



# COMMUNITY is all of us



A PUBLICATION OF



**COMMUNITY WORKS** NEW YORK CITY  
Building Community Through Art and Education

**2008-2009**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community Works salutes the Members of the New York City Council, under the leadership of Speaker Christine Quinn, for the creation of the Cultural After-School Adventures (CASA) initiative, which enables New York City arts organizations like us to provide innovative and much-needed cultural after-school programming to the city's public schools.

We would like to give special recognition to Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., Chair of the Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations Committee, whose vision and leadership led to the creation of this powerful initiative that benefited students across the city, and to the following Council Members who selected Community Works to implement CASA programs in their districts:

*Honorable Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.*

*Honorable Inez E. Dickens*

*Honorable Robert Jackson*

*Honorable Larry B. Seabrook*

*Honorable Kendell Stewart*

*Honorable Thomas White, Jr..*

Their generous award designation enabled us to bring our model *Making a Difference* after-school arts and literacy program to nine public schools and to publish this anthology.

We are also grateful to the schools, principals, teachers, students, honorees and artists whose support and participation made the success of our CASA programs possible.

# COMMUNITY is all of us

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	
Introduction to Community Works.....	2
Harlem is ... Activism	
Harlem: Moved By Social Activism.....	5
The Revolution of Art Activism.....	7
PS 154, High School for Math, Science & Engineering, PS 149 and PS 241 .....	11
Brooklyn is... East Flatbush	
PS 181K.....	59
Queens is... Jamaica & Rochdale	
Social Activism and Arts Activism in Jamaica & Rochdale.....	78
PS 140Q and PS 80Q .....	81
Bronx is... Wakefield/Seton Falls	
PS 111X & PS 87X.....	111
Artist Profiles.....	128
Credits.....	132
About Community Works	

Community Works is pleased to present the fourth annual *Community Is All of Us* anthology!

This fourth annual anthology again brings together the extraordinary work of students across the city who participated in the New York City Council funded Cultural After-School Adventures (CASA) programs during the 2008-2009 school year. The following pages contain students' prose, poetry, artwork, video, interviews and photographs.

Our students, ranging from early elementary to high school, came from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They interviewed role models and community leaders from their own neighborhoods who are making a positive impact on their lives and society at large.

Using their personal voices and experiences, the students reflected on what makes their communities unique through hands-on exploration and creation in the literary, performing and visual arts. Through this anthology, they share their stories and their communities with all of us.

Community Works' CASA programs were conducted using our *Making a Difference* arts and literacy model which teaches young people to honor neighborhood heroes and celebrate local communities through the arts.

Since the inception of *Making a Difference* in 1996, students from over 48 schools have honored more than 258 local heroes.

This year, we are proud to have expanded this model to nine CASA sites across the city:

PS 154- Harriet Tubman in Harlem

High School for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering at City College in Hamilton Heights, Harlem

PS 149- Sojourner Truth in Harlem

PS 241 - Family Academy in Harlem

PS 181K - John Steptoe School in East Flatbush, Brooklyn

PS 140 - Edward K. Ellington in Jamaica, Queens

PS 80 - Thurgood Marshall Magnet in Rochdale, Queens

PS 87- in Wakefield, Bronx

PS 111 - Seton Falls, Bronx

*Making a Difference* epitomizes Community Works' mission of building bridges between diverse cultures and neighborhoods, using the arts as a tool for social and personal change, and sharing the community stories that connect us all.

Community is all of us!

Barbara Horowitz  
Founder and President



harlem is...

# ACTIVISM



K5  
media, inc.

Denny Mac's  
Barbershop

Denny's  
Denny Mac's

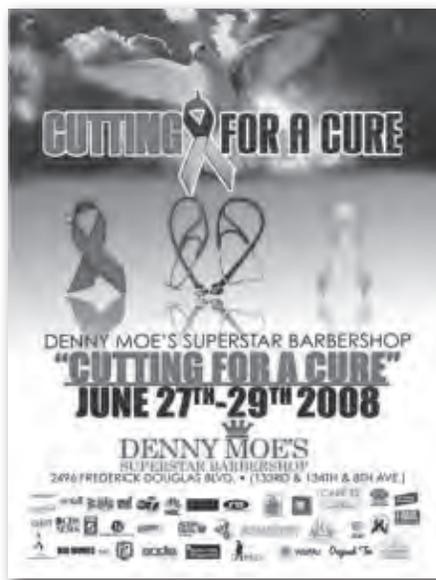
# Harlem

## MOVED BY SOCIAL ACTIVISM

By Ron Scott

Since its reputation as the “Black cultural capital of the world” was established, activism has remained the cornerstone of Harlem. The NAACP became active in Harlem in 1910, under its co-founder W.E.B. Dubois, to secure political, educational, social, and economic equality for African Americans. Today as one of the oldest civil rights organizations in America it undertakes litigation, political activity, and public education programs. Marcus Garvey, a black nationalist brought his Universal Negro Improvement Association to Harlem in 1916, promoting racial pride and black ownership. A. Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP, 1925) that represented black porters and maids who served the white patrons of Pullman sleeping and dining railroad cars. In 1937 the BSCP settled the first contract between a major U.S. company and a black union.

Harlem was originally an independent village of New York City until 1873. After being incorporated into the greater city, a housing boom emerged.



The area was quickly populated with Jews, Italians and other ethnic groups during the 1890s. Following a real estate crash, white landlords were anxiously trying to find whites to rent in Harlem, but yet they were reluctant to rent to blacks. The black real estate entrepreneur Phillip Payton, Jr. moved blacks into the Harlem community in 1904-1905. His Afro-American Realty Company was primarily responsible for the mass migration of blacks from the early Manhattan neighborhoods of the Tenderloin (34th Street), San Juan Hill (the Lincoln Center area), and Hell's Kitchen (the west 40s and 50s).

Due to a segregated society, activism in Harlem was an on-going process with many tentacles. Reverend John H. Johnson of St. Martin's Church took a more subtle role of activism in 1937 by forming the St. Martin's Federal Credit Union, which made it possible for its black congregation to obtain mortgages and acquire real estate. This concept was used by many Harlem churches over the years.

Early on following the “Great Depression” blacks



banned together to change their situation in Harlem by forming the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign. Boycotts were organized by the Citizens’ League for Fair Play against Blumstein’s Department Store on 125th Street, in June 1934. The store soon agreed to a more integrated staff. This success empowered Harlem residents to take on other protests with the reverend and civil rights leader Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. As chairman of the Coordinating Committee for Employment, he organized rent strikes and public campaigns, forcing Harlem Hospital to hire black workers. His bus boycott in 1941 led to the hiring of 200 black workers by the transit authority. When Negro pharmacists were failing to get hired, Powell led a fight in 1941 to have drugstores in Harlem hire them all.

In 1937 Powell succeeded his father as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church. In 1941 he was elected to the New York City Council as the city’s first Black council representative. In 1944 Powell was elected as a Democrat to the House of Representatives, representing the 22nd congressional district. He was the first black Congressman from New York. Recently celebrating its 200th anniversary, Abyssinian Baptist Church remains in the forefront of Harlem activism under its 20-year pastor, Dr. Reverend Calvin O. Butts, II.

Many groups were active in Harlem during the turbulent 1960s, fighting for better schools, jobs, and housing. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had offices on 125th street, and acted as negotiator for the community with the city, especially in times of racial unrest. The influence of the Southern Nonviolent Protest movement was quite prevalent in Harlem and Martin Luther King, Jr. appeared on many occasions. The Black Panther Party incorporated breakfast and tutorial programs for school children, patrolled the community, and spoke out against injustice. The Nation of Islam whose Temple Number 7 was run by Malcolm X (1952 -1963) was the most influential in galvanizing self determination in Harlem. Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) coined the phrase “Black power” and was a dynamic member and chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Harlem was a community of activism out of necessity and that same spirit continues to ignite its residents when injustices arise. For three decades Reverend Al Sharpton has been at the forefront of community activism. Even his run for President of the U.S. was a form of activism. This continued social activism and community organization played a major role in Barack Obama being elected the first black President of the U.S.

# THE **REVOLUTION** OF ART ACTIVISM

By Ron Scott

**T**he Black Arts Movement took a radical turn in America as a result of the civil rights movement, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, and the Black Power Movement. During 1960-1970 artists became creative warriors expressing politically engaged work that explored black culture, its roots and historical experience. It was time to define the world in their own terms not through the white perceptions. *Time* magazine (1994) described the Black Arts Movement as the “single most controversial moment in the history of African-American literature—possibly in American literature as a whole.”

The most significant art movement group was formed in Harlem by 50 artists calling themselves The Twentieth Century Creators, serving as a blueprint for black artists. Some of the members; Abdullah Aziz, Taiwo DuVall, Gaylord Hassan, Bill Howell, Otto Neals, Ademola Olugebefola, Okoe Pyatt and Abdul Rahman regrouped, in 1965 as The Weusi Artists Collective. They became the pace-setters for much of the cultural movement in Harlem, and the rest of the country. The tradition of black art is seen in the new art galleries sprouting up in Harlem, as some former members like Olugebefola and Harlem artist Grace Williams continue the Weusi philosophy.

In 1968 The Studio Museum in Harlem became the premier museum dedicated to African American art, an institution that grew out of the Black Arts movement. The development of Black theater

groups with ties to community organizations and its issues were a direct result of the Black Arts movement. Black theaters served as the focus of poetry, dance, and music performances in addition to formal and ritual drama. The most important figure in the Black Arts Movement is Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones). Following the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) made a symbolic move from Manhattan’s Lower East Side to Harlem, where he founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BARTS). By 1970 Black Arts theaters and cultural centers were active throughout America. The New Lafayette Theatre (Bob Macbeth, executive director, and Ed Bullins, writer in residence), Barbara Ann Teer’s National Black Theatre, Woodie King’s New Federal Theater, Roger Furman’s New Heritage Theater, and Frank Silvera Writers Workshop under the direction of Garland Thompson led the way in Harlem. These groups are responsible for generations of theater-goers, as well as giving aspiring actors an opportunity to perfect their craft. AUDELCO (Audience Development Committee, Inc.)

was established in 1973 by the late Vivian Robinson to honor excellence in Black Theatre through presentation of Vivian Robinson/AUDELCO Recognition Awards. The awards were created to promote “recognition, understanding and awareness of the arts. Poets in the Black Arts Movement include: Amiri Baraka, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ed Bullins, Jayne Cortez, Nikki Giovanni, Lorraine Hansberry, Gil-Scott Heron, Maulana Ron Karenga, Larry

**The Black Arts movement opened the door for blacks to define their culture through creative self-expression.**



Neal, Ishmael Reed, Don L. Lee, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Quincy Troupe, and John Alfred Williams among others. Black writers moved to form the Harlem Writers Guild, led by John O. Killens, which included Maya Angelou, Jean Carey Bond, Rosa Guy, and Sarah Wright among others.

Young dancers pursued their dreams through such dance companies at Dianne McIntyre's *Sounds in Motion*. The Alvin Ailey Dance Company, founded by Ailey in 1958 changed the perception of American modern dance. The company, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, continues to move forward. Dance Theatre of Harlem the first black classical ballet company was founded in Harlem, New York City (1969), by Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook. The company's traveling ensemble continues its tradition. James

Brown reflected the movement with songs like "Say It Loud, I'm Black and Proud," Sly and the Family Stone's "Stand," and "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey." Max Roach recorded *Freedom, NOW!*, Miles Davis introduced jazz-fusion on "Bitches Brew," "On The Corner" and "Jack Johnson," as musicians like pianist Don Pullen, Billy Bang, David Murray, Cecil McBee and Sam Rivers forged a free-flowing sound called *avant-garde*.

Today activism is entrenched in the community with such musicians as Craig S. Harris and Bill Saxton, and the New Amsterdam Music Association, as well as the Harlem Arts Alliance. The Black Arts movement opened the door for blacks to define their culture through creative self-expression.

# Did you



*... Harlem was an independent village of New York City until 1873?*

*... Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. bus boycott in 1941 led to the hiring of 200 black workers by the NYC Transit Authority?*

*... Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) coined the phrase "Black Power"?*

*... Loren Schoenberg was the musical director for the famous cabaret singer Bobby Short during his many performances at NYC's Cafe Carlyle?*

*... Loren Schoenberg participated in a televised jazz music special filmed at the White House with President Clinton?*

*... President Clinton appointed Jackie Rowe-Adams to serve as Members of the Parents Advisory Council on Youth Drug Abuse?*

*... Photographer Kwame Braithwaite has great photos of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles and Little Stevie Wonder performing at the Apollo Theater?*

*... 125th Street was the site of the Battle of Harlem in 1776?*

*... Most of the artists in the Black Arts Movement came from the Bronx?*

*... The Children's Art Carnival has a course on making and writing comic books?*

*... Curtis Sherod was a former member of the rap group Touch of Class Disco?*

*... Dindga McCannon, who co-founded the Black Women's Art Collective, made a Barack Obama quilt?*

*... Kwame Braithwaite has been an art activist for 50 years?*

# Did you

X

M

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M

?

*... The IMPACT Repertory Theater was the first Harlem teenage group to be nominated for a Grammy Award?*

*... Harlem stretches from the East River to the Hudson River between 158th Street-where it meets Washington Heights?*

*... Spanish Harlem extends east Harlem's boundaries to south of 96th Street?*

*... The Dutch living in Harlem were repeatedly ambushed by Native Americans (Lenape), who were previously the only inhabitants of the land?*

*... Wealthy farmers, called "patroons," maintained country estates largely on the heights overlooking the Hudson River?*

*... Service connecting the suburb of Harlem with New York was by steamboat on the East River, an hour and a half ride?*

*... Small groups of black people lived in Harlem as early as 1880, especially in the area around 125th Street and "Negro tenements" on West 130th Street?*

*... Some white residents of Harlem resisted the neighborhood's change, especially once the swelling black population pressed west of Lenox Avenue, which served as an informal color line until the early 1920s?*

*... In 1936, Orson Welles produced his famous black Macbeth at the Lafayette Theater in Harlem?*

*... Harlem lacked any permanent performance space until the creation of the Gatehouse Theater in an old pumping station on 135th Street, in 2006?*

*... W.E.B. DuBois lived and published the NAACP's magazine The Crisis in Harlem in the 1920s?*

# PS154

harlem

**Grades:** Pre K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, SE

**Principal:** Elizabeth Jarrett

**Assistant Principals:**  
Raymundo DeJesus

**Participating Teachers:**  
Yvonne Laroche, Rudine Wright

**Parent Coordinator:** Tonato Perez

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Inez E. Dickens

**Teaching Artists**  
Margaret Holtz: Musical Theater  
Iyaba Mandingo: Visual Art



**Participating Students:** April Washington, Deion Reliford, Kevin Smith, Amani Reaves, Mariama Diallo, Jamel Dingle, Nurjahan Nazu, Fanta Kaloka, Shaquasia Meade, Deja Lewis, Nathalie Encarnacion, Lataje Cleveland, Kaire Kane, Tyrick Peterson, Donte Cox, Chardonnay Williamson, Yaya Diabate, Adrian Mendoza, Asley Torres, Kiaris Guzman, Zachariah Davis, Jordan Campell, Juan Vasquez, Autumn Joseph, Anissa Oliver, Tony Wang, Janay Salter, D'Armond Vance, Steve Reddic, Christina Goodwin, Deashia Williams, Kristian Hutson, Tatayana Herviey, Jacquell Phillips, Ashley Collazo, Kayla Sylvester, Ricardo Alicea, Carneiquea Blake, Jose Garcia, Natia Williams, Michael Howard, Nadia Espinal, Kristopher Carolina

# OUR

## favorite places

### Apollo

By Jacquell Phillips

Apollo,  
all my history in fact  
And I'm inspired by Sojourner Truth  
Who was an Abolitionist against slavery.  
I also work with people from the Apollo  
And interview the elders about their history  
And Harlem.  
We learn things we didn't know.

### Abyssinian

By Carnequea Blake

All churches in my community  
And only one is my favorite.  
The Abyssinian church  
Such a historical place  
A place so sweet, so unique  
In it's own way.  
Some people cal it  
A place for family, friends  
Everyone is so welcome.  
You get a feeling of kindness  
That's why it's my favorite

### The Schomburg

By Janay Salter

This place is historical  
History at the door  
But still has much  
More in store.  
Turn the page  
Maybe you will see  
What's inside you and me.  
Searching for the world  
We once knew  
Come on the history  
Is inside of you.  
Follow the wall  
And you will see  
What you and me can be.  
Past, present future  
Awaits you and me  
So let's discover history.



# COMMUNITY IS...



A Community is a place where people live, learn, work and play. A Community is where we love each other and we care.

—Tavay Salter

## My School is Community

Our school is named after Harriet Tubman. Harriet Tubman who ran for freedom. The 19 time - she never got caught. She led about 300 slaves to freedom. I'm proud that my school is part of THIS community.

—Jose Garcia

## HARLEM

Come to this town.  
Look around.  
People may be crazy.  
Don't be lazy.  
Don't have a frown, listen  
To the sounds of Harlem. Talk-  
ing about the American Dream  
you  
got better luck looking in  
magazines if you want to  
know how to dance.  
Take a chance.  
Come to follow The Apollo.  
Just Follow.

—Kristoper Carolina

## Excerpt from play about community

Community, where the people live

Where there are places to go  
Game rooms, restaurants and  
stuff you know

Where we travel by cars, buses  
and trains

Where we have fun

While we play in the sun.

Walking down the street

I see what my community can  
be.

I see great opportunities  
And possibilities.

I see the dream of unity  
in my community.

Adam Clayton Powell

Streets crowded with people

And when you look up

You see people, people, people.

—Created by The Hip Hop Ac-  
tivist Theater Group

# PS 154

# Youth **on the** Move!

“The Tour was fun. We had a competition, we made banners, we danced and we rapped. We had two teams. One was called Team swagger and the other was Swagger Kids. I was on Team Swagger. We tried our best and had fun.”

—**Neaishia Williams**



“The walking was exciting. Although I’ve been there before, but it wasn’t as fun as going with my class and schoolmates. It was exciting competing against one another but in a positive way. We learned the four elements of Hip Hop. Mr. Curtis Sherrod showed us how we can make money the smart way.”

—**Carnelquea Blake**

“We danced and played. Some people won. Some people lost. My favorite was dancing. Even though people won and lost, everyone had fun.” —**Natia**



# Dindga McCannon



Dindga McCannon, multimedia artist and master quilt maker, was born and raised in Harlem. Inspired to become an artist at age 10, McCannon fuses traditional women's needlework taught to her by both her mother and grandmother with fine art training received at the City University of New York. Her career as an artist began in 1964, when she joined the Weusi Artists, a Harlem-based artist collective.

A co-founder of The Black Women's Art Collective, McCannon uses paint, yarns, beads, fiber, metals, fabric collage and papers, which she herself makes, to produce her "ArtQuilts." Two themes usually run through her work— stories documenting the African American existence and landscape explorations. McCannon wrote and illustrated two children's books,

*Peaches and Wilhemina Jones - Future Star*, which chronicle her early adventures as a young Harlem artist. She also illustrated the children's books of Edgar Nkosi White.

McCannon's work has been featured in several high profile exhibitions, including "Spirits of the Cloth" at the American Crafts Museum, "Black Creativity Prism" at the Museum of Science and Industry, "Visions Speaking to the Soul" at the Schomburg Center and the NCA's "Modern Tribe Vibes-Elegance to Funk" at Baltimore's Eubie Blake Museum. Her wearable art pieces have been mainstays in the fashion productions, AFRIMODA, FashionArt and FashionNations.

# INTERVIEW WITH DINDGA McCANNON



## **What does Harlem mean to you?**

Harlem is my home. I lived on 121<sup>st</sup> street and St. Nicholas, growing up. I was supposed to be born in Harlem Hospital but that night everybody was having babies so they took my mother to Ward's Island and I was born there. Harlem is a place with great cultures. I have lots of friends here. I grew up during the 60s when we were into Black Power and trying to manifest the African spirit on the planet and instill black pride in our people. You saw that in Harlem, especially on 125<sup>th</sup> street. 125<sup>th</sup> street is my most favorite street in the whole world because there is so much going on: the colors, the people and so many cultures intermingling. I also used to be a vendor on 125<sup>th</sup> street.

## **What does being a community activist mean to you?**

Basically it means if I see something that's troubling I try to change it, or I try to get a group of people together so we can all come together and slowly but surely change things. Also I try to make people aware of what's going on. When you see something that's wrong sometimes one person can't always change things but you can start small. Like Black History Month; it started with one day, now it's up to a month.

