



**TESTIMONY**  
**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**  
**COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING:**  
  
**CULTURALLY COMPETENT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS --**  
**EXPLORING HOW CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY**  
**COMPETENT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS BENEFIT YOUTH**

**PRESENTED BY**  
  
**COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG**

**JANUARY 20, 2015**

Good morning Chair Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Bill Chong, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Youth & Community Development. Thank you for holding this oversight hearing on culturally competent afterschool programs.

DYCD greatly values and supports the delivery of afterschool programs in a linguistically and culturally competent manner. We know there are multiple benefits for young people, such as the affirmation of one's heritage, development of positive self-esteem, fostering caring relationships between youth and staff, better engagement of parents -- especially immigrant parents -- in the development of their children, and exposure to different languages and cultures that instill an appreciation for diversity.

Essential to our successful programs, are our partnerships with community based providers. Our funding model acknowledges that community-based organizations and their staff are best equipped to meet the cultural and language needs of a student body and their community. Included in our Request for Proposals are linguistic and cultural competency requirements. We have evaluation criteria that reflects these requirements when we select providers. The organizations that we fund hire staff and design programs in accordance with the needs of their participants.

Our outreach efforts to identify new providers who can reach underserved communities and bring fresh and engaging content to our programs has also paid off. For last year's SONYC expansion RFP, we partnered with the Department of Cultural Affairs to reach out to arts organizations. To promote our SONYC non-public school sites RFP, I spoke at the Muslim Youth Day. We also conducted a training for the Islamic School Association on how to become eligible to apply for RFPs by pre-qualifying through HHS Accelerator.

We have so many strong CBO partners that include specific racial/ethnic organizations and mainstream nonprofits that have the linguistic and cultural competency to serve New York's diverse neighborhoods. For example, El Puente's Cornerstone program at Taylor Wythe also serves Williamsburg's Hasidic Jewish residents. At Bronx Works' Melrose Cornerstone Community Center, bilingual staff operate an afterschool program for recent immigrant youth. Other examples of DYCD's provider organizations include:

- Abyssinian Development Corporation
- Arab American Family Support Center
- Black Spectrum Theatre Company Inc.
- Chinese American Planning Council
- Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
- Council of Peoples Organization
- Haitian Americans United for Progress
- Korean American Family Service Center
- Sesame Flyers
- South Asian Youth Action
- The settlement houses and other member agencies of United Neighborhood Houses
- YMCA

To no surprise, our program participants speak many languages -- 32 in addition to English. Of the over 244,000 program participants in our COMPASS, Beacon and Cornerstone programs, nearly 43,000 speak a language other than English. These include Spanish, Chinese,

Russian, Haitian Creole, Arabic, French and Bengali, to less spoken ones like Mandinko, Albanian and Vietnamese. A majority of these 43,000 speakers of other languages -- 73% -- are English proficient.

Another prime illustration of our commitment to linguistically and culturally competent programs are the providers we just selected from our SONYC non-public school sites RFP. Last week, the Mayor announced that 18 of the new SONYC middle school after school programs were located at religious schools. We added additional sites at Catholic schools and yeshivas, and funded programs for the first time at Islamic schools, as well as a Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist school. Several of the new SONYC programs will also be operated by providers who serve the City's newer immigrant populations, including the New York Tibetan Service Center in Queens, and the African Refuge in Staten Island, which specializes in the Liberian community. Also selected was University Settlement's Houston Street Center in the Lower East Side, which serves a majority of Cantonese-speaking families, with a multi-lingual staff to accommodate those needs.

Our DYCD program managers also have several tools at their disposal, to make sure providers are offering culturally competent programs:

- DYCD contracts include provisions that require services to be provided in a linguistically and culturally competent manner.
- When conducting site visits to assess program quality, linguistically and culturally competent services is a key factor that's reviewed with our program quality management tool. This tool feeds assessment data into the City's VENDEX rating system, which can impact whether funding continues and if a provider can receive funding from other city agencies.
- DYCD's contracts require meeting enrollment and attendance targets that cannot be achieved without engaging parents and young people in a linguistically and culturally competent manner.
- Technical assistance and trainings are available to our providers. Training topics have included supporting English language learners; sexual orientation and gender identity; and working with LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth.

In order to connect New Yorkers to our services, we have a 1-800 hotline called Youth Connect where callers can learn more about our programs and find program sites in their neighborhood. If we identify callers that need interpretation assistance, we connect them to our language bank operators, who have the ability to speak up to 180 different languages.

Once again, thank you for holding this hearing today. We look forward to collaborating with the City Council on how best to support afterschool programs serving our wonderfully diverse city.

**FOR THE RECORD**

## **TESTIMONY**

### **THE COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS (CSA) NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES**

Honorable Mathieu Eugene  
Chairperson

**Presented on  
Tuesday, January 20, 2015**



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**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF  
THE COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS (CSA)  
NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES  
HON. MATHIEU EUGENE, CHAIRPERSON  
JANUARY 20, 2015**

Good afternoon Chair Eugene and distinguished members of the Committee on Youth Services. CSA appreciates this opportunity to testify in favor of expanding our city's after-school programs by offering high quality programs that are culturally and linguistically competent and beneficial to the youth being served.

CSA has always believed that we must provide high quality after school programs because the research is clear that these programs can help close achievement gaps among our most needy students. To that end, we strongly believe that such programs must have a diverse staff, responsive to participants and to create policies and practices that make services available to (and are inclusive of) a wide variety of populations. This will also help participants understand and value all people.

Cultural competence is an important aspect of a quality after-school program. However, it must be embedded within everything an organization does. Some evidence indicates that culturally competent programs can help promote developmental growth. For organizations, cultural competence means creating the practices and policies that will make services more accessible to diverse populations, including special needs youth and that provide for appropriate and effective cross-cultural situations. Programs can also build the participants' cultural competence by helping pre-teens to understand and value their own and other cultures, language and community.

Here are some specific examples of this principle in action:

- The program provides a diverse staff that youth can identify with in terms of race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, language and special needs.
- The program collects data on the demographics of the youth served and

the youth in the community to determine whether any groups need further outreach, appropriate languages for program materials and what kind of cultural training is needed.

- The program is physically accessible and culturally and linguistically inclusive.

- The program provides activities that encourage youth to affirm their cultural and ethnic heritage.

- The program provides youth with opportunities to interact with and learn from youth within different cultural identities.

It is critical to note that we cannot have a “one size fits all” model. Rather, these programs must be customized at the school level to meet the needs of the students in each unique community of the city. Also, research indicates that youth should be given options of programs to choose from, instead of being directed to a program.

The efficacy of any program is dependent upon its ability to continually improve. Continuous program improvement is the glue that holds the program together.

This is based on three guiding principles:

1. Continuous and targeted professional development.
2. Monitoring and coaching to support implementation.
3. Data collection and analysis of program strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some examples of this principle in action:

- Staff is supported through ongoing professional development and training.

- Staff can translate what they have learned in workshops into practice.

- Program observations are conducted and the information they yield informs professional development and program improvement.

- Professional development is clearly connected to and builds on the program’s vision, purpose and goals.

- Staff retention is high.

- Program goals and objectives are meaningful and measurable.

- Youth outcome measurement data is collected regularly and used to

influence program improvements.

- Staff evaluations are regularly conducted with staff and used to guide professional development and program improvement decisions.

- The organization regularly assesses program quality through staff assessment or outside evaluation.

Given the Council's outstanding track record of stepping in to fill shortfalls in various budgets, CSA is confident that this committee recognizes the importance of quality after-school programs that are culturally and linguistically competent and can truly have a positive impact on our students.



**ExpandedEDSchools**  
by TASC

**FOR THE RECORD**

**TESTIMONY**

**BEFORE**

**New York City Council Committee on Youth Services**

**Culturally Competent Afterschool Programs: Exploring How Culturally and Linguistically Competent Afterschool Programs Benefit Youth**

**TESTIMONY BY**

**LUCY N. FRIEDMAN**

**PRESIDENT, TASC**

**January 20, 2015**



**ExpandedEDSchools**  
by TASC

Good afternoon. My name is Lucy Friedman, and I am the President of TASC. I want to thank the Committee on Youth Services for the opportunity to submit testimony.

TASC is dedicated to giving all kids expanded learning opportunities that support, educate and inspire them. Our vision is that kids from all backgrounds will have access to the range of experiences and world-class education that all families want for their children. Schools and after-school programs will support students' intellectual, creative and healthy development and prepare them to thrive in a democratic society.

Our roots are in New York City's movement to equalize educational opportunities. From an initial \$125 million investment from Open Society Foundations, TASC leveraged more than \$1 billion in New York City for after-school programs, revolutionized standards for after-school programs throughout New York State, and helped create many initiatives which have sustained and grown the after-school field. Since our inception 14 years ago, TASC has helped more than 450,000 kids by supporting after-school and expanded learning programs at more than 500 public schools in New York City and beyond.

At the end of our first decade, we challenged ourselves to apply the lessons from our long-term external evaluation studies, which demonstrated that in the most effective programs, the host school and its community partner operated as one team with a common vision for student progress. Together the principal, teachers, parents and community educators planned learning activities that reinforced and expanded on what kids learned during the school day. They shared responsibility and accountability for supporting and educating the whole child.

It is this experience that informs my testimony today. We have seen the transformational effects that culturally relevant programming can have on young people's lives, engaging them in learning and helping them acquire the skills needed for future success. TASC's experience, decades of research, and common sense agree: the most successful after-school programs are those that address cultural needs and linguistic assets of young people. In a city of brilliant diversity, supporting and educating the whole child must include culturally competent programming. Personalized and engaging learning opportunities have been shown to increase students' acquisition and application of skills and knowledge while boosting engagement in learning, self-confidence and school-day attendance.<sup>1</sup>

New York City surely has some of the best programs in the country in this area, but there is still much work to be done to ensure every child has the culturally competent programming they deserve. The following are recommendations to build a stronger public fabric of linguistically and culturally competent after-school programs throughout New York City.

- 1. Identify and support after-school providers that have cultural competence.** Public funding priorities can make cultural and linguistic competence a preference for competitive funding. During periods when schools and after-school providers are developing new partnerships or proposals, technical assistance providers can offer strategies for principals and parents to select potential partners based on their cultural competence. TASC often helps broker relationships between schools and community

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<sup>1</sup> 3 Brown, D. & Thakur, M. (2006). Workforce Development for Older Youth. New Directions for Youth Development, 111, 91-104.



- organizations by taking time to understand the school demographics, needs, desires and surrounding communities, and matching those characteristics to organizations that have the ingredients for success for that school community. We provide lists of questions for school leaders to help them identify appropriate matches for their school communities.
2. **Enable flexible staffing models.** Staff who come from similar backgrounds are more able to act as role models. They understand students' cultural experience in New York and also perhaps in a home country, and are able to speak the same languages as students. Adding after-school hours means that children can still practice oral and written English and have time to socialize and discuss academic and social concerns in a language that is comfortable for them—they don't have to trade one for the other. In addition, parents are better able to discuss their children's educational progress with staff who are linguistically competent. And bilingualism is seen as the asset that it is in our global society, rather than a deficit. At P.S. 188 on the Lower East Side, a teaching artist from the Education Alliance used after-school time to take students on a "trip around the world" where students studied the art, food, and language of different countries, including ones where their families had lived. To be an expert and to teach peers builds pride and confidence in learning and a strong school culture. When I visited, the children beamed with pride at their artwork on display in the halls.
- Similarly Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn offers an expanded learning day at P.S. 89, which offers dual-language programming. The community organization and the school together implement a social – emotional curriculum and framework. This affords young people an opportunity to discuss their identity, emotional growth, and personal choices in their home language, making those lessons more personal and more relevant than if the lessons were in English and staff members were not bilingual.
3. **Build staff capacity through training and professional support.** TASC offers central training and on-site training to help after-school providers build their cultural competencies and their other youth development skills so they can use those competencies effectively. Peer training and education so that staff with linguistic and cultural assets can train co-workers can help translate assets organization-wide and sustain gains by institutionalizing them throughout the program.

In some cases, after-school providers may train teachers or other school staff who are not as familiar with the student populations' cultures. TASC supports DYCD's focus in after-school on strong partnerships between schools and community organizations. Such partnerships allow youth-serving organizations to align academic supports with the school-day curriculum and get results that neither entity could achieve on its own. They also allow organizations to collaborate with school staff and collect school data in order to tailor the support they provide to meet the needs of individual youth. We recommend that all educational support programs be implemented through meaningful school-community partnerships as evidenced by:

- Joint planning and implementation;
- Shared professional development that improves the effectiveness of community partner staff and school staff;
- Shared student data systems that support program improvement and student learning; and



- Alignment and coordination of student learning goals, curriculum, activities, and training.

Strong school-community partnerships are a requirement of the New York State Department of Education's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program. The federally-funded program supports such partnerships across the nation. Annual performance data shows that students who regularly participate improve their reading and math grades. According to teachers, more than three-quarters of participating students improved homework completion and 72 percent showed improvements in behavior.

4. **Support use of culturally relevant curricula.** TASC supports curricula that are attentive to multiple languages, cultural identity, and explore global themes that connect young people from their New York City classroom to other areas of the world that may be part of their heritage. Global Kids and One to World both offer curricula that explore global policy issues and build youth leadership and connection.
5. **Encourage innovative models of school-community partnership to encourage young people who would most benefit to attend after-school.** To reach young people who might not enroll in a voluntary, first-come, first-served after-school program, the City might encourage innovative models, such as TASC's own ExpandedED Schools. In ExpandedED Schools, whole grade approaches set the expectation that every child attends regularly. Thus, we reach young people who would not otherwise participate in after-school.

## **Conclusion**

I'd like to thank you once again for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. New York City is a leader in after-school and a leader in diversity. Thank you for exploring how we can build on our assets to benefit young people throughout our great City. Enabling more young people to participate in culturally and linguistically competent programs will enable DYCD to achieve its goal of increasing self-reliance, literacy and life-long learning, and helping individuals reach their full potential.



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## Testimony on Culturally Competent After-School Programs

Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Sami Abu Shumays, Deputy Director

Flushing Town Hall

At Flushing Town Hall (a member of NYC's Cultural Institutions Group – CIG – and a Smithsonian Affiliate), we believe that “cultural competence” must be central to arts educational programming in a city as diverse as New York. The arts play a significant role in how children develop both a sense of identity and a sense of community (in addition to fostering numerous cognitive and social abilities) – and it is absolutely crucial that New York's minority and immigrant children be given the opportunity to *see themselves* represented in the arts and cultural programs brought to their schools, and that non-immigrant or minority children see other cultures in a positive light. Flushing Town Hall has been at the forefront of this type of programming for years.

Aside from the fact that there are no certification procedures in NYC for most of the world's artistic disciplines, because any given school and community in NYC is host to an extraordinary diversity of cultures, it would be unrealistic to expect schools to be able to hire enough in-house arts teachers capable of doing justice to all of the artistic traditions coming from the countries of origins of all of their students. That's where cultural institutions and teaching artists can play a significant role in expanding the horizons of NYC School students.

And because school budgets, and especially arts budgets, are stretched thin (as highlighted by Comptroller Stringer's report in Spring 2014), additional funding from City Government, including the Council, the Department of Education, and other city agencies, has a major impact in increasing the likelihood that NYC kids will have the opportunity to experience culturally competent arts educational programming.

