

THE NEW YORK
COMMUNITY TRUST

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GRANTS

December 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Students training to become radiation technologists at Long Island College Hospital in a Trust-supported program that helps people qualify for good jobs. Photo: Clair Bush/The Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

Pairing the Needs of Business and Workers

It's difficult to get a good job in New York without at least an associate's degree. After all, unemployment is on the rise, the steady decline of manufacturing jobs continues, and the recession has started to take its toll. But there are well-paying jobs with opportunity for advancement in health care, transportation, and information technology. Over the next decade, City employers will need hundreds of thousands of trained workers to fill new jobs and replace retirees. But there are too few job-seekers who possess the necessary skills, and too many people with little education or skills in jobs that no longer exist.

Veterans who have become sick or been injured serving our country...are entitled to monthly disability benefits, but they face an error-prone, inefficient, and faceless system that is backlogged with more than 650,000 disability, health care, and pension claims—20,000 disability claims in the New York region alone.

In 2001, a group of funders created **The New York City Workforce Development Fund** in The Trust to improve the City's approach to helping people at various skill levels get on—and move up—the career ladder. Since then, the Fund has become an important voice in shaping workforce development policy in the City and State.

In 2006, the Fund started a successful sector-based training initiative: industries identify jobs they needed filled and work with training programs that taught people the skills to fill them. The Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty is training 119 individuals as paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and radiation technologists in one of the pilot programs. Because of the project's success, the City is opening several centers focused on specific industries. The first opened in Queens in the summer of 2008, and will train 650 participants for transportation jobs at LaGuardia and JFK airports and elsewhere.

With part of a new **\$125,000** grant, the Fund will commission Public/Private Ventures and the Aspen Institute to help nine more City employment organizations work with employers and learn how to manage these sector-based job training programs.

The Fund will also work with the State to make additional funding available for City groups that help low-skilled job seekers become eligible for training in careers where they can advance. With our support, the Fund will continue to spur innovation and investment in workforce development to provide more people with the tools to earn a better living.

Fighting for Vets' Benefits: Lawyers take on Veterans Affairs

Veterans who have become sick or been injured serving our country often come home to battle the bureaucratic labyrinth that is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These men and women are entitled to monthly disability benefits, but they face an error-prone, inefficient, and faceless system that is backlogged with more than 650,000 disability, health care, and pension claims—20,000 disability claims in the New York region alone. Those who served in the Vietnam War and the first Gulf War are forced to compete for services with veterans of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and the strain on the system will only worsen as returning vets file an anticipated 638,000 new claims over the next five years. Veterans who have legal help are far more likely to receive the benefits owed to them, but few organizations have the expertise to help.

The **Association of the Bar of the City of New York** recognized this growing need and began a program to provide veterans with lawyers eager to help. The Veterans Assistance Project supplements its staff attorneys with *pro bono* lawyers whom they train to represent vets. Since the program started in 2007, 235 lawyers have teamed up and taken on cases for 166 veterans.

With a grant of **\$35,000** from The Trust, the Project will help an additional 150 vets. Part of the money will pay a consultant who has more than 20 years of experience helping veterans navigate the VA. According to one lawyer, "[the consultant] taught us how to understand the nuances of getting a claim through the



Girls in a single-sex after-school program run by the Center for Court Innovation for youth facing delinquency charges. Photo: Fund for the City of New York.

VA, despite its extreme dysfunctionality and four-month response time to any inquiry.”

Legal help is especially essential for Iraq and Afghanistan War vets filing claims for problems caused by traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. Although there is often no physical evidence, these problems can leave vets unable to function. Because of the stigma surrounding these disabling conditions, many of those who serve our country wait a long time after they leave the service before making their claims, adding to the difficulty of getting needed benefits.

One of the Project’s clients recently returned from serving in the Iraq War and suffered injuries in a roadside bombing. In addition to his brain injury, hearing loss, and damage to his shoulder, he also experiences the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder: headaches, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and mood swings. Although he had applied to the VA for disability benefits, he had heard nothing. The Project was able to pair him with a team of lawyers who are now helping him get the benefits he deserves.

