

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2011





Cover photo by Anita Singh; above photo by Rosalie O'Connor from the Mark Morris Dance Group.

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DEAR NEIGHBORS,



For most of us the holiday season is an extra special time of year—good meals, gifts, gatherings with family and friends—as we reflect on faith and giving to others.

For many Brooklynites however, this will be a season of greater anxiety about putting food on the table, making rent and mortgage payments, providing for their children, and battling poor health.

The cost of living here is increasing, yet incomes are not. One in five Brooklynites have incomes that are so low that they are unable to afford food at some point during the year.

Neighborhoods like East Flatbush, Bedford Stuyvesant, and Canarsie have some of the highest foreclosure rates in the city. Even in an increasingly developing neighborhood like Red Hook, more than half the residents still live in poverty.

We've heard the worried voices and received concerned emails from food pantries, social service providers, and dozens of other nonprofit organizations serving our neighbors. We continue to do what we can to answer their calls for help, but we are facing an unprecedented time of increased demand and fewer and fewer resources.

So far in 2011, we've provided 119 nonprofits organizations with more than \$2.3 million through our five Field of Interest Funds, a sampling of whose stories are told in this newsletter. This work is made possible because of generous donors like you who want to do something about hunger, who want to help educate children, who want to help seniors stay in their homes, and who want to help people get the skills they need to get good jobs.

This holiday season, we ask that you join us and **give a gift to Brooklyn**, the place that you have embraced as your home and the place you want to share with your family and friends. During these difficult economic times any gift at any level is more important than ever before.

And through the end of this year **a generous anonymous donor will match all gifts of up to \$250**, and thanks to our legacy operating support from Independence Bank, **100% of your tax-deductible donation** goes directly back to the community to support the best ideas and programs serving Brooklyn.

Please make your donation to Brooklyn by using the enclosed reply form and envelope, visiting us online at BrooklynCommunityFoundation.org, or calling (347)750-2310. Thank you for joining us to Do Good Right Here during the Holidays and all through the year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marilyn Gelber', written in a cursive style.

Marilyn Gelber
President
Brooklyn Community Foundation



The Brooklyn Community Foundation promotes access to quality education and academic success for all children and adults, as well as programs that help young people make smart life choices and nurture their social and emotional well-being. So far in 2011, with support from our generous donors, we've given **\$636,000 in grants** to **31 nonprofit organizations** working in Brooklyn through this fund.



they began soliciting for support to help fund the effort, the Brooklyn Community Foundation was the first to step up with a grant in 2008.

Each year a new group of Kindergartners come in. They will continue through eighth grade, partaking in academic and extra-curricular activities to stem learning loss. Children from public schools adjoining Brooklyn's Farragut, Ingersoll, and Whitman public housing communities take swimming lessons, participate in a variety of visual and performing arts, and visit the city's cultural institutions.

"It's being able to be exposed to the world beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, to figure out where their talents lie."

Meet a Grantee: Horizons at Brooklyn Friends School

On a September afternoon, Ian Foster Jones sits behind a piano at the Brooklyn Friends School, a private school in downtown Brooklyn. The group of tiny children who stand rapt before him is a picture of New York's melting pot—different classes, races, and ethnic backgrounds.

Only about half these children are students at Brooklyn Friends, but each is a member of this school's afterschool program thanks to the Horizons National Student Enrichment Program. For 40 years, Horizons has battled the "achievement gap" between low-income and middle class students. Its programs, hosted by independent schools, keep public school students sharp and active.

Horizons co-executive directors Taunya Black and Rachel Webber say both the summer and afterschool programs benefit the public and private school students.

"It's about showing both groups of kids that there is more to the world than what you see when you walk out your door," says Black.

When starting up the program, Horizons approached dozens of independent schools in New York City, but Brooklyn Friends, with its Quaker mission to serve the wider community, was the only one to sign on. When

They go to school better prepared to learn. They also learn about themselves. The program is about access to opportunity. "It's about exposure to the world beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic," says Webber, "to figure out where their talents lie."