## **What was it like being a kid in Harlem?**

Growing up in Harlem in the 60s was very community minded. There was no such thing as a cell phone and a lot of us didn't have telephones, but you can believe if I did something wrong and I was on 125<sup>th</sup> Street by the time I got in front of my building on 121<sup>st</sup> Street my mother or grandmother would be standing outside

with a belt, already knowing what I had done. And there was no arguing. We didn't talk back to our parents or elders. There was a lot of respect for adults. We said "Yes Ma'am" and "How are you?" We had a very loving community. We used to bring our blankets out to Mont Morris Park and spend the night there.

## **When did you decide you wanted to be a community activist and who inspired you?**

In the 60s we, as black people and as artists, had a lot of issues—getting jobs, finding work, space, just trying to make our community more aware that black was beautiful and just as valid as other races or religions on the planet.

## **What was it like being an artist in the 60s?**

It was heaven and hell. As a woman I wasn't supposed to be an artist. I was supposed to be something else. I was strongly discouraged to be an artist and that was hell because I knew what I wanted to do. It was heaven because there were a group of artists that started out being called the 20<sup>th</sup> century art creators. Next thing you know, I joined the group. The group morphed into the Weusi Artist Collective. These artists embraced me, they helped me learn to paint, they helped me get supplies, they helped me have exhibitions and they basically started my career.

## **What is the most important thing I can do to help our community today?**

Be successful, go to school, get your education, become a part of the community that's positive. Try to

# STUDENT REFLECTIONS



help whoever you can in whatever way you can. You don't have to have money to help; you can do something as simple as ask an elder person if you can help them with their groceries. Things like that.

## What makes you an artist?

Very hard work. Countless nights, sleepless days, unpaid holidays, getting laid off on a job—all of that stuff. But mainly the love of creating something, taking nothing and making it into something that is fascinating, that's what I love about it.



Dear Sister Dindga,

Thank you for coming and sharing your knowledge of art and Harlem. I am glad you showed us your art. Thank you for answering all our questions. I liked all the art you showed. One day I would like to be an artist just like you.

Sincerely,  
—**Fanta Kaloka**

Dear Sister Dindga,

I want to thank you for coming and sharing your knowledge of art and of Harlem. I am glad that you showed your beautiful art. It's truly amazing and I will never forget about it; it will always be in my memory. I hope you can come again. Thank you for spending time with us.

Sincerely,  
—**Kaire Kane**

Dear Sister Dindga,

Thank you for coming and sharing your knowledge of art and Harlem. I love your art and it really meant something special. There were many pieces of art that I will always remember in my head. You're a very beautiful woman that I will always stand up to.

Sincerely,  
—**Mariama Diallo**

Dear Sister Dindga,

Thank you for coming and sharing your life history with us. I think that your life is interesting. I thought that all of your art is so beautiful. I loved the way you answered the questions. You really gave very important things that happened to you in your answers. I like the way that your art tells a story. I'm looking forward to reading your book "Peaches". I would really like to see you again. Someday I would like to be a wonderful artist, just like you.

Sincerely,  
—**Shaquista Meade**

PS 154 honors

# Curtis Sherrod



## Co- Founder, The Hip Hop Culture Center

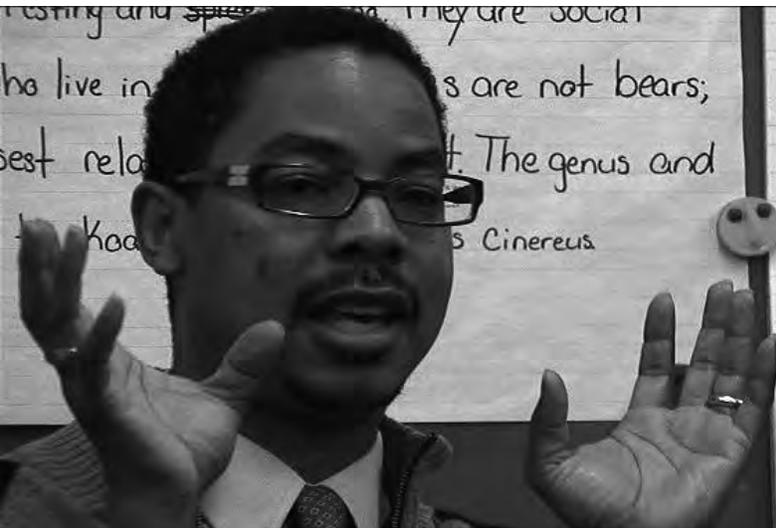
Curtis Sherrod, Harlem resident, is an entrepreneur, Hip-Hop activist and Hip-Hop historian. Director of Global Artists Coalition (GAC), he also founded the Hip-Hop Culture Center in Harlem. Sherrod possesses one of the most significant collections of Hip-Hop memorabilia in the world.

GAC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating at-risk youth about and connecting them to careers

in the arts, communication and entertainment industries. GAC provides a path for youth to build self-confidence, discover a sense of purpose and plan for the future. Sherrod co-produces GAC's traveling Hip-Hop History & Cultural Exhibition, showcasing the living history of music, styles and art that began over a quarter century ago. The Hip Hop Cultural Center, a brainchild of Sherrod, was created to be a haven for the young people of Harlem where education, literacy programs and Hip-Hop culture are the priorities.

Sherrod's collection of over 1,000 original Hip-Hop flyers and memorabilia items has been appraised by Sotheby's at more than \$15,000. A Hip Hop aficionado since 1977, Sherrod realized his flyers were records of hip-hop history. 80 of Sherrod's flyers are now housed in the permanent collection at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. Other components of his collection are scheduled to tour Japan and other countries around the world.

# INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS SHERROD

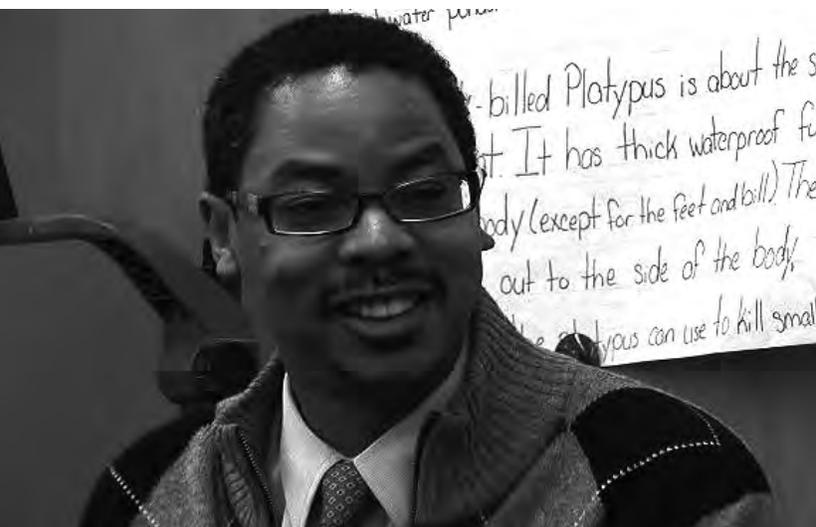


## **What do you do at the Hip-hop Museum and Cultural Center?**

We use Hip-hop to teach economic literacy, political awareness, hip-hop and civil rights, diet and nutrition. You have a lot of distractions today that were not around when I was young. You have the internet, TV, mp3s, iPods. It's ok to be versed in hip-hop but you have to balance that with education.

## **When did you start your career?**

I had my first hit record when I was 16. The first song I made was called The Ultimate Rap. My group was called Nice & Nasty 3M.C.'s. Can you imagine



being 16 in high school and you got a record out? But the thing is, you have to master the English language. The more words you know and the more experiences you have, the more you'll be able to talk about. But I also have to say; for me it wasn't about making money, I just wanted to be the best at it.

## **How is Hip-Hop different today than it was when you were young?**

The way you experience hip hop is totally different than how I experienced it. Me and my boys would go find a street lamp and hook up our equipment to a street lamp and then we would play the music in the street. All the neighbors would come out and you would have a block party. There was no cursing, no



N word, and no B word. It was about being creative. Today Hip-hop is used to make money. Hip-hop is a multi-billion dollar industry. When hip-hop was first born it was done for the love. And when you do it for the love it something very different then when it's done for money. And the other thing is we don't control it. We don't run it.

## **What is a hip-hop activist and what advice would you give to someone who wants to be a hip-hop activist?**

A hip-hop activist is someone who uses hip hop to cause something positive to occur in their community

# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

I like Hip-Hop in the Boogie Down”

—**Kristoper Carolina**

The words that best describe him/her:

“Funny, because he was corrected by Darmon and *he listened*”

—**Jacquell Philips**

“Cool. awesome and jazzy.”

—**Nadia Espinal**

“Well-spoken, knowledgeable person and dignity”

—**Christina Goodwin**

Mr Sherrod. Thank you for taking your time to come see us. You told us about your life and we thank you. I did not know that Hip Hop was changing until you told us. I like your love for Hip hop and history. Thank you.

Sincerely,

—**Kristoper Carolina**

Dear Mr. Sherrod,

I thank you for coming to our school. I wish you could come back but you got work to do. I hope you're doing fine. You really inspired me to be a rapper and I will need a little help

Sincerely,

—**Steve**

Dear Mr. Sherrod,

I enjoyed your visit. I also appreciate your visit because you taught us about the Boogie Down. I love your raps and think you are a good activist. You should make more songs like the ones you used to write. One day they could be a big hit.

Sincerely,

—**Anissa Oliver**

Dear Mr Curtis Sherrod,

Thank you for coming to our school so we can interview you and also thank you for sharing about your personal life. Also, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

—**Tatyana Herviey**



or for their people. The advice I would give would be to learn the plight of black people. Learn the true story of black people. Because if you don't know where you come from you won't know where you're really going. For example I was speaking at Medgar Evers College the other day and I asked the students in the audience who Medgar Evers was. They didn't know. Learn how great your people are.

## **What do you hope is your legacy?**

That I applied myself and that I tried to help others.

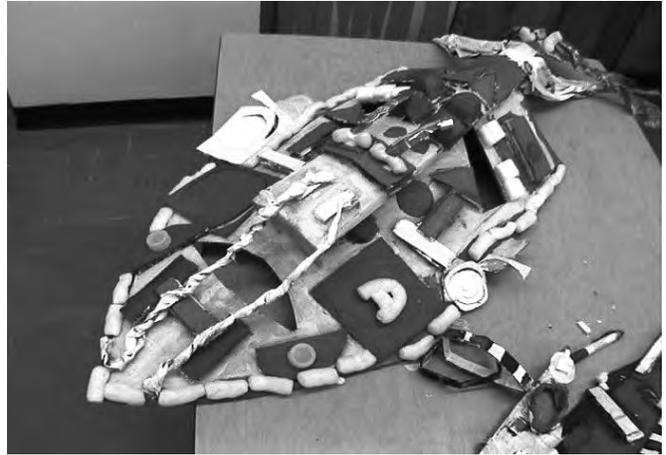
## **What are your future goals?**

My future goal is to take the hip-hop cultural center and have it be open every day. Right now it's only open by appointment. What I want to offer the community is, if you want to learn about photography you come to the cultural center, if you want to learn about break dancing you come to the cultural center, if you want to learn about graffiti you come to the center. I want to offer more programming to the community.

# PS154

celebrates  
**Art & Activism**





# High School for

## Mathematics, Science, and Engineering at City College in Hamilton Heights, Harlem

**Grades:** 9 – 12

**Principal:** William Dugan

**Assistant Principal:** Wylie Burgan

**Parent Coordinator:** Iris Nunez

**Participating Teachers:**

Mr. Benjamin Zara and  
Ms. Rachel Wheeler

**Funded by Council Member:**

Robert Jackson

**Teaching Artists:**

Jade Banks: Poetry & Spoken Word  
Kimani Fowlin: Dance  
Randy Dottin: Film Making &  
Screenwriting



**Participating Students:** Kenneth Lewis, Erica Elston, David Martinez, Jade Randolph, Julissa Malaie, Silvio Garcia, Casey Chan, Najah Bilal, Madelin Meja, Sherry Rivas, Jonathan Ruiz, Nadiyah Nunez, Danielle Cahee, Issac Phaire, Sagirah Lewis, Zadaai Gonzalez, Arhea Marshall, Manuel Gomez Jr., Victoria Perez, Thelma Perez

# HSMSE SPEAKS



on

activism  
and change

How would I affect society? In order to affect society I currently hand out meals to the senior citizens in my girl-scout building. If the seniors are unable to go downstairs then I personally deliver the meals to them. In the future I would like to open an organization that tutors children and helps them with their homework. The organization will be free and older students will help the younger students. This will provide community service for those that are helping. Also it will encourage students that are having trouble with their homework because students are helping them.

**—Jade Randolph**

I would like to change how society views women. Society views them as shiny objects. Women are portrayed as inferior to men and still after 80 years after women fought for the right to vote, women are excluded from some professions, underpaid in jobs and undermined. My activism would seek to level the playing field.

**—Zadaai Gonzalez**

Growing up in a domestic violence shelter showed me how powerful “weak” women can be. They rebuild their lives and their homes from scratch. Due to this I feel I should give something . . . maybe fund some events trying to get clothes and gifts to those affected by domestic violence.

**—Kenneth Lewis**



In my neighborhood one thing I would like to be more active with is mentoring children. I used to help the public school kindergarten teachers. It was a very rewarding experience and something I would like to repeat.

**—Estil Peralta**

I don't know yet what I want to be when I grow up, but I know I want to change the world for the better. If I decide to be a doctor, I'm going to work in my hospital and work in my community treating the needy. If I decide to be a teacher I'll teach in my school and teach in my community to the adults that never got the chance. The point is to better the community with whatever skills I have to offer.

**—Victoria Perez**

As an active part of my community, I spend my summers working at a camp held at my elementary school. There, I get to help younger kids go through the same things I did and better their experiences in the process. Sharing the love is what I'm all about!

**—Casey Chan**



# THE POETRY CAFE & SPOKEN WORD by HSMSE students

destined  
to  
succeed

**Kyzer Sozey**  
(a/k/a Kenny Lewis)

I can feel it I'm destined to succeed  
Cuz I was taught to lead so at the top  
I often be [pause] opportunity was the only thing  
Offered to me so I took advantage of all  
The things you couldn't manage I'm like a  
Savage when I'm working for that cabbage buy  
My girl them carrots so we can live like a  
Hearty salad [pause] Golden Boy determined to  
Make my father proud make my mother smile  
In the sky even through the clouds I'm college-  
Bound with a verbally distinctive sound so when  
I start rapping you at least turn around cuz  
You feeling my sound if you wasn't before  
I'm sure you feeling me now so give me my  
Crown cuz I'm putting it down I never got  
It twisted even when I had braids cause even  
When I misbehaved I had good grades now I'm  
Sitting wit a scholarship counting my days  
Brushing down my waves proud cause I found my way

# the puppeteer

**Danielle LaHee**

Watch as my puppeteer strings me along  
Stare at the mirror reflecting  
Our light  
Artificial  
Like my love's mind  
Inferno like my heart

Chasing dreams in my own  
Personal hell  
As brown-eyed frost  
Meets blue-black heart  
Surrounding my eye  
Hugging as if friends

I need someone to control me  
Because when I hold myself  
I'm just not worthy  
So maybe if I pray a little harder to  
A curvaceous idol that is not real  
My crucifixion will take away how I feel

But in the meantime I will nail  
Those strings to my hands  
Surrender my manhood to this  
Binding  
Stage  
In this tragic comedy we play

What a parody

My puppeteer  
I kneel waiting for you again  
To strike me again  
And toss me aside again

Sinner, Savior, Goddess  
How I need thee

# what does it mean to make a difference?

**Manuel Gomez**

To make a difference means to change some-  
thing drastically,  
affecting the lives of one  
Or many for the good.  
To awaken mortality within self and others...

# untitled

**Danielle LaHee**

Tyreik makes me feel  
Like a Harlemiter  
During those talks we have  
Across 125th Street  
From Lexington  
To Lenox

Walk as we talk...  
And blend in with streets.

**HSMSE honors**

# Natsu Ifill



## **Arts and Civil Rights Advocate**

Natsu Ifill is a seasoned arts administrator. Program Officer for East Harlem, Central Harlem and Washington Heights neighborhoods, she retired from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) in 1997. She is also a survivor of the World War II Japanese-American Internment.

After leaving the “relocation” camp, Ifill worked as a domestic in Detroit prior moving to NYC in 1944. She was an office worker at American Jewish Congress by day and a student at Hunter College by night. Ifill was subsequently employed as a civil service worker by the U.S. Army in Japan before returning to NYC and beginning a career in the arts.

Ifill was Executive Director of Ballet Hispanico for ten years. She then served in the office of the regional representative for the NEA and was Executive Director of the Harlem School of the Arts before initiating a prominent career as an arts administrator for the DCA. After retirement, she served as interim Executive Director of the Harlem Arts Alliance of which she is a co-founder.

A patron of the arts, Ifill has supported Densho, Battery Dance Co., Working Theater New York, One Stop Senior Services and the Center for Community Change. Additionally, she established The Percy C. Ifill Endowed Scholarship Fund, in honor of her husband, for students majoring in Architecture at Howard University.

# INTERVIEW WITH NATSU IFILL

**Did anything significant happen, when you were younger, that convinced you to go on the career path that you did?**

With the history of my life I made no decisions. As you know the Japanese Americans were evacuated from our homes after Pearl Harbor by President Roosevelt's executive order. I was your age. I was in high school when the first order came in. I was a junior. There had been an order that said you had to be home between 8 pm and 6 am and you could not travel more than five miles from home. This was rural, northern California. Our high school was more than five miles from my home, so I couldn't finish my junior year. Then I was in camp and I graduated from high school in the camp. There were ten camps in five different states. I was in a place called Hela River, Arizona, which was on a Pena Indian

**How do you think that each of the organizations that you helped to build helped the community to come together culturally as well as artistically?**

One of my early jobs was with Ballet Hispanico. It was a wonderful experience with Tina Rumerez, with starting this company, and our dancers were your age. We nurtured them. We got them through high school. In the summer we got them to get paid for dancing. The enriching part of it was not only to deal with these young people but also to deal with their parents. They were mostly Puerto Rican, and they wanted them to have something more than they had. I worked from 9am to 2am. The parents worked with me, and they sewed things so I could have a bazaar and raise money.



reservation. You could go to mid America. You couldn't go to either coast. You were still a so-called danger. So I applied for a position in Detroit. At age seventeen I left the camp. My family was still there. I was the first to leave and the government gave you your train ticket and twenty-five dollars. That's how I started life. You made no career choices under these kinds of circumstances.



When I retired I worked for the Harlem Council for the Arts. We created the Harlem Arts Alliance. It's a service organization to help Harlem artists and arts organizations. I also worked at Harlem School of the Arts. There was this fabulous building created by this absolutely fabulous woman and people didn't know it was there. I decided when I worked there, if anything happened in Harlem, it had to happen at the school, so when a group had a gathering, I rented it for pennies. I just wanted everybody to know about it.

# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*I understand that choice is a privilege; having freedom and free will is something we take for granted.”*

—Madelin Meija

*I respect the determination of Japanese Americans and I have a different view of the American government.”*

—Jade Randolph

*“Natsu taught me to be aware and pay attention in life because a lot of things can happen that you might not expect, and you have to be able to adjust.”*

—Thelma Perez

*I should always be aware of what’s going on around me. I should never let discrimination happen in front of me.”*

—Sherry Rivas



## **How did your experience in the internment camp affect how you view life today?**

I think it certainly made me more active, fighting discrimination over the years. It also made me more aware. When something like this happens to you, you become more aware of how precious your freedom is. It may be why most of my life I worked with minority organizations and fought for their right to have money, etc. You must be aware and pay attention.

## **Were there any lessons that you learned from your hardship that should be shared with young adults?**

Pay attention and don't let this happen to anybody. Make sure daily discrimination, on a personal level, doesn't happen and your school doesn't allow it to happen. It is so important. Unfortunately it is tragic that it is not really taught. It should be part of our history so that everybody knows it, so it won't happen to any other group again.

A wonderful thing has happened. The Japanese Americans invited the Muslims, after 9/11, to work with them to make sure that what happened to us wouldn't happen to them. In our history this is the only time something like this happened, where they just, without any relation to your civil rights or legal rights, that you were just picked up and dumped someplace. So the young Japanese people worked with the Muslims to make sure that kind of thing wouldn't happen to a whole group of Muslims.