The CASA (Cultural After-School Adventures) Program is one such effective vehicle for this. Thanks to funding from CM Paul Vallone in 2015, Flushing Town Hall is pleased to be offering to PS184 in Whitestone, a program in world percussion traditions led by African-American master percussionist Napoleon Revels-Bey. Beginning in West Africa and ancient Spain using traditional drums and rhythms, the program moves to the Americas with the rhythm of the clave and its development in Cuba. From there, the lessons explore the Caribbean and early New Orleans sound, the new





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American sound of Jazz, Latin Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance, with a focus on Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Tito Puente. The project will culminate with a student music presentation on May 13th at PS184's Parent Exchange night, where students will perform with Revels-Bey and his band, and parents will be invited to participate on stage with the students. This program thus creates an intergenerational bond around culture, so that students' learning does not exist in isolation from their own community.

In 2013-14, Flushing Town Hall offered a CASA program to IS25 in Flushing on Asian Arts, which included instruction in traditional Korean dance, Korean mask-making, Chinese calligraphy and Chinese dance, and featured a number of the master teaching artists on our Roster (tradition bearers, artist who carry forth the arts and culture in which they are deeply immersed). This combination of both Korean and Chinese arts traditions reflected the demographics of our area, and used the arts to build a bridge between Chinese and Korean students, who come from communities that are often at odds with each other. (This approach is mirrored in Flushing Town Hall's public programming).

Another wonderful upcoming example of our culturally competent after-school programming, this time funded by the DOE, is our 2014-15 "Teen Thursdays" program, an Educational Dance series entitled: *Dancin' Queens*. This program will explore NY's, and in particular Queens' history, its waves of immigration and its diversity through the traditional dance of some of its immigrants. Queens Borough Historian, Jack Eichenbaum, will open the series with a lecture presentation that roots Queens' diversity in the Flushing Remonstrance of 1657, which was a precursor to the US Constitution's provision on freedom of religion. Teaching Artist, Ling Tang will discuss the history of Chinese immigration into NY and Queens specifically, as well as the cultural exchange between China and the US, and introduce students to traditional Chinese ribbon dance with an interactive dance workshop. Master Teaching Artist, Song Hee Lee, will discuss her personal immigration story from principal dancer at the Pusan Metropolitan Dance Company in Korea to launching her own dance company in NY. She will introduce students to *sogo chum* (small hand-drum dance), one of Korea's the most popular folk dances through an interactive dance workshop. Alberto Lopez, co-founder of Calpulli Mexican Dance Company and Queens' resident, will discuss the historic and current pressures that push Mexican migration into the US, and to NY specifically. He will introduce students to dances from the Gulf Coast of Mexico as well as related Spanish vocabulary with an interactive dance workshop. Master teaching artist Abha



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Roy, will introduce students to *kathak*, the classic dance form of northern India through an interactive dance workshop. Abha is also a geography specialist and will meld both areas into a discussion mapping the history of *kathak* dance, to its roots in modern day Bollywood and the Indian immigrants and non-Indians who perform it. In total, this program will show teens dance traditions from some of the most significant immigrant populations in Queens, helping them to celebrate their differences in a positive framework.

In addition to these after school programs, Flushing Town Hall conducts numerous residencies in NYC schools with teaching artists from a diverse array of world traditions and cultures, and we offer exciting "field-trip" programs in our theatre featuring many of the internationally-touring artists we present to general audiences. Through all of these programs, we have found that students are tremendously curious and open-minded, and that a diverse and changing selection of arts and arts traditions engages these students more than a static presentation of mainstream Western arts genres.

More funding for after-school programs in the Arts would enable us to take advantage of an underutilized resource already at hand: the expertise of the many master teaching artists on our Roster, who carry forward rich cultural traditions from around the world. In fact, this is a resource underutilized by NYC as a whole, where artists from all over the world practice, while many schools have no arts programming at all, as highlighted by the Comptroller's report in Spring 2014. With funding, our Education Director, Folklorist Gabrielle Hamilton, could lead a workshop panel on arts education programming for a diverse community.

Below, I've compiled a list of some of our culturally competent field trip programs, as well as a list of our master teaching artists, so you can see the breadth of what we are able to offer to schools in New York. Thanks very much for the opportunity to testify.

#### **Culturally Competent Field Trip Programs:**

2012-15

Martha Redbone – African-American/Native American/ Roots music

EastRiver Ensemble – Chinese folkloric music and dance

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company – Mexican music and dance

*Flushing Town Hall (1862) is a New York City landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.  
In 1996 the facility became an officially designated cultural institution in the City of New York.*



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Black Violin – Hip Hop/rock/R&B/classical fusion  
13 Moons with Greyhawk Perkins – Native American storytelling and music with Blues & jazz  
Mariachi Real de Mexico – Mexican music and dance  
Ologunde – Afro-Brazilian music and dance  
Guyi Guyi – Puppetry from Spain  
Zikrayat – Egyptian and Arab music and dance  
Campbell Brothers – African-American Pentacostal music with steel guitars  
Los Pleneros de la 21 – Puerto Rican music and dance  
Sonali Skandan & Jiva Dance and Akshara – Indian music and dance

**Culturally Competent Teaching Artist Roster (for school residencies and programs)**

Abha Roy – Indian Classical and folk dances  
Angela Rostick – dance, theater, African-American dance forms  
April Armstrong – Poetry and Blues singing  
Aurelia Fernandez – Mexican paper arts  
Bobby Gonzalez – Native American and Puerto Rican storytelling & poetry  
Christina Camacho – Nutritionist; Peruvian cooking  
Dr. Hsing-Lih Chou – varied Chinese and Taiwanese arts  
Joy Suarez – English Language Learning through the visual arts  
Karen Ahn – Korean traditional knotting (craft)  
Karen Wellington – Origami and the math of Origami  
Ling Tang – traditional Chinese dance  
Napoleon Revels-Bey – world drumming traditions  
Pablo Mayor – Colombian music (cumbia and other traditions)  
Pepe Santana – Ecuadorian music  
Song Hee Lee – Korean Traditional Dance  
Robin Bady – Jewish folklore and storytelling  
Rachel Emproto – Mandalas and Tibetan Culture

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC**  
**[www.bigsnyc.org](http://www.bigsnyc.org)**  
**Testimony before the Committee on Youth Services**  
**January 20, 2015**

On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC (BBBS of NYC) and the children we serve, I would like to thank Council Member Eugene and the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Hector Batista and I am the Chief Executive Officer of BBBS of NYC.

We are proud to be the founding agency of the nation's mentoring movement.

This year, we celebrated our 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and throughout that history, we have been committed to helping children achieve success in life. Each year, we serve 4,000 youth with mentoring and other youth development programs.

The youth we serve are as diverse as the City we live in; a large majority are African-American and Latino, with a growing Asian population.

Most of these children live below the poverty line and come from single-parent households. Many also face additional challenges; they live in foster homes, have an incarcerated parent, have been in trouble with the law, have learning disabilities, or have recently immigrated.

We have many programs to meet their evolving needs.

In our Community-based Program, our Bigs meet with our Littles eight to ten hours a month participating in activities that promote cultural understanding, community engagement, and self awareness.

We also have several site-based programs, such as the SONYC program that we run at two schools – one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn.

In addition, we have a Community-Impact program with a high school in East Harlem, where we provide the students in the school with mentors and group activities.

Another site-based program is our Workplace Mentoring Program, which is the focus of my testimony today.

In this program, students from NYC public middle and high schools are brought to partner companies after-school to be mentored by its employees.

The program introduces Littles to the world of business.

Whenever possible, partner companies mirror the school's area of interest. For example, one of the schools we work with is the Business of Sports High School, which we matched with the National Football League; or a fashion-design school is matched with a fashion company.

This gives Littles the opportunity to work with experts in the fields of their professional interest. Students map out a plan for their future and work with their Bigs to develop the tools needed to succeed in the work place.

The curriculum centers on the 4 critical skills needed: communication, professionalism, teamwork, and problem-solving. Activities are facilitated by Master-level social workers who are trained in youth-centered approaches.

Topics that are relevant to Littles, such as bullying and social media, are chosen to engage Littles in the development of workplace critical skills, such as leadership and communication.

Each Little also collaborates with their Bigs to create 3 SMART goals for themselves (*specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound*), and regular check-in meetings are scheduled to track their progress.

Additionally, in the beginning of each program year, the Littles collaborate on the creation of their Rules of Engagement, which outlines what the program expects from them, and what they expect from the program. As you can see, we include our Littles in the goal-setting process to give them a sense of ownership and value.

Littles in this program also participate in several trips a year. Trips are designed to be educational, cultural, or service oriented and have included such places like college tours, museums, and community centers. Often, Bigs also visit the schools of their Littles, giving an opportunity for the Littles to introduce their mentors to their own environment.

And I am proud to say that research has consistently shown that our model of mentoring at Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC is making a tremendous impact in the lives of the children in our programs.

In fact, last year alone, 98% of Littles were promoted to the next grade, 97% of high school seniors graduated, with 86% of them accepted into college.

Our youth also experience gains in self-confidence, relationships with peers and adults, and avoidance of risky behaviors. And since the start of the Workplace Mentoring Program, we have served over 10,000 kids and currently work with over 40 of the top corporations.

As I hope you can see, Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC works hard to provide the children in our communities with the support and resources to help them reach their full potential and achieve success in life.

I thank the Council for their past support of our organization and I look forward to our continued work together in serving the youth of NYC.

# THE CENTER

FOR THE RECORD

January 20, 2015

## Youth Services: Oversight - Culturally Competent Afterschool Programs: Exploring how culturally and linguistically competent afterschool programs benefit youth

### Introduction

My name is Nicole Avallone. I am a social worker and the Director of Youth Services at The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Community Center (The Center).

The City Council has previously discussed concerns related to diversity and inclusion in public schools, and we are grateful that today we are addressing this need beyond the traditional classroom, in the multitude of afterschool programs available citywide.

For over 20 years, The Center has provided afterschool programming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied young people. Today we reach over 1000 youth annually with life enhancing, and life-saving crisis intervention and referral services, brief counseling support, recreational and psycho-educational groups, and leadership and performing arts programming. With over 80% of young people in our programs identifying as people of color, and more than half coming from communities in New York City most affected by poverty, Center Youth is well aware that LGBT youth experience intersecting oppressions, and addressing all of these realities is essential to providing effective, culturally competent support.

### Current Situation and Challenges

LGBT youth, particularly youth of color, continue to experience unacceptable rates of harassment, violence, and poor health outcomes.

Key findings of a 2009 survey of LGBT students in New York City<sup>1</sup> showed that:

- 3 in 4 experienced verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation and about 3 in 5 because of their gender expression.
- 1 in 4 was physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) because of their gender expression and 1 in 10 was physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) because of their sexual orientation.

LGBT youth of color often report feeling pressure to choose between their race/ethnicity, and sexual or gender identities, though we know that these experiences are inseparable. In a nationwide study that looked at intersections of oppression, it was found that nearly one third of LGBT youth also reported harassment based on their race or ethnicity.<sup>2</sup>

When young people do not feel that all aspects of their identities are affirmed, they are less likely to participate in afterschool programs, and are *placed at higher risk for poor health outcomes*:

- Up to 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ, with an estimated 65% of homeless people being from communities of color.
- Young men who have sex with men aged 13–24 continue to have the greatest percentage increase in diagnosed HIV infections, and among those infected an estimated 58% were black and 20% were Hispanic/ Latino.<sup>3</sup>

### Community Impact

Culturally relevant afterschool programs and culturally competent individuals can better serve youth, and when partnered with social justice, can more effectively work toward equality in health outcomes for all young people, regardless of their race/ethnicity,

<sup>1</sup> GLSEN. (2013). *School Climate in New York City (Research Brief)*. New York: GLSEN.

<sup>2</sup> Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Palmer, N. A., & Boessen, M. J. (2014). *The 2013 National School Climate Survey*. New York: GLSEN.

<sup>3</sup> CDC. (July 2014). *HIV & Young Men Who Have Sex With Men*. [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hiv\\_factsheet\\_ymsm.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hiv_factsheet_ymsm.pdf)

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER**  
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# THE CENTER

language, gender, sexual orientation, or other aspect of identity.

Center Youth has been guided since inception by the goal of creating a "Community of Inclusion," where all youth feel respected and valued. **Concrete and proactive steps we take toward this end include:** intake forms that encourage youth to share their multiple identities, in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, family make-up, and linguistic needs; seeking out and hiring staff that reflect the multiple identities of the young people we serve; providing regular training to assist staff in better meeting the needs of all youth; offering linguistically appropriate services in-house when possible, and seeking out appropriate translation services when needed; ensuring that groups and leadership programs allow youth the opportunity to reflect on, explore, and take direct action around their experiences of oppression; integrating our Community of Inclusion guidelines in all of our peer educator and other youth leadership curricula; and offering educational materials and books that are inclusive of diverse families and identities.

Similar actions to those detailed above could be implemented in afterschool programs citywide to ensure that the diverse identities and needs of youth are more effectively met.

## **Comments for the City Council**

While the New York City public school system has made strides, such as the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and the 2007 launch by the Department of Education Respect for All program, *there are no such guidelines specifically targeting the multitude of afterschool programs available to youth citywide.* Additionally, in both public school and afterschool programs, there remains

little to no oversight to ensure that culturally competent and affirming services are being provided. Young people continue to face what is often called bullying but is really discrimination, harassment, assault, and worse. All youth should feel safe and free from violence and harassment in afterschool programs.

We recommend that the City Council look to lessons learned from the DOE, and explore strategies to extend similar guidelines in afterschool. Beyond guidelines however, we advocate for accountability through collection and use of risk behavior data, and direct reporting on efforts toward increasing competency, including accessing necessary resources and mandated trainings. Centralized forms with gender-neutral language and parentage status for registration, emergency, and medical contact forms is another small way to ensure that LGBT youth and families, of all make-ups, are included and their experiences validated. City Council supported and mandated anti-bullying and harassment policies, trained and effective afterschool personnel, active and supported gay-straight alliances, LGBT-inclusive curricular resources, and the active participation of parents and staff can positively affect afterschool climate and ensure that New York City programs are inclusive for all students, family, and staff.

## **Conclusion**

The Center is thankful to the City Council for holding this hearing. We are hopeful that through your advocacy we can do more to recognize and support the diverse population of children and families, including LGBT students and families of all identities, in afterschool programs.

Nicole Avallone, LCSW  
Director of Youth Services

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**Testimony before the Committee on Youth Services of the NYC Council  
Culturally Competent Afterschool Programs: Exploring How Culturally and  
Linguistically Competent Afterschool Programs Benefit Youth-January 20, 2015  
By Yelena Baranovskiy, Multi-Site Director, Queens Community House**

Good afternoon Honorable members of the City Council,

My name is Yelena Baranovskiy and I am a multi-site director of the Queens Community House (QCH). Queens Community House is a multi-site, multi-service settlement house that serves the diverse population of Queens. Through a broad network of programs operating out of 24 sites in 11 diverse neighborhoods, we offer Queens residents a needed support every stage of life, helping them to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills to change their lives for the better and become active participants in their large community.

Queens Community House's comprehensive youth programs serve 5000 youth ages 5 to 24 annually at 18 school and community centers providing after school and summer camp, educational enrichment, teen outreach, school and college retention, tutoring, leadership development and comprehensive community programming to diverse families representative of Queens.

Across QCH youth programs, 80% of participants are immigrants or children of immigrants. QCH is skilled at recruiting and serving immigrant, low-income youth and families who are challenged by language barriers, adapting to a new culture, and the loss of extended family support. Our staff is multi-lingual and receives ongoing training in cultural sensitivity. We are rooted in the community and many immigrant parents have utilized our services (ESOL, housing assistance, immigration counseling, and senior services) so they are comfortable with our agency and staff. Whereas many organizations have skill with one ethnic or linguistic population, QCH is known for serving a heterogeneous community with a diverse participant base. Our youth programs also have expertise with Hispanic and African American males from low-income communities.

