

February 2009 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. If you would like to learn more about how to do this, please contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton, at 212.686.2563

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Safe Space staff drive their vans to areas in Queens where homeless and runaway youth hang out and give them the facts on preventing STDs and HIV. See p. 4 for HIV prevention story.

## Helping New Yorkers Weather the Storm

**W**ith Wall Street at the epicenter of the economic crisis, it's hard to find anyone in New York City who does not feel the pain. But in these tough times, it's more important than ever to help those who are hit the hardest and have no safety net. As we did after September 11<sup>th</sup>, The Trust is working to balance immediate and urgent needs with our long-term goals—public education reform, job creation and training, and universal health coverage among them. Grants in early 2009 will help New Yorkers weather the storm by making sure that the most effective City nonprofits—who also are hurting financially—can continue to help our neediest neighbors get food, shelter, and public benefits. And because domestic violence and child abuse increase during times of stress, we will concentrate grants in communities we expect to suffer the most.



A Selfhelp legal advocate visits the home of an 86-year-old client who lives in Brooklyn. Selfhelp was able to get her full-time home care, and is currently investigating whether she needs an aide that can assist her at night.

prescription drug subsidies. In addition to helping individuals, the organization will conduct 40 training sessions for 1,500 staff members of groups serving seniors, and run 20 educational sessions for at least 700 elders.

## When Your Social Security Checks are Seized by a Creditor

We, too, are feeling the impact of the market collapse. But with the generosity of past donors who set up endowed funds with us, the big hearts of our current donors, and careful management, we will maintain our commitment to solving today's problems and plan for a more promising tomorrow.

## When You're Forced to Make the Toughest Choices

Thousands of elders in New York City are facing hard times because of declining retirement income brought on by the financial crisis. Paying for medications and health care is becoming particularly difficult, especially for elders with chronic health problems. Deciding whether to fill a prescription or buy groceries is a choice no senior citizen should ever have to make. Almost all elders are eligible for Medicare, and those who become poor because of chronic illness are eligible for Medicaid. But these programs have complicated regulations and few elders understand them. And with State budget cuts, it may become harder for disabled elders to receive Medicaid-funded home care.

With a **\$100,000** grant, **Selfhelp Community Services** will continue its hotline, staffed by lawyers and paralegals who can coach social workers, elders, and caregivers to navigate these bureaucracies. When problems are too complicated for elders to solve on their own, the organization assigns lawyers to represent them; Selfhelp expects to help at least 250 elders who have been denied Medicaid or Medicare home care benefits, or who have problems getting

Credit cards with high interest rates and mounting penalties have been aggressively marketed to poor people across the country. When a job is lost or a health problem hits, credit card debt can mount quickly, leaving people like Queens resident Ms. Z, a disabled 57-year-old, in the lurch. Before she was able to get disability benefits, Ms. Z survived by charging necessities to her credit cards while she was recovering from successive strokes. Then she started getting several calls a day from collectors and soon her bank account was frozen. She didn't know she was being sued, and never received a notice to go to court.

Ms. Z is not alone. Collection agencies have bought up millions in credit card debt and are using unscrupulous and often illegal methods to take these collection cases to court and seize assets. The courts are overwhelmed with cases filed with errors, such as wrong names and addresses. As a result, New Yorkers can find their pension payments and Social Security checks suspended, and not even know they had been sued.

The **Legal Aid Society** was able to help Ms. Z get the case dropped by proving to the courts that her bank account only contained exempt Social Security Disability funds. With a grant of **\$75,000**, Legal Aid's Consumer Rights Law Project will help protect more Queens residents from abusive debt collectors. Focusing on cases that have potential to set precedents to protect all consumers, the project will represent at least 40 low-income individuals keep creditors out of their bank accounts.

Collection agencies have bought up millions in credit card debt and are using unscrupulous and often illegal methods to take these collection cases to court and seize assets. . . As a result, New Yorkers can find their pension payments and Social Security checks suspended.