## Mr. Arthur H. Barnes and Mr. Loren Schoenberg of The National Jazz Museum in Harlem

### **The National Jazz Museum in Harlem**

Founded in 1998, The National Jazz Museum in Harlem is dedicated to fostering the spirit of jazz as a living, breathing entity. Its focus is the many dimensions of jazz musical history, with particular emphasis on the narrative nature of the jazz experience. Soon to be housed at the redeveloped Victoria Theater on 125th Street, the museum, began as a virtual entity and yet has successfully sponsored educational and community jazz programs at neighborhood venues and academic institutions. Its powerful Board of Directors includes jazz luminary Wynton Marsalis, jazz documentarian Ken Burns and other New York business and community members dedicated to the vision of the Museum.

### **Arthur H. Barnes, Chairman of the Board**

Born and raised in Harlem, Arthur H. Barnes has been Chairman of the Board for the museum since December 2007. He is also been Senior Vice President for External Affairs and Corporate Contributions at HIP Health Plan of New York. A lifelong fan of jazz, Mr. Barnes brought HIP and jazz together, facilitating funding and services for nonprofit organizations, including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Charlie Parker Jazz Festival by City Parks Foundation, Jazz Foundation of America, Jazzmobile and jazz station WBGO. Since its inception, the HIP Jazz Concert Series has donated its proceeds to academic institutions and charities. Mr. Barnes is also Vice President of the P.A.L. Board of Directors and a board member of PENCIL Principal for a Day. He has been honored by numerous organizations for service.

### **Loren Schoenberg, Executive Director**

Historian by nature, Loren Schoenberg was appointed Executive Director of the museum in 2002. As a teen, Schoenberg volunteered at the now-defunct Jazz Museum



in New York City, which ignited a career that has exhibited extraordinary range. Schoenberg went on to produce radio shows for WBAL, WGBO and WKCR, compiled documentation for the Benny Goodman collection for the NYPL and Yale University, established the Loren Schoenberg Big Band, and produced a Charlie Parker and Lester Young tribute at Carnegie Recital Hall. Schoenberg also performed and collaborated with many distinguished groups including the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. Schoenberg won two Grammys for his writing, released a book, *The NPR Curious Listener's Guide to Jazz*, and performed at the White House with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem All-Stars Band. Schoenberg is currently a member of the faculty of Julliard's Institute for Jazz Studies, Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz 101 series and has taught at numerous academic institutions.

# INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR BARNES AND LOREN SCHOENBERG

**Mr. Schoenberg do you think that jazz is heavy rooted into today's music? Should jazz be reinvented into a new Genre today?**

In terms of today's music, and jazz music, everything has come from it. Jazz is like a tree trunk and the roots are American music. From it comes jazz, blues, soul, and R&B. Jazz. Some people try and keep jazz related to the past but jazz has to be relatable to everything.



**Do you consider yourself an activist? How does your activism work?**

**Mr. Barnes:** If you're going to be effective in whatever interest that you have then you got to be an activist. Because the opposite of that is that you are going to sit silently and not get your point across or make your contribution, so activism must be your middle name. You focus on the issues and develop a



**How can jazz be used to educate people?**

**Mr. Barnes:** Look at the music and look at social morays of any given time there is your answer. The source of jazz was in New Orleans. Spanish French English, Irish and people from Normandy and from northern France people brought what they came from when they came to New Orleans and Canada. That mixture of all this ethnic music with an African beat is what we call jazz. Also Brazil Bossa Nova and Afro-Cuban it all had the African soul of music.

**Mr. Schoenberg:** I'll answer that question. If someone had tried to teach me math through music I would have learned a lot quicker. It's nothing but beat.

set of beliefs that motivate you to assert those who's beliefs are the same and try to persuade others with the same point of view.

**Mr. Schoenberg:** You're too young right now to think about your own mortality but when you start to confront it and you say to yourself "If my life was to end tomorrow" and you say to yourself "what did I do?" "Did I leave this place better or worse?" "Did I do something?" "Did I influence people?" "Did I try at least to be our there with what I believe in?" That's what motivates me to be an activist. I'm not interesting in talking; I'm interested in doing something about it.



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*Listening to Local Heroes Loren Schoenberg and Arthur Barnes was an inspiring experience. During the local hero interview I felt like both heroes gave me a roadmap of how to be dedicated to any work that you do. Mr. Schoenberg was passionate and well read in his explanation of his love of jazz. Arthur Barnes was inspiring in his desire to have everyone in Harlem and beyond understand the importance of Jazz music. After the interview I gained a deeper appreciation of jazz.*

**—Veronica Dejesus**

*From Local Heroes Loren Schoenberg and Arthur Barnes I learned that activism manifests itself in many ways. I learned that Jazz music is an “activist” art form, because it has an incredible power to bring people from all over the world together. After talking with Arthur Barnes and Loren Schoenberg, I will never listen to jazz music the same way again.*

**—Zadaai Gonzalez**

*I was amazed at how many connections there are between Jazz music and my favorite music—hip hop. When local heroes Arthur Barnes and Loren Schoenberg talked about music’s ability to bring people together that was good. When they talked about the origins of jazz and how it has changed the world—I thought to myself, “Hip hop music does the same thing!”*

**—Kenneth Lewis**



# HSMSE on DANCE and FILM







# PS149

## Sojourner Truth

**Grades:** Pre K - 8

**Principal:** Shaniquia Singletary

**Assistant Principal:** Marie Jones

**Participating Teachers:**

Ms. E. Asis, Ms. L. Jankovsky and  
Ms. T. Rinaldo

**Parent Coordinator:**

LeShawn Hodge

**Funded by Council Member:**

Inez E. Dickens

**Teaching Artists:**

Vickie Fremont: Visual Artist  
Michael Mustafa: Percussionist



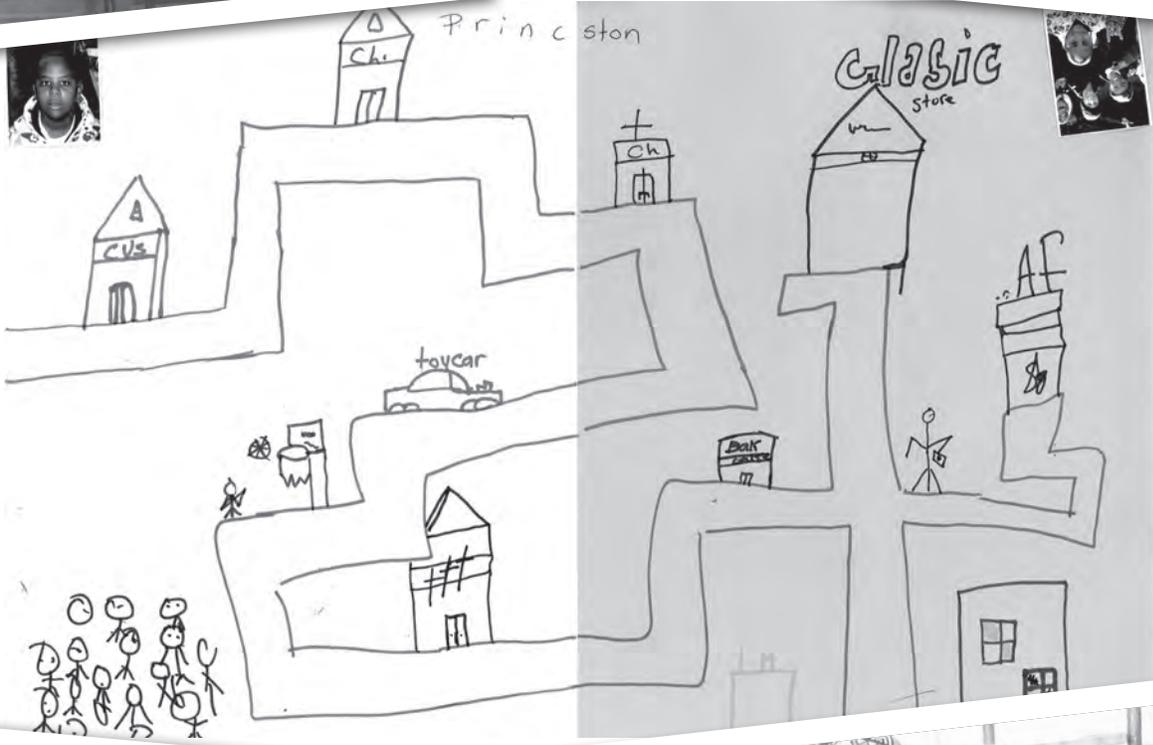
**Participating Students:** Octavia Barrett, Amanda Martinez, Ebonaya Smallwood, Ebonee Smallwood, Malik Meyers, Ray Rodriguez, Ousame Barry, Tracy Perrington, Kaesha Brooks, Ronald Andretti Byas Jr., Shaiann Bridges Potts, Tajanea Renea Woodroffe, Kadiato Diallo, Brandon Shelton Smalls, Sylaty Komara, Justyn Rosa, Willington Vuelto, Princeton Thomas-Hines

# OUR

## favorite places

PS 149 Students  
toured the  
galleries,  
Amy Ruths and  
some new places  
in between!





# Students' Reflect on their **COMMUNITY AND HEROES**



A community hero/heroine is a person who takes care of our community.

—**Tajanea Woodroffe**

A community is a place where people love each other.

—**Willington Vuelto**

A hero is a person who takes care of you and protects you from harm.

—**Ronald Andretti Byas, Jr.**

A hero is a person who saves the world.

—**Brandon Smalls**

To me, a community means home. A lot of people I know live there.

—**Kadiatou Diallo**

# Say Your Name

Lyric's created by 149 Percussion Group & Michael Mustafa Ulmer

## Hook:

“Say your name”  
(repeated chant 8x times)

“Brandon...Ronald...Shaiann...  
Tajanea  
Justyn...Willington... Princeton  
and Kadiatou”

## Chorus 1:

“Community... What!!!”  
(repeats 3x's)  
“Works, Works, Works!”

## Rap:

“Polluting is Bad, Bad for the  
Environment. Our Earth's in  
danger, How We Gonna' Save  
It!!!”

Group say's one: “Community  
What!”

(this repeats 3x's, on 4th  
time, after the rapper asks the  
question:

“How We Gonna Save It!”

## Hook:

“Say Your Name” (Repeated  
8x's)

## Chorus 2:

“One, Forty-Nine... P. S.”  
(Repeated 3x's)

Group say as one:  
“Rocks The Drums”

ACTIVISM  
GHANTI!

From  
Percussion Team  
of PS149



# Ms. Jackie Rowe-Adams



## **Co-Founder of Harlem Mothers S.A.V.E.**

Born and raised in Harlem, Rowe-Adams is a wife, mother and concerned citizen. She has been employed by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation for over 25 years, currently as Center Manager of the Jackie Robinson Recreation Center. It was, however, the death of her two sons (innocent victims of gun violence in 1982 and 1999) that solidified her activism in the community.

On a mission to make her neighborhood safer, Rowe-Adams joined Community School Board #5 and became Vice President of Community Board #10. In 2001,

President Clinton appointed her to the White House Parent Youth Council on Drug Abuse. Rowe-Adams also facilitated workshops with schools, community groups and welfare-to-work programs. In 2006, Rowe-Adams, along with Jean Corbett-Parker, founded Harlem Mothers SAVE (Stop Another Violent End), a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to prevent gun violence.

Rowe-Adams has also sat as a Director on a number of Boards, including the Harlem Red Cross, the Modern School, Renaissance Healthcare and CASH (Congregation Association Serving Harlem). She has received numerous service awards, including being honored at the 2007 Stand Up for a Safe America Gala by the Brady Center. Rowe-Adams also made a bid for City Council, is a local union president for AFSCME/AFL-CIO and was a 2008 delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

# INTERVIEW WITH JACKIE ROWE-ADAMS

I have four boys. I had two sons who were murdered. My last son was murdered by a 13 year-old. My first son was 17 at the time. He got killed because some boys in a store didn't like how my son was looking at them. A meaningless, senseless act took my son's life. And I know this because the owner of the store told me the boys said "We should shoot that N----." And you know the word that NONE of you should use and so often use it. I want you to know what they said because it is important.

He was my first-born and when he got killed I didn't smile, I didn't laugh and I didn't listen to music for a whole year. I love to laugh, but there was nothing for me to laugh about. I wouldn't let my other kids listen to music, either, because all of his favorite songs used to play and it hurt so bad. That was my first son. And I'm telling you, that was the greatest loss ever. It took me a long time to get over it. The second one is what really made me go to work to help people.



## **Why did you make a safe program for mothers?**

One day, after the deaths of my sons, there were three murders in three different places. That night, I woke up screaming "We have to do something about this killing!" So, five other mothers (who lost children to gun violence) and I stormed into the office of Assemblyman Keith Wright to make our voices heard. We eventually had a press conference about guns and violence on the steps of City Hall with Assemblyman Wright. That is how Harlem Mothers Save started. I'm proud to say we were the New Yorkers of the Week on NY1. They recognized us as making a difference in the community and that's big. We received hundreds of calls after that.

## **Who were your heroes?**

People in the community were my heroes because they protected us from violence. Neighbors would police the street by hanging out of their windows. If I did something wrong, they would yell "You better go home, Jackie. I'ma tell your mother." There was this man who lived in my building named James Allen. He saved my life because he showed me tough love. Mr. Allen went on to start an organization in Harlem called A.R.C. (Addict's Rehabilitation Center), which now has a famous choir that travels all over the world.



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*The things I will always remember about Jackie Rowe-Adams are that she helps our community and will always help out.*

**-Kadiatou Diallo**

*Jackie Rowe-Adams taught me to never use guns because they are something that should have never been made.*

**-Tajanea Woodroffe**

*The words that best describe Jackie Rowe-Adams are helpful, kind, calm, cool, collected and gentle.*

**- Ronald A. Byas, Jr.**

*Now that I've met Jackie Rowe-Adams, I know I will never play violent video games or watch violence on TV.*

**-Luvtaj Garrett**

## **Is there a place that is special to you in Harlem?**

Yes. Morningside Park is my history. Seventeen years ago Morningside Park was rat infested, it was drug infested and it was pit bull infested. The kids weren't able to go in there. The park was dingy and dirty. I was given that park to create a program. I used to go out with a bull horn and say "NO MORE DURGS" "PUT OUT THE DOGS." The drug dealers were angry with me but when the people saw I was serious and consistent the people, the parents backed me up. We took back the park and gave it back to the community. That's my heart.

## **What needs to change in Harlem?**

We have to speak out. We have to rally. We have to start contacting our elected officials. We have to be heard if we want things done. The young people have to take over and stand up. Say it loud! You have a voice in the community and you have to use it.



# Charles Mack

Charles Mack has served as musical director and Associate Artistic Director for Impact Repertory Theater, a Harlem youth group that combines theater arts and leadership training to play a pivotal role in providing opportunities and transitions for the leaders of tomorrow. Charles was featured in the Warner Brothers Major Motion Picture “August Rush” and contributed original music to the film. He earned an Academy Award Nomination for Best Song with “Raise it Up,” which he performed at the 80<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards televised world-wide.

Charles Mack was born and raised in Flatbush Brooklyn. At the age of seven, he began piano lessons and, by age 10, developed an interest in singing at his church, which opened up the doors for his musical appetite. Labeled a child prodigy, he was first accepted into a well-known performing arts middle school and then into the world famous LaGuardia High School for the Arts. He also joined the critically acclaimed program CityKids Repertory Company, which led to performances on world stages, on television, and for five former presidents! Mack continued his musical training at Five Towns College before taking his songwriting and production career to the next level. He has produced songs for HBO and BET films and his songwriting/production team The Proffessionallz has worked with star-studded list of hit producers. As an actor, Mack has performed in the leading role of Another Chance at the Samuel Becket Theater and can be seen in the hit movie “Cadillac Records.” He has also made numerous appearances on television shows such as Good Morning America and Night Line.

Mack has not let recent success overshadow his commitment and passion for service to the community. He served as an Auxiliary Police Officer in Harlem’s 32<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for 6 ½ years prior to joining the department as a full fledged officer. He now serves as a Police Officer in the neighboring 28th Precinct. Excited about the future, Mack’s journey continues.





## INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES MACK

**Please tell us about Impact and the work you do with teens.**

Impact was started about 12 years ago by a man named Jamal Joseph. I was only 17 when I joined Impact. I was about to go to college when Jamal approached me about working and performing in a company he started to get kids off the street. Jamal knew me because he was my director at City Kids and also mentored me. I still volunteer my time and work with them today.

**Do you think music and arts can help youth become leaders?**

Most definitely! My first leadership role was as a vocal coach with City Kids. I was 15. My job was to teach performers, who were my peers, how to warm up their voices. At the time I was a student at LaGuardia High School for the Arts. If it wasn't for my music, I would not have been given the opportunity to be a leader.

### **How did going to the Academy Awards help your community?**

I let people know that, if it can happen to me, it can happen to you. I am just a regular guy who grew up in Brooklyn, lived in Harlem and in the Bronx - and I was able to go to the Oscars! If I can do it, I know it can happen for you. I just followed my dreams. Just remember - follow your dreams.

### **What does community mean to you?**

The community is where a group of people live and work. A community is made of people and schools and store owners and like-minded people who are all in it together. We all need each other to have a great community. As a police officer, I work in the community and check in with the people who live there and also with the local stores in the community.

### **How do you help people in your community?**

It depends on what I am doing. As a police officer, I try to keep the community safe for all people. When I have to stop someone from doing something wrong, that is helping to make the community better. As a musician, I make the community feel good and smile. I love to see people in the community happy.



## **STUDENT REFLECTIONS**

*The interview with Charles Mack was fun! I learned that he is a police officer who does a lot of community work. He helps young people get a good education. Mr. Mack loves his wife and daughter. He also loves to act and play piano.*

**—Keisha**

*I learnt that Charles Mack is an actor and musician. He is a really great singer. He inspires me. When I grow up, I will be a singer, too.*

**—Octavia**

*Charles Mack's songs make me feel sweet.*

**—Ebony**





# visual & literary

**ART BY PS 149 STUDENTS!**



# PS241

## The Family Academy

**Grades:** K - 8

**Principal:** Diana Diaz

**Assistant Principal:** Eve Navarro

**Participating Teacher:**  
Ms. Laticia Robinson

**Parent Coordinator:**  
Rebecca Johnson

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Inez E. Dickens

**Teaching Artists:**  
Randy Dottin: Digital Photography  
Pam Johnson: Chorus



**Participating Students:** Shaquana Johnson, Nia Lee, Damion Strong, Clifton Baptiste, Ayana Perkins, Courtney Collier, Keshawna Williams, Adama Balde, Marc Maxwell, Shawnakay Shaw, Sasha Jones, Batafing Soumano, Michelle Samuels, Johnelle Ferran, Monet England, Aakhi Severe, Ashayha Belton, TaShare Spencer, Jalisa Johnson, Luis Moreira, Shaquille Woods



# 241 working on ACTIVISM!

Activism is important to me because it's what makes you a good person capable of creating many great things. An activist could be an entrepreneur who creates jobs to help people in different ways. I can start my own saxophone industry or help others become entrepreneurs themselves. I can also be a big help to young people by helping them learn what an activist is. That would be helpful for them because when they get older they can pass down activism to the next generation.

—**Damian Strong**

I like to have activism in my life because it is an important part of this country. If we did not have activism we would not have leaders, or a government or anything that we have now. It would be a world without hope.

—**Clifton Jean**

I can be an activist because I could change myself socially and politically. I could also be an activist in my school by giving speeches to my school and to students' one on one so that they can change themselves. I could help my neighborhood by giving my ideas to programs so they could give my information to other kids around Manhattan. Also they could give it to other organizations and then my ideas will keep on spreading around New York. What I think activism means to me is reaching out to other people to try and make a change. Activism is important to me because I still have more room to change. Also I want to change other people. One thing that I want people to change is littering and fighting people. Also, I want them to stop smoking and drinking a lot. One thing I can change for myself is to stop behaving badly and stop setting a bad example for younger kids. Also I can change the way I catch an attitude.

—**Shaquille Woods**

# COMMUNITY reflections

A community is a neighborhood where people work together to make it clean and comfortable to live within.

—**Fanta Fofana**

A community is a group of like people who meet each other and help each other out in the world and in life.

—**Monet England**

My community is my family.

