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West Harlem Local Development Corporation Gives \$2M in Grants to 83 Groups Updated 66 mins ago

March 21, 2013 4:16pm | By Jeff Mays, DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

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HARLEM — Harriet Rosebud of the non-profit **Women in the Black** plans to use the \$5,500 she was awarded to get more women to come to the group's "Who's the Boss" conference, which teaches women how to be entrepreneurs.

Aziz Reid of the **Def Dance Jam Workshop** will use her \$15,000 grant to teach 25 more disabled youths about the arts and dance.

The women are just two of 83 recipients who were awarded a slice of \$2 million in grants Thursday as part of the **West Harlem Local Development Corporation's** first disbursement of \$76 million. The cash is part of a community benefits agreement that **Columbia University** signed with West Harlem as part of its \$6.3 billion, 17-acre campus expansion.

The winners run the gamut from groups that provide afterschool programs to a theater group planning to produce Shakespeare works at Riverbank Park.

They were awarded grants ranging between \$5,000 to \$45,000. Approximately 38 of the 83 groups that received money are based in Community District 9, but all of the organizations will use the funds to provide services to the area.

The West Harlem Local Development Corporation, which is in the process of transferring its assets to a new organization named the West Harlem Development Corporation, estimates that approximately 12,000 people will receive services because of the grants.

Groups that work in arts and culture received 29 of the grants, totaling \$575,000.

"We decided to go wide versus deep," said WHDC Executive Director **Kofi Boateng**. "We decided it is better to give a little something to everybody."

The grants come almost four years after the group signed the community benefits agreement with Columbia in May 2009. Since then, the WHDC has experienced some turbulence, including an **investigation** by the Attorney General's office after it was reported that the group had spent more on consultants than programming while failing to launch a website, find a headquarters or hire an executive director.



Grant recipients celebrated receiving \$2 million from the West Harlem

Boateng was brought on last year to right the ship. Attorney General Eric Schneiderman found that the group did nothing **illegal** but said it was in disarray and had failed to establish procedures to distribute the funds.

Boateng said he believes this first round of grants shows that his organization is back on the right course.

"Because of our history, a lot of organizations didn't believe this would happen," Boateng said.

Rosebud, a member of the board of directors of Women in the



More than 80 recipients were awarded \$2 million in grants Thursday as part of the West Harlem Development Corporation's first disbursement of \$76 million in cash that is part of a community benefits agreement that Columbia University signed with West Harlem as part of its \$6.3 billion, 17-acre campus expansion.

(DNAinfo/Jeff Mays)

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Black, said the money will come in handy.

"There are a lot of women out there who don't know how to realize their dreams of owning a business," Rosebud said.

Organizations will receive half of their award now and will have to meet with WHDC officials in six months to show what they have accomplished before receiving the remainder of the grant. The application for a second round of grants is set to begin in June.

The group plans to award grants twice per year.

Boateng said his goal is to give money to groups as an investment. He hopes to transform the WHDC into a community trust that will also solicit other grant money beyond the \$76 million it will receive from Columbia over the next several years.

Debra Ann Byrd of **Take Wing and Soar Productions** said her group sees the award as an investment that will produce dividends. They will use their \$13,500 grant to produce Shakespeare plays in Riverbank Park this summer and build capacity. They hope to use some of the money for a direct mailing to boost attendance.

"Our event brings people to this community and helps with economic development. The people who patronize our event use local businesses. We rent space and pay for other services that help local businesses," Byrd said.

Another benefit of the grants is to create connections between the community-based organizations and to recognize smaller groups that have been operating in the shadows for years.

"The smaller organizations sometimes have a bigger impact than the larger ones," Reid said.

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By **Jeff Mays**, DNAinfo.com
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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
24	25	26	27	28	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Upcoming Events

Community Board 9 Youth Expo

Date: Apr 13, 2013 - Apr 13, 2013
Location: Convent Avenue
Time: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

North Star Harlem Community Organizing Workshop

Date: Apr 10, 2013 - Apr 10, 2013
Location: Manhattan Avenue
Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM



First Person Plural April

Date: Apr 1, 2013 - Apr 1, 2013
Location: Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard
Time: 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM



Freedom Now Art Exhibition

Date: Feb 22, 2013 - Apr 5, 2013
Location: 163 West 125th Street
Time: All Day

Monday, March 25, 2013

Freedom Now Art Exhibition

Art exhibition that celebrates the struggle for freedom and equality among African Americans, Dominicans and Haitian Americans.

Time: All Day

Location: 163 West 125th Street

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