Christodora

Suggested by: Harriet Gerard Clark

Current Request	$15,000	**Organizational Budget**	$2,385,399
Previous Grant Amount	$15,000	**Last Site Visit**	n/a
Grants Since 1998	7	**Project Budget (if applicable)**	$228,996
Total Grants Awarded	$95,000	**Purpose**	Community of Rising Environmentalists (CORE)

Mission

To encourage the positive academic and developmental growth of NYC youth through stimulating educational and challenging outdoor programs.

Organization History

Christodora, founded in 1897, provides opportunities for young people to learn about the environment and experience the natural world first-hand, resulting in leadership development and STEM education. The organization delivers a seven-week environmental science curriculum in public school classrooms, runs weekend urban ecology and community service programs in parks and green spaces across New York City, and offers camp experiences at their 85-acre Manice Education Center in the Berkshires. Each year Christodora serves approximately 2,300 New York City students (79% of whom are aged 11–13 and 80% from economically disadvantaged communities) with eight full-time staff and up to 30 seasonal part-time staff.

Update on Last Grant and Current Request

Funding from the Vidda Foundation last year supported the Community of Rising Environmentalists (CORE), which provides 96 hours of environmental science, leadership, and stewardship programming over two semesters. Enrollment grew from 27 to 48 students per semester, with an average of 40 attending each Saturday, and the stipends increased by $25 per participant per semester, with a total of $4,000 spent on student stipends overall.

Christodora met its major goals, most notably developing a new four-year CORE curriculum so returning students encounter new material each year, spanning urban water systems, plant ecosystems, climate resilience, environmental justice, and green careers. The program also expanded its Art in Nature activities through nature journaling, museum visits, botanical art, and guest artist instruction, and strengthened partnerships with parks and environmental organizations including the Met Cloisters, Billion Oyster Project, New York Restoration Project, Riverside Park Conservancy, and Bronx Land Trust.

Christodora requests a renewal of $15,000 to support CORE in 2026–2027. Funding will help cover staff, student stipends, professional development, and other program costs. The primary focus will be

piloting the new four-year curriculum, which integrates environmental science, connections to local communities, green career exposure, leadership and problem-solving skills, and hands on stewardship. Christodora will also continue its Art in Nature programming and introduce a student intern position to support the growing program.

Notes

CORE's growing popularity has increased staffing, stipend, and other program costs and created a need for a consistent indoor gathering space during inclement weather. Christodora is also focused on implementing and refining the new curriculum as it is piloted. Potential funding cuts to local school partners could reduce participation in its Winter Ecology and field trip programs, though no immediate impact on Christodora's budget or funding is anticipated.