The Brooklyn Community Foundation continues to help make that happen with a **\$10,000** grant this year. "Because we grow exponentially, we need funders that are able to commit over the long haul," says Black. "Having them in our list of funders speaks highly of us."

That afternoon in Jones' chorus class, the Horizons and Brooklyn Friends students are distinguishable only by the uniforms that the public school students wear.

Jones starts into kid-friendly version of the hit song "Party Rock is in the house tonight." His enthusiasm seems to melt barriers of race, class, and experience. The dozen tiny students wave their hands in the air and sing, "Party Rock is in the school tonight, and everybody's gonna have a good time!"

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Please support efforts like these by making your secure one-time or recurring donation online at BrooklynCommunityFoundation.org





The Brooklyn Community Foundation supports outreach efforts of local arts and cultural organizations, integrating the arts into schools and afterschool programs, and collaborations that employ the arts to address pressing community issues. So far in 2011, with support from our generous donors, we've given **\$560,500 in grants** to **36 nonprofit organizations** working in Brooklyn through this fund.

Meet a Grantee: Mark Morris Dance Group

Mark Morris' choreography has appeared on stages from Lincoln Center to London's Royal Opera House. But the work of the Mark Morris Dance Group, goes beyond award-winning performances.

"We have an ethic that you serve the community you're in," says Lauren Cherubini, director of development and external relations. "We believe that a good life involves access to high quality art."

The Brooklyn Community Foundation has bolstered that ethic for over a decade, beginning with a grant toward construction of MMDG's five-story building on Lafayette Avenue in Downtown Brooklyn, finished in 2001.

The Community Foundation continues to help MMDG achieve its growing mission. That includes a **\$25,000** grant this year to underwrite programs that bring dance to under-served Brooklynites by collaborating with, among others, local schools through its Dance, Music and Literacy Project, the New York City Housing Authority, and the Brooklyn Parkinson Group.

Mark Morris often calls the building a "hive," and on a recent Wednesday it buzzes with activity. But it is on the fourth floor that magic is happening.

"It makes a difference when you feel a part of the world."

In a packed Dance for PD (Parkinson's disease) class, students fill chairs encircling three instructors, all professional dancers in the company. The program, which offers dance classes with live music to those with varying degrees of PD, came about through an innovative partnership with the Brooklyn Parkinson Group. More than 40 communities worldwide have been inspired by the Brooklyn model to create Dance for PD classes.

The joy the class brings is evident in the students' focus. One petite woman sits ramrod straight, moving with steady, sure grace. Across the room, an elderly man



Photo by Amber Star Merkens.

with a Yankees hat moves stiff arms carefully back and forth, but he follows every beat.

Instructors encourage caregivers to take the class too. When the class transitions to the ballet barre, a caregiver in purple scrubs stands behind her charge. Each moves a pointed toe to and fro, smiling wide.

"I hope that it will help them physically, but I know that it helps them socially, emotionally," Cherubini says. "I know that it makes a difference when you feel a part of the world."

MMDG also works to foster that feeling well beyond Downtown Brooklyn. Cherubini oversees a nascent project in Brownsville, a neighborhood that grapples with some of the borough's most severe poverty and crime. MMDG works with several organizations to help residents gain better access to everything from pre-natal services to dance and music.

Though in the early stages, these efforts show MMDG's commitment, with the Community Foundation's support, to pollinating pieces of Brooklyn far beyond the hive, expanding the possibilities of what great art can do.





The Brooklyn Community Foundation assists vulnerable Brooklyn families and individuals with immediate need for a social safety net and seeks to provide access to health and mental health services. So far in 2011, with support from our generous donors, we've given **\$405,000 in grants** to **22 nonprofit organizations** working in Brooklyn through this fund.

