

The Cherry Blossom Festival on April 13, 2019 was a most memorable day for the following reasons:

1. The fantastic performances: everything from the Japanese Cultural Fair at Gallery RIVAA to the Tea Ceremonies at South Point Park, to the performances at Four Freedoms Park. The visitors were dazzled by the performers and we received endless positive feedback. The Cherry Blossom Festival Committee is very grateful to the neighbors, musicians, dancers and supporters who shared their talents.
2. For the first time in our nine-year history, the Committee was able to raise enough funds from local merchants, building managements and off-island organizations to pay the world-class musicians and dancers for their performances.
3. Members of the Committee are very thankful for the vast support and coordination among the local groups: the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, FDR Four Freedoms Park, Gallery RIVAA, the Roosevelt Island Japanese Association, the Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance, The Noguchi Museum, the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, the Roosevelt Island Parents' Network, Amalgamated Bank, Bozzuto Management Company, Bread & Butter Deli, Cornell Tech, Fuji East, Gristedes, Hornblower, Hudson and The Related Companies, Island House Tenants Corp., Island Wine & Spirits, The James Jay Dudley Luce Foundation, Manhattan Park, Resobox, Starbucks, Urban American, Wengerd Farms, Westview Preservation Partners and Wholesome Factory Market. Thank you as well to the financial sponsors and donors who gave in-kind items.
4. Our neighbor, the renowned Noguchi Museum, participated in our Cherry Blossom Festival for the first time!
5. The exuberant attendance exceeded all expectations. It's safe to say no one anticipated the overwhelming number of the many thousands of people visiting. Whether visitors headed south to participate in our programmed events, or simply strolled north of the tram and subway to view the necklace of cherry blossom trees around Roosevelt Island, everyone delighted in this annual glorious spring display.
6. Let's also give credit to all the employees of all the island establishments and the Cherry Blossom Festival volunteers who, in the face of an overwhelming number of visitors, maintained a calm and orderly atmosphere.

The scope of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association is the creation, production, staffing, promotion and maintenance of the cultural integrity of the Cherry Blossom Festival's programming. One of the quintessential elements of the traditional Japanese cherry blossom celebration is to witness to the actual popping of the cherry blossoms while picnicking under the trees. We give our residents and visitors alike that rare opportunity and that special experience, not often found outside Japan, as they picnic under the cherry blossom trees around the island. This is what makes our festival most authentic. Every year is a learning experience; as the Cherry Blossom Festival continues, we will incorporate what was learned this year, and in the previous years, into our plans.

As for the issues related to transportation, to the best of our knowledge, RIOC was in regular communication with the MTA prior to the Festival regarding continuous service of the F train.

The status of our infrastructure and transportation shortcomings, which is something that Roosevelt Island residents know all too well, has again been called to the attention of our elected officials. Many of them spoke to our festival audiences and witnessed different aspects

of these challenges. Let us hope this first-hand experience, plus the widespread news coverage, may serve as the basis to address and fix the shortfalls in our infrastructure and transportation.