## Greening New York Through Jobs and Historic Preservation

### When Green is Gold

Green collar jobs are one solution to two major problems facing New York City: disappearing jobs and thousands of buildings guzzling too much energy and water. Seventy-nine percent of the City's greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings, and retrofitting them with efficient light bulbs, green roofs, better insulation, and low-flow toilets will mean smaller energy bills, cleaner air, and less sewage runoff. Although these solutions are energy-efficient, they can be labor intensive.

President Obama has promised to create millions of green collar jobs. In the meantime, with prior support from The Trust, **Sustainable South Bronx** has already trained 100 people to install green roofs that absorb carbon dioxide and improve the air quality in a neighborhood with some of the highest asthma rates in the nation. With a grant of **\$25,000**, the organization will add workshops that teach participants to retrofit older buildings with high-efficiency lighting, plumbing, appliances, and heating and cooling systems.

After the trainees finish the workshops, Sustainable South Bronx will help them find full-time jobs and

Now employees of the Sustainable South Bronx venture SmartRoofs, these graduates of a Trust-supported training program install a green roof on a building at Sarah Lawrence College.

work with labor unions and trade associations to place them in apprenticeships on green building projects. Demand for workers with these skills is on the rise, and The Trust is making sure New Yorkers are on the leading edge of this growing economic sector.

### When Old is Green

When "green architecture" is mentioned, people cite the recently built Solar One condos in Battery Park or the Bank of America tower on Bryant Park. But green can also be found behind pre-war porticos and Federalist façades. Before air conditioning, buildings were often designed with stone floors and natural ventilation to help keep temperatures cool in the summer. Repairing old windows, using florescent light bulbs, and installing solar panels are often more energy efficient and environmentally friendly than bringing in the wrecking ball and starting from scratch. Yet from 2003 to 2007, the City issued 38,000 demolition permits, wiping out part of the City's past and leaving behind rubble and waste that now makes up 60 percent of our total waste stream. In order to promote energy-efficient re-use of buildings, architects, city planners, and developers need to understand the value of retrofitting old structures.

With an **\$80,000** grant, the **Municipal Art Society** will launch a public campaign using data on the City's demolition trends that it compiled with the National

Energy, materials, and the history of Crown Heights are conserved in this former ice house, built in the 1880s. It was converted to a LEED-certified housing co-op in 2004, with the installation of a green roof, solar panels, and a radiant heating system. Photo by Kieran K. Meadows.



**“There is a taboo against speaking about sex in Caribbean homes, and part of our job is to help mothers and daughters figure out how to overcome this taboo and communicate.”**

—Cheryl Hall, executive director, The Caribbean Women’s Health Association

Trust for Historic Preservation. The Society will bring together representatives from the environmental design, construction, and historic preservation fields to make recommendations to the City. It will then host public exhibits, programs, a conference, and a design contest to explore and demonstrate the greening of historic buildings in ways that do not compromise their architectural character.

## Preventing HIV Infection Neighborhood by Neighborhood

Throughout the City, young women are having unprotected sex, and those living in HIV hotspots are more likely to suffer dire results.

African-American, Caribbean, and Latina girls in the City are four times more likely than white girls to become infected with HIV. This is largely because they live in parts of the South Bronx, central Brooklyn, and parts of Queens where they are having sex with men who have some of the highest infection rates in the country. A growing number of these girls are also “hooking up” and practicing unsafe sex with men they meet on line.

The City’s Department of Health reported 10,000 new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in girls of color last year. In addition to facing the health problems caused by STDs, these girls are four times more likely to become infected with HIV after unprotected sex.

Ineffective outreach and sex education and a lack of access to HIV testing and health care in these neighborhood have created a perfect storm: 90 percent of young women ages 13 to 24 living with AIDS or HIV in the City are black or Latina. To combat AIDS in these communities, prevention messages must deal frankly with cultural attitudes and sexual pressures. And because few girls will go to an AIDS organization, the education, support, and health care must come to them. That is why The Trust is funding groups that are working in these communities, or reaching these at-risk girls where they are—whether that means drug

hotspots in Long Island City at 2 a.m., after church services on Flatbush Avenue, or on Facebook.

