

West Harlem Development Corp. gets \$2M grant to improve quality of life for residents

West Harlem Local Development Corporation (WHLDC) awarded \$2 million in grants to 83 local community-based organizations (CBOs) whose work will advance WHLDC's mission of promoting increased economic opportunities and quality of life to sustain a vibrant West Harlem community. The grants will fund CBOs to provide a wide range of services to West Harlem in the areas of arts and culture, community facilities, education, environment, historic preservation, housing, and workforce and economic development.

All of the organizations' programs will benefit residents of Community District 9. An estimated 12,000 people will benefit directly or indirectly from this inaugural grant cycle. WHLDC held a grant award ceremony celebrating the grant recipients at Our Children's Foundation. At the end of the ceremony, WHLDC presented a symbolic \$2-million check to the entire group of grant awardees.

"Our grant program allows us to help build the capacity of community-based nonprofits and allows us to begin to fulfill several of the community's needs," said Donald C. Notice, WHLDC board chairman. "Children's education will be enhanced, their parents will be trained to hold stable jobs and the entire community will benefit from better support of the arts, preservation, community facilities, housing initiatives and the environment."

The grant programs include:

- After-school programs that offer tutoring and art or physical education that may be missing from their school curriculum and scholarships to help finance early education through college.
- Workforce training that aims to help adults, seniors and immigrants obtain and retain stable jobs.
- Arts programs that aim to include more West Harlem resi-



Assemblyman Keith Wright

dents in the community's rich culture, provide more exposure for seasoned artists and train future performers.

- Multimedia projects that document the community's history.
- Programs that keep youth and seniors fit, healthy and safe.
- Housing initiatives to help West Harlem residents find and keep affordable housing and fight harassment.
- Programs that enhance the area's natural landscape and instill good environmental practices.

"These grants are a continuation of WHLDC's major investments in the community," said Kofi A. Boateng, WHLDC executive director. "The challenge of the 83 grantees is for each to succeed, document the outcomes and provide us with the basis to include them in future strategies to meet our mission as we move toward building a community trust fund."

WHLDC received 101 pre-grant applications, and 89 of those organizations were invited to submit formal grant applications. The volume of proposals

— which amounted to \$18.5 million in total requests — demonstrated that community-based organizations had a hunger to provide great services to West Harlem, and many were providing much-needed services with limited capacity. WHLDC decided to fund as many projects as possible, spreading \$2 million to 83 worthy organizations in order to build their capacity, allow them to provide much-needed services to the community and give WHLDC data for future initiatives that will serve West Harlem.

"I'd like to dedicate this grant award ceremony in honor of our late beloved community advocate, Patricia Arlene Jones. As I stated in the Congressional Record, Pat took on the role as Chair of the West Harlem Local Development Corporation (WHLDC) at a very difficult and contentious time during the negotiating process. Her leadership led to one of the most significant Community Benefits Agreements ever achieved in New York City and in the nation that will positively enhance and improve the quality of health, environment, education and

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affordable living for all of the residents of Community Board 9. The benefits from the WHLDC grant program will resonate in West Harlem for years to come," said U.S. Congressman Charles B. Rangel, who has a representative on the WHLDC Board.

Grants were given in seven community-need areas as follows:

- * Arts & Culture: 29 grants totaling \$575,750
- * Community Facilities: 13 grants totaling \$279,000
- * Education: 19 grants totaling \$439,750
- * Environment: 2 grants totaling \$57,750
- * Historic Preservation: 4 grants totaling \$68,250
- * Housing: 4 grants totaling \$155,000
- * Workforce and Economic Development: 12 grants totaling \$402,625

"I am extremely happy that

this milestone has been accomplished. The announcement of this funding has been long-anticipated and each of the groups selected perform vital functions in the West Harlem community. I am proud of the commitment and hard work done by the West Harlem Local Development Corporation. The WHLDC Board members are heroes in West Harlem and I look forward to the West Harlem Development Corporation carrying the torch," said Assemblyman Keith L.T. Wright, who has a representative on the WHLDC Board.

The grant-making program is a significant activity under the Community Benefits Agreement signed with Columbia University. WHLDC plans to fund two grant cycles a year with awards going to nonprofits that service Community District 9, which runs from 110th Street to 155th Street and from the Hudson River to Manhattan, Morningside, St Nicholas, Bradhurst and Edgecombe Avenues.

"I am proud that today we kicked-off the West Harlem Local Development Corporation's grant program, which will give the West Harlem community the benefits that were secured from Columbia University's Manhattanville Expansion. As a founding member of the WHLDC, it gives me great pleasure to see that \$2 Million in grants will support job readiness, youth development, tenant advocacy, and arts and cultural efforts throughout West Harlem," said Council Member Robert Jackson, who has a representative on the board.

WHLDC will administer a second grant cycle this year, starting in June. Those awards will be distributed in September.

At the grant award ceremony, WHLDC Board Members were recognized for their work, which has led to the celebration of this milestone. Mr. Notice introduced the board members of the West Harlem Development Corporation, the successor to the WHLDC.
