

RISE: Good Things to Come in 2023!



Honor Rock Way at Arverne East



The illustrations are by Billie Cohen Ltd. Landscape Design Studio.

By Stephanie Samoy, Director of Operations & External Affairs

RISE (Rockaway Initiative for Sustainability & Equity) is busy working on plans to expand its youth and community programming with a continued emphasis on environmental education, shoreline conservation, and resiliency in 2023.

RISE has been designated a one-acre section of Arverne East, which will include a native plant nursery/seed bank, “Honor Rock Way,” an educational garden, and classroom space in the new field station at Beach 44th Street.

The Native Plant Nursery and National Seed Bank Affiliate will seed and grow native shrubs, berries, grasses, and flowers for use in the Rockaway Dune Preserve restoration and “adopt-a-dune” training program. The nursery will employ local high school youth and residents to learn seed collection and propagation of native shoreline plants and beekeeping and will host community events.

Honor Rock Way will be an open lawn area with stone sculptures, serving as a land acknowledgment to the Indigenous peoples of the Rockaway peninsula. The area will

be landscaped with large boulders found on site, sculpted by artist Kevin Sudeith, with petroglyphs of native flora and fauna.

The Educational Garden will be a teaching site for K–12 educational programs and will serve as a place for students to learn about pollinator plants and the importance of providing food and habitat to insects and birds.

The Native Plant Nursery will connect with the “Greater Rockaway Community & Shoreline Enhancement Plan” by offering civic organizations, public schools, and stakeholders locally grown native

plants to be used in establishing a five-mile dune preserve that will serve as a natural protective barrier against storm surge.

RISE has partnered with many local civics and public schools to actively engage people of all ages in these efforts. Any teachers, neighborhood organizations, and individuals who are interested in participating are encouraged to attend RISE’s next community forum on Thursday, February 9, 2023.

For more information or to register for upcoming events, visit www.riserockaway.org.