—**Shawna Kay Shaw**



# Marlene Martin



## Executive Director of Children's Carnival

Marlene Martin is an arts administrator, filmmaker and cultural custodian. Martin, who holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech & Theatre from the City College of New York as well as a post-graduate diploma in International Law & Relations from the University of the West Indies, has been the Executive Director of The Children's Art Carnival since 1997.

Over the past twenty years, Martin has worked primarily with cultural arts organizations producing and presenting multi-media programming for organizations, including

the International African Arts Festival, Caribbean Cultural Center, Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center and TransArt among others. She also founded Back-A-Yard Theatre, a storytelling performance ensemble, co-founded Urban Dance Collective, and was a founding member and Treasurer of Point of Encounter. Currently, Martin serves as Board Vice-Chair & Treasurer for Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center and Secretary for the American Theatre of Harlem.

Martin is also director and executive producer of the films, *Handology* and *Continuing the Movement: The Weusi Artists Collective*, a documentary about the group of Harlem-based artists. Her writings have been published in various newspapers and magazines including *Metro Exchange*, *African Connections* and *Voices*. Martin has received several community service awards, including being honored by the Harlem Women of Excellence Award for her outstanding accomplishments in the field of Art

# INTERVIEW WITH MARLENE MARTIN



I am also establishing a scholarship fund for students interested in receiving a college arts degree. I would like to create an annual citywide arts exhibition of young artists.

## **What have been your three proudest moments?**

My first “proud” moment was seeing one child reach his goal to go college. My second “proud” moment was the 35<sup>th</sup> fundraiser that the Carnival teens created. We grossed \$90,000! The third “proud” moment was Senator (now Governor) David Paterson honoring me as a Harlem Woman of Excellence.

## **How has the economic crisis affected the Children’s Art Carnival (CAC)?**

I was born in Jamaica and come from a Maroon tradition. As a child, I learned that, when there’s trouble in the

## **Who were your mentors growing up? How did they help to shape you into the person you are now?**

Joseph A. Walker (playwright and theater director) and Marie Brooks (dancer and choreographer). These people have so much power, drive and determination inside of them. They are so committed to African-American culture that I had to embrace it.

## **What are your goals going forward for the Carnival?**

We are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> year with year-long activities. We are establishing an endowment fund so that the Carnival can be around for another 40 years.



community, you deal with it within the community. This helps in how I need to deal with cutbacks and financial challenges at the CAC.

## **Do you feel it is important for young people to be activists? Why?**

Yes. Many movements have been propelled by the voices of young people, their strength and determination. This has led to great change. In order to make change, you need to become activists.

## **What is your definition of community service?**

It could be helping in your church, doing something in your school, serving the homeless, helping the senior citizen across the street...



**Why is working with young people so important to you?**

I am inspired by youth. Young people set the standards. Young people are in your most magical stage of life, soaking everything up.

**Now that Obama is president, do we still need Black History Month?**

Yes. I think that every month should be Black History Month. We should celebrate our history, culture, ancestors and heritage every day. Just because we have a Black President doesn't mean we should stop recognizing our culture. Let's flood the gates! How long have we been left out?

**If you were the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S., what laws would you immediately create to change the world?**

My laws would be based on human rights and the respect for them and respect for mankind.

**What inspired you to work in Harlem?**

I love Harlem. I went to school here at City College. Harlem has the culture, history and people I know and love and that I am a part of.

**What is your advice for young people who want to build a strong career in business or in service of others?**

Go to school! Education is not always something you get in school. But, it is important for you to get a degree and have the experience. Make sure to involve yourself outside of the academic environment to be well-rounded in your major.

**How did your college education shape who you are?**

I attended City College for my BA. I then went on to attend the University of the West Indies in Trinidad to study International Law and Relations. Being at City College in Harlem exposed me to my culture. Going to Trinidad allowed me to have an international experience.



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*The words that best describe Marline Martin are smart, well-educated, thoughtful, hard-working and independent.*

**—Nia Lee**

*The thing that I will always remember about Marline Martin is she said that money does not mean anything to her – that, if she was the richest person in the world, she would also be the poorest person in the world because she would give it all away to people in need.*

**—Shaquanna Johnson**

*Memorable Quote by Marline Martin – “Black History Month should be celebrated every day.”*

**—Damion Strong**

*The thing I will always remember about Marline Martin is that she told us to grab for what we believe in.*

**—Tanisha Goode**

*Marline Martin taught me how to fight for my school and how to help my community.*

**—Clifton Jean Baptiste**

# Kwame Brathwaite



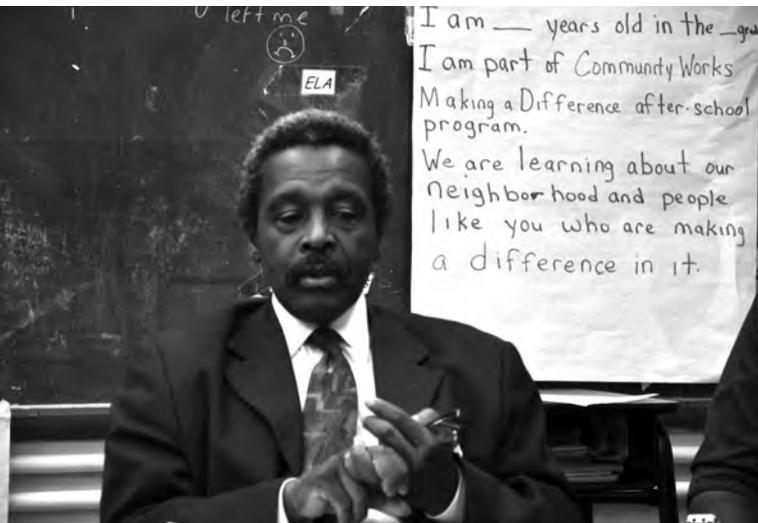
## Photographer

Kwame Brathwaite, photo-documentarian and fashion photographer, has been described as the “keeper of images.” A consummate activist, he co-founded the African Jazz-Art Society and The Grandassa Models (with his brother, Elombe Brath), founded the wearable art shows, AFRIMODA, FashionArt and FashionNations and is former president of the National Conference of Artists.

Brathwaite’s camera work has taken him to over twenty countries in Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. He has photographed the elite in fashion and entertainment, including Iman, Ruby Dee, Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Michael Jackson. Brathwaite’s primary interest, though, has been recording African cultural movements and liberation struggles worldwide. He had been selected by President Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea and President Sam Nujoma of Namibia to document their travels within the U.S. His most treasured images cover the funeral of Kwame Nkrumah and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela.

Brathwaite’s photos have appeared in the books *The Jacksons*, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Being a Model*, *James Brown: The Godfather of Soul*, *Queen Latifah*, and *Forever Harlem: Celebrating America’s Most Diverse Community*. His images have also been published by *The Amsterdam News* and *The Daily News*, archived at The Schomburg Center and exhibited in “Hugeux” and “Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers” at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

# INTERVIEW WITH KWAME BRATHWAITE



**We are learning about people and places in Harlem. What does the community mean to you?**

A lot of history! Harlem is probably the best-known community in the world. It started with the Garvey movement and continued with things like the Black Arts Movement (that I was a part of).

**What was Harlem like when you were young?**

On Sundays, my father would take us to Seventh Avenue – the widest street I had ever seen. It always seemed so bright and sunny. In Harlem, you did not go out on Sundays without being sharp! Everyone was dressed in their best, especially the older folk.

**What did you want to be when you were our age?**

I really had not thought about it that much. The only thing on my mind, other than school, was the Brooklyn Dodgers. I was an avid fan. It began when Jackie Robinson joined the team in 1947. I was 9 years old. I knew all the players, their numbers and batting averages.

**How did you get your first camera? Who taught you how to use it?**

I went to school for art and majored in advertising art. I owned a camera – one of those old ones where I had to look down into it – I had gotten for graduation. Everyone liked my pictures, so people started asking me to take pictures of them and their families. I began charging a fee for development and soon realized I had a business.

**What is the most important thing that happened in your life?**

Well, I was born. That was the most important thing.

During my travels, there have been many important things. In 1956, I came across a group in the Bronx called the Nationalist Pioneer Movement. It was led by Carlos Cooks, a black man from the Dominican Republic, whose father was a Garveyite. We learned about what was happening internationally to people of African descent. It changed our lives. We began working with groups that were called N.G.O. (Non-Governmental Organizations), helping them demonstrate to get their causes known.

**What made you want to become an activist?**

There was an actor who played Mantan Marlon living in our neighborhood. He encouraged us to stay in school because he wanted us to have more choices than those he was forced to take.

**What motivates you to continue your work?**

I get a lot of motivation from seeing things get better every time there seems to be no hope. Like what happened last year with the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States – that gave people a lot of hope.

**What do you consider your most important accomplishment?**

When I became the President of the National Conference of Artists, I established a department of Communication and Education. It produced a national newsletter that circulated throughout the arts community and eventually became the basis for the website. It also led to a program called “Black Arts Across the USA” that comes on eight times a year.



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*Memorable Quote by Kwame Brathwaite: "I've been to 19 countries."*

**—Michelle Samuels**

*Kwame Brathwaite taught me to stay in school and to study everything!*

**—Ahshaya Beiton**

*Now that I've met Kwame Brathwaite, I know I can learn to be a photographer.*

**—Batufing Soumans**

*Now that I've met Kwame Brathwaite, I will do well in school and try my best.*

**—Tasheba Pommeg**

## **How can we make kids and people in this community more aware of your work?**

I guess that's my job - to get out there and reach more young people. We established the International Arts Business School and created classes that taught the business of art as well as technical aspects. We are hoping to get this program into many schools.

## **What do you hope is your legacy?**

I hope that my legacy and my epitaph will say, "He was dedicated to his people. He did all that he could to further their goals."

## **What advice would you give to someone who wants to become a photographer?**

Study photographs in magazines. Pay attention to light and subject. Get the best camera you can get. Try to use it on automatic and then learn to use it on manual. Just like jazz, you have to learn the note before you can improvise. You can break the rules after you know them...





digital photography  
&  
chorus



**east flatbush is...**

# **BROOKLYN**

Although the borders of East Flatbush are highly subjective, we generally accept that it is east of the area in Brooklyn, New York that is known as Flatbush. East Flatbush was formerly known as Rugby and it was developed in the 1920's. Generally speaking, it is bordered to the west by Prospect Park, to the south by Canarsie, to the east by Brownsville and to the north by Crown Heights.



The area of East Flatbush was largely populated post World War II, by immigrant Jews and Italians. By the 1960's the area was predominantly African American. Social activism in the area consisted of anti-war demonstrations against the U. S. involvement in Vietnam, which was never technically declared a "war". Of the young men from the area who survived, many returned from Vietnam with drug dependencies and other social problems that could be attributed to their time spent in Vietnam as well as governmental apathy upon their return. Also, during the mid to late 60's and early 70's there was the beginning of the "Black is Beautiful" movement and it was not unusual to see young African Americans adorned in African garb and natural hairstyles. Some of the youth from the East Flatbush neighborhood were recruited for scenes in the 1974 movie, *The Education of Sonny Carson*, a biographical movie that depicts hard ghetto life.

East Flatbush is home to three major New York City hospitals, Kings County Hospital, SUNY

Downstate Medical Center and Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center. Recently, Kings County Hospital was in the news when a 49 year-old Jamaican-born woman collapsed and died on the floor of the psychiatric emergency room. There was an outcry at that time for improved service. There has been talk , over the last decade, of joining Kings County Hospital and its neighbor, SUNY Downstate Medical Center. It has been said that this would not happen without strong community activism. Now that the city and state have withdrawn support from both hospitals, they might need to merge in order to survive.

More recently in East Flatbush there's been an influx of immigrants from the Caribbean countries including Jamaica, Trinidad, Haiti, Grenada, Guyana, and Barbados. There are immigrants from India and African countries as well. During the summer of 2006, New York City renamed a section of Church Avenue (between Remsen Avenue and East 98th Street), in East Flatbush, to Bob Marley Boulevard after the Jamaican Reggae legend.



# Did you

KNOW

YOU

WANT

?

... Producer, Spencer Bellamy coined the phrase, “East Flatbush Project”, for his work with local Brooklyn rappers?

... “Blackout”, a movie about the massive blackout during the summer of 2003, is about some events that took place in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn?

... Roger Holland, who played for the Boys Choir of Harlem for many years has spent most of his life living in East Flatbush?

... Grammy Nominated, Jamaican American rapper, songwriter and actor Trevor Smith, better known as Busta Rhymes, was born in East Flatbush?

... Michael Jordon, who has been called, “the greatest basketball player of all time”, was born in East Flatbush?

... Javaka Steptoe got his idea for the writing of *The Jones Family Express* from his grandmother?

... F.O.K.U.S. is an organization that produces arts events that to educate and entertain and a magazine, *Insight*, aimed at highlighting the importance of the arts in our lives?

... “Panama is more than a canal” is the motto of Conjunto Nuevo Milemo, The New Millenium Panamanian Performing Arts Company that showcases Panamanian folklore and customs through dance?

... *Brooklyn at Eye Level* is a project of The Civilians and a unique performance of theatre, dance, and music created from interviews of Brooklyn residents, “old and new”, including community activists, developers, politicians and more?

... The name “Flatbush” is an Anglicanization of the Dutch language “Vlatbos” (approximately “wooded land”)?

... There’s a movement in Brooklyn to build healthier neighborhoods by strengthening community based farmers markets?

... There were 3,200 people in attendance at a recent Brooklyn Food Conference whose goal was to bring the borough together around food issues such as food worker justice and global food policy?

... Akila Work Songs, Inc. is a leading arts and activism company offering management, public relations and consulting services?

... Something Positive is a performing arts education company dedicated to the art and culture of the African Diaspora and its cross cultural influences?

# PS181K

**Grades:** K- 5

**Principal:** Dr. Lowell Coleman

**Assistant Principals:** Mr. George Patterson, Ms. Sharon Porter and Ms. Karen Hodnet

**Participating Teachers:**  
Marina Cipriani

**Parent Coordinator:** Keith Grady

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Stewart

**Teaching Artists:**  
Orion Gordon: Digital Photography  
Irene Koloseus: Salsa Dance



**Participating Students:** Ken Allen, Nicholas Ramsaran, Christina Robert, Jamal Weekes, Raymond John, Ahyana Gordon, Brandon McClure, Kimberly Sampson, Tonia Browne, Whitney Reid, Melissa Hughes, Serena Callender, Verishka Genius, Joanne Terrogin, Claudia Demeza, Sallie Calixte, Jashaun Richards, Michelle Laforet, Monephia-Duncan, Shanesia Morrain, Changlee Bailey, Myriam Cohetero, Zamel Mitchell, Shantal Lewis, Jelani Deas-Quit, Najee Martin

# OUR

# favorite places

**Below, left-right:**

*White Sak* by Raymond John

*Three Story Shot, Brooklyn NY* by Tonia Browne

*Frozen in Time* by Melissa Huges



# COMMUNITY IS...

The leaders of this community are OURSELVES. We all have something different that we are proud of. Leaders are everywhere.

—**Joanne Terogin**

Clouds of judgment hoping that you will be great, but when you drop so low you need someone to pick you up that's where your community comes along, giving you inspiration. When everything has gone so wrong, unmistakable truth has come to you and you thank each and everyone that has inspired you.

—**Tonia B**

My favorite place is the library because it's a place where I can be alone and it's quiet and I do what I love most. Read!

—**Verishka Genius**

Community is like the wonders of photography. It puts you in another world. Imagination brings pictures to life, by a click of a camera the pic-

ture turns to life. The movement of your feet creates beats that tells you that a community moves and act together.

—**Raymond John**

I love that my community is made up of different cultures and it's very exciting. I would like to change the violence in my community, the littering, and the block shootings. I can be a role model at school, home and church.

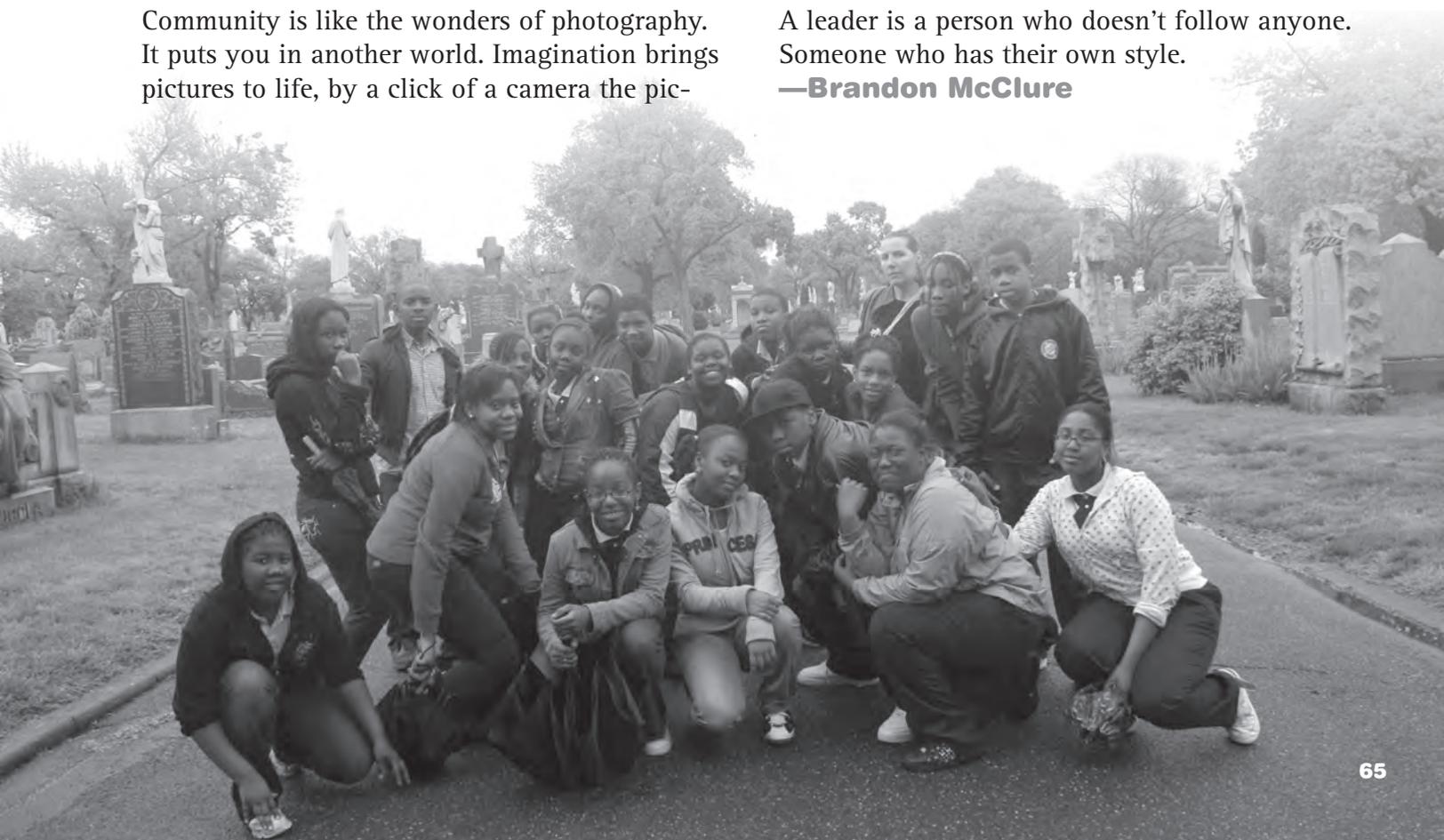
—**Nieema Gill**

My favorite place is home because it's warm, safe, and my parents don't have to worry about where I am; because I'm right where I'm supposed to be.

—**Serena Callender**

A leader is a person who doesn't follow anyone. Someone who has their own style.

—**Brandon McClure**



# ACTIVISM

# IS...

Activism is basically standing up for what you believe in, taking action and making a change. —**Myriam Cohetero**

I like my mom as a community activist because she helps the neighborhood. She helps recycle and plant trees. —**Whitney Reid**

I like Cory Booker as a community activist because he interacts with the people in order to know what they people think about the community and their views on what should be done to help it. —**Kimberley Sampson**

The person who I think is a community activist is my teacher because she inspires her students to do great and look beyond what they see in their community. —**Melissa Hughes**

If I was a community activist, I would plant more trees, mostly fruit trees. People could feed off the trees and be healthy at the same time. —**Joanne Terogin**

If I was a community activist I would help the senior citizens and build buildings for them with state-of-the-art elevators. I would help lower the crime rate. I would tell the mayor to build more parks for kids, and also to use solar energy. —**Brandon McClure**



# Javaka Steptoe



## Visual Artist, Children's Book Author and Illustrator

Javaka Steptoe is an amazingly talented, award winning, artist, designer, author and illustrator. He grew up in Brooklyn in an artistic household, being the son of two artists, John Steptoe and Stephanie Douglas. Javaka won the 1998 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award for his first book, *In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers*. This book is an anthology of poems

for which he contributed a poem in honor of his father. Javaka has since illustrated a number of other children's books and in 2003 he authored and illustrated *Jones Family Express*. Javaka learned a great deal about artistic expression by observing both of his parents. When asked by an interviewer about his work style he said that the word usually comes before the image, meaning that he reads the words before creating the art, and then he does a lot of thinking. He said, "... so I get paid to daydream." Javaka earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. He is very committed to children's education and appears regularly at schools, libraries, museums and conferences across the country.

