

August 2011 NEWSLETTER

Most of the grants described in our newsletter are made possible through the generosity of past donors who established permanent, charitable funds with us during their lifetimes or through their wills. To learn more about how to set up a fund, please contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton, at 212.686.2563.



## Stopping Disease *En Route*

**E**ver since September 11th, Americans—particularly New Yorkers—know that our ports must be protected from terrorists. But most of us are unaware of another threat: the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that tag along with the animals and animal products that enter New York City every day.

Live frogs prized for their haunches and exotic pets are joined by an increasing amount of illegally shipped meat that feeds a growing hunger for international delicacies. While most animal products are harmless, some contain pathogens

These bats were confiscated at JFK Airport on their way to trade shows in the Midwest from Indonesia. They were tested for pathogens, but none were found.

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**“With this improved understanding, we will be better able to create policies to mitigate wildlife disease introductions and enhance support to the regulatory agencies to fill these gaps.” — Kristine M. Smith, wildlife veterinarian and the associate director of health and policy at EcoHealth Alliance.**

that can spread to customs agents, inspectors, food handlers, and to the general public. Diseases can also be passed to local birds, domestic animals, and humans via mosquitoes and other carriers. Many public health experts and environmentalists fear that, without more controls, a crisis looms.

The threat is exacerbated as the human population expands and settles in former wilderness areas and comes in contact with previously undisturbed wildlife; while global travel and commerce provide easy ways for pathogens to spread. Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), originating in bats, was passed to humans through the wildlife trade—and travelled fast—arriving in Toronto from Asia in only a few days. Avian flu, West Nile virus, and the Ebola virus were also spread from animals to humans.

A grant of **\$100,000** is helping **EcoHealth Alliance** to work with regulatory authorities at JFK Airport to collect and study 500 samples of confiscated animal goods. “It is the first study to focus on how pathogens carried in animal products put New Yorkers in danger,” says Len McNally, program director for health and people with special needs at The Trust. EcoHealth Alliance will test samples for infectious diseases, develop a computer model to predict travel patterns of disease and, recommend ways to improve surveillance. Gaps in regulatory authority persist because different federal agencies have limited jurisdiction over certain types of wildlife and domesticated animals. In order to put a better plan in place, a more comprehensive mapping of the problem is necessary. “With this improved understanding, we will be better able to create policies to mitigate wildlife disease introductions and enhance support to the regulatory agencies to fill these gaps,” says Kristine M. Smith, wildlife veterinarian and the associate director of health and policy at EcoHealth Alliance. “This work will also have the side benefit of curbing the illegal trade in wildlife.”

The Trust made the grant to EcoHealth Alliance with money from two funds left by scientists who wanted their charitable legacies to support biomedical research.

Biochemist Carolyn Rosenstein Falk created a fund to support biochemistry and chemistry research to improve public health. Dr. William Hallock Park, a renowned researcher in the field of bacteriology at the turn of the 20th Century, worked for the New York Board of Health where, among other achievements, he diagnosed Typhoid Mary. Invested to produce both steady income and growth, these funds will support biomedical research in perpetuity.

## Art Worthy of Kings (County)

Brooklyn has no less than 762 dance, film, theater, literary, visual, and multi-media producers, presenters, and educators listed on the Brooklyn Art Council’s directory. Many of these groups are able to produce critically acclaimed works at audience-friendly prices on shoe-string budgets, but it’s not easy. *Reader’s Digest* co-founder and art-lover Lila Acheson Wallace knew that all great things start somewhere and established funds in The Trust that support small and mid-sized arts groups. Five grants to such organizations are featured below, four in Brooklyn, and one that presents dozens of events there.

