apple Greeter’s long-term development and financial stability, and the expansion of the Global Greeter Network. This is an association of greeter programs around the world – 11 so far, on four continents – all based on the Big Apple Greeter model. At the same time, after eight years with Big Apple Greeter, Alicia Pierro became executive director. Her goals for the organization include partnering with other agencies or programs to expand services and enhancing Big Apple Greeter’s internet presence. “Doing more with our website – what some might call ‘virtual greeting’ – is something we will be working on,” explains Alicia. “That could mean watching videos about New York’s neighborhoods or asking Greeters questions about New York – or something we haven’t thought of yet!”



Founder Lynn Brooks, Mayor David Dinkins and Congressman Charles Rangel, 1995



Greeter Diane Raphael at the auction table, Celebrate New York 1997 fundraiser



Greeter and visitors walk over the Brooklyn Bridge



Greeter and Visitor in Chinatown



Greeter Abe Margolies and visitors, 1997



Volunteer Recognition Reception on NY Waterway harbor cruise

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For more information, please contact Audrey Eisman at (212) 669-8281. Or email: aeisman@bigapplegreeter.org

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