# INTERVIEW WITH JAVAKA STEPTOE

Collage is a means of survival because if you look at the history of Black people in America, we came here on slave ships. We weren't given the best of everything or anything, at first. So we had to make do with what we had. We had to use scraps. It might not have been meant for whatever it is that you were creating, but you take that scrap and you make it into what you want it to be. I think that in this country people have taken their lives and their situations and transformed them into what they want them to be. That is the great power of Black Americans.

will value. We need to see ourselves in the stories that we read and be inspired.

## **How can we influence our communities in a positive way?**

If you as person live in a good way, you don't throw litter on the ground, you study hard in school and get good grades, you don't necessarily have to go out and say, "I am going to change to my neighborhood" but you have to look within yourself and see what is good and positive for you.



## **Do you think if you can change one person's mind, you can change the community?**

I think so. It always takes one person to ask a question, to say that something is wrong. Usually that one person is not just speaking for themselves, they speaking for those afraid to speak out. Or that one person could say, "Look I think this is wrong" and there is there is an opportunity for others to join in and speak out for themselves as well..

## **Everyone knows that your father is an accomplished author, artist and illustrator. What advice did he give you?**

I grew up watching my father, watching him create books. He would talk to me a lot even when I didn't want to hear it. He would talk to me about the importance of what he does, what he did. When he was growing up, there weren't many books, children's books about Black people. If all of the pictures in the stories that you see of yourself are of people and situations are negative then that is what you

## **Do you think that your work has influenced your community?**

In one way, I come from the perspective that I want to spread happiness; I want to spread joy. To a certain extent, I stand as a representative of achievement. It lets people know that you too can be a children's book illustrator or writer if you have the dedication. I think in some ways I help to preserve good memories by choosing to write about and illustrate about positive things and positive moments. I also think that family is important. In the books that I create, I like to show good moments in family.

The things that we look at everyday, the things that we listen to, the things that we read and think about—those are the things that help create who we are. If you put a lot of negative things inside you, negative thoughts—What kind of person are you going to be? Eventually, you're going to be a negative person. If you put happy things inside you, even it not at that moment, eventually you will be happy.

**They say that children can be an inspiration. How have children influenced you and your creative process?**

Kids help me get going. Sometimes no matter what it is that you do, sometimes you get tired you say - What I am doing all this for? Nobody cares and then you go to a school and you see the kids and you see how happy they are to have your book. They enjoy your stories and it makes you feel better. Children are funny- kids they do all sorts of weird things all the time. When I illustrate a picture, I think about the story, and I think about my experiences with kids. So I study kids, I watch kids. I think about the things that they like. I ask them questions. They are my audience. I have a lot of fun with kids, just playing around, listening to their language. In those different ways, children inspire and help me to keep on going.



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*The thing I will always remember about Javaka Steptoe is his spirit and how much he loves doing what he does.*

**—Tonia Browne**

*The words that best describe Mr. Steptoe are calm, very outgoing, and a person that listens to people even when it's coming from the smallest voice.*

**—Kimberley Sampson**

*Now that I've met him I can believe in myself to become an artist.*

**—Raymond John**

*Javaka Steptoe has great imagination and inspires me.*

**—Joanne Terogin**

*One memorable quote is "if you don't love yourself you can't love anyone else."*

**—Ahyana Gordon**

*Now that I've met him I would love to do art more.*

**—Nicholas Ramsaran**

# Michael Manswell



## Choreographer

Michael Manswell began his artistic life as a storyteller, performing at arts festivals, and winning many prizes and awards. He studied music with Lindy Anne Bodden Rich and at Brooklyn College with Tom Cultice. As a singer he toured Europe and the Caribbean and has performed as a soloist in many productions of opera and oratorio including *Dido & Aeneas*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Beethoven's 9th Symphony*, *Messiah*, *Missa Criolla* and *Missa Luba*. He studied dance at the Trinidad Dance Theater with Eugene Joseph, training in modern, ballet, jazz, ballroom and folkloric styles. Michael worked with Geoffrey Holder on *Douglas*

*II* and *La Valse des Bakas* for the Trinidad Dance Theater and toured with the company in the United States and in the Caribbean.

A prolific choreographer, Michael has created many works that are currently in the repertoire of *Something Positive* as well as work for *Once Upon This Island* (Packer Collegiate Institute), and *Belle* (Brooklyn College). He is an Orisha devotee in the Yoruba religion (Trinidad). He presents lectures and workshops in traditional religious practices and has worked closely with the Interfaith Center in their programs. One of "Brooklyn's Black Men of Distinction 2000", Michael currently teaches for *Something Positive*, The Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, The Brooklyn Arts Council and the Caribbean Cultural Center.

# INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL MANSWELL

## **What motivates you to continue your work?**

I have been a dancer for 29 years. After all this training, you have stuff that you can teach someone else. You have to make a statement about something that is happening in your community. Sometimes the social activity causes you to do something. That act can affect that whole community of people.

## **What do you wish you could do to change your community?**

I would like to change people's attitude and perception of art as entertainment. It is a way to make the whole world better. To say that art is not political is not true. But at the same time it is.



went to Brooklyn College. I didn't grow up here but I always knew that I would live in a place that was not my birthplace – I thought it would be London, but it is too much like home while at the same time too far away.

## **Did any of your family members inspire you to dance?**

No I am the only one in my family. My mama said "where did you come from?" I was born an artist and then I made a choice to be an artist...I have one cousin if mine who lives in Winipeg. She is a ballet dancer and biracial. She has had a difficult time dancing because of her color. I don't think she dances anymore.

## **How do you feel about the Brooklyn community?**

I love living in Brooklyn, one of the most fascinating places on earth. In Trinidad and Tobago, we all have to live in the same general area. We are closer. In Brooklyn, you can form a little enclave that feels like little China. I can go down to Church Street and hear my accent, at Kings Plaza, I can enjoy looking at the different ethnicities.

## **How long have you lived in the U.S.?**

I have lived in the US for 22 years. I came here to study,





# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*The words that best describe Mr. Manswell are upbeat, honest and very serene. He connects with the students and shows expression when answering every question asked.*

**—Changlee Bailey**

*He taught me to support your teachers because they are the crossroad between learning and doing. It is very important to follow your dreams because at the end of the day it's all about you.*

**—Sallie Calixte**

*Now that I've met him, I see that he is a very bright person. He's very expressive and he expresses his brightness through dance.*

**—Zamel Mitchell**

*He believes the world would be a better place if we participated in the arts more.*

**—Claudia Demeza**

## **Do you have any passions besides dance?**

I sing opera- Mozart, Handel, Shubert and I like cooking. I am a great cook- singing and cooking. My troupe loves my cooking. They are always asking me to make food for them.

## **Would you sing us a note?**

Manswell agreed and sang a Mozart Aria, "Cosi Fan Tutti". He explained- It is about two women in love with two friends. The friends pretend as if they are going off to war to see how much their girlfriends really love them. They return in disguise and attempt to seduce each other's girlfriends.

## **As a choreographer, do you audition?**

I don't have the luxury. Auditions are dehumanizing, you feel like a prize pig on a display, a human meat market. You have the look but not the technique or you have the technique but not the look.

## **Would you prefer to live in your present community or the one in which you grew up?**

I love living in New York. I love this community. I wouldn't change it for the world. I love Brooklyn. I love living and working and Brooklyn. It is a real plus for me. People from the Caribbean who love here really love and appreciate it.

## **What was your first production like? Were you nervous? Was your family there?**

Yes and no. I was super-nervous at my first production. I was so scared. I still have jitters. What makes me a wreck is if I am choreographing, dancing and preparing. That makes nervous, not so much performing.



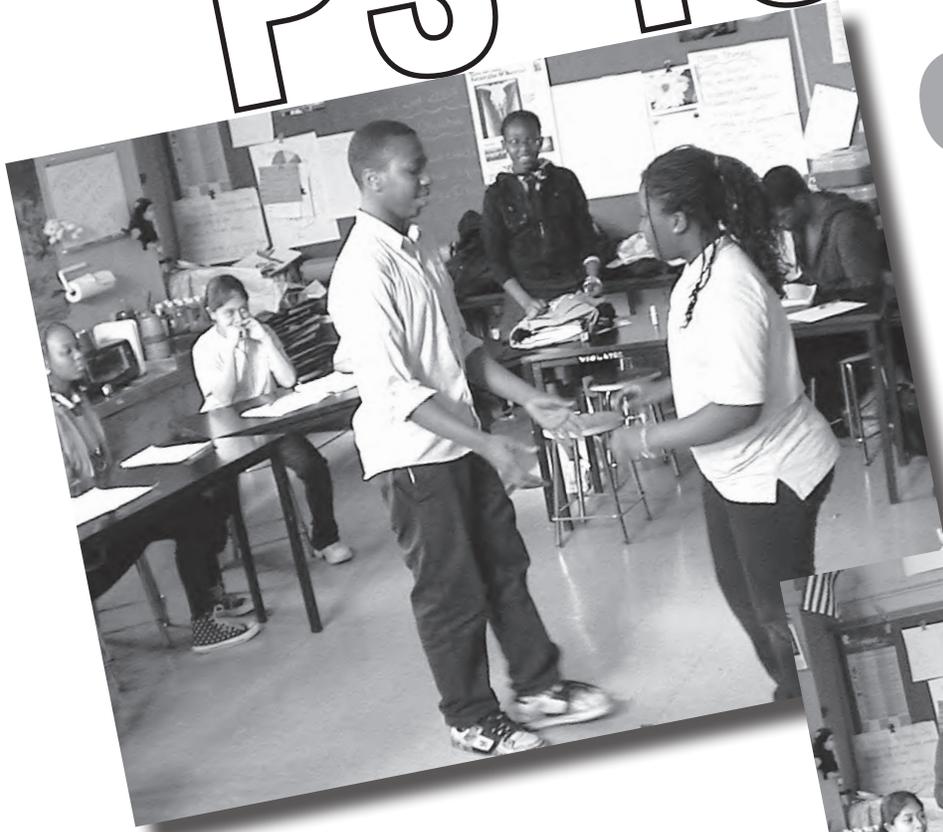


**PS 181K  
TOURS  
FLATBUSH!**



# PS 181K

# cha cha chas

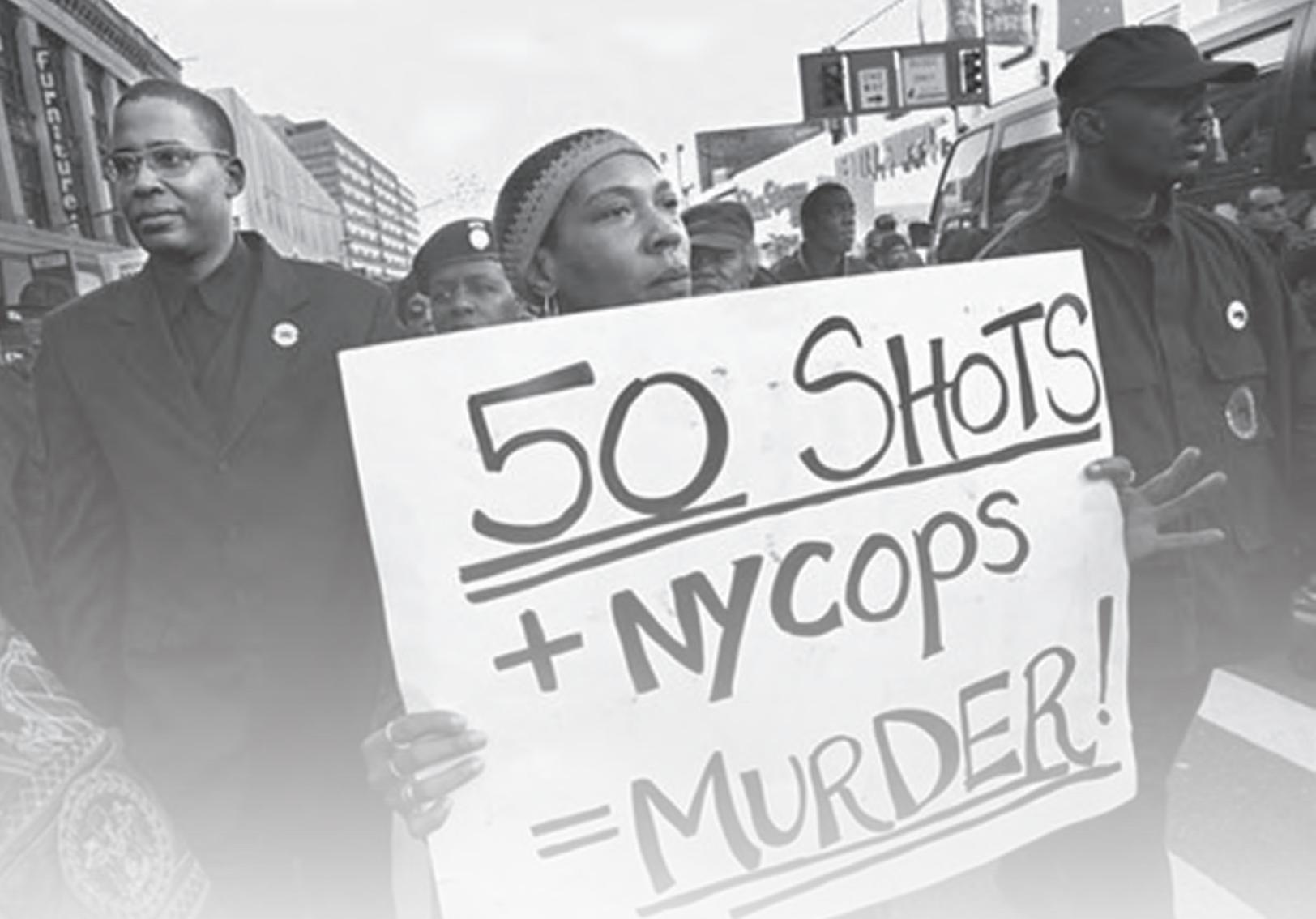




**rochdale is...**

# QUEENS

**jamaica is...**



# **SOCIAL ACTIVISM AND ARTS ACTIVISM**

**in Jamaica and Rochdale Queens**

You may not see a lot of rallies, demonstrations, marches or boycotts in Jamaica or Rochdale, but there are, and have been, a number of subtle forms of social activism and arts activism throughout the area.

In 1853 twenty-three black men signed a document, a petition, appealing to the Village of Jamaica for protection from beatings of white toughs. The petition wrote, "If you do not protect us, we must protect ourselves." Tom Lloyd at the Store Front Museum exhibited an enlargement of this document. The Store Front Museum was located at 162-02 Liberty Avenue during the time span from 1971 to 1986. The mission of that museum was "to instill pride and identity". Lloyd left his position as an art professor at Sarah Lawrence College to start the museum. He had been a sculptor and a long time supporter of black art and culture.

Activism is defined as, "An intentional action to bring about social or political change". Starting such an institution in the center of city designated poverty area, with substandard housing, high crime, and a 1 in 10 employment rate was a bold act to bring about change. The museum focused on a vision of life that did not separate the creative process from the realities of everyday existence. The museum promoted the belief that community arts cannot be set aside from real life. Tom Lloyd wrote, "The effects of poverty have not been abolished here, but a sense of promise and rejuvenation permeates the spiritual consciousness. There is a new vitality challenging neglect and indifference - leading to renewal and social change."

During the late 1970's the Store Front Museum was the headquarters for the Queens Inner City Arts Council, which was comprised of a number of artists/activists, including John Watusi Branch, director of the Afrikan Poetry Theatre, Carl Clay, director of Black Spectrum Theatre, Bernice Johnson, Nana Dinizulu, Baba Ishangi and Russell Robinson, to name a few. These artists started institutions to keep the arts alive for communities where the arts would not be a priority if not for them. This coalition came about largely in protest of the shooting of young Clifford Glover by the police.



Years later the Code foundation, Inc. was founded by Matu Shakur, the father of the late Tupac Shakur, while he was in prison for some Black Panther Party activities. He charged his son, Tupac and Erica Ford to start an organization that would instill morals among black youth. The organization was launched in 1994 at a concert at Roy Wilkins Park in Jamaica, Queens. The Code Foundation is an organization that was started to discourage youth involvement in street violence. Erica Ford defined violence as more than just a shooting. "Violence is a lack of quality health care. Violence is a lack of quality education. Violence is a lack of quality housing. Selfishness is violence because it impedes on another individual's life", she said.

LIFE Camp was established in April of 2002, for ages 13 to 24 to develop strong leaders and responsible entrepreneurs. They use the arts, particularly music and film to:

- Instill personal and community leadership skills
- Ignite critical and independent thought
- Provide professional business training.

The idea for LIFE Camp was born out of the Queens, New York chapter of The Code Foundation and Kids Rule, a non-profit organization of hip hop artist and actor, Jeffery "Ja Rule" Atkins. Out of this organization came the "I Love MY Life" movement. All of this was an attempt to enroll "at risk" youth to stop street violence that was claiming the lives of so many of our youth.

Today we have individual artists/activists like illustrator, Charles Lilly, who curates the annual Black History Month arts show at York College Performing Arts Center; poet, Jahman, who coordinates the Giving Back to Our Youth annual talent show at the Afrikan Poetry Theatre and dancers Keri Edge and Carolyn Devore who are keeping the dance tradition of the late Bernice Johnson alive. All of their efforts keep the arts thriving in the Jamaica area.

# Did you

# KNOW

# YOUR

# ?

*... Mrs. Elizabeth Cisco of Jamaica, a business woman and the first Black woman to fight against school segregation, was a promoter of the 1900 state anti-segregation law?*

*... Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu created The Aims of Modzawe Cultural Center at 115-62 Sutphin Boulevard out of an abandoned gas station?*

*... The day care center at 189-28 Linden Boulevard is the first one to be run by the NAACP, a civil rights organization?*

*... King Manor, in Jamaica, is a New York City landmark, and Rufus King, its original tenant, was one of the central authors and signers of the United States Constitution?*



*... Sutphin Boulevard is named after John Sutphin, a philanthropist who worked in Jamaica, supported dozens of families, and at one time was reportedly paying the rent of 55 needy families?*

*... The documentary “80s Babies” was developed, researched, planned and produced by community youth aged 15 to 20?*

*... Rap/Hip Hop CEO Roc Cayard launched a social activism clothing line, “Hood Certified Clothing”, in response to the Sean Bell tragedy in Jamaica Queens?*

*... Dr. Gerald Deas, an internist who practiced in South Jamaica for many years, has written seven musical plays and dramas and at least three hundred poems?*

# PS140Q

## Edward K. Ellington

**Grades:** PK-6, SE

**Principal:** Elaine Brittenum

**Assistant Principals:** Eartha Pruwitt, Lindon DeFreitas and Yvonne Isley

**Participating Teacher:** Ms. Carlotta Hardy

**Parent Coordinator:** Belinda Lewis

**Funded by Council Member:** Leroy Comrie

**Teaching Artists:**

Orion Gordon: Tap Dance

Rosse Gamboa Taveras: Salsa Dance



**Participating Students:** Jaydon Shelby, Cantrese Grant, Tamara Meyers, Siara Simpson, Shania Moncada, DiArvion Callender, Kelisha Howard, Keyanna Barksdale, Valerie Rodriguez, Jayleen Payero, Anthony Mendoza, Leondre Bent, Jose Padilla, Jocelyn Padilla, Lauren Milano, Cerese Jordan, Luz Peralta, Astrid Fabian, Isaiah Luciaga, Elizabeth Abrea, Ramone Stone, Jazmin Jackson

# COMMUNITY IS...

Community means  
A group of teams  
Encouragement and  
Compliments  
Love  
Putting on gloves  
Sweeping the streets  
You even might get treats  
Taking a part  
making a good start  
Help pushing carts  
At WalMart  
Tender love and cares  
With soft and loving glares  
Community means  
A team  
Together forever  
Everyone together  
Achieve with each other  
Maintain each other.