I direct the Queens Community House Afterschool Program at PS 86 in the Queens, Jamaica area, for children ages 6 through 12. We have been a continuous community partner with this school for nearly 20 years. PS 86 is in a high need community and has a student population of over 950 students where more than half of the student population is South Asian, nearly 30% Hispanic and 12% Black. Nearly 40% of the students are English Language Learners. I would like to share the best practices that we use to run an effective program within a culturally diverse community. Half of the participants in our afterschool program currently come from Latin American countries, like Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Guatemala and Columbia. Many others arrived from Pakistan, Bangladesh and several Southern-Western countries of Africa. The majority of these families are recent immigrants and experience many stressors related to their adjustment to new life, struggle with lack of employment, poor housing conditions and deprivation of the support from their extended families, all of which increases their vulnerability and produces a negative impact on children's psychological wellbeing and overall development.



There is a great value - add and support to the school that we provide. What we do in our afterschool program to work effectively with culturally, linguistically, racially and ethnically diverse groups is the following:

- Educate staff about various cultural norms, habits and effective communication styles that help establish stronger partnerships with parents and families. Staff receives formalized training on the cultural differences and how to build up stronger communication with families and show respect towards cultural differences.
- Ensure that there are always staff members available to translate during parent orientation, registration and meetings with participants' parents. For example, we have a staff person to represent each of our major language groups, Spanish, Bengali and Creole at registration and enrollment so that parents are clear from the beginning the expectations and policies of the afterschool program and what to do if they have questions or issues of concern related to their children's special needs.
- Over and above own services we provide school administration with collaboration and partnership to reach out to families with language barriers. Our afterschool program Staff often assist school office in their telephone conversations providing translation to non-English speaking parents or during their verbal communication with families during school Parent-Teacher Conference days or some other special events for families.
- Provide families with referrals and resource information which might be related to a multitude of issues of concern to them: health clinics, food pantries, affordable housing, educational and cultural places to benefit from, etc. For example, staff provided parents of a child who has recently arrived to USA with his family from Bangladesh with a list of local Food Pantries Centers in both languages, English and Bengali, to assist financially struggling family to improve their nutrition at home and ultimately the child's wellbeing.
- Organize cultural celebrations to allow parents, participants and staff to increase people's awareness of a cultural diversity of the community they live in. For example, in December afterschool program staff organized the end of the year cultural celebration for families and children during which they enjoyed Pot Luck Dinner and Singing Show. Parents were happy to share their favorite recipes of native cultural dishes with each other and it became a great learning experience about cultural diversity for our youth.
- Serve as informal advocates and liaisons between families and the school when parents feel lost or are hesitant to address issues of concern related to their children's performance at school. For example, afterschool program staff served as a liaison between a Spanish-speaking parent whose child showed learning and behavioral difficulties during both regular school day and afterschool program and school staff by helping the parent to build up a bridge of communication with a school Guidance Counselor and Administration. As a result of these efforts, parent and student were able to start attending weekly sessions with a professional Counselor of a local mental health clinic and currently there are obvious signs of improvement in this participant's school and afterschool performance.

This culturally sensitive approach helps the program not only establish an effective communication and strong partnership with parents and families but it contributes towards a gradual and smooth integration of children with special needs into our afterschool program activities and the school as a whole.

For more information feel free to contact me at my e-mail address: [ybaranovskaya@qchnyc.org](mailto:ybaranovskaya@qchnyc.org)



**Remarks by Cidra M. Sebastien, Associate Executive Director  
January 20, 2015**

### **The Brotherhood/Sister Sol: Our Model & Cultural Relevance**

Founded in 1995, The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Bro/Sis) provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support services to youth who range in age from 8 to 22. Our Theory of Change is to provide multi-layered support, guidance, education and love to our membership, to teach them to have self-discipline and form order in their lives, and then to offer opportunities and access so that they may develop agency. We achieve this through the facilitation of programs and activities that focus on our members' culture and identity.

Bro/Sis is an evidence-based program that has documented outcomes that far surpass City numbers:

- Harlem's teenaged pregnancy rate is 15 % - our members have a rate of less than 2%; our educational achievement numbers far surpass those of NYC as well.
- In the City of New York the general high school graduation rate is 61%; where as 88% of our alumni have graduated from high school, 94% either graduated from high school or earned their Graduate Equivalency Degree
- In Harlem 30% of youth, ages 18-25, are working full time or in college; where as 95% of BHSS youth are working full time or enrolled in college.
- One out of three Black men in American, ages 20-29 are under supervision of the prison system – in prison, on probation or on parole. After 20 years no member or alumni of BHSS is incarcerated and less than 1% are on probation.

Our Rites of Passage program is an intensive four- to six-year ROP process. Members learn from culturally relevant curriculum to develop critical thinking and global awareness skills through leadership development, drug awareness, conflict resolution, political education, community service, and other activities. Each Rites of Passage Chapter develops a Mission Statement and collectively defines what it means to be a sister/brother, woman/man and leader. Members also create individual Oaths of Dedication–personal testimonies to how they will live their lives. The program is structured around our *10 Curriculum Focus Issues*, incorporating topics such as Pan African and Latino History, Sexism and Misogyny, and Political Education and Social Justice.

I welcome City Council Members to visit our space and learn more about our Rites of Passage program.

### **DOE/ESI Partnership**

Our Rites of Passage program is the founding Bro/Sis program and in 2014, we began a partnership with DOE and the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) to bring elements of our model to three new schools. One school is in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn and two are in Queens. The intensive professional development trainings for educators we conducted focus on culturally relevant youth development strategies and implementing Rites of Passage programs.

In order to expand focus on culturally relevant after-school programming, we are recommending a change to the DYCD after school RFP process to engage smaller culturally relevant programs.

### **NYC, Youth Development & Service Providers**

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is pleased with Mayor Bill DeBlasio's commitment to prepare every student for success with his focus on universal pre-K and the expansion of after school programming for middle school students.

The current New York City RFP system often advantages large non-profits while not giving emphasis to smaller, innovative CBOs that may not match minimum threshold requirements and yet can provide equal or better client outcomes. Problems regarding the RFP system are related to: scale or numbers of clients served, a cumbersome and tedious application processes, complicated reporting systems, and untenable delays of actual grant funding that smaller CBOs simply cannot carry.

We recommend the following:

- Any new DYCD RFPs to have a portion of the new or re-bid funding (10%) "carved out" for a separate competitive process for small non-profits. This category can be defined as "Seeding Innovation" for example.
- The City can define the size of the acceptable applicants for Seeding Innovation such as, any non-profit that receives less than \$500,000, or less than \$1 million in New York City funding.
- The RFP could perhaps be streamlined for this category, so that requirements regarding scale, or past experience are more flexible.
- Funding for "Seeding Innovation" grants should be fast-forwarded and guaranteed within a 90-day time frame of contract signing, so CBOs that compete for the grant dollars do not have to rely on other funding sources to start the program.

## The Brotherhood/Sister Sol

(Bro/Sis) has stood at the forefront of comprehensive youth development for nearly 20 years, building programs that provide a network of support and guidance for youth who face a range of challenges and pressures each day.

We offer daily after school programming, youth organizing, leadership training, international study, job training and internships, community outreach opportunities, environmental education a youth run farmers market, and more. Our programs are holistic and comprehensive.

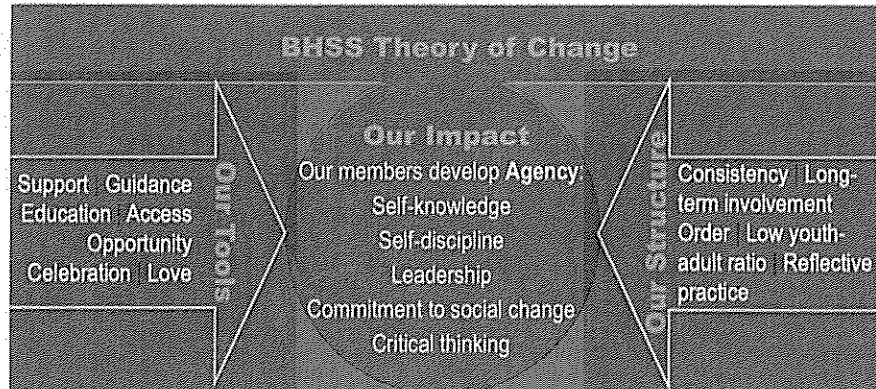
We exist to help youth survive and excel as independent thinkers and leaders within their community. Youth define manhood and womanhood for themselves embodying new forms of leadership within a moral and ethical code that embraces difference and supports excellence.

Through our "Theory of Change" model, our members can safely speak their minds, acquire knowledge and skills, explore their identity and beliefs, and access support to make their dreams reality. We help young people identify their natural and unique strengths toward defining their self-worth. We want them to think critically, see themselves as history makers and overcome the negative pressures they face, the effects of poverty and the inadequate education they receive.

Our members, ages eight to 22, are engaged by multiple staff who are teachers, mentors and nurturers, and available to our members 24/7. What binds Bro/Sis programs into a vibrant whole are our 10 Curriculum Focus Issues through which we help our members develop life-long bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood and a commitment to personal and community transformation. Equally essential to our success is the reflective and collaborative practice of our staff who average over seven years tenure in Bro/Sis, nearly half of whom are Bro/Sis alumni.



*"The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is using their passion to uplift and inspire a next generation through extraordinary work that creates leaders and a sanctuary for children where their members can develop a higher vision themselves".* - **Oprah Winfrey**



Bro/Sis is locally based, with a national reach. We publish assorted curricula and collections of our members' writings and we train educator from throughout the nation on our approach. Through a unique partnership with the New York City Department of Education we have helped to institute our model in three schools in Brooklyn and Queens. In addition we advise on educational and criminal justice policy, as it relates to our work, throughout New York City and the nation. Our leadership is invited to speak and present at educational and policy convenings and conferences across the country.

*"Thank you for your leadership in providing services that empower and inspire our youth. . . . Your organization is a great example of how our community organizations can change lives for the better.*

*I am grateful for your contributions to our communities."*

- **Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand**

United States Congressman

*"It is surely one of the most incredible organizations in the nation. Their work is catalytic! Their leadership, their services and outcomes are without peer. Simply put, The Brotherhood/Sister Sol does the work that few others will or even know how to do."* - **Susan L. Taylor**

Founder & CEO, National CARES Mentoring Movement

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## Reach

Each year we provide direct guidance and support to over **350** youth, and serve another **300** via our partnership with the DOE. Through our youth development model we have trained over **1,000** educators from nearly **250** schools and organizations to serve thousands of youth.

## Select Presentations

Bro/Sis staff and members regularly give presentations for and at educational forums and foundations.

The Atlantic Philanthropies  
American Educational Research Association  
ETS  
Ford Foundation  
Georgetown School of Law  
Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Heinz Foundation  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
National Principal Leadership Institute  
NYCORE  
New York University  
Open Society Foundations  
University of Florida School of Law  
University of Virginia  
Yale Law School

## Awards & Recognition

Commitment to Care Award/Emblem Health (2013)

Urban Justice Center's - Police Reform Project Citizen of the City Award (2012)

The New York Women's Foundation  
*Neighborhood Leadership Award* (2010)

National Black Theatre *Institution Building Award* (2010)

Finalist - *The Brooke W. Mahoney Award for Outstanding Board Leadership*, VCG: Volunteer Consulting Group (2010)

NYS Education Department *Exemplary Advocacy Organization Award* (2008)

Union Square Awards *Special Achievement Award* (2007)

Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation *Art for Life Beneficiary* (2005)

Catalog for Giving Member Organization (2001-2005)

Ford Foundation *Leadership for a Changing World Award* (2005)

Abyssinian Development Corporation *Renaissance Award* (2003)

Brown University *Young Alumni Public Service Award* (2003)

There are **23,023** youth below age 19 living in our community (which includes West Harlem, Hamilton Heights and Washington Heights). The mean family income is **\$26,471** with over a third of our residents living below the poverty level.

The majority of our members **about 92%** participate in the free or discounted lunch programs in their public schools. Many of our young people come from single parent households or are cared for by another relative.



**90%** of Bro/Sis alumni have graduated from high school.

**94%** either graduated from high school or earned their Graduate Equivalency Degree.

**95%** are working full time or enrolled in college.

NYC's general high school graduation rate is **61%**  
The teen pregnancy rate of Bro/Sis members is **less than 2%**

Harlem's teenage pregnancy rate is **15%**

After 19 years of programs, **none** of our current members or alumni are incarcerated and **less than 1%** have a felony conviction.

Oprah Winfrey Use Your Life Award (2001)

Dance Theatre of Harlem Youth Council Award (2001)

Community Works Long Walk to Freedom Award (2001)

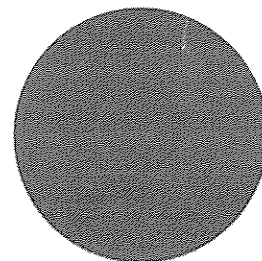
La Unidad Latina Community to Community Award (2001)

Fund for the City of New York Union Square Award (2000)

Oracle/NYIT *Innovation in Education Award* (1997)

## Select Media

ABC-TV  
The Amsterdam News  
CBS  
CNN  
The Daily News  
Essence  
Fox News  
Fox News Latino  
The Huffington Post  
MSNBC  
NBC News  
New York Times  
NY Magazine  
Oprah Winfrey Show  
Rolling Out Magazine  
TV One



Funding going to  
BHSS Programming = 86%  
Administrative Overhead = 14%  
- September 2014

"I've stood on platforms around the world . . . many occasions that would be . . . auspicious, important. I have been anointed. I have been blessed and I have been admired, and I am now at my eighty-third year in life. I can honestly say with total recall that no other event has ever meant this much to me as this evening, this very moment, in my public life."

