

February 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Rayza, a student in Cooper Union's Outreach Program, explores the possibilities of printmaking.

## And the Beat Goes On... *invigorating the arts*

**T**he voice of R2D2 in Star Wars. Those annoying noises made by your kids' video games. The ubiquitous ring tones on cell phones. "Sound composition" is the creation of musical and non-musical sounds—often bizarre yet beautiful—and a growing part of fine and commercial art. For the high school students in **Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art's** Outreach Program, sound composition is now in the curriculum. Each year, the program helps prepare 400 poor, but talented, City kids for admission to the country's leading visual arts and



Wahidah, another high school student in the Outreach Program, creates a mono-print portrait of a classmate.

design colleges—and ultimately for jobs in the City’s \$10 billion visual arts and design-related businesses. It finds them through community agencies in low-income neighborhoods and 20 public high schools with large enrollments of black and Latino students. Classes, taught by Cooper Union faculty, meet every Saturday during the school year, and for seven weeks in the summer, and include drawing, painting, architecture, and photography. Eighty percent of the students go on to college and up to 20 are accepted each year into Cooper Union’s highly selective Schools of Arts and Architecture. With

**Do all the swans in Swan Lake have to be white? Critics have long complained that classical ballet companies have done far too little to diversify their troupes.**

our two-year, **\$50,000** grant, the Saturday outreach program will add sound composition to the curriculum. An anticipated 40 students will study the history and cultural uses of sound, survey mass media sound practices, and learn how to create sounds and produce increasingly complex scores and arrangements. For a demonstration of how sound composition is used in the arts, you can visit <http://youtube.com/watch?v=qMqCCuYROgA>.

Do all the swans in Swan Lake have to be white? Critics have long complained that classical ballet companies have done far too little to diversify their troupes. Of course, Alvin Ailey and Dance Theater of Harlem are two companies that have offered opportunities to talented minority dancers. But in 1994, former Alvin Ailey principal dancers Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson started a multiracial, contemporary ballet company. **Complexions—A Concept in Dance** “was not just a name—it was a philosophy of personnel,” wrote noted dance critic, Clive Barnes, in January 2007. “Not only would the style be a ‘contemporary’ third stream between classic ballet and modern dance, but Rhoden and Richardson also did what everyone else talked about—develop an absolutely multiracial troupe. Now, 13 tough years later . . . it remains alive and kicking like a racehorse. It has nurtured a remarkable group of dancers: high-voltage, high-wattage, high-energy.” In addition to an annual season at the



Complexions-A Concept in Dance performing “Red,” choreographed by the company’s co-artistic director, Dwight Rhoden.

Joyce Theater, the company tours nationally and internationally. Complexions has been commissioned by the Brooklyn Philharmonic to develop two new dances, which will be performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and accompanied by the orchestra in the spring of 2008 and 2009. A two-year, **\$60,000** grant from our Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund supports the company.

## Raising the Bar... *defending the poor*

Since 1963, when the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, states have been obligated to provide legal counsel to criminal defendants if they can't afford one. But there is no comparable right in civil cases, which can have severe consequences for poor defendants: loss of their homes, public benefits, and even children; and deportation. New York has a network of civil legal services and *pro bono* agencies, but they are overwhelmed

by requests for help. The State Unified Court System estimates that only 15 percent of poor State residents get civil legal advice or representation. Grants to two legal organizations will help meet the need:

- **Association of the Bar of the City of New York Fund's** City Bar Justice Center runs monthly legal clinics for homeless women at six shelters by organizing partnerships between law firms and the shelters. Our **\$75,000** grant will help hire another attorney to supervise volunteer lawyers from four law firms eager to join the project, adding another four shelters and helping more than 1,000 women and their families.
- **Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem** provides criminal defense to poor residents of Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood. It has recognized the need to offer civil legal services and counseling to help defendants and their families deal with the reper-



Students from the Young Women's Leadership Foundation's Bronx school on a college visit.

cussions of criminal charges. Early in 2007, the agency recruited several law firms to provide *pro bono* legal counsel in civil cases, including school suspensions, immigration, police misconduct, and consumer fraud. With our **\$60,000** grant, Neighborhood Defender Service will recruit 40 volunteer lawyers to handle civil cases and train staff attorneys in immigration and other areas of civil law.