Getting Kids Off the Pathway to Prison

Each year, 6,000 City children under the age of 15 commit non-violent offenses, and many stumble onto a path that can lead to a lifetime of trouble with the law. Appearing before a judge in family court on delinquency charges for crimes as minor as jumping over a subway turnstile, they are too young to drive or vote, but old enough to get locked up in detention. The majority are black and Latino, and all are poor. They often spend 48 hours to a month in City detention, and 2,000 are sent to upstate residential facilities each year.

Being pegged as delinquents this early in life crushes self-confidence and increases the likelihood of future incarceration. An estimated 80 percent of youth discharged from upstate facilities are rearrested within three years.

With detention costing taxpayers twelve times as much as community alternatives to incarceration, the State and City can’t afford to ignore this broken system. Although the Bloomberg administration is investing in community



Members of the Harlem Honeys & Bears Swim Team, an athletic group for New Yorkers 50 and older, practicing at the Hansborough Recreation Center. Photo: New York Academy of Medicine.

physical or sexual abuse. With a grant of **\$54,000**, the **Fund for the City of New York's Center for Court Innovation** will expand a program to deal with delinquent girls. In addition to home visits, structured after-school activity, and intensive parent involvement, staff will be trained to identify the signs of trauma, and develop an individualized plan of counseling, educational support, and other services. Last year, a total of 167 youth were mandated to participate in the program, and only 7 re-entered the juvenile justice system.

courts and other methods of keeping kids out of detention, much more remains to be done.

With grants of **\$50,000** each, the **Correctional Association of New York** and **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** will work together to advocate for juvenile justice reforms, such as closing City detention and State residential facilities and increasing the use of alternative programs such as pre-trial monitoring and getting more support for youth on probation. They will also publish a report on the State's progress on implementing juvenile justice reforms and push for City Council hearings to discuss its findings.

Programs throughout the City help youth tackle problems that lead to delinquent behavior. But with limited funding, only a fraction of the youth who need help get it. A **\$60,000** grant to Bronx-based **Urban Youth Alliance International** will help an additional 33 youth on probation get individual counseling and therapy to address bad behavior at its root.

The majority of girls facing detention have serious emotional problems and have experienced or witnessed

In order to improve and reform policies dealing with delinquent youth, City agencies, policymakers, lawyers, and judges need accurate data about the kids in the juvenile justice system. With a **\$100,000** grant, the **Legal Aid Society** will compile data on race, gender, neighborhood, household hardships, and prior arrests. This information will be uploaded to a database that protects the individual's privacy while making important statistical information available to the public.

The City's troubled youth have been treated like criminals for far too long. By combining support for policy reform, advocacy, direct services, and technology, The Trust hopes to provide kids with the help they need to avoid a life in and out of jail.

Creating a Senior-Friendly New York

With its free concerts and Shakespeare in the Park, expansive public transit, and family and friends (and pharmacies) close by, New York City can be a wonderful

New York City can be a wonderful place to grow old. But ask any senior citizen who is disabled, facing a rent hike, or struggles with English, how they feel about living here, and they'll tell you the City could do a lot more.

place to grow old. But ask any senior citizen who is disabled, facing a rent hike, or struggles with English, how they feel about living here, and they'll tell you the City could do a lot more.

With over one million seniors living in the City, and more living into their 80s and 90s, their numbers, and their needs, are on the rise. In response, the **New York Academy of Medicine** released a study that interviewed groups of seniors throughout the five boroughs. Their suggestions included assistance finding jobs that would allow them to phase into retirement, a telephone helpline to aid them with their mental health needs, and express buses to Brooklyn to visit the Botanical Garden and the beach.

With a grant of **\$100,000** from The Trust, the New York Academy of Medicine will form the Commission for an Age-Friendly New York. Its purpose is to spell out concrete ways to achieve the goals set in the report, such as increasing access to the outdoors and public buildings; improving transportation, housing, social services, and health care; fighting social isolation; and improving seniors' ability to participate in civic life or get a job.