- Harry Belafonte  
Artist & Humanitarian

[www.brotherhood-sistersol.org](http://www.brotherhood-sistersol.org)

# Our Impact



The Brotherhood/Sister Sol follows members in our **Rites of Passage Program** through age 22. The statistics below and on the reverse side represent just some of the positive impacts young people have gained from participating in our programming.

| OUTCOME   | PERCENTAGE |
|---|------------|
| <b><i>Educational Achievement</i></b>   |            |
| Alumni graduating from high school or earning a GED   | 94%        |
| Alumni graduating from high school  | 88%        |
| Alumni accepted into college  | 85%        |
| Alumni working full time or enrolled in college   | 95%        |
|   |            |
| <b><i>Critical Decision-Making</i></b>  |            |
| Alumni who are incarcerated   | 0%         |
| Alumni ever sentenced to jail   | 2%         |
| Alumni having a criminal record   | 3%         |
| Alumni having a known addiction to drugs  | 0%         |
| Alumni having children before graduating from high school   | 2%         |
| Members who had a child before age 22   | 5%         |
| Male alumni remaining with the mothers of their children, having primary custody or maintaining regular visitation patterns | 100%       |
| Alumni members known to have contracted HIV   | 0%         |

*"This organization has changed my life for the better. I have become more responsible, reliable and gained more confidence. Of the many things I have gained through BHSS, the most important has been knowledge – the knowledge to understand that to succeed in life you must fight past the obstacles that may try to hold you back. If it were not for this program I might have fallen into traps and made mistakes I would have regretted for the rest of my life."*

*"I learned what you do is up to you. Life is up to you: what path you take, what road you walk, All of my personal demons I will now put behind me... I will not let fear,*

*guilt or laziness or anything else hold me. I will do what I need to do for me, my family and all my brothers and sisters that are not blood. I will be mentally strong, physically strong, and spiritually strong. I will be a man."*

*"Being here has placed so many goals into perspective. The activities we've done have brought down a wall that I've been hiding behind... I can compare climbing a mountain to life because I set goals for myself and reaching my goals hasn't and will not be easy. But to succeed and reach my full potential I must believe in myself. And it helps a lot when I have significant individuals in my life who encourage me and refuse to allow me to ever give up or fail. Sister Sol has become a part of me and a part of me that is extremely positive and enlightening."*

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## The Colleges and Alma Maters of Bro/Sis Members

BHSS provides comprehensive college guidance to our members. Over their time in our program our members attend assorted college tours where they are exposed to the array of college and university possibilities. We work

with our members to form a list of schools that fit each individual student; we provide intensive guidance, write letters of recommendation and provide financial aid support. Our members from our different programs are presently attending or have graduated from:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| American University                    | Monroe State University                  |
| Anne Arundel Community College         | Morgan State University                  |
| Antioch College                        | New Paltz                                |
| Argosy                                 | New York University                      |
| Barnard College                        | Norfolk State University                 |
| Baruch College                         | Northeastern University                  |
| Bennington College                     | Pace University                          |
| Bethany College                        | Parsons School of Design, The New School |
| Borough of Manhattan Community College | Penn State university                    |
| Boston University                      | School of Visual Arts                    |
| Brandeis University                    | South West Minnesota State               |
| Brooklyn College                       | St. Johns University                     |
| Brown University                       | SUNY Buffalo State                       |
| City College of New York               | SUNY Albany                              |
| Clark Atlanta University               | SUNY Delhi                               |
| Columbia University                    | SUNY Herkimer                            |
| Daemen College                         | SUNY Institute of Technology             |
| Delaware State University              | SUNY Old Westbury                        |
| Eugene Lang College, The New School    | SUNY Onondaga                            |
| Fordham University                     | SUNY Oswego                              |
| George Washington University           | SUNY Purchase College                    |
| Haverford University                   | Syracuse University                      |
| Holy Cross                             | Temple University                        |
| Hampton University                     | University of Hartford                   |
| Howard University                      | University of Las Vegas                  |
| Hunter College                         | University of Minnesota                  |
| John Jay College of Criminal Justice   | Utica College                            |
| Johnson & Wales University             | Virginia State University                |
| Lehman College                         | Wesleyan University                      |
| Lincoln University                     | Wheaton College                          |
| Manhattanville College                 | Yale University                          |
| Medgar Evers                           |  |

# The Brotherhood

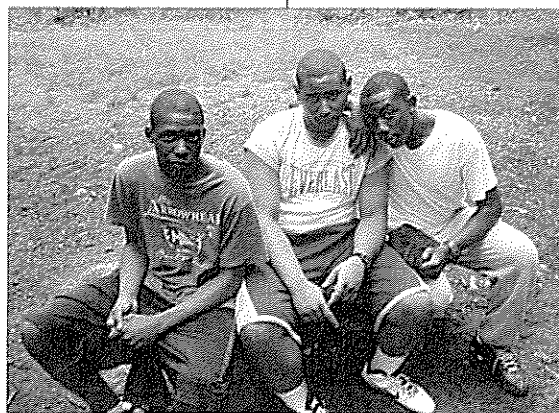
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol partners with public secondary schools, creating single sex chapters that are sustained over the course of our members' high school careers. During weekly sessions, Black and Latino young men explore critical social issues and new experiences, deconstruct messages about manhood and brotherhood, and develop life-long bonds. We have been very successful over the last 16 years building Brotherhood chapters and retaining our membership. Current and alumni chapters—**Invincible & Untouchable, Knowledge of Self, Akoma, Infinite, Eternally Unbreakable, Intrinsic Kings, United Warriors, Stive To Thrive Ciphers, Legacy**—having 12-24 members who say about the program: "**Brotherhood for life.**" We believe several factors play an important role in our successful recruitment and retention.

## staffing

At core are our **dedicated and experienced Brotherhood Chapter Leaders**, men who are deeply committed to young men and have been involved with our organization from 10 to 16 years, and who are available to our members 24/7. This consistency and commitment speaks volumes to youth and is necessary for doing this and similar work well.

## we are family

We know it is important that two distinct kinds of dedication are in place—**long term and wide-ranging**. Our young men too often experience adults, especially men, coming in and out of their lives. Men who say one thing and do another, men who promise to be there for them and then disappear. Brotherhood Chapter Leaders cannot be these types of men. We have often gone well above the call of duty in supporting



# The Brotherhood 20 years of Transforming Youth SisterSol

and guiding our members. We are there when they cry and when they have wonderful moments, and are extremely careful to follow through on what we promise. If we say we will attend a game, or graduation, or a teacher meeting – we attend. **They can count on us.** We have assist our members

in confronting individuals who assault or harass them, and show up in large numbers when a gang jumping was threatened. We make court appearances and home visits, attend meetings in their schools to serve as allies and advocates. If we say this is a family, then this must act like a family showing our members, in word and deed, our **love and commitment**. This level of dedication is contagious and encourages reciprocation.

## recruitment = s.a.w.

**Sight:** When young Black and Latino men see older Black and Latino males walking through the halls of their school outfitted in Brotherhood T-shirts or hoodies with captivating quotes by Malcolm X, Roberto Clemente or Martin Luther King, Jr., it is appealing to them. We wear some aspect of the dress of the day, not to "look cool" but because that is our style. This raises the curiosity of potential members especially as in many of the schools in which we work we **may be the only Black and Latino males who are not custodians, coaches or security guards**. Thus we stand out and the young men become interested in what The Brotherhood is about.

**Association:** Being men who look young enough to be older brothers to our members makes it easier for them to relate to us, and vice versa, and to recruit new members. We look like

*They'll never count me  
among the broken men.*

- George Jackson

(printed on Brotherhood T-shirt)

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the men in their families and communities. We are able to speak their language (the slang of the day) and have an understanding of their perspective. This aids in our ability to develop bonds. We **play multiple roles in our members' lives that may be familiar to them and yet rarely found in one person**: we educate like a teacher, discipline like a father or grandfather, laugh with them like a friend, support them in their development on any issue like an older brother, inspire them like a coach, and bring new ideas and concepts that help them to reflect on their lives like a preacher.

**Word of mouth:** Once the word gets out from members about The Brotherhood, their friends and other young men from their schools or communities then want to be down. Whether they hear about our retreats, trips to the movies, or being hooked up with a free computer, our members are the best promoters of our program. During recruitment we also use alumni and older current members to talk about what The Brotherhood experience has meant to them. This gives new recruits an opportunity to **hear about the benefits of The Brotherhood from their peers**, alumni and long term members from very similar life conditions and attended similar schools as incoming members and know The Brotherhood is thorough, committed, for real, and that we walk the walk.

### **filling the void**

It is well known that there is a pervasive lack of fathers in the communities in which we work; that over **75% of our children are raised without a father in the home**. While we know well that a woman can raise a boy into a strong man, as so many have done, we also know that during their adolescent years many boys crave male influence. This influence is often found in the wrong places—in gangs, drug dealers or slightly older peers who steer them wrong. Black and Latino boys are often seduced by gangs, by prison, by the temptation of being "hard", by the misguided allure of money and sex, by the belief in the alleged quick money of music, by the unlikely possibility of playing professional sports. We seek to fill this void and use the same methods that have helped gangs attract members, fraternities become attractive, or the street corner be seen as exciting.

- We build a chapter that provides **opportunity for young men to connect**, to gain a sense of strength in numbers and of belonging.

- Brotherhood **clothing** helps to convey a sense of belonging. It is also appealing because it's well-designed, stands out and marks the young men as being part of something larger than themselves.

- We **expose them to new possibilities** and positive experiences that are exciting, constructive and opens their eyes (e.g., plays and cultural performances, positive examples of Black and Latino professional men, our *International Study Program in Africa and Latin America*).

- We help them to **expand their minds and follow their dreams** through using a curriculum that is geared toward them, that deals with their lived reality, and uses multiple media that engages their minds and spirits.

- We offer **resources** that help them know we are there for them during tough times. We offer school or home counseling and legal representation and identify job opportunities that will put money in their pockets. We use **Check-in** (at the start of chapter sessions) to listen to and let them know their lives and views are important and can help them overcome a feeling of hopelessness. We **connect the chapters to each other** during outings and retreats, helping them see they are part of an entire **network of support** that will love and protect them.

Too many men who work with Black and Latino boys and young men utilize an approach based only on toughness and discipline. Others go too far in accommodating negative behavior due to the difficulties the young men experience daily. Some do not uphold high expectations or standards. The language we use with our members goes a long way towards maintaining their involvement in The Brotherhood and the organization as a whole.

- We seek to be **gentle, yet firm**; supportive, yet tough through combining discipline with love and providing **unconditional support and high expectations**.

- We **respect their opinions** and talk to them as the intelligent young men they are. We express how truly interested in them we are by closely listening to their experiences and views on the world. Even when angry or disappointed with them, we speak with respect, showing them that our caring is unconditional.

- We raise the bar, expecting that they will struggle to live more consciously and righteously, that they will not be perfect and that they will fall, but that, as we always tell them:

**The test of a man isn't whether he falls,  
but whether he gets back up.**

Check out *Black Boys Don't Cry, Manhood in Urban America*, the award-winning video produced, written and directed by Frank Lopez (alumnus of our Lyrical Circle) <http://www.youtube.com/user/bhss512?feature=mhee#p/u/2/rpm8nw-7pcQ>

# Sister Sol

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (BHSS) partners with public secondary schools, creating single sex chapters that are sustained over the course of our members' secondary school careers. During weekly sessions, young Latina and Black women explore critical social issues and new experiences, deconstruct messages about womanhood and sisterhood, and develop life-long bonds. We have been building Sister Sol chapters since 1998 – *Sol Axé, EleLoLi: The Pages, Siempre Baakoye, Eternal Sistas, and Cherished Phoenix, Soul Apoyo, Soul & L.I.F.E. and Somos* – that have developed into empowering spaces to bond, explore, reflect, and actively work to overcome the social barriers that pit females against each other. Young women are learning to live by our mantra: **My Sister, Myself.**

Facing communities full of violence, underserved schools and limited economic mobility, our girls and young women hope for lives greater than their circumstances. *Where can they turn to develop a moral code and receive unconditional encouragement and counsel on this journey?*

**They can turn to Sister Sol**—to women who can offer insights and advice born of experience, yet who can still relate to their struggle and interests—to opportunities where they can realize their dreams and embrace their potential to become healthy, critically thinking sisters, women and leaders.

## the ties that bind

Through Sister Sol young women enter a 4 to 6 year **rites of passage** process guided by two adult Chapter Leaders. Beginning in the 7th or 9th grade, we bring together 10-18 young women for weekly sessions



to **develop relationships based on trust and respect.** *Check-in* allows them to speak about a problem they are having or reveal good news they are bursting to share, all toward nurturing bonds of sisterhood. Chapters create a *Chapter Name, Mission Statement and Definitions for Sister, Woman and Leader.* During an initiation ceremony they are acknowledged by all of Sister Sol and receive a T-shirt commemorating the completion of this first phase of the process.



It is critical that Chapter Leaders help members' "buy-in" to Sister Sol. Their commitment is challenged by attitudes about single sex spaces and by peers and family. Some young women prefer coeducational settings or to remain in their cliques. At home they are often held to different standards than their male relatives, charged to babysit siblings, prepare

meals and return home before dark. At times they are unable to participate because families do not understand our activities as being important to their development. Sister Sol however offers high expectations and respect for our members' opinions. Chapters are intimate spaces for sharing their thoughts without judgment and finding support to negotiate painful conflicts. We challenge them to make better decisions and hold them accountable. We begin where they are—the desired outcomes being tied to how well they live by their self-defined goals. We share our deepest fears, express our truths, laugh and cry together, praise each other, and **find solace in sisterhood.**

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## my sisters, the world & me

Entering their second and third years in Sister Sol, our members go deeper into exploring who they are, what they stand for and how they connect to the world. They participate in workshops, activities and outings that delve into our *10 Curriculum Focus Issues*. Sessions expand from two to three or more hours as the young women develop the ability (and desire) to analyze complex issues and more fully understand themselves and the world they have inherited. Our members develop a sense of solidarity with other girls and women through examining about feminism and the experiences of women throughout the world. They come to appreciate the sacrifices of their mothers and grandmothers and to see themselves as part of a legacy of strong, enduring Latina and Black women. They learn life skills, discuss topics important to them that are not covered in school, **explore ideas of identity, voice, community, equality, diversity**, and they build friendships. Our varied educational and enrichment opportunities increase our members' college and career readiness and foster commitment to family and community. Wilderness retreats are deeply meaningful as young women unwind from the stresses of home and school and enjoy an environment much different from the usual city sights and sounds. *Homecoming* (bringing current and alumnae Sister Sol members together), *Oriki* (based on a Nigerian tradition of storytelling), and *Sisters Day* (an event for all BHSS women) are other key activities.

## a commitment to strive

During the final years of an active Chapter, young women continue their engagement in activities and take on greater leadership roles by facilitating sessions, providing guidance to younger members and helping to recruit for new chapters. They also write an *Oath of Dedication*—a process of reflection and creation of a personal statement describing their **beliefs, goals and commitment they will strive to live by**. This time to reflect on their individual lives is cathartic, healing and inspiring. The Oaths are shared before current and alumnae members and staff during our wilderness retreats and members receive a T-shirt

and their framed Oath acknowledging successful completion of this phase. Young women usually add their Oaths to their college or scholarship applications.

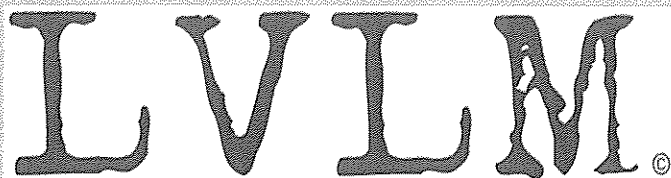
## always home

After graduating from high school (as over 90% do) alumnae no longer meet weekly though remain connected to Sister Sol through attending special events, retreats and hosting younger members at their colleges. Alumnae (up to age 22) receive on-going support as they continue their development to be strong women and leaders. **Chapter Leaders continue our role as advocates, big sisters and cheerleaders.** We connect them to internships, provide financial assistance for college expenses, and assist them with healthcare and housing issues. We coach them through challenges that arise in college and at the workplace. And we show up to their graduations and other celebrations. As they did during earlier years, they know they can call on us at any time. The bonds of sisterhood our members develop are with each other and with us.

**College students. Activists. Educators. Healthcare professionals. Researchers. World travelers. Mothers. Life partners.** Our alumnae are pursuing college degrees and working full-time. Nearly all have chosen to delay pregnancy and parenthood until

after high school graduation to pursue higher education, explore career options and explore the world. Our alumnae give back to BHSS too—co-facilitating our trainings for educators and youth workers (*Liberating Voices/Liberating Minds*), representing BHSS at local and global conferences, volunteering at special events, and serving on our Board of Directors. They know they will always have a place to call home, to **share their knowledge and inspire others**, to receive and show love.

