



# EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

Breaking  
Ground For  
A New Future

- A Special Report for our Supporters

# EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY By the Numbers...

300,000+

People visited Eastern State in 2019

\$41 M

Eastern State's  
annual economic  
impact

28,000

Students visited Eastern State

100%

Philadelphia students  
who visited for free

900

Postcards  
written to  
*Hidden Lives  
Illuminated*  
filmmakers

29

Nights of our  
*Hidden Lives  
Illuminated*  
film festival

20

New animated films  
created by currently  
incarcerated artists

9 Shovels needed for our  
visitor center ground breaking



Top and Bottom Images  
*Hidden Lives Illuminated*,  
Summer 2019

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, 2019 was a groundbreaking year – full of exciting experiences and major milestones. From 29 nights of film screenings and events during *Hidden Lives Illuminated* to the first phase of construction on our planned visitor center, our donors, members, and friends helped make 2019 our best year yet.

A project three years in the making, *Hidden Lives Illuminated* received rave audience reviews and extensive national attention, including glowing features in *The New York Times* and *National Public Radio*. Over the course of four weeks in August and September, more than 4,000 people watched as we premiered 20 new animated films made by currently incarcerated artists. We projected their stories of love, loss, regret, and hope onto our 30-foot tall façade. Meanwhile, inside the event hub, audience members

Top Images  
*Al Capone's Cell*

Bottom Images  
*Rendering of our new tour launch point.*

*Groundbreaking ceremony for  
our planned visitor center.*



**We broke records again in 2019,  
welcoming more than 300,000  
daytime visitors.**

---

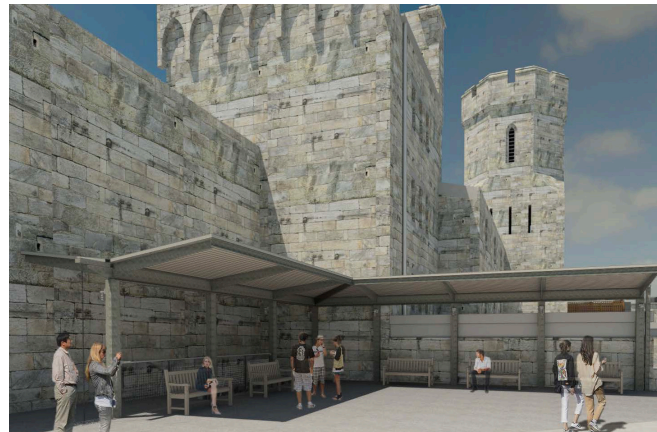


wrote nearly 900 postcards directly to the incarcerated filmmakers and participated in discussions with leaders engaged in criminal justice work.

In addition to amplifying the voices of those most impacted by incarceration today, we uncovered some surprising history while revamping one of our most popular exhibits. As we peeled back layers of paint in Al Capone's Cell last winter, we made an unexpected discovery. Our conservators found evidence of decorative paint, which was likely once part of a mural.

In May, our newly conserved Al Capone exhibit reopened in a neighboring cell. Now, guests can view a more historically accurate representation of Capone's time at Eastern State. Plus, in the original cell, they can get a glimpse of the penitentiary's historic paint schemes and learn more about conservation.

Then, in November, in the midst of many projects exploring our past and revealing the realities of our present, we took a significant step forward in planning



for our future. We began the first phase of construction of our planned visitor center. We marked this milestone with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by the many people who helped bring this project to fruition. Since then, contractors have been hard at work on plumbing, electricity, storm water management, and other infrastructure we'll need to move forward with future stages of work.

These are just a few of the wonderful things we were able to accomplish together this year. Here are some other 2019 highlights, all made possible with the help of our generous friends:

We put our often-hidden collections on display. During our *Pop-Up Museum* last January, visitors got a closer look at prisoner-made crafts, memorabilia from Eastern State sports activities, and other rarely seen items from our collection.



**With significant support from state and national funders, we raised six times more than last year.**



*Top and Bottom Images  
Masonry workshop with  
partners at Pullman-SST,  
PowerCorpsPHL,  
and the International  
Masonry Institute.*

We preserved history and helped pave the way for future generations. Last summer, we developed a masonry workshop with partners at Pullman-SST, PowerCorpsPHL, and the International Masonry Institute. Over the course of two weeks, eight young adults removed Portland cement mortar from Cellblock 3's exterior walls and replaced it with historically accurate, structurally appropriate lime mortar. In addition to providing much needed stability to Cellblock 3, the workshop gave the participants on-the-job experience and introduced a new generation to the field of historic masonry.

Finally, we broke attendance records again in 2019, welcoming more than 300,000 daytime visitors. People from around the world and right in our own backyard had the chance to engage in meaningful ways with the legacy of criminal justice reform as they walked our historic cellblocks.

All of this would have been impossible without the help of our members, donors, and partners. With significant support from state and national funders, we raised 582%



*Above Images The newly preserved Soup Alley*

more than last year. Our year-end giving appeal was our most successful campaign to date, and members were thrilled with the launch of our newly redesigned membership program.

We're just getting started. We are in the process of reopening Soup Alley, the penitentiary's communal dining space, for *Hands-On History* tours after extensive preservation. In May, we'll debut new site-specific artist installations and officially kick off our 2020 season. And, this spring, when the first phase of visitor center construction is complete, we'll unveil our new tour launch point – a space with benches, a water bottle refilling station, and a canopy providing protection from sun and rain.

We can't wait to share everything 2020 has in store.

We hope you'll visit soon and often!

Sincerely,

Sara Jane (Sally) Elk  
President and CEO



### *Our Mission*

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site interprets the legacy of American criminal justice reform, from the nation's founding through to the present day, within the long-abandoned cellblocks of the nation's most historic prison.

*Cover Photo: Eastern State leadership and board members, local legislators, and project contractors participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for our planned visitor center.*