Making life better for elders has long been a priority at The Trust. Since 2000, we have made 437 grants totaling more than \$15 million to projects that serve the elderly. "Creating a citywide plan makes a lot of sense," said Len McNally, The Trust's health program director. "Respecting our elders means making them a priority in every City agency."

Other Grants

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

Food Bank for New York City, Food for Survival, \$50,000 to maximize the use of federal nutrition funding for free lunches in City schools.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELFARE

Black Equity Alliance, \$75,000 to produce and distribute a report on the status of New York's black residents in areas such as education, health care, home and business ownership, safety, and employment.

Borough of Manhattan Community College

Foundation, \$105,000 to help immigrant and other minority women stay in college by removing policies that impede their enrollment and retention, and improving academic support services.

Episcopal Social Services of New York, \$31,000 (three years) to strengthen pre-kindergarten literacy programs in two Harlem day care centers.

United Way of New York City, \$50,000 for a group of grantmakers that support projects to improve early child care, such as expanding daycare options, improving early-education teacher training, and helping nonprofits adapt to new City policies and reduced funding for child care.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Hetrick-Martin Institute, \$65,000 to expand a program for young lesbians with aggressive tendencies, providing opportunities for involvement in community service projects, paid internships, and creative arts programs.

MOUSE, \$80,000 to expand a student-run computer help desk program in City public high schools.

Police Athletic League, \$80,000 to expand a program for poor teens in Brooklyn that offers academic support, community service projects, job-readiness training, and paid internships.

Working in Support of Education, \$95,000 to expand a community service awards competition for high school students.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Common Ground Community Housing Development Fund Corporation, \$60,000 to offer coordinated health, employment, educational, and social services in a renovated community space for families in four Brownsville housing projects.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Center for Large Landscape Conservation, \$80,000 to study how habitat destruction, man-made migration corridors, and climate change affect the health of wildlife in the Yellowstone region.

Clean Production Action, \$150,000 for a partnership between nonprofits and businesses to promote the use of safe chemicals in consumer products.

Enterprising Environmental Solutions, \$100,000 to use state climate-action plans as blueprints for national policies to deal with global warming.

Environmental Advocates of New York, \$50,000 to promote the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and ensure continued funding by the State.

Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, \$90,000 to help community foundations along the Mississippi River work together to address regional environmental issues.

Nature Conservancy, \$150,000 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation.

New Partners for Community Revitalization, \$50,000 for a coordinator to help 20 community groups awarded State grants for brownfield redevelopment meet requirements needed to push forward long-delayed projects.

One Region Fund, \$225,000 for joint grantmaking on transportation issues in the tri-state metropolitan region.

Rockaway Waterfront Alliance, \$40,000 to train 60 youth to involve residents in environmental awareness and action in the community, and to clean up the waterfront in Far Rockaway, Queens.

SmartPower Connecticut, \$100,000 for a campaign to inspire and teach young adults to be smarter energy consumers, using social networking sites such as FaceBook, MySpace, and YouTube.

State Environmental Leadership Program, \$75,000 to phase out the use of mercury in dental and other products.

Wildlife Conservation Society, \$100,000 to build local capacity to promote livestock and wildlife health and husbandry in Bolivia.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York, \$75,000 to establish a nonprofit insurance company to serve nonprofits in the City.

Support Center for Nonprofit Management, \$50,000 to shepherd nonprofit groups through executive transitions.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The Actors' Fund of America, \$35,000 to expand and promote services for dancers that include a directory of low-cost health care options and workshops on nutrition, injury prevention, and financial planning.

ArtsConnection, \$80,000 to begin music programs in three public schools in the South Bronx.

Cool Culture, \$80,000 to help poor families use the City's cultural institutions as educational resources.

Cuban Artists Fund, \$50,000 to help an arts organization serving Cubans and Cuban-Americans upgrade their Web site and increase visibility through public outreach.

Harvestworks, \$50,000 to provide one-year fellowships for four digital media artists.

International Documentary Association, \$135,000 for a series of activities to commemorate Pare Lorentz, including a film festival, a DVD collection, and a documentary fellowship.