Check out *My Sister Myself*, a video produced and directed by Frank Lopez (alumnus of our Lyrical Circle) with Sister Sol alumna Njeri Parker  
<http://video.yahoo.com/watch/6844459/17800306>



Youth-approved education for liberation strategies & tools

**Liberating Voices/Liberating Minds (LVL M)** is the publications and professional development project of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (BHSS) offering *Training, Coaching* and *Resources* to educators, youth workers, schools and community organizations committed to practicing education that transforms minds, lives and communities. Over 1000 people (ages 15-60+) working in over 200 different spaces have experienced LVL M. They give high ratings for its quality, accessibility and influence. They are reminded of the meaningfulness of working with youth and have:

*"put into perspective what is possible with youth leadership and peer influence."*

*"finally found the answer of how to integrate movement building into youth development work."*

Since 2006, BHSS has enabled more youth to access educators informed about the issues that matter to and impact them. As a result of our trainings, LVL M participants have:

- Facilitated our workshops and icebreakers
- Shared our members' writings with their youth
- Redesigned their approach to a leadership development elective class
- Created single sex programming that was modeled after our **Rites of Passage Program**
- Hired a BHSS alumna as their Community Assistant and as their Chapter Leader



- Expanded their organization's library to "emphasize Black and Latino writers"
- Launched an activism project for 4th & 5th graders focused on keeping the local YMCA open that was inspired by our youth-led **Liberation Program**
- Used what they describe as "challenging readings and detailed textual analysis" and writing activities
- Given greater focus to staff development including by sharing their experiences at LVL M Institute with colleagues

Our LVL M Partners are, or have included:

- Girls Best Friend Foundation (Chicago, IL)
- Nathan Cummings Foundation (New York)
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Open Society Institute (New York)
- New York City Department of Education
- The Steans Family Foundation (Chicago, IL)

*"Up until this week I had forgotten the beauty of the teenager. I plan to utilize this training, first in thinking differently about my teens, then in findings ways—verbally, physically/spoken or written to remind them of the amazingness."*

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The Brotherhood/Sister Sol offers comprehensive, holistic and long-term support to youth who ages from eight to 22. We focus on leadership development, educational achievement, sexual responsibility, sexism and misogyny, political education and social justice, Pan African and Latino/a history, and global awareness. Our evidence-based programming includes a 4-6 year rites of passage process, 5-day-a-week after school care, counseling, summer camps, job training and opportunities, college preparation, community organizing training, and international study in Africa and Latin America. Our work has earned national recognition that includes the **Oprah Winfrey Angel Network Use Your Life Award**, **Ford Foundation Leadership for a Changing World Award**, **Abyssinian Development Corporation Harlem Renaissance Award**, and **Brown University inaugural Alumni Association Young Public Service Award**.

# TRAINING

LVLM Institute is typically 3-days long and designed for groups of 10 to 30 people. Participants learn about the BHSS educational approach from our staff and alumni—those who have directly experienced our model and those adept at facilitating it. Youth voice is resonant in their writings and during exchanges with current members and alumni who speak candidly about what sparks their learning and development as emerging leaders.

LVLM Institute is offered:

- At our brownstone (a living pedagogy) for individuals and duos/small teams from the same school or organization.
- Through schools, school districts, community based organizations, university departments, and foundations that contract with us to facilitate trainings around the country.

Participants will:

- Learn and practice youth engagement strategies with topics that include:
  - Facilitating rites of passage and single sex programming
  - Nurturing brotherhood and sisterhood
  - Using reflective writing to hone critical thinking and creative expression
  - Helping youth define individual and collective moral/ethical codes for achieving their personal goals and creating strong communities
  - Selecting and utilizing developmentally/culturally relevant and challenging resources
  - Developing holistic curriculum using our *Framework for Analysis*® and *Content, Perspective, Dialogue Workshop Model*®
  - Engaging in reflective, collaborative practice
- Reflect on their role as facilitators of youth development in discussions on race, class, gender, and other critical social issues
- Receive LVLM Publications

# COACHING

LVLM Institute participants can receive support in adapting elements of our model into their settings to align with their mission. Coaching is individualized to meet the needs and interests of teams or individuals, but has included:

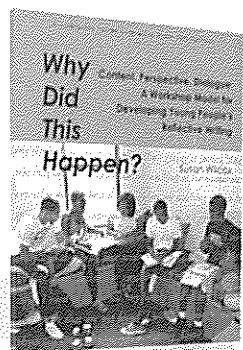
- Providing long term training leading to the founding of the *Bermuda Brotherhood* (no legal affiliation), created to help address the rise of violence on the island and hired a Brotherhood alumnus to co-facilitate the project
- Reviewing and providing advice on the design of a 7-week community ethnography project and museum inspired by one of our workshops and created by The Harlem Community Justice Center
- Working with a team of teachers and school staff at two middle schools (Isaac Newton Middle School for Science & Math, Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change) seeking to develop their Advisory by focusing on students social development as an enhancement to their academic classes
- Providing year-long guidance in the development and implementation of "Social Justice Core Values" at DreamYard Project (Bronx, NY)
- Offering feedback to numerous individuals on curriculum and workshop development

"The overall strength of the training was BHSS's view of children and their belief in their being individuals who are worth more than what society says they are."

"The quality of the instructors/facilitators was second to none. The content was delivered in an easy to understand manner, and even though this is an ambitious program, the instructors give you confidence that it is possible to implement."

# RESOURCES

LVL M Publications include our curricula (a collection of over 50 workshops and strategies for developing rites of passage programming, and a how-to primer for fostering young people's social consciousness). We have also compiled anthologies of our members' writings, bringing to light the powerful voice of youth—providing both examples of the outcomes of our model and literary tools for educators.



## **Why Did This Happen?**

Content, Perspective, Dialogue: A Workshop Model for Developing Young People's Reflective Writing

by Susan Wilcox (Ed.D.)

*"For educators and others who are interested in finding ways to engage young people. . . a practical, insightful and accessible guide."*

Pedro Noguera

Agnew Peter L. Professor of Education New York University

*"Not only an instructional roadmap, but a moral compass for working with Black and Latino students as if they matter."*

A. Lin Goodwin, Professor of Education & Associate Dean for Teacher Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

*"A stellar resource to positively engage African American and Latino youth . . . to ensure academic and life success."*

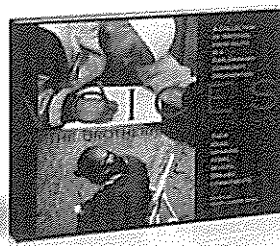
Sabrina King, Former Chief Academic Officer  
New York City Department of Education

## **VOICES OF**

### **THE BROTHERHOOD/SISTER SOL**

A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS FROM YOUTH IN A HARLEM-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION - THEIR IDEAS, OPINIONS, FEARS, BELIEFS, DREAMS, COMMITMENTS

- Khary Lazarre-White (Ed.)

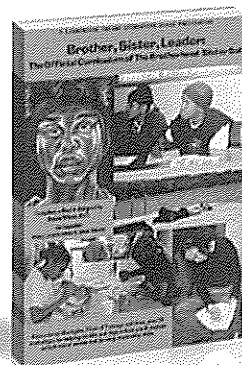


## **Brother, Sister, Leader: The Official Curriculum of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol**

Compiled, edited & designed  
by Susan Wilcox (Ed.D.)

*"... a gift that is urgently needed by today's teachers. It is not a quick fix, not a simple recipe, but it is a workable investment that will empower teachers to teach and students to learn, all students."*

Ruth Charney, Co-Founder,  
Northeast Foundation  
for Children, Responsive  
Classroom Approach



*"... has the power to transform young people . . . should be used by public schools, private schools, youth development agencies, civic groups, cultural institutions, faith-based organizations, and families."*

Reverend Alfonso Wyatt

Vice President, Fund for the City of New York

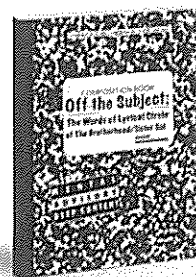
## **Off the Subject:**

### **The Words of Lyrical Circle of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol**

- Khary Lazarre-White (Ed.)

*"I am struck by the level of empathy and compassion found in these words. . . . It is clearly due to The Brotherhood/Sister Sol . . . the guiding force that tutors their hearts and minds with such careful attention to the redemptive possibilities of personal narrative and to the necessity for critical citizenship in the world."*

From the Foreword by Sekou Sundiata, Poet



LVL M Publications are available online at:  
<http://www.brotherhood-sistersol.org/bookstore.shtml>



Over **1000** teachers, youth organizers, program directors, principals, graduate students and professors from over **200** K-12 schools, youth organizations and universities have participated in **LVL Institute**.

## West

Bayview Association for Youth  
- San Francisco, CA  
San Francisco Achievers Cultural Rites of Passage Program

## Mid-West

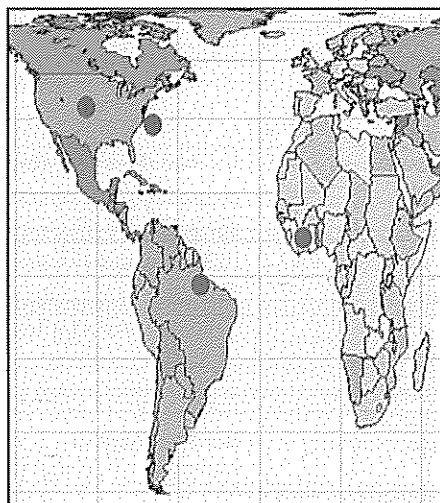
Access Living of Metropolitan - Chicago, IL  
Black Male Summer Program - Milwaukee, WI  
Blessed Sacrament Youth Center - Chicago, IL  
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council - Chicago, IL  
Celestial Ministries - Chicago, IL  
Chicago Girls Coalition  
Family Focus - Chicago, IL  
Family Matters - Chicago, IL  
Global Girls - Chicago, IL  
Healthy Families - Chicago, IL  
The House Covenant Church - Chicago, IL  
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health  
- Chicago, IL  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
North Lawndale College Prep High School -  
- Chicago, IL  
P.O.W.E.R - Chicago, IL  
Public Allies - Milwaukee, WI  
Carole Robertson Center - Chicago, IL  
Running Rebels Community Organization -  
Milwaukee, WI  
Sankofa Safe Child Initiative - Chicago, IL  
Street-Level Youth Media - Chicago, IL  
Umoja Student Development Corporation  
- Chicago, IL  
Urban Underground - Milwaukee, WI  
YMEN - Chicago, IL

## South

The Children's Defense Fund - Jackson, MS  
El Centro Hispano - Durham, NC  
Durham School of the Arts - Durham, NC  
Feret Neighborhood Center - New Orleans, LA  
Global Girls - Durham, NC  
El Kilombo Intergalatico - Durham, NC  
Institute for Southern Jewish Life - Jackson, MS  
Jackson Public School District - Jackson, MS  
Nollie Jenkins Family Center - Jackson, MS  
Lakewood Elementary School - Durham, NC  
Mississippi Youth Justice Project - Jackson, MS  
Mos Chukma Arts as Healing Institute -  
New Orleans, LA  
Partnership for Youth Development -  
New Orleans, LA  
E.K. Powe Elementary School - Durham, NC  
Riverside High School - Durham, NC  
SEEDS - Durham, NC  
SpiritHouse - Durham, NC  
Tougaloo College - Jackson, MS  
Tulane University Center for Public Service - New  
Orleans, LA  
United Way of Capital Area - Jackson, MS  
Urban League College Track - New Orleans, LA  
The Young People's Project - Jackson, MS

## East

Abyssinian Development Corporation - NYC  
Added Value - Brooklyn, NY  
ALANY (American Latin Association of New York)  
AWAAM-Arab Women Active in the Arts and Media - Brooklyn, NY  
Banana Kelly High School - Bronx, NY  
Broadway Housing Communities/Dorothy Day After School Program - NYC  
Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School  
Brooklyn Generation High School  
The Brooklyn Young Mothers Collective  
Buckingham Youth Bridge - Arlington, VA  
CASES (Center for Alternative Sentencing & Employment Services) - NYC  
Central High School - Newark, NJ  
Citizens Community for NYC  
CLUSTER Community Services - Yonkers, NY  
Coalition for Asian American Children & Families - NYC  
Correctional Association of New York/Each One Teach One & Safe Passages  
Community Involvement Program (Brown University) - NYC  
The Cove-KGNA - Bronx, NY  
DC Language Access - Washington, DC



Dreamyard Action Project - Bronx, NY  
Fiver Children's Foundation - NYC  
Girls, Inc. - NYC  
Girls for Gender Equity - Brooklyn, NY  
exalt youth - Brooklyn, NY  
Harlem Children's Zone  
The Harlem Community Justice Center  
Harlem RBI  
Hudson Young Leaders/Bard College  
- Annandale-on-Hudson, NY  
Hyde Square Task Force - Boston, MA  
Korean Americans Service and Recreation Center  
- Flushing, NY  
Learning Leaders - NYC  
MNN Youth Channel - New York City  
Make the Road New York - Brooklyn, NY  
Mentoring USA - NYC  
New Afrikan Women's Caucus/MXG Movement  
- Brooklyn, NY  
P.S. 114 (Luis Llorens Children's Academy) - NYC  
The New York Academy of Medicine  
Providence Summerbridge/The Wheeler School  
S.T.A.M.P./Sasha Bruce Youthworks, Inc. - Washington, DC  
Soundview Academy for Culture & Scholarship - Bronx, NY  
Southern Tier Advocacy & Mitigation Project, Inc. - Ithaca, NY  
Urban Assembly School for Peace and Citizenship - NYC  
Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice Brooklyn, NY  
West Brooklyn Community High School  
YaYa Network - NYC  
Youth Empowerment Mission/Blossom Program for Girls - Brooklyn, NY

## International

**Brazil: Irmãos Unidos** - Arembépe (Bahia)  
Bro/Sis Co-Founder Jason Warwin trained colleagues and has established our first official international Brotherhood program.

**Bermuda: Bermuda Brotherhood**  
The Director, Board and other community leaders have participated in LVL Institute. The organization also hired a Bro/Sis alumnus to help facilitate the program that uses our model. There is no legal affiliation.

**Ghana: Adagana** - Wusula (Volta Region)  
Dr. Kodzo Gavua (Archaeology Department Chair, University of Legon), a partner in our **International Study Program Study**, is using our model and curriculum to work with secondary school students.

**Groundswell Testimony to Youth Services Committee:  
Culturally Competent Afterschool Programs:  
Impact on Youth**

*Amy Sananman, Executive Director  
Groundswell  
540 President St 1A, Brooklyn NY 11215  
718.254.9782*

*Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
250 Broadway, Committee Room, 14th Floor*

Good afternoon and thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Amy Sananman, and I am founder and the Executive Director of Groundswell.

NYC's leading community public arts organization, Groundswell's projects are designed to engage artists, marginalized and underserved young people, and community members in creating visible and permanent change in some of New York City's most challenged neighborhoods. In the afterschool space, Groundswell offers a suite of programs designed to engage a broad and culturally diverse group of participants. These opportunities range from community service for court-involved youth programs to programs focusing on college access and preparedness.

At Groundswell, we've built cultural competency into all aspects of our organizational structure.

In our experience, there are four key issues to keep in mind as the council looks to foster culturally competent programs:

1. **Staffing:** Staff and leadership demographics, from Governing Boards to Teaching Artists, should reflect the youth and communities served. This is important in fostering an environment where youth feel affirmed and free to express their voices.
2. **Recruitment and Support:** Culturally incompetent programming leads to poor recruitment and low retention rates among non-profits. Supports **MUST** be in place to help guide youth through programming and quickly identify any cultural or environmental challenges. This level of staff investment allows organizations to provide equitable service to a diverse group of participants. In our case, Groundswell has developed positions within our program team, a Youth Development Manager and Youth Development Assistant, to specifically focus on the development of our youth participants.
3. **Program Diversity and Open Dialogue:** A diverse and accessible suite of programming options, that encourage open discussion and group exploration, is also vital when building a culturally competent curriculum. This open exchange of ideas creates a situation where youth



feel connected to the organization and project while fostering a learning environment in which youth feel empowered to fully express themselves.

4. **Creativity:** Creation is inherently liberating across cultural barriers, helping us reflect and see that something else is possible. It recognizes, affirms, and elevates the lived experiences of those often left out of civic engagement. Through imagination and creative action we can reconfigure our social and economic relationships, shift power, and make change.

While these are approaches Groundswell has found useful in meeting the needs of a diverse youth population, we understand that cultural competency is a continuing journey rather than a destination. As a sector, we must be flexible and aware of our own cultural assumptions in order to create meaningful change.