“Unfortunately, because of its abstinence-only policy, the federal government doesn’t fund these programs,” said Trust program officer Jasmine Thomas. “In fact, The Trust is often the only source of private money available for these frank prevention, outreach, and testing services for teens and young women.”

Last year, support from The Trust helped The **Caribbean Women’s Health Association** launch a new HIV prevention program tailored to the needs of the Caribbean community in central Brooklyn. Working with groups and individuals in churches, libraries, and summer programs, the organization recruited girls who would most benefit from the program. “If we are meeting with a Haitian group that speaks French and Creole, we will have Haitian staff that speak French and Creole—it’s important to have someone that the girls can relate to,” said Cheryl Hall, executive director of the Association. “There is a taboo against speaking about sex in Caribbean homes, and part of our job is to help mothers and daughters figure out how to overcome this taboo and communicate.” With a grant of **\$50,000**, the Association will continue individual counseling and increase the scale of their popular prevention programs, serving 2,000 people at these community events. In addition, they will help 400 Caribbean girls and young women improve their self-confidence and learn how to get their partners to use condoms.

A **\$50,000** grant to **Safe Space** will strengthen its HIV prevention program for high-risk teens in Jamaica and Far Rockaway. The program will expand its recruitment efforts to bring girls to its weekly safer sex group session. Fifteen-year-old Leah talks about her experience in the program. “It helps me learn how to be confident; most females are scared. A lot of the time, girls want to use a condom, but their partners don’t, and then they do what their partner wants because they don’t want to be broken up with...Miss Nikia taught us how to deal with that

situation. If they object, we say 'If we can't use a condom, we can't have sex,' 'cause I ain't trying to get pregnant or catch an STD."

This grant will also fund outreach vans to help homeless and runaway girls and young women on Long Island City streets. Every night between midnight and 3 a.m., the vans will visit hangouts where drug use and prostitution make them nests for HIV infection. Licensed staff will provide rapid HIV tests, safer-sex kits, and counseling; help teens get off the street or into job training; and get them food stamps and health insurance.

It's critical to reach girls on an individual level, but making a Citywide impact means harnessing major media outlets as well. Of the 16,000 girls who were tested for HIV at **Planned Parenthood of New York City** in 2007, the majority had not participated in any sex education or HIV prevention programs. With a grant of **\$125,000**, the group will roll out a series of public outreach efforts, including radio spots that make the connection between HIV and STDs and encourage girls and young women to get tested. Planned Parenthood will also hold "Teen Nights" at community health centers in high-risk neighborhoods that will spice up HIV prevention and sexual health workshops by including games, open discussions, and party favors. Planned Parenthood will also send out mobile medical vehicles that will be stationed at various community colleges where girls and women can get tested for HIV or other STDs and receive gynecological exams, information, and other help.



Young women are using the Internet to meet young men and to find health-related information. A grant to Love Heals will tailor safer-sex outreach to these girls and young women. Photo by Love Heals.

Meeting girls and young women where they're at means communicating with them on line. Although the Internet is where some find risky hook-ups, it's also where many go for help. But when **Love Heals**, an organization that educates young women about HIV infection, tried to find resources that worked for urban teenagers on line, they couldn't find any.

It will use a **\$30,000** grant from The Trust to refine its on-line videos about real-life dating and negotiating safer sex with feedback from focus groups and post them on its site, YouTube, and other social networking sites. And because the organization knows that teens are more likely to listen to each other, supervised peers will provide information to other teens via live chat sessions, answering questions regarding HIV/STD testing, free condoms, and social services, and making referrals to local agencies. "As young people's use of the Internet continues to evolve, we too must evolve to remain responsive," said Jasmine Nielsen, executive director of Love Heals. "We are adapting our outreach to the Internet in order to harness the power of peer education while capitalizing on the ease and anonymity that makes the Internet such an attractive portal for meeting people and finding information."

# Other Grants

## GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

**Saint Michael Academy, \$135,000** to improve academic, career, and health services in five Catholic high schools for girls.

## HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

**Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, \$200,000** to provide emergency counseling and financial assistance to prevent families from becoming homeless.

## SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELFARE

**Hour Children, \$50,000** to expand a mentoring program for children who have a parent in prison.

**New Destiny Housing Corporation, \$150,000 (three years)** to provide affordable housing and follow-up services to battered women and children escaping from abusive relationships.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**Bronx Addiction Services Integrated Concepts Systems, \$80,000** to monitor the progress of chronic addicts using Bronx Lebanon Hospital's detox program and curtail their repeat use of inpatient care by helping them enter follow-up care programs.

**Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, \$50,000** for a relapse prevention program that helps gays and lesbians recover from drug addiction.

**Osborne Association, \$70,000** to help youth with criminal records who are in drug treatment programs prepare for the job market, enroll in GED classes, and get counseling.

**Project Renewal, \$55,000** to add a case manager at a downtown men's shelter to motivate more men to complete the detox program and accept longer-term treatment.

**Turning Point, \$70,000** to improve an outpatient program for youth living in Sunset Park, Brooklyn by hiring two youth workers to run group workshops that focus on social skills, teamwork, accountability, constructive problem-solving, and community service.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**Harlem Educational Activities Fund, \$80,000** to expand a program in Bronx and Manhattan middle schools that prepares underperforming students for high school.

**Medgar Evers College of CUNY Center for Law and Social Justice, \$65,000** to teach poor and minority voters about the mechanics of registration and voting so that their votes count.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Community Resource Exchange, \$54,000** to train and counsel 52 new nonprofit leaders with a special emphasis on leading during tough times.

*The following grants were made as part of our Neighborhood Revitalization Program, now celebrating its 30th anniversary. This program awards annual grants to nonprofits working in low-income communities on projects that involve residents. All grants are for \$40,000.*

**Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A**, to provide legal support to up to 40 low-income buildings in Bushwick.

**Chhaya Community Development Corporation**, to help owners in Jackson Heights and Jamaica, Queens bring illegal and hazardous apartments in compliance with housing codes.

**Good Old Lower East Side**, to provide public housing residents with free tax help and other financial services, monitor their quality of life, and hold workshops on public housing issues.

**Myrtle Avenue Commercial Revitalization and Development Project**, to improve the nutrition of public housing residents in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.

**Neighborhood Housing Services of the North Bronx**, to prevent foreclosure through financial assistance and counseling for residents in Williamsbridge, Wakefield, and Parkchester.

**Northfield Community Local Development Corporation of Staten Island**, for a public education campaign and individual counseling to prevent foreclosures on the North Shore.

**Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition**, to brief housing officials on predatory equity (when developers buy buildings in poor, but changing, neighborhoods and try to remove low-income tenants), help prevent foreclosure, and improve living conditions in Kingsbridge Heights, Bedford Park, and Fordham.

**Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation**, to help public housing residents in Far Rockaway, Queens with taxes, finances, and finding jobs.

**St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation**, to organize tenant associations and promote financial literacy in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

**United Community Centers**, to prevent foreclosures in East New York, Brooklyn.

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, \$55,000** to involve a diverse range of residents in the improvement and upkeep of a nine-mile trail system, and to expand the park's community activities.

**League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, \$74,000** to lobby nationally for rapid action on climate change.

**Natural Resources Defense Council, \$100,000** to design a multi-billion dollar energy efficient program that will retrofit all privately owned buildings in the City.

**Pratt Institute, \$55,000** to help nonprofits acquire and develop office space.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, \$100,000** to develop individual employer-matched savings accounts for education and job training.

**Legal Momentum, \$100,000** to recruit, enroll, and retain more girls in vocational high schools to prepare for higher paying jobs not traditionally held by women.

### ARTS AND CULTURE

**Cave Canem Foundation, \$45,000 (three years)** for public readings by African-American poets.

**Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, \$50,000** to revitalize downtown Jamaica, Queens through cultural events at the AirTrain Station, the lawn of the Jamaica Performing Arts Center, and King Park.

**Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, \$45,000 (three years)** for dance and theater at a performing arts center in the Bronx.

