



BIG APPLE GREETER NEWS

FALL 2006

Dear Friends,



I'm so pleased to welcome you to our fall newsletter, my first since becoming executive director on May 17 at Big Apple Greeter's 14 Anniversary Recognition Breakfast. I would also like to congratulate Paul Insalaco on becoming the 5th Chair of our Board of

Directors. I look forward to working with you.

Big Apple Greeter is facing one of the most challenging moments in the life of any organization, that of the founding executive director turning over day-to-day operation to a new executive director. We at Big Apple Greeter are fortunate that Lynn Brooks will continue to play a large role in Big Apple Greeter's future. I am proud to become the new executive director of an organization as bright and vibrant as Big Apple Greeter.

Thanks go to the volunteers, staff, all-volunteer Board of Directors and funders who have supported Big Apple Greeter's work for the last 14 years. Our gratitude goes to Immediate Past Chair Christopher P. Boylan for his guidance and wisdom.

Alicia Pierro
Executive Director



Welcome! It seems only a "New York minute" ago that Lynn Brooks started Big Apple Greeter. Now here we are starting our 15th year and looking forward to our next 15 years!

Big Apple Greeter is especially proud of the press we've had this

year. In May, Big Apple Greeter was the focus of a *New York Times* story that captured the essence of the work Big Apple Greeter does for the City. In July, we were featured in *The Great Outdoors*, a nationally-aired Australian travel show that resulted in hundreds of requests from down-under. Travel writer Mary Alice Kellogg's first-person account of her life as a Greeter was published in the July issue of *Sky Magazine*, Delta Airline's in-flight magazine carried around the world!

I would like to welcome Alicia Pierro to the executive director's chair, and Lynn Brooks to her new senior advisory role. My thanks go to Immediate Past Chair Christopher P. Boylan for his years of service to Big Apple Greeter, and to the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers for all their hard work, as well as our generous donors and event sponsors for their continued support.

Paul Insalaco
Chair, Board of Directors

New Roles for Big Apple Greeter Leaders

Big Apple Greeter Board Chair Paul Insalaco is pleased to announce that organization founder Lynn Brooks has made the transition from the executive director position into a newly created and active role as senior advisor within the organization, and that Alicia Pierro, formerly deputy director and director of volunteers, has stepped up to become executive director. Patricia Ryan, formerly assistant director of volunteers and access coordinator, has been promoted to director of volunteers and access.

The new roles became effective on May 17 at Big Apple Greeter's 14th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast. "Lynn's new position as Big Apple Greeter's 'elder statesman' and Alicia's new position as executive director give us the best possible launching pad into the future," said Board Chair Paul Insalaco.

Lynn Brooks' new role will encompass fundraising and government relations. Lynn will also work to promote and expand The Global Greeter Network, the informal association of greeter programs in New York, Chicago, Houston, Fairbanks, Toronto, Melbourne and Adelaide, Australia, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. All these programs are based on the Big Apple Greeter model, and Lynn, in her capacity as Founder and head of Big Apple Greeter, consulted in the start-up of the Melbourne, Chicago and Fairbanks programs. Lynn said, "I'm thrilled that Alicia has accepted the position of executive director. Her strong leadership skills will ensure that Big Apple Greeter has a healthy future."

Alicia Pierro has moved into the position of Big Apple Greeter executive director, taking over the day-to-day operation of the organization. Alicia has been with Big Apple Greeter for 8 years, the last 3 as both deputy director and director of volunteers. "I'm so pleased that in my new role Lynn and I will continue to work together for the betterment of Big Apple Greeter." As director of volunteers, Alicia oversaw the organizational workforce that included nearly 300 volunteer Greeters and about 30 office volunteers. Prior to joining Big Apple Greeter, Alicia worked with the Grand Central Partnership and has six years of

experience in visitor services and staff management.

As director of volunteers and access, Patricia Ryan will continue to oversee Big Apple Greeter's Access Program for Travelers with Disabilities, the only program in New York City focused on travelers with disabilities and their travel companions, and expand her interaction with Greeters and office volunteers. "Patricia has done such a great job with Big Apple Greeter since joining us in 2002, and I am so glad that her leadership role is continues to grow," said Executive Director Alicia Pierro.

Sensitivity Awareness Sessions

Greeters are the welcoming face of New York City to thousands of visitors a year, many of whom have disabilities. Since 2003, Big Apple Greeter has held Sensitivity Awareness Sessions as a way to familiarize Greeters with the needs of travelers with disabilities. 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 has recruited and trained over 50 volunteer Greeters who themselves have disabilities.

"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 get the most from their Greeter visit."

Sensitivity Awareness Sessions are an ongoing program for Greeters. Each session includes a discussion of various disabilities, the etiquette of communicating with persons with disabilities, role playing and Q&A.