## When Truth Proves More Interesting Than Fiction

What do you call it when playwrights use journalism to develop plays? If your answer is “investigative theater,” you are correct, and *very* culturally savvy. **The Civilians**, a theater company in the BAM cultural district in downtown Brooklyn, coined the term to describe a process of exploring current events, interviewing primary sources, and recording community discussions. A two-year grant of **\$50,000** will help the company develop new investigative theater. *The Great Immensity*, a play currently in the works, focuses on the implications of climate change based on interviews with residents of



Irondale Ensemble performs *Murrow's Boys*, a piece using the words and adventures of reporter Edward R. Murrow and other journalists to investigate the questions: Is news important today? Where do we get it? And why should it matter? Photo by Gerry Goodstein

Panama and arctic Canada, two places already irrevocably altered by climate change. The grant will also be used to teach investigative theater to the next generation through the expansion of programs at Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School and two other schools.

### *Performing Brooklyn's History*

Where some saw a neglected Sunday schoolroom, experimental ensemble **Irondale Productions** saw a theater. In 2008, The Trust supported the renovation of the schoolroom in the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, an important stop on the Underground Railroad. With a new two-year **\$50,000** grant, Irondale will use the space to develop and perform its own work, as well as provide the Foundry and Epic theaters with time and space to perform and rehearse. True to the history of the building, *In Pursuit of Freedom*, a play currently in development, will explore Brooklyn's abolitionist history with fellow Trust grantees Brooklyn Historical Society and Weeksville Heritage Center. "Along with the theater piece, the project will include a walking tour, a website, three exhibits, and a work of public art," says Terry Greiss, Irondale's executive director. "*In Pursuit of Freedom* will use little-known events of the past to address themes relevant to the present."

### *Bringing Big Band to the Beach*

A cooling breeze ruffles your hair while you dance to live swing and big-band orchestras, or maybe you just sit on a picnic blanket enjoying Ellington, Gershwin, and Porter. It happens every July, and it's always free. There's even free parking. In the colder months, audiences go indoors to enjoy world-class Flamenco or to see a play still in development and stay for a discussion with the playwright, for a fraction of Manhattan prices. Residents of this seaside hotspot have been enjoying free concerts at Kingsborough Community College's amphitheater since 1968. Located on the southern tip of Brooklyn

Swing night at Kingsborough's Hot Summer Nights free outdoor concert series draws loyal Jitterbuggers and Lindy Hoppers.





Before Akim Funk Buddha performed, he shared some of his moves on stage at a master dance class in Von King Park, Brooklyn. Photo by Roneil Smith

close to Brighton Beach, the college's commitment to the community shows in its affordable, crowd-pleasing lineup. A two-year **\$40,000** grant to **On Stage at Kingsborough** will help keep the music in the air, the spotlights on, and the artists paid. It will also bring artists-in-residence to the campus, including Brooklyn's Camille Brown & Dancers, Godlight Theatre, and playwright Stephen Earnhardt.

### *Creating an Artistic Home*

The **Brooklyn Arts Exchange** in Park Slope is more than just a place for artists to hone their crafts and kids to enroll in programs named Dance Frenzy and Puppet Play, though it's great for both. "We create an artistic home," says Marya Warshaw, the group's executive director. "When you walk in the door, it's important that you know people. A lot of good things happen when you build trust." That's why, Ms. Warshaw says, its artist residency program lasts longer than most. "Our artists can create a play over one or two years, working on it in our studios, showing it as a work in progress, and integrating feedback from other artists." Some former resident artists go on to advise the next round of artists and help them apply for grants and find venues for their work. A two-year **\$60,000** grant to Brooklyn Arts Exchange will provide 12 artists with free rehearsal space, stipends, and the opportunity to present their work. "Many people can make it as an artist for a short period of time,"