—**Siara Simpson**

The Community means your home.  
Your Comfort Zone, having fun  
with your friends. The suit memory.  
The party. The wonderful faces.

—**Tamara Myes**

To me, a community means the  
place where people join together  
to make everything work.

—**DiArvion Callender**

Community means to me that peo-  
ple playing games, playing in the  
park. the other things are seeing  
people having fun inspiring oth-  
ers. Community also means to me  
when people inspire me and pick  
up litter. Community means pow-  
er. That's what it means to me.

—**Cerese Jordan**



# PS140

## Students Touring





# the neighborhood!



# Kateline Gresseau



## Children's Book Author

Kateline Gresseau was born in Brooklyn, New York and even though she was the youngest of four siblings, she was the most outspoken. She developed a love of reading when her parents took away her television privileges for seven years. From that punishment came the greatest gift her parents could have given her: the love of reading. Without television Kateline became a voracious reader.

She also wrote several short stories.

It was Ms. Kruh, her seventh grade teacher, who suggested that she become a writer. Kateline's parents groomed her for a legal profession however, and she worked for several prominent New York City law firms before she realized that she wanted to have a greater impact on others. She explored several different professions and worked in over forty different jobs in pursuit of creative fulfillment, what she really wanted. It was a conversation with her husband that inspired her to begin writing her first novel, *The Journey Solo*, which is about the choices young people make and their involvement with gangs. She stated, "I have not always made the correct choices and it has affected my environment. I want to relay the message that the future is now. Every decision you make can help to improve your life and those around you."

# INTERVIEW WITH KATELINE GRESSEAU

## **What sort of work do you do?**

Jason and I own a publishing company together and we try to create books that make a difference.

## **Where did you get your idea to write your story?**

The person who gave me the idea and made the suggestion that I write the story is Jason, who's my "hubby". He said, "You should write a story because this issue of gangs is really important. He knew that as a kid I dealt with some issues about gangs. The moral of the story is: Your choices create your environment. I used to make some really bad choices. By changing it you can achieve anything.

schoolwork and keep track of your goals, you can achieve anything. My dad inspired me. He came to this country from Haiti with one hundred dollars in his pocket. He said if he ever ran out of that money then he'd go back to Haiti. He worked real hard to support all four of us and he passed away about three years ago and he's never been back. And also my mom. She's real strict. When I have kids I want to be strict too.

## **You mentioned having obstacles in your life and some of the bad choices you made and how you turned those negative choices into something positive. Can you describe a situation of a choice you made and how you corrected it?**



## **What are the things that affected your life?**

I think the biggest thing that affected my life was my mom taking away my TV privileges for seven years. I was a really stubborn kid. I didn't want to listen to her at all. I couldn't even listen to the radio. She wouldn't let me go visit my friends so I could watch TV. I became a reader after that. I also learned to draw really well.

## **Who are some of your heroes who influenced you?**

I'm really inspired by Obama. I think it is so awesome that he was able to rise to such a high level with racism and discrimination still going on. He was able to rise above that. It just shows for me that if you focus on your

When I was in the sixth grade I was getting 35 on my math exams out of 100. I don't know what I was thinking. But my parents took away my privileges- that allowed me to improve my grades. In high school I had a 98 average. All of the schools I applied to for college, I got into. I pursued law and social work at Fordham. Because I had good grades, whatever path that I wanted to follow I was able to do that. I'm a paralegal by training. I may go back to school to do something else. The road is always open as long as you're willing to learn. I think that's really important. That's why you need good grades.

## **Who inspired you to write books?**

Jason. I love reading and you guys inspired me to write



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*I'll remember to be a writer when I'm big.*

**— Jose Padilla**

*I will think before I choose to do something.*

**—Leondre Bent**

*Maybe I will become a writer when I grow up.*

**—Luz Peralta**

as well. I remember when all I had time to do was to read. I couldn't find any books that I identified with. My motivation was to write books you guys could relate to.

**What are some things that you think would make this community stronger?**

A lot more outreach and programs like this one. Money to help our youth. Gangs only take you three places- jail, the hospital and the morgue.

**Is reading important to you?**

Very important. That's how you find out what's going on in the world...in your community. People can change history by writing it down. We as a people must master writing. People are changing history all the time.

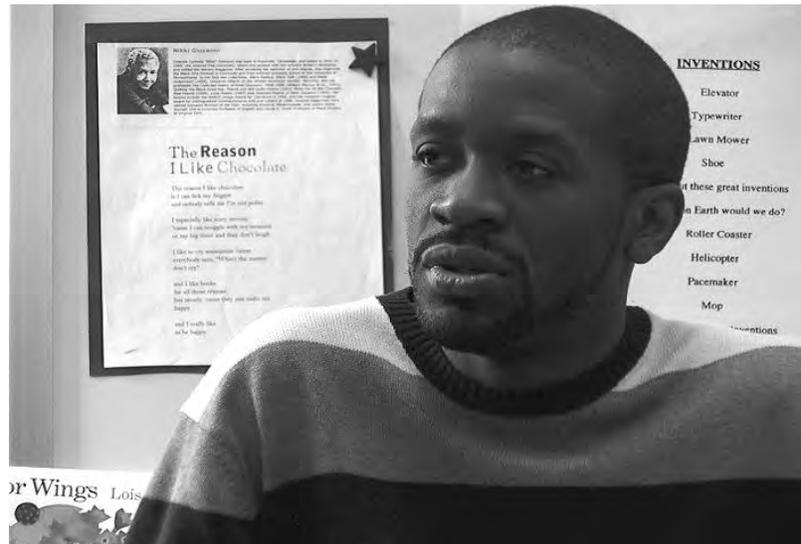


# Jason Spencer Edwards

Jason A. Spencer-Edwards was born in London, England to Jamaican-born parents. He later moved to New York City and grew up in the Laurelton section of Queens. His passion is writing. As a child, his favorite hobby was writing poetry. Night after night he stayed in his room writing poems. Since Jason was outspoken as a child, many people convinced him that he should go into law. Pursuing that dream, Jason graduated from York College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science.

Working for a large law firm in New York City made Jason realize that a career in law was not for him. His love for the written word led him in another direction. He wanted a career that would allow him to be more creative. After writing several poems for his fiancé, she suggested that he write a book. His first book was “Jiggy,” which he published himself, using his savings from his temp jobs.

Jason A. Spencer-Edwards is the author of four books. He is the president and co-owner of JASP Publishing Inc., which has now published twelve books. Their motto is, “Publishing Books That Make a Difference”. The books they publish are realistic fiction and they deal with social issues that affect young people as well as adults. All of the books they publish have uplifting themes. Mr. Edwards conducts creative writing workshops in community schools and he also does public speaking engagements regarding, “How to Publish Your Own Book”.



# INTERVIEW WITH JASON SPENCER EDWARDS



## **Tell us about your educational background.**

I went to school in Queens. I am a product of the New York City school system. P.S.156 in Laurelton, J.H.S. 231 and Benjamin Cardozo High School in Bayside, I went to Morrisville SUNY and Albany SUNY, upstate and York College CUNY, Jamaica, Queens, also TCI (Technical Career Institute), Manhattan.

## **Who or what inspired you to write?**

My wife Kateline. It all stemmed from a conversation that we had about materialism, how people judge you on the material success that we may see. That spawned my first novel, which is entitled, "Jiggy".

## **Tell us about your ideal community?**

My ideal community would be one where everyone looks after everyone else. We don't look at ourselves as separate entities. We look at ourselves as a collective. We care about each other's welfare. We support one another and we live in a cohesive unit. That would be my ideal community.

## **What does community mean to you?**

Community is a state of mind. It represents to me the state of mind, how you feel about the individuals that

are around you. You can't really have a true community unless you are together. If you're disjointed, you're not truly a community.

## **Describe a favorite memory or experience you had as a writer.**

I had several distinct memories when I was writing "Jiggy". It brought me back to my childhood.

## **What motivates you to continue your work?**

God. You have to have something beside yourself to look up to. My second motivation has to be my wife because she motivates me to be a better person. She challenges me. The third motivation is you guys. I'm concerned about how you view the world and what you're actually acquiring.

## **Who made you want to write poems?**

What made me want to write poetry initially was a friend of mine, Darian. I was ten years old and we wanted to start a rap group. It took me a long time to get my words to rhyme. It opened the road for me. It allowed me to have that love of reading and writing and expressing

myself through the written word.

## **Why didn't you finish law school?**

The paralegal job showed me that law was not for me.



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*He taught me how to believe in myself and do what I want to do.*

**—Shania Moncada**

*Never get into gangs because bad things might happen.*

**—Kelisha Howard**

*If you put your mind to something, it could happen.*

**—Di'Arvion Callender**

*Mr. Edwards cares about the environment. It doesn't matter if you are his family he will still care for you.*

**—Siara Simpson**



I never really liked working for someone else. I like to work for myself. I can get so much more done and I don't ever want to do something for money. I've never worked for money. You want to be paid for your services, but money doesn't drive me.

### **How many books have you written?**

"Jiggy", "A Valuable Lesson", "I've Got It Made" and "Patrol Boy", four books, three novels and one poetry/children's book.

### **Have you ever wondered what your life would be like if you were a lawyer?**

Yes, I did. Being able to be a paralegal and see how some of the lawyers acted and what their lifestyle was gave me the opportunity to live vicariously through them. I found that it was overwhelming. It was really work that had no true purpose or benefit besides making sure that you protect your client. I felt that it wasn't something that was rewarding. It seemed like you were just pushing paper all day, even though you can get paid a considerable amount of money to do that. It was boring.

### **Why have you chosen to write for children as opposed to adults?**

Children's minds are a little more receptive. You guys are going to be the future. There's so much information out there for you to learn. So I try to teach you things through literature. My author's purpose is to persuade. I think that's what makes me a responsible author. I can write anything but we want to write something you can take from.





tap

**PS 140Q celebrates**

dance



salsa



# PS800Q

## Thurgood Marshall

**Grades:** K - 5

**Principal:** Paulette Glenn

**Assistant Principal:**  
Danielle Cecere

**Parent Coordinator:** Victor Aquino

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Thomas White, Jr.

**Teaching Artists:**  
Betsy Kelleher: Visual Arts  
Randy Luna: Hip Hop Dance



**Participating Students:** Kevontae Basley, Sanai Hayes, Abriana Johnson, Sade Figeroux, Jaemi Wilson, Serenity Watson, Leann Montague, Karessa Baptiste, Justin Williams, Tajhon Haylett, Tahliq Battle, Jaden Dance, Carol Hughes, Chamari Robinson, Jada Forrester, Shane Greer, Jazlyn Allison, Lashir Hogan, Jada Blount, Cyril Murray, Shane Greer, Jaden Davis

# Community Is...

I think a community is HUGE  
We live in a community  
I like visting in my community all  
the time.

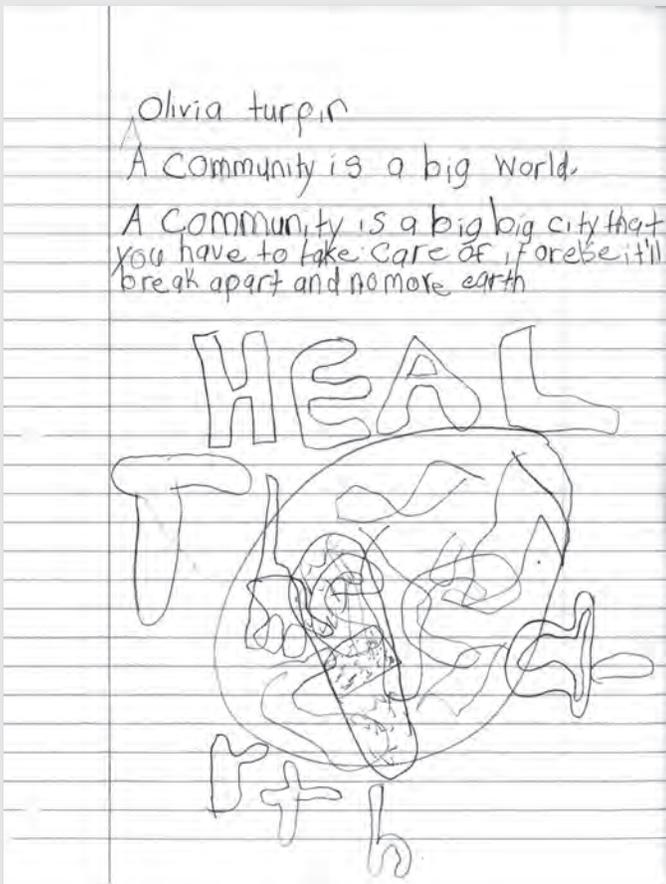
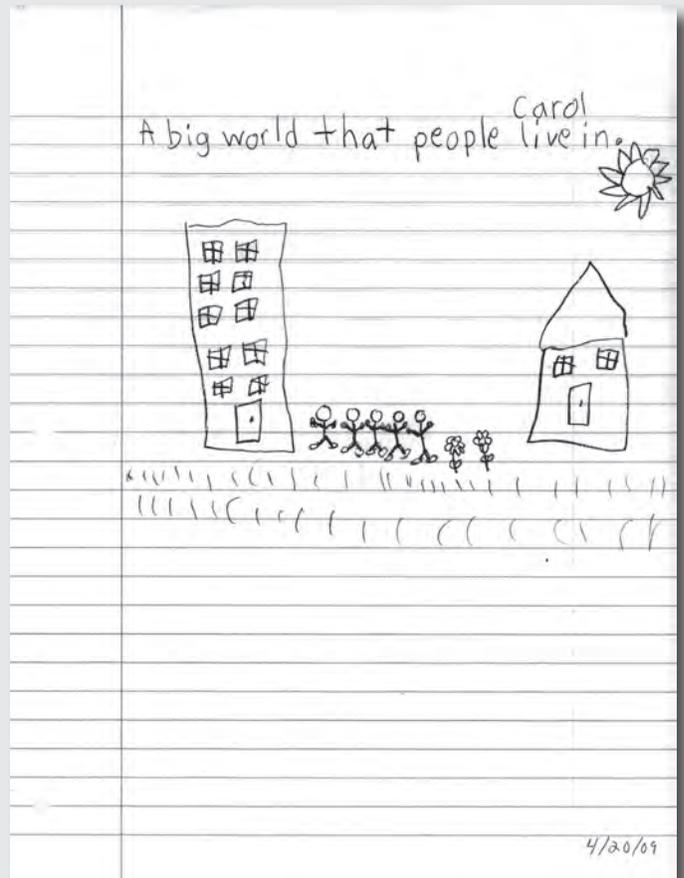
—**Jazlyn Allison**

A community is where the animals live  
In the Bronx Zoo.

—**Dante Edwards**

I love the beach because I get to swim  
and play with my beach ball in my  
community.

—**Lushair Hogan**





# Our **Favorite Places** and Things

I love the beach because I get to swim and play with my beach ball in my community.

—**Lushair Hogan**

I like the ocean and I love to fish!

—**Jada Blount**

I like the mall because you can do a lot of stuff and you can eat at different places!

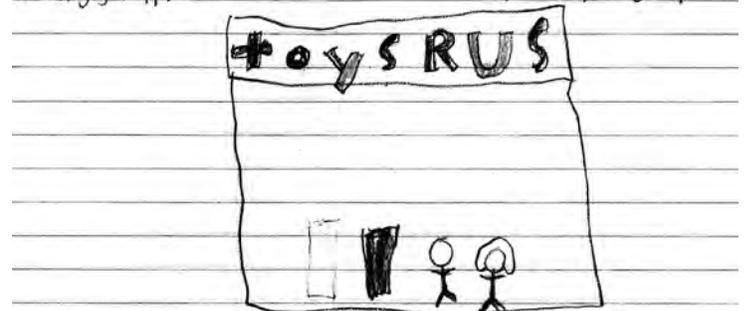
—**Jazlyn Allison**

P.S. 80

Carol Hughes

Class 1-47

4-27-09



# Mrs. Augusta Van Duzen



**Lt. Governor,  
Queens East Division,  
Kiwanis International**

Augusta Van Duzen and her husband, Ralph, have raised five children. They have eleven grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Augusta enjoys being active in her church, serving as a Eucharistic Minister and member of the Social Justice Committee. She is also active in her community. For thirty one years Augusta has been a member of The Laurelton Club of

the National Association of Negro and Business Women's Clubs, Incorporated. This organization strives to bring community awareness to issues of health, education, employment and personal development. Kiwanis International is an organization of community-minded men and women who volunteer their services to support children and young adults around the world. In fact they are "dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time." Augusta Van Duzen has been a member of this organization for fifteen years. During this time she has held various distinguished titles and offices. The Queens East Division has unanimously elected her to be their Lieutenant Governor for their 2008 to 2009 club year. She will preside over eight clubs in that division. Augusta Van Duzen believes that one person can make a difference.

# INTERVIEW WITH AUGUSTA VAN DUZEN



**NOTE:** also present at interview were Robert Witherspoon, Lieutenant Governor Elect – Queens East Division, Veronica A. Witherspoon, President Rosedale/Laurelton Club, and Robert DeSouza President Elect, Rosedale/Laurelton Division

**What does this community mean to you?**

We know that by working with children we can make an impact on the future. Educating children means we'll have educated adults. We have a "Terrific Kids" program where at the end of the year we reward children for their good behavior throughout the year. We also have a "Bring Grades Up" program that gives special recognition to the child who has shown the most improvement.

**When did you figure out what you wanted to do?**

Once my children were grown and gone from the house I was lonely. My husband worked nights so he

slept all day. I needed something to do to occupy my time and that's how I got involved with the Kiwanis activities.

**What was your most difficult obstacle?**

**Augusta:** Learning how to drive! I learned in my thirties. I got tired of waiting for others to take me places. Going to visit friends in the city was a challenge.





# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*Mrs. Augusta taught me to make the world a better place.*  
—Jaemi Wilson

*I learned I need to go to bed early and get a good night's sleep and read a lot!*  
—Kervens

*I'll remember to go to the library and read lots of books.*  
—Serenity Watson

## **What motivate you to continue your work?**

**Robert DeSouza:** To see joy on the face of a child – the children motivate me. Helping children to be happy and bringing smiles to all the children we help – that's what motivates me.

## **What was your greatest accomplishment?**

**Robert Witherspoon:** Our biggest accomplishment would be the “scaled down” trauma equipment that we had created through the North Shore/Long Island Jewish Hospital Trauma Center. They used to only have the adult-size equipment that was often too large for use on children.

## **Ms. Van Duzen, what advice can you give to us for us to be successful?**

Go to bed early! Don't watch so much TV or play so many video games. Read a lot!

**Robert Witherspoon:** I work for Verizon turning on the internet in people's homes. Internet is another book to open up. Take charge – be leaders!

## **Where did you grow up and what was it like?**

**Augusta:** I grew up in Harlem. I lived with my aunt and uncle. They had a twenty two room brownstone house. My uncle was a doctor and they had a maid. I always say I grew up with the last of the “Proper People”. When I was twelve years old I played piano at Carnegie Hall.



# INTERVIEWS WITH SAM SCHWARTZ MICHAEL KEATON AND HELEN BOOKER

## Sam Schwartz, the Neighborhood Mall Pharmacist

Sam Schwartz is a busy man who took time out for us to ask him a few questions. He owns a store in an outdoor strip mall.



### **How long have you been working here?**

Since 1988, a long time ago. You may work here someday.

### **Where were you born?**

In Philadelphia.

### **Mr. Schwartz explains other aspects of his work:**

The doctor makes a decision if you need medicine, then you or another family member would bring the prescription to me and I would fill it to help you get better. We also fill medicine prescriptions for dogs and cats. We fill it as far as out of the country.

### **What do you do for the community?**

We participate in every event that the community has. We work with churches, little league and the track team, making donations to these valuable organizations, and we have a work study program at the pharmacy for teenagers.

### **Do many people come here?**

Yes, we have a HIP center next door and therefore see 45,000 people who come from the HIP center within a year. That's why we are very busy.



## Michael Keaton, Mall Optician

We dropped in for a quick visit to Dr. Keaton's office. He came out for a brief moment to tell us a little about what he does in this Optician's office:

I've been here for nine months. I help people to see who have trouble with their eyes. I fix their glasses, and choose the right spectacles for each person. Everybody knows each other in this community. It is a very close-knit community. I am not the owner.