Museum of Arts and Design, \$80,000 to work with other cultural organizations to plan and publicize programs in its new auditorium on Columbus Circle.

Museum at Eldridge Street, \$40,000 to build an audience for a renovated museum on the Lower East Side.

Working Playground, \$60,000 to bring an arts program to four elementary schools that enroll 400 recent immigrants.

The following eight grants were made through our Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund:

Clubbed Thumb, \$30,000 (three years) for a theater that commissions, develops, and produces innovative works by emerging playwrights.

Foundry Theatre, \$60,000 (three years) for a theater that produces contemporary works exploring new ideas and issues.

Gina Gibney Dance, \$45,000 (three years) for an all-female dance company.

Jose Limon Dance Foundation, \$90,000 (three years) for a modern dance repertory company.

New York City Center, \$90,000 (three years) for an annual dance festival.

Storyville Center for the Spoken Word, \$60,000 (three years) for The Moth storytelling company.

Thin Man Dance, \$30,000 (three years) for a contemporary dance company.

Women's Project and Productions, \$90,000 (three years) for a theater dedicated to developing and producing plays by and about women.

EDUCATION

Campaign for Fiscal Equity, \$100,000 for continued advocacy to implement the 2007 Education Budget and Reform Act, and ensure that the new funds are used for the neediest students.

Donors' Education Collaborative, \$150,000 for a joint foundation effort to support advocacy for public education reform in New York City.

Internationals Network for Public Schools, \$100,000 to bring mentors from successful international schools to

help principals of public high schools work with English language learners.

Shinnecock Indian Nation Fund, \$40,000 to support teenage boys on the Shinnecock Reservation with educational opportunities such as college and job preparation workshops, counseling sessions, and community service projects.

Urban Assembly, \$100,000 to improve the effectiveness of new teachers and develop the leadership skills of staff in its network of small high schools.

HUMAN JUSTICE

Empire State Pride Agenda Foundation, \$45,000 to build support for same-sex marriage in New York State through outreach to businesses, unions, and religious communities.

South Brooklyn Legal Services, \$100,000 to protect poor elderly New Yorkers from abusive and illegal debt collection.

HEALTH

Community Health Project, \$75,000 to strengthen the electronic medical records system of the City's only gay and lesbian health center.

Fund for Public Health in New York, \$275,000 for a cancer, diabetes, and heart disease screening and treatment program for public housing residents.

God's Love We Deliver, \$100,000 for individual nutrition counseling and to prepare wholesome meals for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiation.

League for the Hard of Hearing, \$45,000 to train staff at 40 community groups to identify children with hearing loss and refer them to free services.

Mount Sinai School of Medicine of New York University, \$150,000 to expand the capacity of pediatricians to treat poor children with mental health problems through the use of an interactive Web-based diagnostic tool.

New Jersey Medical School, \$100,000 to study a strain of drug-resistant bacteria in three New York City hospitals.

Primary Care Coalition, \$75,000 to ensure that the State implements its plan to improve primary health care.

Primary Care Development Corporation, \$125,000 to help community health centers provide a wide range of health care services to people in a comfortable and patient-friendly environment.

S.L.E. Foundation, \$50,000 to expand a Lupus screening and treatment program on Staten Island.

Visions/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, \$150,000 to train interpreters to work with visually impaired, non-English-speaking New Yorkers.

ELDERLY

Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled, \$55,000 to improve conditions at adult homes by educating residents about how they can exercise their rights, apply for alternative housing, talk to State inspectors, and organize resident councils.

Visiting Neighbors, \$40,000 to expand popular programs and services that educate elders about managing their health and how to get medical care.

SPECIAL PROJECTS AND PHILANTHROPY

FSG, Inc., \$75,000 (three years) for an on-line database that gives community foundations comparative information about their financial operations.

Independent Sector, \$75,000 (three years) to help nonprofits improve governance and management.

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

**This issue and past Grants Newsletters can be found on our Web site:
www.nycommunitytrust.org**

If you'd prefer to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please send an e-mail with your name, e-mail address, and "Grants Newsletter" in the subject to newsletter@nyct-cfi.org.

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