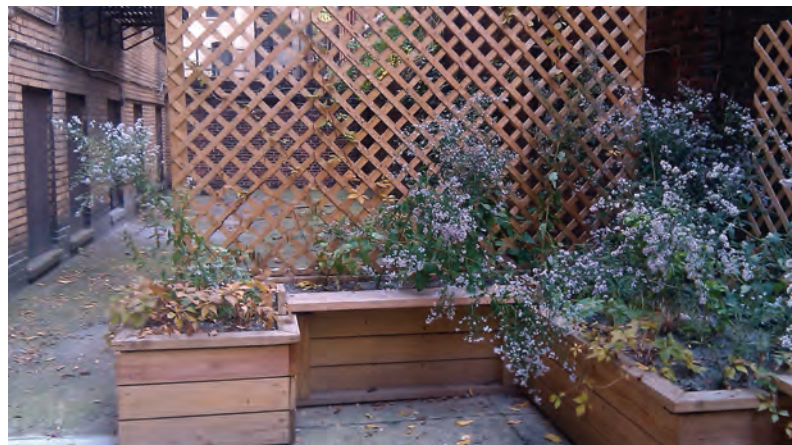
Warshaw continues, "but this residency helps artists handle their long-term goals, births, deaths, and livelihoods so that they can keep it going for a lifetime."

### *Performances in Parks: Worth the Mosquitoes*

While many New Yorkers choose to summer elsewhere, those who stick around are richly rewarded. SummerStage, **City Parks Foundation's** free outdoor concert series in Central Park, offers music, dance, and theater. SummerStage crews are now taking the show on the road throughout the five boroughs, turning small neighborhood parks into entertainment venues—setting up lights, sound equipment, and stages where needed. The crews start the summer in Brooklyn with hip-hop, funk, and Latin rhythm playing in Bedford-Stuyvesant's Von King Park, Brownsville's Betsy Head Memorial Playground, and Red Hook Park. After putting up and taking down shows in the Bronx, Queens, and on Staten Island, the crews end the tour in Manhattan neighborhoods, including Washington Heights and the Lower East Side. A two-year **\$40,000** grant to the Foundation will keep the lights on and New Yorkers entertained through these long, hot nights. For a full listing of what's in store this summer, visit [www.summerstage.org](http://www.summerstage.org).

## Other grants to small and mid-sized arts groups:

- **Casita Maria, \$40,000** to support dance and theater performances in the South Bronx.
- **Center for Traditional Music and Dance, \$60,000** to preserve and present immigrant dance in the five boroughs.
- **Chen Dance Center, \$50,000** for an Asian dance center.
- **Dance/USA, \$25,000** to help inventory the City's dance community and publish a report on the needs of dancers and the audiences, space, staffing, and finances of dance groups.
- **Foundation for Jewish Culture, \$50,000** to distribute a DVD of *Nuremburg*, a film produced by Pare Lorentz.
- **Gina Gibney Dance, \$40,000** for a modern dance company.
- **Harlem Stage, \$60,000** for dance, theater, and multi-disciplinary performances.
- **Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, \$60,000** for dance and theater presentations.
- **Kupferberg Center for the Arts, \$60,000** to support dance, theater, and literary arts at Queens College.
- **Lehman College Center for the Performing Arts, \$50,000** for dance and theater performances in the Bronx.
- **Ma-Yi Theater Company, \$50,000** to develop and produce plays about Asian-American experiences.
- **New Georges, \$30,000** for a theater that develops and produces new plays by women.
- **Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, \$40,000** to support an Asian-American theater.
- **Poetry Project Limited, \$20,000** for literary readings and performances.
- **Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre, \$60,000** to support a dance program in the five boroughs.
- **Sundog Theatre, \$30,000** for a Staten Island theater.
- **Symphony Space, \$50,000** for literary programs at a performing arts space.
- **Women's Project and Productions, \$60,000** for a theater dedicated to developing and producing new plays by and about women.



(Left) The back patio of this Bronx apartment building is being outfitted with a rainwater collection vessel that supports plant life similar to the system shown above.

## The Power of Smaller Grants

*In addition to the larger competitive grants that you read about in this newsletter, The Trust also makes smaller grants to projects where a little support goes a long way.*

### Putting Plants to Work

We know that plants are good for cleaning the air, but did you know they can do the same for our water?