## Helen Booker, Building 7 Resident and Mall Shopper

Nobody lives in my apartment but me. When I moved out here there was no trees, no grass, there were no addresses on the buildings and no medical center. My daughter back then was in kindergarten, and now she has graduated from medical school and is a practicing pediatrician. She went to Stuyvesant High School, Princeton University and Columbia University. I enjoy the community very much, but it has changed quite a bit.

When I first moved out here it was 5-10% minority and was mostly white and Jewish. There was the old Jamaica racetrack and no stores or grocery stores



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*The interview was a lot of fun! I interviewed 3 people.*

*They were very nice, some young some older. The man that works in the variety drug store sold a lot of things like medicine and candy!*

**—Lashir Hogan**

*On the walking tour, people gave us a lot of information. Everyone was very kind to answer all our questions.*

**—Seka**

# PS80Q

Students celebrate their neighborhood!



**wakefield/seton falls is...**

# **THE BRONX**



PARKS  
ARE  
FOR PEOPLE

# WAKEFIELD

DEPT. OF PARKS  
RECREATION & CONSERVATION

Wakefield is the northernmost neighborhood in New York City. Seton Falls derives its name from the prominent waterfalls that were built in the Seton Falls Park by the Seton family. The best known member of that family is Elizabeth Seton (1774-1821), the first American to be canonized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. The surrounding area was formerly inhabited by Siwanoy Indians, from whom English colonist Thomas Pell purchased a large parcel of land. This area of the Bronx was the scene of a great deal of military action and one battle occurred on the land that is now known as Seton Falls Park. It is now a beautiful wetland, woodland and bird sanctuary.

Formerly Wakefield was the home of a large Irish American and Italian American population. During the 1980s that population was replaced by a large number of African Americans. Today the inhabitants are still largely African-American with a considerable number of Hispanic and Caribbean members as well.

Wakefield/Seton Falls is an area in the Bronx that is not generally known for social activism or arts activism. There are, however, people from the area who are active in the community and supportive of various arts based institutions. The Wakefield Taxpayers and Civic League, Inc. is an association that was formed in 1913 to maintain the integrity of the community. It is one of the oldest community organizations in the city and has been serving the community since it was incorporated in 1931. On their website it states, "Wakefield is a beautiful community because we care and we fight to keep it so." This league merged in 1988 with the Wakefield Civilian Patrol that had been formed in 1979. They have saved lives by bringing medical assistance to those involved in accidents and other emergencies and have even been able to stop crime in progress. The Safe Way/ Safe Home program was initiated by the league in 1984 to address the increase in violence against children (by adults as well as peers). This award-winning program was submitted to the New York City Police Department. The New York State child safety symbol, the McGruff dog, is a result of the work of this league. On the internet, the home page for this league offers links to various city

agencies and provides a wealth of information for concerned citizens of the area.

Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center is a community-based cultural center in the Northeast Bronx that offers a variety of classes in the performing arts for students from age three to adulthood. Though Mind-Builders is geographically in the Williamsbridge section of the Bronx, Wakefield is one of the primary sources of its students. Founded in 1978, this center has been recognized as a nationwide model for its instruction in the arts and for the preservation of the cultures of the African, African-American, Caribbean and Latino people. The executive director and founder, Madaha Kinsey-Lamb, wanted to form an independent school as a vehicle for social change. She didn't originally plan to develop an arts institution, but was unable to find quality arts instruction in the area for her daughter. Over the last thirty years hundreds of people have been serviced by this center. They are known for their

reasonable rates and for their dynamic instructors in music, dance and theater.

In addition they have a community folklore program that trains local teenagers to

research, document and present folk artists and the traditions of various community members.

The Bronx has a rich artistic cultural heritage and the Bronx Council on the Arts has documented a borough-wide culture boom. They assist 5,000 artists and 250 community-based groups, including 29 galleries, museums and artist networks and 17 performance groups. There may not be a great deal of obvious social activism or arts activism in the area but the work is being done through the actions of committed Bronx citizens on a regular basis.



# Did you

# KNOW

# WMO

# ?

*... The official New York State child safety symbol, the McGruff dog, is a result of the Wakefield Taxpayers and Civic League, Inc.?*

*... Professor Lloyd Ultan is the official Bronx borough historian?*

*.. At one time Manhattan folks called what is now known as the Bronx “the annexed district” and the Bronx folks called it “the north side”?*

*... On January 1, 1914 Bronx became the 62nd and last county in the state of New York?*

*... The Bronx River was named after Jonas Bronck (Bronck’s River) and that that is how the Bronx got its name?*

*... On the first Wednesday of each month the Bronx Culture Trolley offers a free ride through the Bronx, visiting various arts attractions? And that it is considered the most successful of the city’s trolley routes?*



*... The Wakefield Taxpayers and Civic League, Inc. has five “fun filled, informative meetings” a year, on the third Thursday of February, April, June, September, and November?*

*... Priest and civil lawyer Father Richard Gorman has served on the Community Board for close to thirty years?*

*... The Bronx Museum of the Arts has been the venue for exhibitions for over 800 participants in its 26 year history?*

*... The Wakefield Taxpayers and Civic League, Inc. interacts with the 47th precinct and monitors crime statistics to see how Wakefield is affected by it?*

*... Hostos Community College has a Center for Arts & Culture, Longwood Art Gallery and an Artisan Marketplace?*

# PS111

## Seton Falls

**Grades:** K – 5

**Principal:** Julia Rivers-Jones

**Assistant Principals:**  
Charyn Koppelson and  
Ava Fullenweider

**Parent Coordinator:** Anita Burrell

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Larry Seabrook

**Teaching Artists:**  
Michael Mustafa Ulmer: Percussion  
Randy Luna: Salsa and Hip Hop  
Dance



**Participating Students:** Breanna Lawrence, Natalie Johnson, Dionte Frazier, Qylani Daniels, Tobor Robinson, Diamond Copeland, Kiara Kearney, Chanice Lopez, Danielle Brown, Maurice Maitland, Kayode Oladapo, Angelique Oakley, Kayla Snaggs, Bryanna Andrew, Shayla Warner, Mikayla McNaughton, Jamal Daniel, Justin Pearce, Kayla Maitland, Julian Ashman, Unique Harris, Gavin Thomas, Carlos Felix, Chizurum Umunakwe, Gabriel Castro, Justin Muniz, Jaden Tumma, Donte Diggs, Jahmari Jackson, Kadeem Ruddock, Kerry Frometa, Dante Smith, Malieke Moralis, William Santiago, Kevin Notice

## student's thoughts on

# COMMUNITY...

A community is a group of people or a place that cares about you and your background. We can make a difference in our community by recycling.

—**Chizurum Umunakwe**

A community is a gathering of people. An individual or a group of people can make a difference by cleaning up the streets. I can make a difference by telling people to stop littering and helping people with their groceries.

—**Jahmarri Jackson**

A community is a place where you have friends, homes, schools and families.

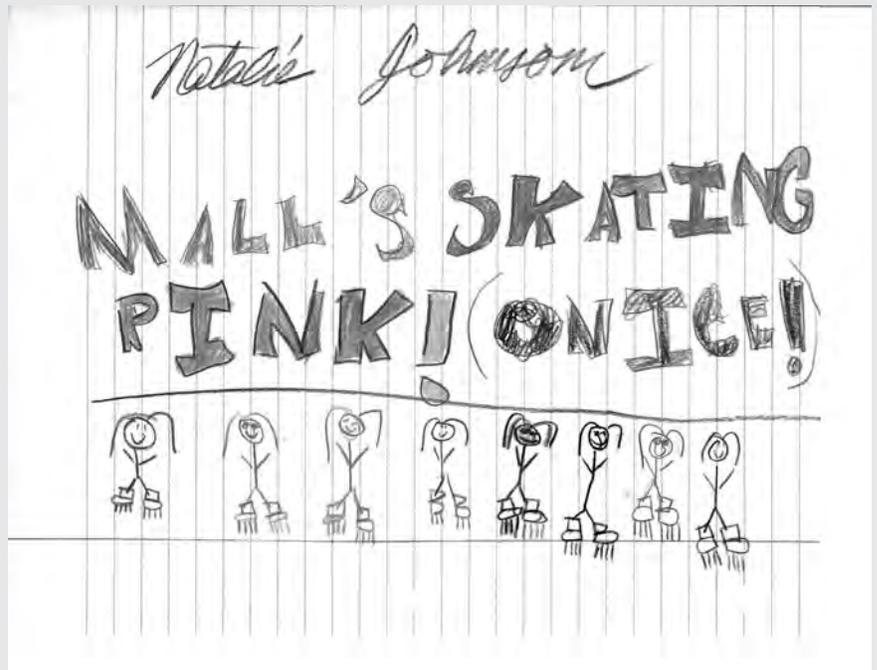
—**Gabriel Castro**

Community is family.

—**Donte Diggs**

# LISTEN TO OUR

## favorite places



# Dr. Robert L. Plummer



## Montefiore Hospital and Youth Mentor

Dr. Robert L. Plummer was born, raised and educated in the Bronx, New York. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Lehman College and a Medical Doctorate degree from Rutgers Medical School in New Jersey. Dr. Plummer completed his General Surgical Endoscopic and Critical Care training at Harlem Hospital Center and Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City in 1989.

Dr. Plummer is Board Certified in General Surgery and is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Plummer has received numerous awards and has been in private practice in the Bronx for fifteen years. He is an attending surgeon at Montefiore Medical Center, Mount Vernon Medical Center and Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center. Dr. Plummer is committed to providing compassionate, state-of-the-art surgery, catering to all, including the underserved and minority communities in the Bronx, as well as the surrounding areas. He has engaged in cancer screening projects, mentoring programs as well as community educational projects. Dr. Plummer is determined to improve the well-being of all with special attention to the African American and Hispanic community of the Bronx.

# INTERVIEW WITH DR. ROBERT PLUMMER

I grew up right here in the Bronx. I was born at the old Lincoln Hospital. My mother was a nurse in the Bronx, and like you kids I went to school right here. When I was a little boy I worked with my dad a lot. My dad drove ambulances for Morisania Hospital. My father was the type of guy who always worked with his hands painting, carpentry and fixing things on cars. He showed me plumbing and electrical work. He had to fix it himself. He didn't want to call anybody in. Surgery is the only specialty in medicine where you actually use your hands to cure people. Because I work with my hands, I like surgery. Surgery is not work. It is fun!



## **How does it feel to be a surgeon?**

It feels good knowing you're needed. I have a lot of patients who need surgery. Other doctors send people to me. It's a good feeling helping people in the community.

## **What does community mean to you?**

I look at the Bronx community as my home. I was born and raised here, like you kids. I identify with all my patients. I've even taken care of patients who know my family. I've operated on people who knew me when I was a little baby. I feel more bound to my

## **Were you nervous when you did your first surgery?**

I was excited! I wanted to do everything I could to save a life. That does make you a little bit nervous and you have to move quickly.

## **What was it like working with other doctors?**

Surgery is like a brotherhood, a special fraternity like a club with everyone having a similar vision. I train residents straight out of medical school. It's fun because they're joining the same club of surgeons.





# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*Thank you Dr. Plummer for telling me about my body. I learned about the body, and I will follow my dream to become a musician, as you have followed your dream to become a doctor.*

**—Justin Pearce**

*Dr. Plummer:*

*I had a fun time. Now I know some parts of my body that I never heard about before. It must be really tough and serious to be a surgeon. Thank you for your fun facts.*

**—Angelique**

*Dear Dr. Plummer:*

*I think you are a very special person saving people's lives.*

*Sincerely,*

**—Emma Suarez**

community when I take care of people I know, people who I feel are just like me. When I look around the room here, I see you kids - I see myself.

### **What do you do for your community?**

I work in mentoring programs. Mentoring is where you almost adopt a kid. I take a high school student every summer through the Einstein Enrichment Program. Every summer I have them help me in the operating room. The hospital administrator said I can't let high school students help me. I try to bring the community into what I do. Right now if I could take you all into the operating room I would. I started an afterschool program. There's also the Harlem Health Sciences Enrichment Program. I told all the doctors I knew and they went in and spoke to kids. You can find a specialty in medicine that works for you.



# Maurice D. Maitland



## Lawyer and Community Activist

Maurice David Maitland was born in Westmoreland, Jamaica in the Caribbean. He has always had a passion to help people with disabilities and immigration issues. Mr. Maitland has been demonstrating this passion since he began working in 1996 as a Social Security disability case manager with the City of New York.

Mr. Maitland has assisted thousands of claimants seeking federal Social Security benefits. He has extensive litigation experience in presenting cases before the U.S. Administrative Law Judges of the Social Se-

curity Administration, handling over 1,100 disability cases. Mr. Maitland holds a J.D. from The Thomas Cooley Law School in Michigan and received his undergraduate degree in Urban Legal Studies and Political Science from The City College of the City University of New York.

In addition to handling cases for disabled workers and immigrants, Attorney Maitland has been a parent leader. He served as PTA Vice President and President, respectively, for P.S. 111 in the Bronx. During his tenure, he was instrumental in motivating school officials, teachers, parents and children to pursue excellence in education despite their lack of resources. While at P. S. 111 Mr. Maitland taught constitutional law for grades 5 and 6 and also gave out copies of the U.S. Constitution to the students. Before working as a lawyer Mr. Maitland was a chef and says he still enjoys cooking for his family when he can.

# INTERVIEW WITH MAURICE D. MAITLAND

## **How is it being a lawyer and are you happy with your job?**

Initially I was a chef. I left the hotel as a chef to study law. I enjoy being a lawyer. It excites me to handle a case. I carry a copy of the constitution. I enjoyed last year when I taught here. My son wants to be a lawyer. I'm happy that my children are happy with what I do.



to know about you and there's a mutual benefit. I participated in the American Bar Association, Moot Court competition. I was a judge and I called on another New York State judge, who was my mentor, to participate. Through that my career blossomed. He wrote me a letter of recommendation. He was so glad I invited him.



## **What is your favorite thing about being a lawyer?**

To give justice where the government fails to serve proper notice; an attorney should fight vigorously for justice.

## **Where were you born?**

I was born in Westmoreland, Jamaica in the West Indies.

## **What is your culture?**

I am Jamaican by birth and American now so I adopt both. I like music and singing. I have Christian parents as a background and I like calypso music.

## **What motivates you to continue in your work?**

I like what I do. It gives me great pride to achieve success when I see something wrong that I can fix.

## **What were your goals as a young person?**

As a young person, your age, I wanted to get good grades and do well in math and science. I also studied Spanish, German and Latin.

## **What are your goals now?**

I like to help people. Through your help, more people get

## **Where did you grow up and what was the community like?**

I grew up in Montego Bay, Kingston, New York and Michigan. I moved around a lot. I usually spent five years wherever I went. My mom was a housewife. My dad was a furniture maker. So am I. My father made sure we all knew a trade before we left home. I am from a large family. There are 11 in my family.

## **Are you planning to do this work for the rest of your life?**

Yes and No. I try to be flexible. More than likely I'll deal with some advocacy. Yes, in the broad sense, especially for people who have been oppressed. I want to do what I can. Our new president is a great civil rights leader. Obama is a great inspiration for many of us.

## **The Bronx has historically been home to many different types of people. What kinds of cultures have you seen represented here, and how does diversity affect the Bronx?**

This is a great community. There is a mixture of West Indian and Spanish culture as well. Spanish food is good here. West Indian food is good also. I enjoy the African

American food from the south, in fact a restaurant recently opened and the owners are from North Carolina. The food is excellent! Chinese food is okay. I really like the cultural diversity.

**Communities are dynamic and always changing. What do you think needs to change in the Bronx to make it a stronger community?**

The government needs to invest more money to improve health insurance and the schools. Many people are unemployed. These are factors we should encourage our government to look into. Also, we need more teachers in the community that reflect the students.



**Tell us about something/someone special to you that exists in the Bronx.**

I like the Bronx Seventh Day Adventist Church. We built a large multi-purpose center to help the community. I joined the men's fellowship of the church, where people reach out to people. Men get together and pray in the morning. It is special to me as part of my spiritual life.

**If you had to describe the Bronx with one word, what would it be?**

One word, I'd say excellent!

**What legacy would you like to leave after your work is done?**

I really want to help the poor and the needy. I would like to help immigrants. I want to push forward to get laws passed so that immigrants won't be sent away and forced out, especially with children who are very young. I also want to help people with disabilities to get a fair share of the pie, people with a mental or physical disability and survivors of substance abuse who are now disabled. I'd like the government to see that they need equal protection under the law.

# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*He is as Martin Luther King Jr. is to Barack Obama, a man who never backs down.*

**—Kevin Norice**

*He is kind of like an officer and protector like a chief.*

**—Unique Harris**



*He is cool like ice.*

**—Jahmarri Jackson**

*Dear Maurice David Maitland:*

*Thank you for sharing how you live your life with me. It was an honor to have you in our school. I love the way your personality is. I love that you like soccer because almost every man I meet doesn't like soccer. You have a great personality because you give everything fairly. Also when I'm bigger I would like to follow in your footsteps. You are like the saying: "From what you give you make a living, from what you get you make a life."*

*Sincerely,*

**—William Santiago**



Hop around, get  
In the spirit  
Pop out from the crowd  
Hop to the beat  
On going rhythm, never stop the  
Pop!  
—**Tobor Robinson**

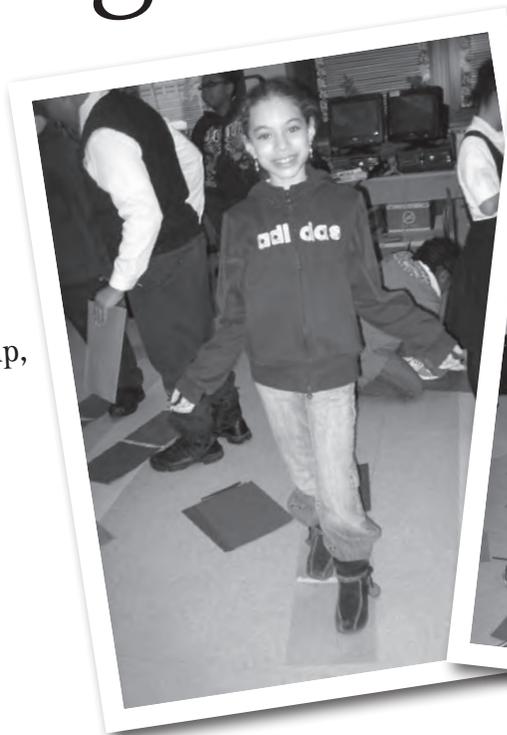


# P.S. 111X Making Music *and* Creating Dances!

## Hip Hop

Having fun  
In class and always  
Paying attention, I always  
Have fun, as long as I don't mess up,  
Or get annoyed  
Please let us get the same teacher.  
I think he is the best.

—**Tiara Davis**



# PS87X

**Grades:** K – 5

**Principal:** Donna Anaman

**Assistant Principal:** Loydie Vertus

**Participating teachers:**  
Ms. Mishler

**Parent Coordinator:** Susan Garcia

**Funded by Council Member:**  
Larry Seabrook

**Teaching Artists:**  
Scott Johnson: Visual Artist  
Iyaba Mandingo: Visual Artist



**Participating Students:** Jonathan Myers, Keniel Ross, Davo Lewis, Jahdiel Deene, Kianna Scarlett, Radeluis Paulino, Renee Walters, Kyshon Weekes, Caniesha Greenland, Deandra Devain, Dyandra Cameron, Khiry Myke, Dennique Khanns, Brandon Kane, Jovaun Bennett, Yamilka DeJesus, Renee Smith, Nana Tutu, Su Ann Ramidassie, Jasmine Gordon, Idongesit Umoh, Kenya Green, Keon Matthews, Lashawna Turner, Khamalah Richards, Kezia Counts, Oneil Reid

**PS87**

# Who We Are...

Who Am I?  
Hospitality  
Vanilla cake, vanilla ice cream with sprinkles  
Teacher and singer  
Pop Star

Who Am I?  
Swag, cuteness  
Lavender, blue, black silver diamond and mango

Who Am I?  
Face  
American West Indies  
Earth  
**•Davo Lewis**

Who Am I?  
Your face  
**•Kyshon Weekes**





# Anne C. Dunbar



Anne C. Dunbar has been the Deputy Administrator for the Office of the Community Affairs/ Division of Volunteer Services/Division of Multi-Service System for Human Services since 1990. Prior to that she worked as a management consultant to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, Director/Assistant Director of Community Relations; Director of Financial Aid (SEEK Program) Hunter College; Assistant to the Vice President for Community Affairs First Venture Corporation of New York and instructor at Bronx Community College. She received her B.A. in 1975 and her M.S. in 1977 from Brooklyn College and a certificate from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at Columbia University. In addition, she holds a MSW from Yeshiva University, School of Social Work. She has devoted an inordinate amount of her time and skills to community and civic affairs for over two decades. As a public

servant, Mrs. Dunbar is a phenomenal woman who has earned numerous honors and awards, including the Distinguished Community Service Award from the Council of Churches, the Citizen of the Year Award from the City Council of New York, the Community Service Award from Consolidated Edison of New York and the Outstanding Service Award from the Black Bar Association of Bronx County. While working as the Director of Community Relations for the Department of Correctional Services for the State of New York, Mrs. Dunbar initiated the first exhibit of art done by inmates that was shown at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Because of Mrs. Dunbar's commitment to community service she has held an impressive number of volunteer leadership positions. She is, without a doubt, an "Outstanding Citizen."