City Council funding has played a crucial role in the support of culturally competent programming by:

1. Allowing us to increase the reach of our programming and number of youth being served.
2. Bringing arts education programming to communities generally underserved by the sector, such as Brownsville and East New York.
3. Fostering new partnerships, increasing the impact of our organizations and providing new opportunities for our youth to learn, make their voices heard, and give back to their communities.

One thing is clear: without support for culturally competent programming in New York City, we will constantly struggle to engage, support, and inspire New York City's most vulnerable young people.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any additional questions.

For more information and work samples: <http://www.groundswellmural.org/projects>



540 President Street, Suite 1A, Brooklyn, NY 11215 | 718.254.9782 | [www.groundswellmural.org](http://www.groundswellmural.org)

## MISSION

Groundswell is a NYC-based, 501(c)(3) founded in 1996 to bring together youth, professional artists, and communities. We use art as a tool for social change by creating high quality works of public art in under-represented neighborhoods. Youth in our programs have worked with professional artists and community organizations to transform more than 450 public spaces, enhancing the quality of life for thousands of New Yorkers everyday.

## CONSTITUENCIES

### Youth

Groundswell youth attend New York City public schools and come from low-income and working-class families. Annually, up to 800 14 to 21 year-olds participate. Youth join our programs due to public art-making's connection to graffiti and street culture, to make new friends, express themselves, develop new skills and work collaboratively. Groundswell youth have gone on to work as paid assistants and serve on our board of directors.

### Community-Based Organizations

Groundswell is NYC's leading organization dedicated to preserving, teaching, and advancing the study and practice of public art-making. Community based organizations, schools and city agencies contact us to learn how public art can raise awareness about their organization, advance their mission, build community and visually transform public space. We have collaborated with over 300 organizations since our founding.

### Artists

Local, established artists are at the helm of every Groundswell project. All have bachelors and/or masters degrees in fine arts and experience working with youth. Giving underserved youth the kinds of experiences that are in short supply in their lives outside of Groundswell, they are dedicated to helping create a new generation of creative, civic-minded spirits.

## PROGRAMS

Youth in Groundswell programs develop and hone their skills in four key areas: **Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Decision Making, and Compassion.** They master skills in art making to communicate ideas, work effectively with others, make informed decisions, and to build awareness of and empathy for others.

### For Youth

- **Summer Leadership Institute (SLI):** A summer job-training program for 75-85 youth. Six teams of youth work with artists and community-based organizations to learn job skills and create public art.
- **Teen Empowerment Mural Apprenticeship (TEMA):** An after-school program, modeled on a traditional apprenticeship, in which teens create public art for community-based organizations.
- **Voices Her'd Visionaries (VHV):** An intensive program where young women who have demonstrated potential for leadership examine issues facing women and girls, and choose a topic upon which to focus a summer public art project.
- **Making His'tory (MH):** An afterschool men's leadership development program, in which young man explore an issue for a large-scale summer public art project.
- **Portfolio Development Program:** Groundswell high-school students interested in attending post-secondary art programs work with artists to develop a complete portfolio for their applications.

### For Court-Involved Youth

- **TurnStyle:** In partnership with the Center for Court Innovation and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, youth arrested for minor offences fulfill their community service requirements working with Groundswell artists.
- **Segue:** Youth who have graduated from the TurnStyle program learn the skills that are necessary for participation in Groundswell's after-school and summer public art-making programs.
- **East River Academy:** Incarcerated youth awaiting sentencing collaborate with Groundswell artists to create murals for the Riker's Island jail.

### In the Community and Schools

- **Community Commissions.** Schools and community groups contract with Groundswell to develop public art projects that reflect their mission. Commissioned projects often meet at a partner organization's site and are sometimes part of the school day.
- **Arts in Education.** Groundswell partners with local public schools to implement visual arts projects into the academic curriculum.

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

Over 800 youth participated in our programs in 2013. Most are NYC public school students, with over 85% of SLI youth enrolled in or graduates of NYC public schools. School-year programs are over-subscribed.

We worked with upwards of 50 Community Partners in 2013, several with multiple projects. Partners included the Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District, Brownsville Community Justice Center, East River Academy at Rikers Island, LISC New York City, NYC Department of Education, and NYC Department of Transportation.

We worked on highly visible sites including community gardens, public schools, the water splash area of Riverbank State Park, storefronts along historic Pitkin Avenue, and the pedestrian underpass connecting Atlantic Avenue to the beautifully restored Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Our project themes included sustainable industry, healing and recovery in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, environmental conservation, livable streets, the New York City mayoral transition, and restorative justice.

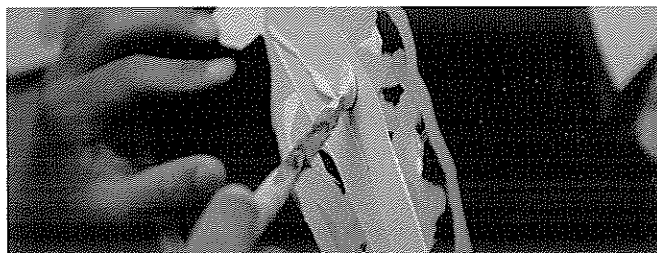
# Transforming NYC, One Wall at a Time

**Groundswell**  
art • community • change



"I'm always outside of the school building in the mornings. Every day I see people walk by the mural, react to it, respond to it. They say, 'Wow! That's beautiful. What's that about?' It connects people to our school and our mission. ...The mural starts that conversation – and that's amazing."

Patrick McGillicuddy, Principal, East Brooklyn Community High School



### Mission

Groundswell brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change for a more just and equitable world. Our projects beautify neighborhoods, engage youth in societal and personal transformation, and give expression to ideas and perspectives that are underrepresented in the public dialogue.



# Every Wall Has a Story

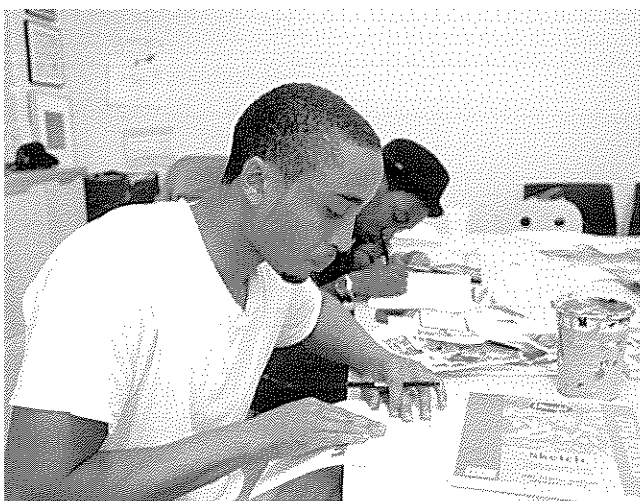


Groundswell is an organization like no other. Through a collaborative art-making process, Groundswell connects personal expression to community activism. The result is artwork that transforms youth, communities, and public spaces.

**Partners come to Groundswell with a challenge:**

- A neighborhood group hopes to beautify its block to inspire pride and a sense of possibility
- A new principal wants to engage students in affirming their school's values and identity
- A city employee is charged with raising awareness of a changed public policy
- A community organization would like to reach new participants to enroll in its programs

As our partners work with us, the collaboration develops into more than a mural. Together, we become part of something bigger than ourselves – something transformative.



Groundswell works with more than 800 students each year.



More than 90% of high school seniors in our Portfolio Development program have been accepted to and enrolled in art college.

### Spotlight: Scaffold Up!

Scaffold Up!, our model of collaboratively working with youth and communities, builds on best practices in positive youth development, asset-based community development, and socially engaged art and design. Through the Scaffold Up! Youth Towers, participants can declare, demonstrate, and reflect upon their own progressive learning within a project and over several projects. College access workshops and guidance are integrated into each youth's sequenced Scaffold Up! Ladder, a personal path to success in college and career.







# Transforming Youth

Youth are the driving force behind every project. And while they are drawn to Groundswell by many things — a connection to graffiti and street culture, a desire to express their ideas, a chance to develop art skills, or to meet new friends — they come away with so much more. At Groundswell, young people learn to use Creativity as a Tool for Change, Collaboration, Critical Thinking/Decision Making, and Compassion (the Four C's) and gain the inspiration, tools, and agency to take ownership of their futures.

**“As a teen I have grown tremendously. I was a victim, then I survived, now I thrive. I have accomplished a lot including getting back into high school, and I am on track to graduate. I am accepted to several art colleges and the rest is up to me.”**

Groundswell Youth Participant



# Transforming Community



Groundswell murals are not just stunning public artworks. Partners use the collaborative artmaking process to generate activism and shift attitudes around social justice concerns, such as environmental inequality, the availability of guns on the streets of low-income neighborhoods, and the potential of a restorative approach to transform our criminal justice system.

**This is what we mean when we say:  
"Art creates community and community creates change."**



### Light: Piece Out, Peace In

Workers Against Gun Violence and American Friends Committee partnered with Groundswell to use art to prevent gun violence. During the creation of the mural, youth met with anti-gun violence leaders and with family members who had lost loved ones to gun violence. A youth who worked on this project asserted that years later, when he has the opportunity and motivation to pick up a gun, he will not do so—citing the mural as a sort of “contract” he made with himself and his community.



Groundswell has collaborated with more than 300 organizations since our founding.

“What impressed me the most is that it’s not an art class; it’s a real civics class. These kids are learning about the subject matter before they actually put up the murals up. They have pride in the work, and they have a new ownership of what’s pictured in the mural.”

Jeff Mann, President, The Greenpoint Chamber of Commerce



# Transforming Public Spaces



Groundswell's 450+ public art projects are a permanent part of New York City's visual landscape, transforming urban spaces such as vacant lots, subway tunnels, community gardens, and schoolyards in over 75 neighborhoods. Each artwork offers passersby an unexpectedly rich opportunity to experience a spark or "aha!" moment – a chance to feel a new connection, look at a problem in a new way, or decide to get involved.

**"A lot of areas in Coney Island are broken down, especially post-Sandy. To have something vibrant and positive sends the message that we're going to bounce back. The mural is a message of hope."** – Reverend Vincent Fusco, Coney Island Lighthouse Mission



### Spotlight: Groundswell Artists

Local, established artists lead every Groundswell project. All have degrees in fine arts and experience working with youth. Groundswell's artists are committed to the practice of collaborative community art and to using art as a tool to advance social change.



# Transformation That Lasts

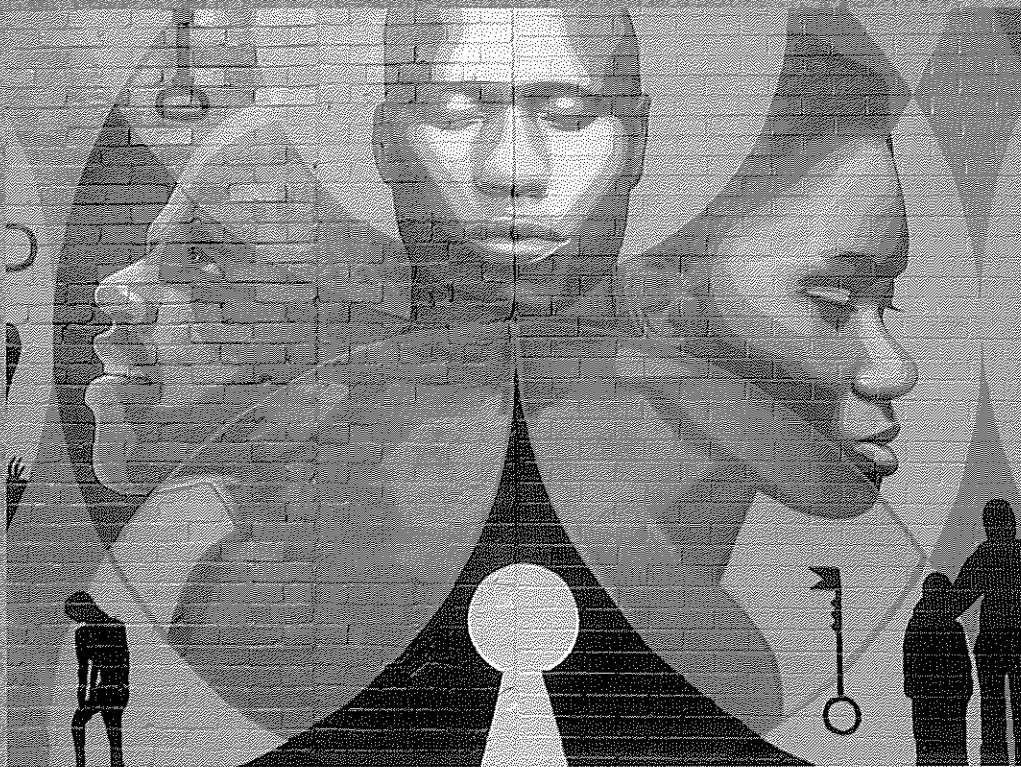


At Groundswell we believe in the transformative potential of the creative process. Even when a mural has been finished, this transformation lives on. The beauty of each piece, the pride of the young artists, and the sense of ownership felt by the community create a collective impact that is felt for years to come. The greatest testament to the power of our process may be this: 98% of Groundswell murals never get defaced.

"Our collaboration with Groundswell has proved a powerful opportunity for us to engage new audiences in our efforts to help people understand the value of their water and the importance of conservation. I trust Groundswell and know that whatever time I spend is spent in a valuable way."

Kim Estes-Fradis, Deputy Director of Education and Outreach, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

# Partner with Groundswell



Groundswell seeks more partners to commission public art to bring important issues and perspectives to light, engage marginalized and underserved communities, and activate neglected spaces. If you are a decision-maker at a public school, government agency, or community-based organization that shares our vision for social change and would like to use art to advance that vision, then we are interested in partnering with you.

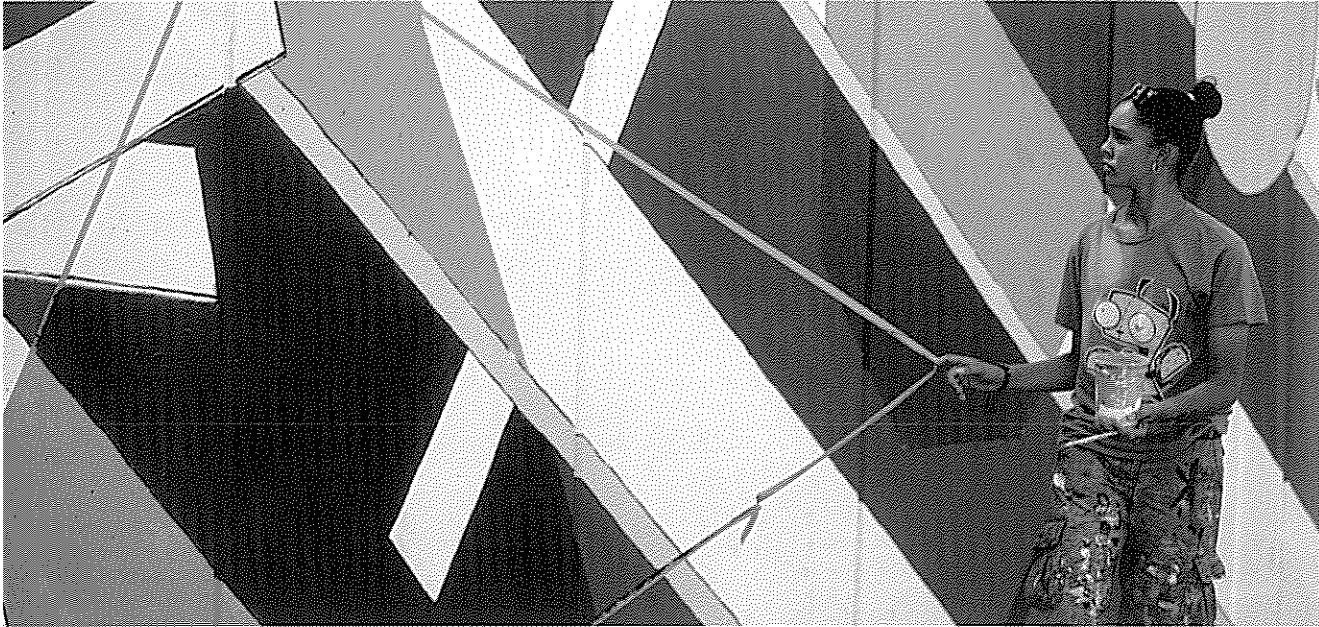
## **What Makes a Good Partner?**

- A commitment to positive social change
- An interest in using creativity to solve problems and generate solutions
- A willingness to work together to accomplish common goals
- Access to a wall or connection to prospective mural site



"Groundswell artists and students captured the history and the growth of our community beyond our wildest expectations. From beginning to end, this was one of the most rewarding projects I have ever been involved with. Thank you to everyone who helped make the mural process so special for all of us."