A **\$10,000** grant will help **Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association**, a Bronx nonprofit housing group, build a rainwater collection system that will feed a garden in the backyard of one of the low-income apartment

buildings that it manages. The project is a part of the mayor's plan to reduce stormwater runoff, which can overwhelm wastewater treatment plants, resulting in sewer overflows that are dumped into rivers. With financial and technical support from the City's Soil and Water Conservation District, Banana Kelly is currently designing a system on the apartment building's roof that will drain through a downspout into a vessel filled with native plants selected for their ability to draw impurities out of the water. "The water will provide a saturated condition for the wetland plantings," says Amanda Bayley, a designer with the

**“This is a small effort to address a big problem. If it succeeds in reducing stormwater runoff, the model can be used in other buildings.” — Pat Swann, senior program officer for community development at The Trust.**

project. “The water is then slowly released back to the sewer system through a low-flow drain line.”

A residents’ committee has been formed and is providing feedback throughout the design phase and will also help build and maintain the system. “This is a small effort to address a big problem. If it succeeds in reducing stormwater runoff, the model can be used in other buildings,” says Pat Swann, senior program officer for community development at The Trust.

### *As [They] Like It: Shakespeare for Teens*

Shakespeare’s timeless works shed light on the most sublime and ridiculous aspects of the human experience, but only if you can understand what they’re saying. The bard’s complex language can pose barriers to understanding, particularly for kids whose first language isn’t English. But by teaching through performance, the **Shakespeare Society** helps students understand the language and meaning of the plays. With a grant of **\$10,000**, the Society will take teaching artists into 30 City schools to work with 3,000 Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan middle- and high-school students. Teaching artists work with classroom teachers to develop a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of students, who are then encouraged to use their own experiences to find meaning in the plays. Students act out the text as it is read by their classmates and choreograph movements to illustrate themes such as jealousy and forgiveness. The Society has also developed ways to make speaking in iambic pentameter come more naturally, using memorization and word games that increase young people’s fluency and comfort with the language.

# Other Grants

## **Giving Young People Opportunities To Succeed**

- **The Door – A Center of Alternatives, \$50,000** to help undocumented youth get permanent residency status so that they can get financial aid for college and become legally employable.
- **Futures and Options, \$30,000** to add paid internships in media, accounting, and technology to a college-readiness program for high-school students.
- **Girl Scout Council of Greater New York, \$125,000** for a career exploration program for girls attending low-performing middle schools in the Bronx.
- **Good Shepherd Services, \$80,000** to expand a program that helps disadvantaged Brooklyn and Bronx teens go to college or find jobs.
- **New York Academy of Medicine, \$75,000** to enhance a science and health career program for girls in middle schools.
- **Parsons The New School for Design, \$186,000** to help minority high-school and college students study design and build portfolios.
- **ReServe Elder Service, \$120,000** to use retirees to help students return to school after suspension or placement in foster care or homeless shelters.
- **Summer Matters, \$125,000** to preserve 31 summer and school-year programs for middle-school students operating in poor neighborhoods.

## **Helping Struggling New Yorkers**

- **Center for Economic Opportunity, \$100,000** to expand an incentive-based cash award and social service program in the Bronx.
- **City Harvest, \$100,000** to make affordable fresh produce more available in Melrose and Mt. Hope in the Bronx, Stapleton on Staten Island, Bed-Stuy in Brooklyn, and Manhattan’s Washington Heights.
- **Kids in Distressed Situations, \$25,000** to distribute donated toys, clothing, and education materials to homeless children staying in shelters.
- **New York LawHelp Consortium, \$50,000** to provide online legal resources for poor New Yorkers and training for community groups and library staff on the use of its website, [lawhelp.org/NY](http://lawhelp.org/NY).

## **Strengthening Our City**

- **Citizens Union Foundation of the City of New York, \$70,000** for the ReShape New York Campaign, which

advocates a fair redistricting process with independent oversight.