# INTERVIEW WITH ANNE C. DUNBAR

## **What was your favorite place in the community as a child?**

I was born in upper Manhattan. I lived in Harlem on 146th Street and 8th Avenue, “The Village of Harlem.” My people came from Ethiopia, East Africa. Harlem was a lovely place, full of culture, full of interesting people: Sidney Poitier, who was my neighbor, Harry Belafonte’s godmother, who was my girlfriend’s mother, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Malcolm X and his wife Betty lived on 142nd Street across from St. Charles. Harlem was my favorite place.

book was when I was working with the Department of Corrections and I told Commissioner Ward that I must go to Washington DC. I took a bus load of children who had learning challenges and invited myself into the White House. When I mentioned how these children were special and had never left their block in the Bronx, the President’s chief of staff’s wife was a Special Education teacher and convinced President Jimmy Carter to accommodate our special group. They held a reception for us at the White House in the Rose Garden. That is one of my legacies that remains a vivid memory in my mind.



## **Was it difficult being a single mom and going to college at the same time?**

Yes! You hit on a topic I love so pull me back if I go on for too long. I was lucky to have a mother who retired so that I could go back to school. My son was born July 28 and I went back to school in September. I was at CCNY and we only had to pay for books. There was no tuition only a registration fee of \$25. It was hard but I had a village of many dynamic women. I had a very long commute from Brooklyn to the Bronx where I did my homework on the train. It was difficult but I knew I had to do it. The former ambassador to Liberia registered me for classes. That was my reentry into school.

## **What do you hope that your legacy will be?**

I hope that I can share with you and you share with me and you will share with your children and they will share with their children and that way I will live forever. All the things that I have done in this book “In Touch with Your Community” one of the major highlights from this

## **What do Social Workers do?**

There is a clinical person who deals with the medical side of social work. There is a group person who deals with groups and there’s the community person, like myself, who heals the village. We work people through the system; we help people come together and become involved in their communities. I now work in a hospital with little children, three and four year olds, who have serious issues.

## **What was it like creating an art show for people in prison? Was it dangerous?**

People were more disciplined back then and therefore more controllable. People had respect, which is a major component missing in today’s society. There was no such jail style of low hanging trousers back then. We worked with a lot of very interesting people, one of them was part of the Panther 21. I did my work at Green Haven, a maximum security prison, and would take my son with me during these work visits. These imprisoned men were political activists who fought for their rights and rightfully so! They



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*She taught me how it felt to be a single mom. She also taught me to love one another and to care for your parents. A memorable quote from Ms. Dunbar: "To care for yourself and treat people how you want to be treated."*

**—Khiry Myke**

*She taught me about social work. The words that best describe Ms. Dunbar are nice, loving, kind respectful, pretty and caring.*

**—Renee Walters**

*Now that I've met Ms. Dunbar, I understand how it feels to know you are doing something good in your life. A memorable quote from her is: "Strive for excellence!"*

**—Nana Tutu**

*She taught me that you go through obstacles in life, but if you're wise you can solve the puzzle.*

**—Lashawna Turner**

were always respectful of the fact that a woman was in their presence.

### **How can we make people in our community aware of the work that you do?**

You can tell them I came here today. You could share some of the things that we have discussed; but most of all you could show by your example. I will be leaving you with something and you will know a little more than you did before we met.

### **How do you define community activism?**

Community is inside the household on the floor in the building that you live on your block outside and continues to stretch across the rivers out into the world. The world is your community; that is your domain. You must be an active participant in this world community. Become a member of the community that gives back and be respectful of your elders, all human beings and the planet at large.

### **What is the most important thing in your life?**

Besides myself...You must love you and be good to yourself first or you won't be good to anybody else, remember that... My family and the world community and the safety of our community are the most important things to me - I am the root and my branches are the family and community.



## Dr. Kenneth Wilson



### **Director of Community Partnerships, Albert Einstein College of Medicine**

Dr. Kenneth Wilson earned a B.A. in Psychology from Gordon College, and an M.A. and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Yeshiva's Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology. Dr. Wilson has worked at New York's finest institutions for health, education, and research as Site Coordinator, Case Manager, Teacher, Psychotherapist, M.I.T. Therapist, Clinical Psychologist and Project Director. These institutions include Harlem Hospital; New York Counseling and Guidance Services; Good Shepherd Services; The Center for HIV/AIDS Education, Training, and Studies; Academy for Educational Development; School of Public Health/NY Presbyterian Hospital; Columbia University: Center for Population & Family Health School Based Health Clinic Program; St. Ignatius School for Girls; Mentoring in Medicine; and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr. Wilson is currently the Director of Community Partnerships at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and works with teens on a variety of issues, including health education, safety, violence, wellness, hygiene, mental health, communication skills, relationships, and transitioning from youth to adulthood. In

this position, Dr. Wilson establishes direct partnerships, in the Bronx between children, teens, and young adults and with community organizations so they can understand each other better. Through his work, he is able to support and promote youth expressing themselves, their concerns, needs, goals and ideas directly to the adult community leaders, experts, and agencies in the Bronx. Dr. Wilson has observed that often, it is the power of the youth, their voices, art work, poems, stories, writings, music and dance performances~ their lives~ that help adults listen to and misunderstand them. He also affects change by informing young people of the resources that are available to them within their own communities.

# INTERVIEW WITH DR. KENNETH WILSON



## **What can we do to become community activists?**

There are many programs and projects that are valuable to the community like: helping the homeless, cleaning up the parks and neighborhood streets and food pantries that help to get people involved in the community. Young people can collect pennies and donate to charities and in my day many would have lemonade stands and you would donate the money to a specific charity. There are a lot of ways to get involved in the community; but I think the biggest thing is being aware of a lot of resources and information of what is happening in the community.

## **How do you feel to have an African American President?**

Good question. There was a poster that made a big impact on me, which tied into the inauguration. The remaining Tuskegee Airmen and Julian Bonds, all the people that fought for us back in the day were at the inauguration. There was this poster that had one side that had Martin Luther King Jr. it said “The Dreamer” and the other side was matched by an image of Obama that said “The Dream.” I never thought I’d see this, an African American President happen in my lifetime. I was 98% sure that Hillary Clinton was going to get the nomination, because I felt that this country was more ready to accept a woman more than a Black man to lead the country. I was wrong. This brings a lot of hope, faith and empowerment. I grew up thinking I could and neither could my friends ever become President of the United States.

## **What does community activism mean to you?**

For me it means motivating the community to be something and do something positive. There is one thing lacking in the Black community and that is the absence of the Black man. In many enrichment and empowerment programs what is the consistent theme in these opportunities is the lacking presence of the Black man. Being an activist I am responding to this need in the community. I will develop a proposal to find out why there is this void. I begin my research with teens to find out why they are not participating in these activities.

## **What inspired you to become a community activist?**

Even though I grew up with a lot of community, when I went to college and graduated from college there was a lack of community. Many organizations that I was a part of operated in a bubble. They were self contained, had their mission, did their work but didn’t relate to other organizations or programs that were going on around them. This was my experience in my work I did for Good Shepherd Services. They dealt with attendance issues in the elementary schools and high schools. We wanted to find out the reason why this was happening in the home of these students. We would make house calls and one of my families had a father who was HIV+ and had eleven children. He was Dominican and only spoke Spanish. His life revolved around being outside with his friends. He provided money for the house but he wasn’t present in the home. He was the caretaker of these children from ages 7 to 25. This was my entry into community work. There

were no programs in place to deal with this man's condition and situation at this time. The support groups weren't available to a man in his condition that only spoke Spanish. This was in Brooklyn and I had to pull together organizations to work cohesively to help in this situation. This man had an old school and world mentality. He refused to speak to a woman even though she was Dominican. He preferred to communicate with me, a man, even though I didn't speak Spanish. This made communication a great challenge. In serving this man it was necessary to show cultural sensitivity to his situation. This was my beginning into community work and activism.

### **What does the Bronx mean to you?**

The Bronx means opportunity. There is a richness in resources that is still being developed. There is work that still needs to be done with the intercommunication between community organizations. Your generation is the promise of change.



## **STUDENT REFLECTIONS**

*A memorable quote from Dr. Wilson is "He is the leader of the tribe, the great warrior, the master of the force and the top dog."*

**—Dave Lewis**

*Now that I've met him I feel very happy because he taught me about community based participatory research. He taught me that he is working with obesity, drugs & alcohol, mental health and reproduction.*

**—Khamala Richards**

*Now that I've met Dr. Wilson I feel that I can go after my dreams. The words that best describe Dr. Wilson are intelligent and honest.*

**—Kianna Scarlett**



# Art, Culture & Community



A Play created by PS 87 students  
Iyaba Mandingo, Teaching Artist

**Usher:** Hello, parents! We know you guys are used to different people but we all live here in the Bronx now. Yesterday, in class we all worked with Miss Lambchop to come up with things we all have in common. Here are some of them: Mangoes. Coconuts, beautiful beaches, dancing and MUSIC!

**Miss Lambchop:** That's right parents...now lets play some music and dance!

Music plays (Haitian)

**Dark Gray Family Mom:** Yes, that's our music.

**Tan Family Dad:** Yes, it sounds like our music in the Dominican Republic.

**Miss Lambchop:** Good, lets play some of your music.

Music plays (salsa)



**Light Gray Family Uncle:** Hey, listen that sounds like our music in Trinidad.

**Miss Lambchop:** Terrific, let's hear some of it.

**Light Gray Family Uncle:** You know we have a lot in common with each other.

**Dark Gray Family Mom:** Yes, much more than we are different.

**Tan Family Dad:** Thank you kids for inviting us today. Let's all be friends!

**Iyaba:** Good, now everybody dance!

# TEACHING **ARTISTS**

**Jade Banks**

Jade! (Jade D. Banks), a literary and creative force, is a publisher, writer, poet, arts educator, graphic designer and author of *On Being Fat, Black And Female*. Founder of Iman Books, she is also publisher and executive editor

of the literary journals, *Signifyin' Harlem* and *The Edge!* as well as the youth literary journal, *Keep It Real!*, a culmination of youth poetry and publishing workshops for teens. Additionally, Jade! facilitates poetry and publishing workshops for the community.

**Randall Dottin**

Randall Dottin graduated with a BA from Dartmouth and an MFA from the Columbia University School of the Arts Graduate Film Division. His thesis film "A-ALIKE" won the 2004 Student Academy Award for Best

Narrative Film. In addition to winning the Director's Guild of America's East Coast Student Filmmaker Award, "A-ALIKE" was also licensed for a two year broadcast run on HBO in 2004. A participant in Fox Searchlight's Fox Searchlab, his Searchlab film "LIFTED" won Best Short Film at the 2007 Roxbury Film Festival as well as Best Actress, Best Short Film and Best Overall Film at the 2008 Texas Black Film Festival. Randall was recently awarded a \$100,000 Feature Film Production Grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for a film he will direct entitled, "Indelible," written by Mikki del Monico.

**Kimani Fowlin**

Kimani Fowlin Native New Yorker and co-founder of ChoreoConcepts, received her dance training and BA from Sarah Lawrence College and is currently completing her MFA at University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

She has toured and performed at Joyce Soho, The Brooklyn Museum, SOB'S, Long Island University, Miami Dade Performing Arts Center, The National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, Dance Place and The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In November 2007, Kimani completed her choreographic work on an off-Broadway Actors' Equity Association approved showcase called *Gutta Beautiful* at Henry Street Settlement's Abrons Arts Center with playwright Nina Mercer and director Eric Ruffin. The show received both critical and popular acclaim.

**Vickie Fremont**

Vickie Fremont is an artist, designer and anthropologist with a passion for the music and cultures of Africa. She has conducted workshops to teach African craft making techniques using recycled materials at Community

Works and other locations. She organizes professional seminars and has lectured widely about the diffusion of African, African-American, and Caribbean and Latino material culture. Her textile and jewelry designs were featured at the Smithsonian, the Museum for African Art and most recently the Bronx Museum.

**Orion Gordon**

Orion Gordon is an artist who utilizes a very wide spectrum of creativity and talents. Born in Trinidad and Tobago, he moved to the U.S. to further his studies as an actor, dancer, singer and percussionist. He has

completed degrees in Mass Communications Creative and Performing Arts and Speech, and Film and Television. He has performed with many companies worldwide including Something Positive Dance Company, Imani Singers of Medgar Evers College, Hunter College Theater Company of Manhattan, and Tobago Academy of the Performing Arts. As a filmmaker, Orion is the CEO of his own company, Rah Productions LLC, and has worked on many independent films, commercials, photo shoots and music videos in various capacities. He has worked as an artist in residence with many schools in the New York City area and has been a teaching artist with the Brooklyn Arts Council and Community Works for the past four years.

**Margaret Holtz**

Margaret Holtz is the Founder/ CEO of Real Life Theater Ministries, Inc. partnering with her husband, Gregory Holtz, Artistic Director. This company tours with a variety of plays from one acts to full length

plays, which all focus on real solutions to real life problems. She is presently producing "Lifeline" written by Gregory Holtz and directed by Noble Lee Lester at the New Wine Theater in Harlem, NY. Margaret has a BFA in Theater from The University of North Carolina School of the Arts and a Masters

of Science in Teaching from The New School for Social Research. She has performed as an actress, singer and dancer on stage, television, and video and in movies and has over thirty years of experience as a teaching artist.



### **M. Scott Johnson**

Sculptor M. Scott Johnson studied anthropology at the University of Michigan and continued his sculpture education as an apprentice under master stone carver Nicholas Mukomberanwa in Zimbabwe for three years. He is an advocate of direct carving. Johnson has exhibited across the U. S. and in Zimbabwe. As a teaching artist, Scott has worked in schools all over New York City, bringing his enthusiasm and intensity to the classroom.



### **Pamela Johnson**

Pamela Johnson calls Harlem her home. Her love for the arts began as a child performing and traveling with the Harlem Children's Theatre Company, Roger Furman's New Heritage Theatre, and the children's choir of St. John's Baptist Church. She holds a B.A in Communications from Lehman College. Her passion for enriching the lives of children was cultivated at The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School where she taught vocal music, kindergarten thru 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. Currently, she is the founder and director of the Shining Light Jr. Choir (which has had as many as 150 children ages 4-12) of Bethel Gospel Assembly, NYC.



### **Betsy Kelleher**

Betsy Kelleher is a native New Yorker who currently lives and works in Brooklyn. A painter, colorist and draftsman, Kelleher studied art at U.C/San Diego and received her B.A. from San Diego State University. She pursued graduate studies at Brooklyn College and the New York Studio School, receiving her certificate with honors in 1998. She has received grants and residencies from the Chautauqua Institution, the Vermont Studio Center, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Betsy has been a teaching artist for nine years working with students at all levels, through Henry Street Settlement,

The Drawing Center, The Brooklyn Arts Council and others. Her art work has been shown in many exhibitions in New York City.



### **Irene Koloseus**

Irene Koloseus is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, and instructor, who began her career in her native Austria. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Fériba-African Rhythm Tap Company, formed through a collaboration with internationally renowned musician Abou Sylla. Ms. Koloseus has studied African and Brazilian percussion intensively, and was a member of Ivo Araujo's Manhattan Samba Band and Madou Dembele's Benkelema. She is the recipient of the Ethnic Dance Award by Giant Steps funded by NYSCA and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and MCAF/NYC, administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Irene has performed throughout the US, West Africa and Europe, appearing with world-renowned tap artists such as Dr. James "Buster" Brown, Savion Glover, Josh Hilberman and Roxane Butterfly.



### **Randy Luna**

Randy Luna is an actor, dancer, choreographer, performer, costume designer, fashion designer and fashion stylist. Born and raised in NYC's lower east side, he has worked with a variety of local schools around the city as a teaching artist and continues to be involved with the HIV/AIDS community to stop the epidemic. Receiving a B.S. in Business Management and B.A. in theater from Brooklyn College, he acquired his dance/acting training from the Abrons Arts Center, where he is now the program assistant for the dance department. He is the founder of Raje entertainment: a dance company comprised of young emerging artist who are devoted to setting new fashion trends by fusing the Hip Hop culture with other cultures of importance.



### **Iyaba Mandingo**

Iyaba Mandingo is an artist, poet, activist and arts educator. Born in Antigua, West Indies, Iyaba moved to America at 11 years old. Spurred by a love of reading, Iyaba ventured into writing, and in college studied

world history and painting. His subject matter is drawn from the Black experience and his narrative, emotive painting style is influenced by artists like Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence. Iyaba released his first book in 2000 called “41 Times” dedicated to Amadou Diallo. He followed this in 2001 with his first CD entitled “Self-Portrait”. Presently he is touring his one man one act play called Self Portrait in the tri-state area and Connecticut while completing his first novel.



**Rosse Gamboa Taveras**

Rosse Gamboa Taveras holds an M.A. in International Transcultural Studies, Comparative Education/ Anthropology from Teachers College, Columbia University. Rosse spent two years in the Caribbean conducting research in dance, religion, music and culture and has worked extensively in Brazil, where she with studied with mentor Dona Cici, from the Pierre Verger Foundation. She is a Fulbright recipient and has received a Far Light Artist Residency space and Artward bound residency from the Field. Rosse is also the Artistic Director and Founder of CUBRAITI, Inc. a non-profit organization that has partnered with numerous educational and cultural institutions and is developing Casa Cubraiti, an international student residency house in the Dominican Republic.



**Michael Mustafa Ulmer**

Michael Mustafa Ulmer is a native to the “Motor City,” raised with a very unique palette of musical influences, ranging from Harmolodic/Jazz to Motown’s R&B wonders, even to

the early days of Rap. Presently he leads his jazz project: Mustafa’s Didjazz Quartet, an ensemble featuring saxophonists such as Patience Higgins and Bill Saxton. Mustafa is on staff at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater School of Dance and has also accompanied Bill T. Jones master classes at Aaron Davis Hall. Mustafa continues to explore the musical side of the dance world, while composing and writing original music in New York for one is new projects a trio titled “Sons Of Blood” with the instrumentation of acoustic guitar/cello and Ulmer’s palette of piano/vocals/didjeridoo and percussion.



**Ken White**

Ken White has been playing drums and percussion for over 20 years and has been dancing for about nine. He holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Jazz Performance from the New England Conservatory and a Masters Degree from the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University that focused on the relationship between music and dance. In addition to being a teaching artist in the New York City public schools, he currently performs and records with the electro-funk bass and drums duo, Comandante Zero, and is Musical Director of the hip hop project, Liberation Music Group.

# CREDITS

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**Community Works** is a leading nonprofit arts and education organization in New York City founded in 1990 by Barbara Horowitz with the mission to forge links between diverse cultures and communities, to improve educational attainment, to share community stories, and to extend the arts to all people. Today, Community Works partners with more than 300 schools, cultural institutions and community organizations to serve over 350,000 students and community members in all five boroughs through its four major programs:

**Theater Connections & Theater To Go** – presents over 200 affordable, multicultural and education performing arts events for students and community members at performance venues and schools across the city.

**Community Connections** – brings artists and mentors directly into the classrooms and neighborhood centers for workshops and residencies that train young people in theater, dance, music, visual arts and the literary arts;

**Making a Difference** – arts literacy and mentoring programs that honor local heroes and commemorate the multicultural history and traditions of our neighborhoods.

**Public Art Series** – multimedia exhibitions that tell the vibrant stories of local communities through photographs and text written by young people, with concurrent performances, symposia, forums, guided tours and workshops.

**For more information, please contact us at 212-459-1854, or visit our website, [www.communityworksnyc.org](http://www.communityworksnyc.org).**





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