Elaine Brodsky, Community Partner



#### Join Us

If you're interested in being a part of the transformative experience of Groundswell, please get in touch.

Call us: 718.254.9782

Email us: [info@groundswellmural.org](mailto:info@groundswellmural.org)

Visit us online: [www.groundswellmural.org](http://www.groundswellmural.org)



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Developed through a service grant from the Taproot Foundation.



101 Avenue D • New York, NY 10009 • 212-982-1633 • [www.girlsclub.org](http://www.girlsclub.org)  
Entrance at 402 East 8th Street

The Lower Eastside Girls Club provides a place where girls and young women 8-23 can grow, learn, have fun, and develop confidence in themselves and their ability to make a difference in the world. By delivering strong arts, literacy, science, health and leadership programs we provide girls with the vision to plan - and the tools to build - their future. All Girls Club programs develop environmental, entrepreneurial and ethical leadership in the girls we serve.

## FACT SHEET

The Lower East Side is representative of the growing income inequality characteristic of NYC. The vast majority of the 300 LESGC members are girls of color living at or below the poverty line. Most come from area public housing and live in homes headed by single working women or grandparents and extended family.

*"I have a safe place to have fun."*

*"LESGC changed how I see the world and it showed me that you're not alone and that other girls have some of the same problems."*

*"LESGC has helped me become more comfortable in my own skin."*

Today, the Lower East Side continues to be one of the largest, most diverse, and densely populated districts in New York City. It has the third highest population density in the city, with over 163,277 people. The eastern edges of the community have the highest rates of poverty where many residents live on the edge of economic survival. The Lower East Side remains one of the most ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods in New York, with a substantial foreign-born and working poor population. According to the 2010 census, 35% of the Lower East Side population was foreign born, of those almost 60% were born in Asia, 26% emigrated from Latin American, and 11.44 % emigrated from Europe. The Girls Club reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the LES.

According to the 2010 census, the Lower East Side population is 34% Asian, 32% white non-Hispanic, 25% Hispanic, 7% Black/African American, 2% mixed. Notably the youth population of the LES is even more diverse with 37.2% Hispanic/Latino, 35.9% Asian, 13.3% White, and 10.7% Black. Poverty rates in the LES remain some of the highest in the city despite an influx in affluent residents. In fact, the Lower East Side has the third highest number of young people living in poverty in Manhattan, with 39.6% of young people living in poverty. Moreover, 47.3% of LES residents are on some form income support (5,793 on TANF, 13,654 on SSI, and 57,760 on Medicaid). Around 30% of LES residents live in households whose incomes fall below \$19,000. The census tracts along the East River, directly across from the Girls Club, indicate that in 2010 over half of families with children had incomes that fell below the poverty line.





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**Adejoke Tugbiyele, Lower Eastside Girls Club**

### ***A Testimony on Culturally Competent After-School Programs***

My name is Adejoke Tugbiyele. I am a teacher and the Director of Studio Arts Programs at the Lower Eastside Girls Club of New York. The City Council is expressing its vision today for culturally competent after school programs, by calling us forward to present testimony on how best we serve our city's youth.

For almost two decades, the Girls Club has provided after school programming to young women in our neighborhood with services that involve the creative arts, wellness, math and science, and much more. We currently serve 300 girls in the Lower East Side annually. In our brand new facility, which houses a planetarium, bio-base, Alphabet City Art School, a roof garden and a Maker Shop where girls learn how to program LED lights, low-income and minority youth make use of all these resources free of charge!

The young women I serve come from diverse populations of low-income, immigrant, African-American, and other marginalized at-risk backgrounds. I engage them in creative projects like drawing, painting, sculpture, reading, writing and presentation, so that they are equipped with the tools they need to rise above their circumstances.

One of my students, Aicha, is a young African American student who lives in NYC public housing on Avenue D - directly across the street from our building- and has dreams of becoming a fashion designer. In class, I work with her one-on-one on patterning, color theory, sketching and conceptual thinking. I realize that giving a young woman like Aicha critical resources can help relieve the fear of being judged while communicating her ideas about art, design and how it affects us on a daily basis. Aicha combines what she learns in my art class with skills in sewing class at the Girls Club. She is now equipped with an entire portfolio of work that she has presented to FIT for possible placement this year.

I studied architecture as an undergraduate student and then eventually pursued a masters degree in sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art. Because I made education a central part of my life, I graduated with honors and was awarded a Fulbright grant to do art and activism related research in Africa. I bring all of my values about creativity, learning and experiences in the world to the Girls Club, to help instill in each young woman the importance of life-long learning.

At the Lower Eastside Girls Club, our kids get the one-on-one attention they often do not get at schools due to overcrowding and over-worked teachers. We also have the facilities and creative curriculum that gives them a chance to experiment, dream and to take-risks without fearing "getting a bad grade."

The mission of LESGC is to break the cycle of local poverty by training the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial and environmental leaders.

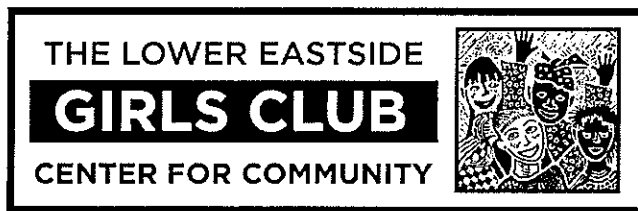
We provide a place where girls and young women 8-23 can grow, learn, have fun, and develop confidence in themselves and their ability to make a difference in the world.

In 2013 we moved into the permanent Center for Community which I described earlier, located on Avenue D – 30,000 sq feet of new state-of-the-art program space dedicated to the advancement of girls, and the neighborhood at large.

Mentoring, wellness, arts, academic support and career training programs share space with community programming, STEM initiatives, and environmental and social justice advocacy. The LESGC also runs several social venture businesses that offer job training and employment opportunities for teens and young mothers: The Art+Community Gallery, La Tiendita Fair Trade and Girl Made Gift Shop at the Essex Market, Celebrate Cafe, and the Sweet Things Bake Shop.

We pride ourselves in seeing our girls run through our doors after-school, greet a Girls Club teacher, grab a free and healthy snack before proceeding up to two hours of art or yoga.

On behalf of the hundreds of girls we serve, thank you for providing us with the resources that allow us to meet the needs of a growing multicultural youth population.



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January 20, 2015

**Aidesha-Kiya Vega-Hutchens, Lower Eastside Girls Club**

***A Testimony on Culturally Competent After-School Programs***

I want to thank the committee for seeing us today, my name is Aidesha-Kiya Vega-Hutchens, and I teach Podcasting and Audio Engineering in the Lower Eastside Girls Club's Sound Studio.

The last time I had the honor of presenting to the New York City Council, I was a child, a member of the girls club drumming team who performed a set we had worked on for a semester at City Hall. An experience that gave me the opportunity at an early age to realize that my potential is limitless, and with dedication and hard work I would be able to navigate the external obstacles placed in my path.

While I went to an elementary school full of dedicated teachers, my school, as well as my neighborhood was often overlooked by those distributing educational resources, that, even at an early age I was aware other schools had the privilege to receive. An awareness that often made me feel inferior to those had the opportunity to go to summer camp, or take expensive instrument lessons. I felt as if I had been ignored for some inherent inferiority. It was my years in afterschool programs, the girls club among them, that closed the gap, that made realize the broader society cared about our community, and even more importantly gave me the evidence that I was on equal standing with who ever I met, regardless of their socioeconomic background. I'd had, of course, performed at City Hall.

The Lower Eastside Girls Club has only gotten more amazing in my absence. It filled the empty lot near my childhood home with a clubhouse beyond my wildest imagination. The fact that I returned from college to a planetarium on Ave D, that girls are spending their summers learning about NYC's food systems, and have a Digital Media Lab to produce videos on what they have learned on par with that of my college required a complete restructuring of my worldview. Since I have been there the Girls Club has lead programs on

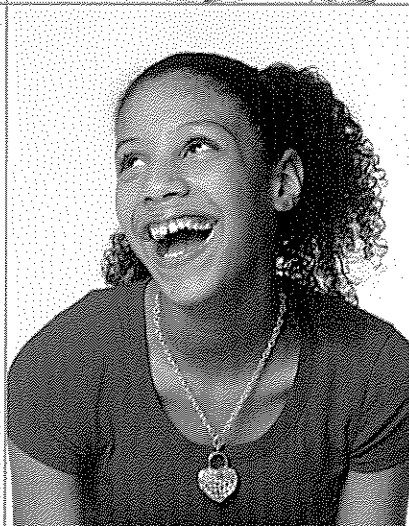
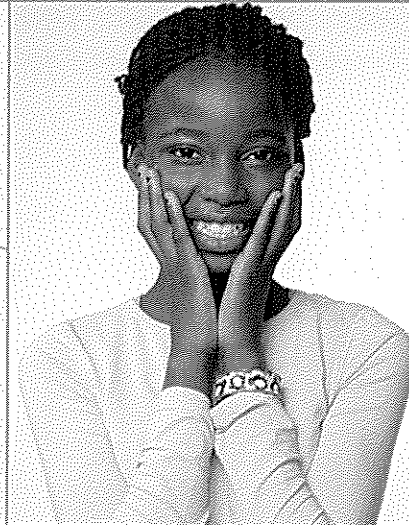
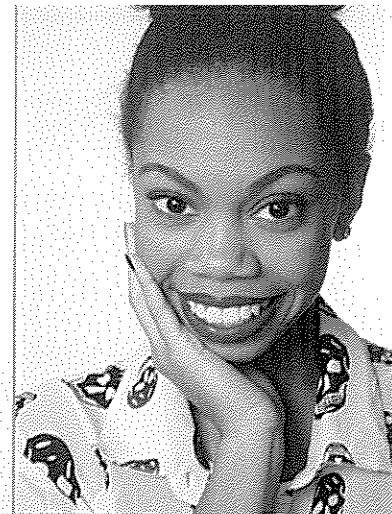
Environmental Racism, Disabilities, Recognizing Domestic Abuse it has spent a semester introducing girls to Chinese-American history, and has had mentors visiting speaking about LGBTQ rights. In these programs there were periods of discomfort, girls had many questions that revealed some prejudice to these communities. It was during these moments that I realized how essential these programs are.

Working as an oral historian at the Center for Race and Ethnicity at Middlebury College, I realized what a unique privilege it was grow up with institutions that prioritized integration above all. As an intern at Storycorps, I learned that one of the most effective ways to foster empathy is listen to the stories of people from other backgrounds. At the Girls Club, I see both happening everyday.

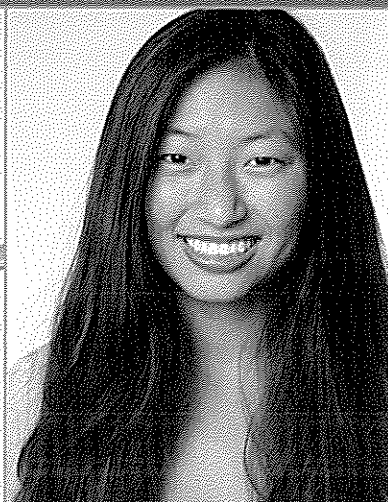
Now, a recent graduate of Middlebury College -- where I double majored in Chemistry and Environmental Science, was a Fellow in Environmental Journalism, a Narrative Journalism Fellow, and Posse Scholar, among other achievements -- I've chosen to bring the skills I developed through these institutions back to my community because I know first hand the influence that the Girls Club can have in shaping the life of a young girl growing up on the Lower East Side. I can't imagine a better way of serving the neighborhood that I love.

Thank you for your support.

Raising the next  
generation of  
environmental  
entrepreneurial  
and ethical leaders



The Lower Eastside  
**GIRLS CLUB**  
OF NEW YORK



# Opening doors. Empowering women. Building community, girl by girl!

Those were the words in our founding mission statement in 1996. Sixteen years ago, The Lower Eastside Girls Club didn't exist. No staff, no programs, no building. And, quite frankly, no manual to follow on how to build an innovative and sustainable organization for girls. After identifying this huge gap, we had a mission: start a place that provides services for girls and women in our own backyard.

In just a decade and a half, The Lower Eastside Girls Club (LESGC) has become one of the best-known community organizations in New York City. Word has spread nationally and internationally, with visitors this year alone from Illinois, California, Louisiana, Australia, Great Britain and Denmark. And everyone is asking the same question: "How did a small group of community moms and their friends become Social Venture Entrepreneurs, design a start-up and grow it from an all-volunteer staff working in borrowed spaces into a unique organization building a \$20 million center?"

How did we do it? Community, Collaboration, Creativity. By being open to opportunity, by making opportunity happen. We understood contemporary culture, and we understood the needs of adolescent girls and their families. We knew our community because it was, and is, our community. And we saw the need for more than 'social services'. All the social services in the world were not making a significant difference in our girls' future prospects - we needed 'social change'. While everyone agrees with the concept that: "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child," we realized that it would: "Take a Girls Club to Make a Village."

We consciously set out to create a new model of community agency, creating a culture that values creativity and experimentation, while putting girls and women at the center of community development and revitalization. Think: Jane Addams meets Jane Jacobs. We took our inspiration from the founder of the Settlement House movement and the woman best known for rethinking the place of community in urban development. We then added a healthy dose of Positive Youth Development best practices, and the Carrera parallel family model, borrowed the education goals of The American Visionary Art Museum and started to build, both philosophically and literally, our Girls Club. Our founding vision was a dual one: to reframe the field of youth development as a 'whole community' issue, and to construct a building to house that vision.

As a community-based organization we work to overcome the fragmentation of youth services through partnerships with non-profit organizations that share our mission, with local businesses, academic institutions, faith-based communities, and with our members' families.

By creating a 'whole-girl' approach - emphasizing a broad range of cultural competencies needed for success: curiosity, poise, happiness, resiliency, compassion, general physical health and job readiness - we use more than academic performance to benchmark our impact. Our new building is designed to create an integrated experience, where education (like life, in general) is not compartmentalized and all are welcome.

*"I love the Girls Club because they help me build my self-esteem, be more confident, and get to know new places and people and try new things!"*  
— Jennifer





## The Lower Eastside Girls Club Center for Community:

- Provides girls with safe spaces to grow physically, mentally and emotionally;
- Delivers programs, experiences and opportunities that spark girls' interests in the world around them, and helps them use these experiences and knowledge to build healthy and successful futures;
- Creates a space for positive peer impact, as studies show that who a youth 'hangs out' with in their teens is a huge predictor of future college and career success; and
- Invests in women. By training and employing neighborhood moms and former Girls Club members, we impact the local economy, and the future of succeeding generations.