- **Fiscal Policy Institute, \$100,000** to help the nonprofit sector understand City and State budgets.
- **Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York, \$125,000** to support and coordinate an awards program promoting excellence in nonprofit management.

### Improving Education

- **Abyssinian Development Corporation, \$100,000** to lengthen and restructure the school day at three central Harlem public schools.
- **Graduate Center of the City University of New York, \$80,000** to start a program for newly arrived high-school students who are illiterate in their native language.

### Bolstering the Arts

- **Brooklyn Academy of Music, \$100,000** to strengthen small performing arts groups that are participating in a subsidized rental program for performance and rehearsal space.

### Protecting Affordable Housing

- **Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, \$65,000** and **Urban Homesteading Assistance (U-HAB), \$65,000** for services and advocacy to prevent foreclosure of privately owned apartment buildings.
- **Center for New York City Neighborhoods, \$40,000** to support foreclosure-prevention policy analysis and advocacy.

### Keeping Mind and Body Healthy

- **Mental Health Association of New York City, \$140,000** to develop and test protocols for integrating mental health services into primary care “medical homes.”
- **North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System Foundation, \$100,000** to expand ActivityWorks, a fitness and learning program in elementary schools that addresses space and time limitations by bringing short, fun, and educational video-led exercise routines into the classroom.

### Protecting Our Planet

- **Basel Action Network, \$50,000** to stop our country’s export of toxic electronic waste to nations with weaker regulations.
- **Center for Climate Strategies, \$100,000** to advance a cleaner, smarter national energy strategy.

- **Center for Working Families, \$100,000** for a statewide residential energy retrofit and jobs program.
- **Clean Production Action, \$75,000** for a partnership between businesses and nonprofit organizations to promote green chemistry.
- **Earthworks, \$75,000** to minimize the hazardous effects of natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale region.
- **Multi-State Mercury Products Campaign, \$75,000** to phase out the use of mercury in consumer products such as thermostats and light bulbs.
- **New York State Gas Drilling Protection Project, \$150,000** to protect New York from damage caused by natural gas drilling.
- **State Alliance for Federal Reform of Chemicals Policy, \$75,000** to advocate for stronger state and federal chemical policies to prevent environmental contamination and protect public health.
- **TEDX, \$50,000** to provide scientific information to policymakers and environmentalists advocating for stronger regulations that make gas extraction safer.

### Helping the Sick and Disabled

- **Adaptive Design Association, \$60,000** to make customized adaptive wheelchairs and other equipment for disabled City children.
- **Amida Care, \$75,000** to improve care for people with HIV/AIDS who struggle with mental health problems, homelessness, and substance abuse.
- **VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, \$150,000** to upgrade Blindline, New York’s information and referral hotline system for the blind and visually impaired.

### Caring for the Elderly

- **Medicare Rights Center, \$80,000** to help elders understand and get the most out of Medicare.
- **Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, \$50,000** to help five of its member agencies in low-income communities retool their operations to deal with growing demand for services and government funding cuts.
- **Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, \$75,000** to improve the training of nursing and home health aides serving frail elders.
- **Selfhelp Community Services, \$50,000** to provide legal help to elders to resolve Medicaid and Medicare problems.
- **United Neighborhood Houses of New York, \$150,000** to help settlement houses adapt to reduced government funding, particularly for children and seniors.

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# GRANTS

**August 2011** NEWSLETTER

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Trust grantee Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre performs *Views of the Fleeting World*. Photo by Basil Childers

The grants described in this issue were approved by The New York Community Trust's governing body at its June 2011 meeting. For grantee contact information, or for more information about the grants, please call The Trust's receptionist at 212.686.0010, ext. 0.

This issue and past newsletters can be found at [www.nycommunitytrust.org](http://www.nycommunitytrust.org).

If you'd prefer to receive our newsletter by e-mail, write to [newsletter@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:newsletter@nyct-cfi.org).

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