

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bike Co-op Launches Outdoor Center for Bike Repair Education in Red Hook

The Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op launches a new outdoor bike education center in Red Hook, with free bike repairs and fun activities Sunday Nov 1, 12-4PM

WHAT	Launch party with free bike repairs, bike-related fun, family-friendly projects, and community design activities
WHEN	Sunday, Nov 1, 2020, 12PM-4PM
LOCATION	98 Dikeman Street, Brooklyn, 11231
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The Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op is launching a new outdoor center for bike repair education — **the first of its kind in NYC** — to meet the city’s increased demands for access to bikes and bike repairs during the COVID era. The Bike Co-op is hosting a festive public launch party this Sunday, Nov 1, at the new site in Red Hook, featuring free bike repairs, a “long-sleeve bikini” bike wash station, mural making, a winter riding workshop, and community design activities to guide the new center’s development and programming (Sunday, Nov 1, 12-4PM, 98 Dikeman Street, Brooklyn).

The Mechanical Gardens is a volunteer-led and nonprofit organization that uses hands-on educational programs to make bikes, repairs, and mechanical training accessible to all New Yorkers. The new outdoor education center in Red Hook will support a variety of donation-based programs, including DIY repair workshops, mechanics classes, community bike building events, apprenticeships, and workforce training intensives. These initiatives will complement the Mechanical Gardens’ ongoing core programs: weekly pay-what-you-can workshops and classes at the Lutheran Church of St. John the Evangelist in Williamsburg, where attendees learn to repair their own bikes using shared tools and resources, and can obtain recycled bike parts and even complete bicycles.

The Bike Co-op is focused on addressing a crucial and often-overlooked piece of the bike equity puzzle. “Countless New Yorkers can’t afford to keep their bikes in working order,” says Josh Bisker, Executive Director of the Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op, “and countless others are systemically excluded from bike shops, the bike industry, and the mechanic’s trade because of their gender, race, age, or geography.” These equity barriers send people who are already financially or socially disadvantaged into the “budget bike” trap, where the only affordable or accessible bikes end up being impossibly costly to maintain. Bikes from big box stores or online retailers use substandard components and hasty factory assembly; those from Craigslist or stoop sales come with older parts and a legacy of deferred maintenance. In all cases, even basic repairs are so time-consuming and challenging that commercial bike shops either charge steep service fees or decline the repair entirely. In this way, the equity barriers to bike repair become cyclical and self-perpetuating. The Bike Coop, and its new Red Hook space, offer an alternative. “Fair access to biking depends on fair access to repairs as much as anything else -- and that means making mechanical education, tools, and resources available to everyone,” says Bisker.

About the Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op

The Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op is a collectively owned and operated bicycle co-operative that provides access to the tools and education that New Yorkers need to fix their own bikes. Since 2015, Mechanical Garden’s mobile bike repair events and weekly Open Hours, hosted at St John’s Church in Brooklyn, offer an accessible, free, or donation-based space for New Yorkers to work on their bikes. Mechanical Gardens is a project of 501(c)(3) Alliance for Global Justice.

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