The Lower Eastside Girls Club Staff

*How is The Lower Eastside Girls Club different and more impactful than other youth serving organizations?*

### The Girls Club staff and 'family' are committed to:

- Focusing on scaling strategies that allow us to share our knowledge without diluting our local impact.
- Taking a stand that might be considered controversial, if necessary, to address social or environmental inequities;
- Sharing our resources by incorporating men and boys into our movement;
- Addressing inequality of resources in a 'gentrifying' city;
- Building a highly engaged governing body (Board of Directors);
- Establishing strong advisory networks;
- Partnering with other organizations to enhance program delivery;
- Developing earned income initiatives;
- Raising funds to capitalize our programs and strengthen financial procedures and internal controls;
- Developing strong and dedicated staff through training supports and benefit packages;
- Building our own "safety net" of volunteers and supporters through our Angel Alliance (junior board), committed mentors and donors at all levels;
- Working on our brand development, creating a youth agency people can "buy" into.

This year, The Lower Eastside Girls Club embarks on a partnership that adds significant reach and resources to our organization: The Tyra Banks TZONE. The TZONE will be the entry portal for youth participants to Girls Club programs, and will be our national training center. With the incorporation of the TZONE, The Lower Eastside Girls Club has the potential to make statewide, national and international impact on youth and community programming. Indeed, it takes a Girls Club to create a (global) village.

**37%**

of Lower East Side girls graduate from High School.<sup>2</sup>

**90%**

of teenage girls say they "hate" something about their bodies.<sup>3</sup>

**45%**

of Girls Club members have a family member who is incarcerated.<sup>4</sup>

**100%**

of Girls Club members have a place to grow, dream and reach their full potential!

**30%**

of Girls Club members are immigrants  
28% are first generation.

**75%**

of teenagers report having been in a physically or verbally abusive relationship.<sup>4</sup>

**95%**

of Girls Club families live below the poverty level.<sup>5</sup>

1. <http://agyp.org/about/our-communities>  
2. [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/hsgrads/2011/rpt\\_district\\_Outcomes\\_allstudents.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/hsgrads/2011/rpt_district_Outcomes_allstudents.pdf)  
3. <http://heartofleadership.com/statistics-on-body-image-self-esteem-parental-influence/>  
4. [http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/public\\_awareness/campaigns/tdvcampaigns/tdvfactsheet.html](http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/public_awareness/campaigns/tdvcampaigns/tdvfactsheet.html)  
5. <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/East-Village-New-York-NY.html>

*Lyn Pentecost*

**Lyn Pentecost**

Co-Founder and Executive Director  
The Lower Eastside Girls Club

# About The Lower Eastside Girls Club

Many of the girls who attend Girls Club programs lack the advantages that children of middle-class families enjoy: namely, a familiarity with the mainstream avenues to social and economic success, a sense of the different ways one can have a say in the community, and the ability to navigate the educational system. While it has become common to speak of a “glass ceiling” that impedes women’s advancement at their jobs and within their fields, many Lower East Side girls do not even have the “ground floor” from which to build their futures.

The Girls Club addresses these “ground floor” issues through its many arts, sports, career-preparation and educational programs. However, we also believe that the problems of poor educational and economic opportunity are compounded by a lack of knowledge about, and experience in, ways of changing their community. Working towards positive social change can furnish girls with a sense of their own skills and self-worth that rivals traditional measures of social and economic success in its power.

Using a project-based experiential education approach, the Girls Club holds classes in schools, after-school, on weekends and on full days throughout school breaks. Girls also participate in national and international travel programs, and have the opportunity to hold part-time jobs in our entrepreneurial businesses (a bakery, gift shop and farmers market). STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs are emphasized along with arts and personal development programs.

In that many of our members participate for five years or more (we have a 93% three year retention rate), we are able to support them as they transition from childhood to adolescence to womanhood. Through a broad variety of programs that take place year-round, Girls Club members develop long-term relationships with staff, peers and volunteer mentors. These relationships are key to guiding girls through the many phases of adolescence, to their arts and academic successes, mental health and ability to enter college or the work force as fully prepared young adults.

*“I love the Girls Club because of all the true opportunities that I get. I enjoy having mentors, going to art museums, going to camp every summer, and going on trips to other places. I also love that the Girls Club is always there for me when I need them. I make new friends and meet awesome people who inspire me.” — Yangzom*

## MISSION STATEMENT

### The Lower Eastside Girls Club

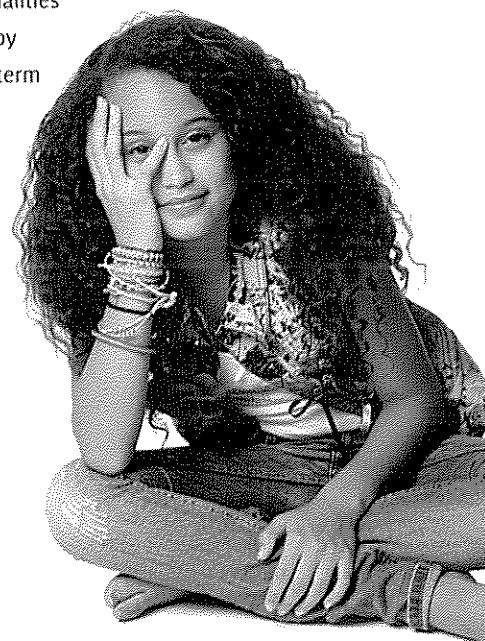
provides a place where girls and young women 8–18 can grow, learn, have fun, and develop confidence in themselves and their ability to make a difference in the world.

By delivering strong arts, literacy, science, health and leadership programs, we provide girls with the vision to plan – and the tools to build – their future.

All Girls Club programs develop environmental, entrepreneurial and ethical

A middle school girl may attend the Girls Club 2–3 times per week, alternating between photography and film classes, Science Sisters workshops, tutoring, arts classes and our monthly mentoring programs. A high school member will attend 3–4 times per week as a Cascading Leadership participant, taking entrepreneurial training courses in our Sweet Things Bake Shop, working at her internship placement or one of our three social venture businesses, participating in our world of work conferences and ongoing speaker series and preparing for college applications and SATs.

The Lower Eastside Girls Club’s cutting-edge curriculum, structured to foster girls’ entrepreneurial, environmental and ethical leadership, addresses the social inequalities faced by our participants by providing them with long-term mentoring relationships, innovative programming, experiential learning opportunities and employment training.





# Our Partners



## LOCAL PARTNERS

### **BioBus**

Science Education for Teens

### **Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing**

On-site nurses for private consultation and training

### **Justice Rising**

Support programs for families affected by the criminal justice system

### **Middle Project**

Young adult leadership training

### **NYCHA REES ZONE Partnership**

Employment of NYCHA moms through our MOM Squad Training Program

### **Voto Latino**

Civic education and voter registration for young women

### **Chicken and Egg Pictures**

Film education

## NATIONAL PARTNERS

Perfect Ten Hudson, NY

YaYas New Orleans, LA

## GIRLS CLUB WORLDWIDE

Shine on Sierra Leone West Africa

Ghar Sita Mutu Nepal

Club Balam Chiapas, Mexico

Glasgow Girls Club Scotland

## ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING

### **La Tiendita**

at Essex Market and East Village

Our Girl Made and Fair Trade shop! Practical gift and culinary items for the home. Proceeds support entrepreneurial, environmental and ethical training programs for girls and their families.

# ABOUT THE NEW BUILDING: THE LOWER EASTSIDE GIRLS CLUB CENTER FOR COMMUNITY

In Fall 2013, we will open The Lower Eastside Girls Club Center for Community: New York City's first and only Girls Club facility. This sustainably-built, "green" state-of-the-art project will enable us to triple our program capacity to 1500 girls per year. When the doors open to the new building, girls will enter a world filled with hope, imagination and possibilities for the future!

We are expanding our successful entrepreneurial social venture businesses, The Sweet Things Baking Company and Community Café, with the construction of a Culinary Education Center and commercial kitchen. These programs offer job training opportunities for teenage girls and neighborhood women. The kitchen will also serve as a classroom for nutrition education and meet in-house food service needs. A courtyard with a planted wall, an outdoor fountain designed by artist Kiki Smith and café tables will provide a unique oasis for studying and quiet events.

In the Fair Trade Gift Shop and Book Store, items from women's cooperatives around the world will share shelf space with girl-made crafts and artwork. An indoor public market space will be a home for our Farmers Market Center, simultaneously supporting New York State farmers and our community's health.

The Technology Core / IT Center is the epicenter of all technology-related programs and equipment. The tech core will be fully accessible to Girls Club members (and their families) and will be home to a 72 seat domed planetarium, screening room, computer stations with free wireless Internet access, digital photography, filmmaking and editing equipment, graphic design computers and digital sound / audio engineering stations.

The Library & Academic Support Center is the site for after-school tutoring, book clubs and quiet activities offered daily by educational staff and trained volunteers. Program development offices, conference and training rooms share space with the Counseling, Career and Leadership Center where girls can meet with social workers, career counselors and college advisors. Leadership development, community organizing and civic engagement programs also take place here.

The Health and Wellness Center, a multipurpose facility for healthcare and physical activities, will include dance, yoga, drumming, fencing, meditation and stress reduction programs, sports activities and more. Nurse practitioners, nutritionists and physical fitness instructors will be available for counseling and training. Educational classes and events for families and new parents will also be held in the center.

## ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY:

The neighborhood that The Lower Eastside Girls Club serves is a 50-block area in the northeast corner of Manhattan's Lower East Side, stretching from the Bowery in the west to the East River, 14th Street to the north and Delancey Street to the south. The Lower East Side falls into Community District 3, which has a population of 164,400 residents. Over 50% of Lower East Side residents qualify for income support or other forms of supplemental assistance. Most members of the Girls Club and their families live in a chain of public housing projects (NYCHA) running along Avenue D and the East River, and in low-income housing developments scattered throughout the neighborhood.

The Lower East Side has the third highest number of children living in poverty in Manhattan, with 13,498 of its 32,139 youth (42%) living in poverty. In many local schools, less than 35% of the students are reading at grade level. In addition to school age youth there are 8,575 young women between 18 and 25 years old. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of this population is Hispanic, African Americans comprise 27% with the remaining population mostly Asian. Risk factors to families and children in this area include high rates of poverty, crime, school drop out, unemployment, population density and a shortage of affordable housing. Together they are formidable barriers to social and economic success.

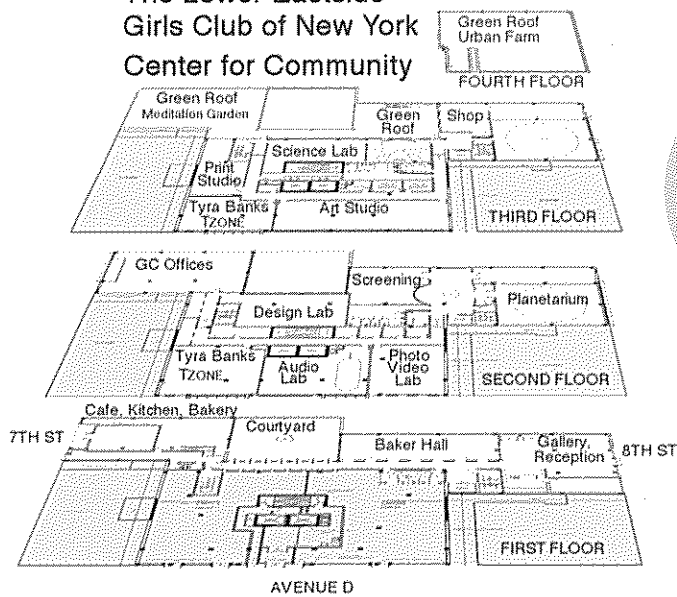
Large, light-filled Art Studios will be used for painting, drawing and other material arts classes. A Book Arts Center with working screen-printing stations and letterpresses will also be available to members.

A Science and Environmental Education Center will open onto a working "green roof" where girls will grow flowers and herbs for the café and demonstrate a variety of alternative energy products. A portion of this new facility will be devoted to public programming and the arts. The "Girls Out Loud" Internet Radio Station is the site for live programming, podcasting and digital journalism activities. Simultaneously, girls will be taking their digital film, photography and IT courses, while school classes and the general public participate in film festivals and screening events in the Center for Media and Social Justice. The Art + Community Gallery, site of our teen curatorial training programs, will act as a venue for a wide range of art exhibitions.

*"I will take full advantage of the media and social justice center for my strong interest in activism. I'm also very excited about the wellness programs for my mental and physical health. I can't wait to enjoy my favorite hobby of journalism by recording in the podcast room in the Airstream. I want to bring my passion for feminism to help future generations of girls feel confident and follow their aspirations." — Nova*



The Lower Eastside  
Girls Club of New York  
Center for Community



WWW.GIRLSCLUB.ORG



## SUPPORT THE LOWER EASTSIDE GIRLS CLUB

Your contributions will underwrite the essential tools for girls as they grow into confident, capable, and self-sufficient young women. Share your philanthropic values while building the long-term sustainability of The Lower Eastside Girls Club.

☐ \$75

Purchases supplies for our after school center

☐ \$250

Sponsors a month of tutoring

☐ \$1,500

Be a patron: cover a year of programs for a girl

☐ \$125

Pays for a week of dance and art classes

☐ \$500

Underwrites 7 weeks of Summer Camp for a girl

☐ \$5,000

Names a stair in our new 30,000 sq ft building

For more details and member benefits, please contact The Lower Eastside Girls Club Development Office at 212-982-1633 X 107 or [adriana@girlsclub.org](mailto:adriana@girlsclub.org)

CONTACT NAME

ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

I WOULD LIKE TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS

☐ **CHECK ENCLOSED:** PLEASE MAKE PAYABLE TO "THE LOWER EASTSIDE GIRLS CLUB"

☐ **CREDIT CARD**

PLEASE CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD (CIRCLE ONE):

VISA

AMERICAN EXPRESS MASTER CARD

CARD#

EXP. DATE

CVV CODE

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: The Lower Eastside Girls Club, 56 East 1st Street, NYC, NY 10003 or [adriana@girlsclub.org](mailto:adriana@girlsclub.org)

The Lower Eastside Girls Club is a 501(c)3 organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the extent provided by the law.

56 East 1st Street • New York, NY 10003



# THE LOWER EASTSIDE GIRLS CLUB OF NEW YORK

Opening doors. Empowering women. Building community, girl by girl!



[www.girlsclub.org](http://www.girlsclub.org)



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Assistant Commissioner Denice

Address: Williams

I represent: DYCD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Bill Chung

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DYCD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/20/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CIDRA SEBASTIEN

Address: 512 West 143 St NY NY 10031

I represent: The Brotherhood / Sister Sol

Address: See above

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/20/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yelena Baranovskiy, site Director

Address: PS 86-2CH, 87-41 Parsons Blvd Jamaica NY 11432

I represent: Queens Community House, Inc.

Address: 108-25 62nd Ave Forest Hills NY 11375

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SAMI SHUMAYS

Address: 137-35 Northern Blvd.

I represent: FLUSHING TOWN HALL

Address: FLUSHING NY 11354

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Sandaman

Address: 517 5th St Bklyn NY 11220

I represent: Groundswell

Address: 540 President St. Bklyn 11215

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ADEJOKE TUGBIYELE (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: LOWER EASTSIDE GIRLS CLUB of NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Adesha Kiya Vega - Hutchens (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lower East Side Girls Club

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/20/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hector Batista

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Big Brothers Big Sisters NYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/20/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandra Sebastian

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Brotherhood Sister Sol

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