Our Visitors Say... The one piece of advice we will give friends traveling to New York is request a Big Apple Greeter... I wouldn't have visited Harlem alone before, but now I know it is a great area... We southerners did not expect such "southern hospitality" in the Big Apple!... Absolutely brilliant! I have terrible blisters on my poor feet but it was worth it!... It's not just about getting to know a city but about getting in touch with a great personal history...

14th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast

Big Apple Greeter's 14th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast on May 15, 2006, was a morning of celebration, honoring the Neighborhoods of New York City, and Diane Raphael as Greeter the Year. The Recognition Breakfast also marked the official transition of Lynn Brooks into a newly created role as senior advisor and Alicia Pierro as executive director. The location for this year's event was the New York Marriot Marquis in Times Square. Over 200 guests were welcomed at the Breakfast, including honored guests Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz and special guest CBS2 feature correspondent Morry Alter.

Borough Presidents Scott Stringer and Marty Markowitz both praised Big Apple Greeter in their colorful speeches, emphasizing Big Apple Greeter's ongoing volunteer efforts and contribution to a positive image of New York City worldwide. Lynn Brooks then took to the stand to announce the developments within Big Apple Greeter and officially hand the baton to Alicia Pierro as the new executive director. As Lynn described, "Alicia provides leadership and stability, loves New York City and has Big Apple Greeter in her heart."



Photo: Bernard Saper

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Board Vice Chair Thomas G. Lewis, President, Gray Line New York Sightseeing, looks on.

Alicia kicked off her new role by introducing this year's Greeter of the Year, Diane Raphael. Diane was chosen as Greeter of the Year for her enthusiasm and dedication. Diane received a crystal apple by Tiffany's & Co.

Morry Alter introduced his "Morry's Story" segment featuring Greeter Arnold Strouch with visitors Betty and Wayne Ring of Carlsbad, CA,

broadcast on CBS2 news just days earlier. Mr. Ring, a World War II Coast Guard veteran, wanted to revisit the city where he was stationed before being shipped out, and Greeter Strouch, a World War II Army veteran, showed the Rings sites in New York City that related to their shared history.



Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.

Photo: Bernard Saper

The story showcased the special relationship that quickly forms between Greeter and visitor.

The Spring Breakfast was rounded off with a raffle jam-packed with prizes generously donated by Big Apple Greeter's supporters. The tempting prizes included tickets to a New York Philharmonic concert at Flushing Town Hall, Brooklyn Day Passes, a one-year membership to the Queens Museum of Art, Bronx Zoo package, a Thirteen/WNET gift bag, two tickets to the hit Broadway musical *The Color Purple* and two tickets to the acclaimed Broadway play *Festen*.

Spotlight on Greeter of the Year 2006 Diane Raphael

Diane Raphael joined Big Apple Greeter in 1992 and has been consistently active since then, sharing her love of New York City with visitors and journalists. Diane has also created several neighborhood walks for her fellow Greeters, including walks through the Lower East Side and Columbia University/ Morningside Heights.



Photo: Bernard Saper

Diane Raphael (right) with Executive Director Alicia Pierro.

Born in Hartford and raised in West Hartford, CT, Diane Raphael moved to New York City to attend Barnard College. She worked at Spence-Chapin and Louise Wise adoption agencies and as a community organizer for Lenox Hill Neighborhood House. She later earned an M.S.W. from Fordham University.

Diane first learned of Big Apple Greeter while reading a newsletter from the office of former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger. The Greeter program seemed like the ideal opportunity "to welcome people from around the world and share with them my appreciation of New York as a unique, international, and culturally diverse city, with its many nationalities, languages, and religions." In addition to her various skills as a Big Apple Greeter, Diane uses her knowledge of French to welcome many French-speaking visitors and journalists and generously gives of her time as a office volunteer, interviewing potential Greeters and helping with other projects when called upon.

SAVE THE DATE!

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Anthony M. Carvette

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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. Nearly 300 volunteer Greeters speak almost 30 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 65,000 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.

Greeter Bits...

It's a small world: Richard Farrell and his two children from Arizona requested a visit on March 28. On exactly the same date, a gentleman from New Mexico, his wife and two children requested a visit on March 28. His name was also Richard Farrell... Greeter Noni Hollman took out a visitor from California, by the name of Nani... Greeter Al Riggi took out a couple from South Africa, who turned out to be the daughter and son-in-law of another couple he had met several months earlier... Greeter Noel Holland met two visitors from...Holland.

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Founder

Lynn Brooks

Executive Director

Alicia Pierro

Director of Volunteers and Access

Patricia Ryan

Director of Marketing & Public Relations

Gail Morse

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Our Greeters Say... After attending a church service and a jazz jam in Harlem, my visitors said they would not have missed the experience...at the end of the walk my visitor came to me and gave me a big hug. It made my day!... Every time I do a visit it reminds me of how much I love the city...Great time!...

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