## Girls Rule... *prepping for college*

People may debate the value of single-sex schools, but it's hard to argue with success. Ten years ago, the **Young Women's Leadership Foundation**, with the New York City Department of Education, opened the first all-girls public school for grades 7 through 12, located in East Harlem. For the last seven years, every graduate has gone to college. The school's focus on col-

lege preparation begins in the 7th grade and includes a counseling program called CollegeBound, which is offered to 10th through 12th graders. Under a full-time college specialist, tutors help students study for Regents and SAT exams, arrange college visits, and help with applications. Once in college, they get online support, a campus visit by an alumnae coordinator, and referrals to internships and jobs. In 2004, the Foundation opened an all-girls school in the Bronx, the following year in Jamaica, and last year in Astoria. In the Bronx and Jamaica, more than 80 percent of the students are black and Hispanic, and nearly 25 percent of the students in Astoria are Asian. Although all three schools offer top-notch academic classes, none has CollegeBound. With our three-year, **\$150,000** grant, the program will be added to the schools, helping girls who face enormous challenges succeed.

**Special Olympics New York recently surveyed the City's public schools and found that only 15 percent of the eligible, disabled students participated in Special Olympics or other structured sports activities. It also discovered that it needed more coaches and facilities if it were to enroll more kids, and developed a plan to increase its programs.**

## Too Many Beds... *containing health care costs*

In a 2006 USA Today/ABC News survey, 80 percent of Americans said that they were dissatisfied (60 percent were very dissatisfied) with high national health care spending. There's a lot of rhetoric about how to contain costs, but not much seems to get done. A year ago, a commission on health facilities convened by then-governor George Pataki recommended closing five hospitals in the City and reducing or converting beds in six others. It also acknowledged that it would have recommended other hospital closings and didn't because some of their services were still needed. New York, unlike other states, doesn't have a way to reimburse what are known as limited-service facilities, and the commission was unable to recommend this option. This year, a project team led by a professor of health policy at the Milano School at **The New School** and the former executive director of the health facilities commission who now works at Manatt Health Solutions, will focus on limited-service hospitals. With our **\$60,000** grant, the team will look at arrangement in other states, study health needs in lower Manhattan and parts of Brooklyn and Queens—areas that need to replace full-service hospitals—and develop guidelines for health facilities that offer a narrower range of services.

## They Paved Paradise... *reclaiming a piece of the Bronx*

The Sheridan Expressway is the proverbial highway to nowhere. Planned in 1941 for trucks going to and from the Hunts Point markets, construction was stopped by groups who were appalled by the idea of a highway through the Bronx Zoo and the New York Botanical Garden. In 1997, the State's Department of

Transportation resurrected the plan to extend the Expressway to Hunts Point, but more than 65 years after its planning, it is still a one-mile strip that does nothing but confuse drivers. The **Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance**, a coalition of environmental advocacy groups, has proposed tearing down the Expressway. It succeeded in forcing an environmental review of the proposed extension. It also has produced a redevelopment plan for decommissioning the Expressway and replacing it with housing, stores, and a park. With our **\$50,000** grant, the Alliance will respond to the environmental review and organize residents to advocate for the redevelopment plan, bringing affordable housing and green space to the people of the South Bronx.

## Cheering Them On... *a new generation of special athletes*

We've all watched and celebrated with the young disabled athletes who compete in the Special Olympics. But few of the more than 100,000 New York City youth who are developmentally, physically, or cognitively disabled are involved in sports, which offer them the same physical and social benefits as non-disabled kids. In fact, **Special Olympics New York** recently surveyed the City's public schools and found that only 15 percent of the eligible, disabled students participated in Special Olympics or other structured sports activities. It also discovered that it needed more coaches and facilities if it were to enroll more kids, and developed a plan to increase its programs. With our **\$50,000** grant, the agency will carry out the plan. It will add and train 50 coaches by re-enlisting inactive coaches and approaching Little League and other sports programs for new coaches; add 10 new facilities;

# Other Grants

## Children, Youth & Families

**Advocates for Children of New York, \$75,000**, to continue to litigate and work toward a settlement in a law suit against the New York City and State Departments of Education for failure to re-enroll, transfer credits, or adequately educate children ages 10 to 15 while they are in detention or alternative-to-detention programs.

**Dress for Success, \$30,000**, to expand a Queens program that gives donated business clothes to poor young women looking for work and, once they are employed, helps them advance in their jobs.

**New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, \$50,000**, to increase the number of families participating in a mediation program to resolve permanency placement of children in foster care.

## The Environment

**ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability USA, \$105,000**, to help other cities adopt PlaNYC, New York City's plan for sustainable development.

**National Audubon Society, \$100,000**, to protect the habitat of significant bird species in the Northern Forest of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

**The Trust for Public Land, \$100,000**, for a plan to guide development of the New York-New Jersey waterfront and save key parcels for public use.

## Consulting Assistance

**Community Resource Exchange, \$50,000**, to train and counsel executive directors of nonprofits who have been in their jobs for less than three years.