**LAByrinth, \$30,000** for a theater company that produces new plays.

**Ma-Yi Theater Company, \$50,000** to develop and produce plays by and about Asian-Americans.

### EDUCATION

**Black Male Donor Collaborative at the Schott Foundation for Public Education, \$100,000** to expand and support programs in public high schools that raise the academic performance, graduation rates, and college and career preparedness of young black men.

**Out2Play, \$50,000** to refurbish the playgrounds of five elementary schools in low-income neighborhoods where children have no other outdoor play space.

**St. John's University, \$100,000** for a summer pre-law program, LSAT preparation, and internships to help minority college students qualify for law school admission.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**New York Landmarks Conservancy, \$50,000** for architect's fees for the restoration of a historic synagogue in Queens that also serves as a community center for new immigrants.

### HUMAN JUSTICE

**Association of the Bar of the City of New York, \$100,000** to train 100 *pro bono* attorneys to provide legal help at clinics in 10 homeless shelters for women and children.

**Sanctuary for Families, \$75,000** to help get asylum for approximately 110 girls and young women who have been victims of rape, forced marriage, genital mutilation, and other gender-based violence.

**Upwardly Global, \$60,000** to help skilled, but underemployed, immigrants find jobs that help them back into careers for which they were trained.

### BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

**Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health, \$100,000** to study the effects of environmental toxins on children's health and development, and to determine if genetic variations affect vulnerability to chemical exposure.

**Hospital for Special Surgery, \$145,500 (three years)** to help people with Lupus live longer, healthier lives by establishing and evaluating a cardiovascular disease prevention program.

**International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, \$300,000** for research to develop an AIDS vaccine.

**Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College of Cornell University, \$120,000** to study painful side effects associated with an effective breast cancer chemotherapy.

**New York Stem Cell Foundation, \$92,000** to study a new line of stem cells with the potential to treat Parkinson's disease.

### HEALTH SERVICES

**Aid for AIDS International, \$45,000** to expand HIV prevention workshops and outreach, testing, and other services to Latin American immigrants.

**Gay Men of African Descent, \$56,000** to support the sustainable expansion of the only group providing HIV services exclusively to gay black men.

**Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College of Cornell University, \$90,000** to expand a palliative care program.

**New York University School of Medicine, Center for Immigrant Health, \$240,000** to inform immigrants about cancer screening and treatments, particularly those that are free, low-cost, or subsidized.

**United Hospital Fund of New York, \$80,000** to study emergency room use by Medicaid patients in two poor communities.

**Visiting Nurse Service of New York, \$85,000** to compare three financing methods for home care to determine which one best serves homebound patients in managed care and also lowers their costs.

## BLINDNESS AND VISUAL DISABILITY

**Bernard M. Baruch College of CUNY, \$75,000** to train visually impaired people to use devices such as voice-operated personal digital assistants and talking watches, and help them get the equipment free or at low cost.

**National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments, \$70,000** to expand a peer support program for parents of blind and visually impaired children in the City.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

**Advocates for Children of New York, \$120,000** to make sure the needs of disabled students are met in the reorganized school system.

**Resources for Children with Special Needs, \$65,000** to tell parents how to get services for disabled children in public schools and help them resolve problems they encounter.

## ELDERLY

**Dorot, \$50,000** to expand a call-in program that offers homebound elders a social way to learn about common geriatric health concerns, or learn basic English or Spanish.

**St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers of New York, \$80,000** to improve care for homebound elders who are frequent users of emergency rooms.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, \$56,000** to expand mobile veterinary clinics in poor neighborhoods.

## LITERACY

**City University of New York, \$200,000** to use a nine-part television series to help parents learn English while teaching them how to become more involved in their children's education.

**Queens Library Foundation, \$50,000** to enhance pre-school and adult literacy programs.

**YMCA of Greater New York, \$50,000** to begin a comprehensive literacy program for recent immigrants in the Bronx.

## February 2009 GRANTS Newsletter

The grants described in this issue were approved by The New York Community Trust's governing body at its December 2008 meeting.

For address, phone number, and contact person for each grantee listed, or for more information, please call The Trust's receptionist at 212-686-0010, Extension 0.

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

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