**United Neighborhood Houses of New York, \$50,000**, to strengthen the management of small and struggling settlement houses.

## Arts & Culture

**The Field, \$50,000** (two years), to improve the technology systems of a service group that supports independent performing artists.

**Fractured Atlas Productions, \$25,000**, to organize the arts community in Long Island City, a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood, to advocate for homeownership and rezoning strategies that will allow artists to remain in the area.

The following two grants are made through our Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund:

- **Intar Theatre, \$60,000** (two years), for a Latino theater company.
- **New York University, \$30,000** (three years), for a free, public reading series by fiction writers and poets, sponsored by the Graduate Program in Creative Writing.

## Education

**Center for Arts Education, \$65,000**, to build a constituency of parents who will advocate for integrating arts into the public school curriculum.

**Institute for Student Achievement, \$100,000** (two years), to counsel and support principals of low-achieving schools.

**LEAP (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program), \$50,000**, to bring a program for grades K through 2 that uses the arts to develop language skills to ten disadvantaged public schools.

**Make The Road New York, \$60,000**, to increase the involvement of Latino parents in their children's schools.

**Unkechaug Indian Nation of Poospatuck Indians, \$40,000**, for a native language program for children on a reservation on Long Island.

### Health & People with Special Needs

With federal funding for biomedical research cut for the first time in many years, grants of **\$100,000** each have been made from our Florio Fund to the following institutions to study how blood cells differentiate to fight disease and repair tissue; and to study blood cancers:

- **Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University**
- **Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons**
- **Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center**
- **New York University School of Medicine**
- **Rockefeller University**
- **Weill Medical College of Cornell University**

**Aid for AIDS, \$41,000**, to help Latin American immigrants with AIDS to be tested and get treatment, and to refer them for legal, job, and housing assistance.

**American Diabetes Association–New York, \$50,000**, to expand diabetes prevention and treatment programs for African Americans and Latinos.

**Commission on the Public's Health, \$50,000**, for a child health advocacy campaign that involves low-income families.

**Community Health Care Association of New York State, \$150,000** (18 months), to test the effectiveness of a heart disease management program in community health centers.

**Fund for Public Health in New York, \$50,000**, to complete a study of the safety of artificial turf on athletic fields.

**Harlem United Community AIDS Center, \$60,000**, to work with the Foundation for Research on Sexually Transmitted Diseases to expand a needle-exchange program to reduce the transmission of AIDS.

**Helen Keller International, \$65,000**, to screen low-income children in the City's public middle schools for vision problems.

**Long Island College Hospital, \$60,000** (two years), to expand and evaluate an asthma education and treatment programs for preschools in central Brooklyn.

**Mount Sinai Medical Center, \$100,000**, to hire additional staff at its Adolescent Health Center in order to serve more disadvantaged teenage girls.

**Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation, \$60,000**, to study genetic factors in cancer growth and treatment.

**Weill Medical College of Cornell University, \$50,000** (two years), to study a new treatment for women at high risk for recurring breast cancer.

### Elderly

A series of grants to prevent and treat substance abuse by the elderly:

- **Educational Alliance, \$45,000**, for elders who live in lower Manhattan.
- **Service Program for Older People, \$45,000**, to add services to a mental health program.
- **United Bronx Parents, \$45,000**, for a relapse prevention program for elderly chronic substance abusers in the South Bronx.

A series of grants to serve gay and lesbian elders:

- **Griot Circle, \$40,000**, for a social, recreational, and HIV-support group at a drop-in center for elderly, minority gays and lesbians.
- **Queens Community House, \$40,000**, to expand a social services program for gay and lesbian elders in Queens.

**Legal Services for New York City, \$240,000**, for its South Brooklyn and Staten Island offices, along with the Legal Aid Society's Queens office, to help poor, minority, and elderly homeowners avoid foreclosure.

**Isabella Geriatric Center, \$100,000**, to complete a training program for nursing home staff and take other steps to make nursing homes more humane and patient-focused.

### **Mental Health**

**Bowery Residents' Committee, \$100,000**, to strengthen a program that helps get resistant, mentally ill individuals off the streets and into supportive programs.

**Comunilife, \$125,000**, to help Latina adolescents who have attempted suicide, a growing and serious problem for these teenagers.

**Premier HealthCare, \$90,000**, to treat obese mentally retarded people, who are obese at a rate 20 percent higher than the general population.

## **February 2008 GRANTS Newsletter**

**The grants described in this issue were approved by The New York Community Trust's governing body at its December 2007 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](http://www.nycommunitytrust.org)***

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