Meet a Grantee: Neighbors Together

It's 1:30 pm, and people sit scattered at tables around the Community Cafe at Neighbors Together, a soup kitchen and community organization in Ocean Hill. A man walks through the door and greets another dressed in a blue sweatshirt, hunched over a steaming plate of pasta with meat sauce.

"What are you doing here?" the man in the sweatshirt says between bites. "I usually see you at the other restaurant."

It's the rare soup kitchen that looks like a restaurant, but Neighbors Together works to be more than a place for people in hard times to fill their bellies.

Neighbors Together was founded in 1982 by a group of nuns and local residents who saw a need. Hunger and poverty were rampant in the surrounding communities of Ocean Hill, Brownsville and Bedford Stuyvesant. Residents here faced myriad struggles from housing instability to unemployment to substance abuse and mental health issues.

"Until we're no longer needed, we're here."

"Our founders believed that Neighbors Together would be a temporary solution to a temporary problem," says Denny Marsh, Executive Director. "Unfortunately 30 years later, as we've seen, this is not a temporary problem. We would love to put ourselves out of business one day, but until we're no longer needed, we're here."

Through providing meals, comprehensive services, and community organizing, the organization works hard to get at the root of poverty, which has only worsened in the economic downturn. But funding has become scarce. The **\$20,000** grant from the Brooklyn Community Foundation this year for general operations has allowed the staffers here continue their work without cutting any services.

Neighbors Together serves free nutritious meals to 400 people each day. Many are single men, though over the past several months more women and children have walked through the door for lunch and dinner. All are



invited to congregate in their café, which offers a welcoming community space in a neighborhood where very few social services exist.

Assistance goes beyond what fits on a plate. Neighbors Together offers personalized social services to members, from applying for Food Stamps to securing referrals for employment, housing, and mental health services.

They are also developing programs to increase members' sense of ownership of the advocacy efforts happening at Neighbors Together, and the policies that deeply influence their lives.

"Food is the first step; social services are another way to respond. But if that's all we're doing, we're merely putting a Band-Aid on the current system," says Marsh. "We believe that to really solve hunger and poverty, low-income people have to have a strong voice in the policy-making process."

DO GOOD RIGHT HERE

Please support efforts like these by creating your legacy for Brooklyn. Consider a gift to the Foundation in your will. We would be happy to explore the possibilities with you. Contact us at (347)750-2310 or shyacinth@bcfn.org.





The Brooklyn Community Foundation supports thoughtful planning initiatives, quality urban design, and sensitivity to the historic character of our neighborhoods, as well as family and individual economic health through support services and effective job training programs. So far in 2011, with support from our generous donors, we've given **\$400,000 in grants to 15 nonprofit organizations** working in Brooklyn through this fund.



Meet a Grantee: St. Nick's Alliance

After 30 years, millions of dollars, and countless coats of paint, St. Nick's Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to the revitalization of North Brooklyn, finally cut the ribbon at the Renaissance Center, their new headquarters and arts center on the former Greenpoint Hospital campus.

Since 1975, St. Nick's has developed and preserved affordable housing in North Brooklyn, keeping roofs over the heads of thousands of low- and middle-income families. In recent years, the group's work has evolved, and blossomed. "This is one of the most dynamic periods in the history of our organization," said Executive Director Michael Rochford. "And the Brooklyn Community Foundation is supporting our new directions."

St. Nick's now serves more than 9,000 people. They provide health care and elder care, workforce and economic development, youth services, and arts classes. A **\$25,000** Brooklyn Community Foundation grant this year helped St. Nick's preserve affordable co-op units owned by residents in the area. Another **\$25,000** grant has gone to foster the workforce development program, which places about 450 residents in jobs each year, and arts programs, relatively new territory for the decades-old organization.

The support is sorely needed. Though Williamsburg has become hip, sprouting glassy condominiums, and some of the most lauded restaurants in the city, many here still struggle. Ten major public housing developments dot the

neighborhood. Unemployment for those residents hovers around 50 percent.

"There is a very stark contrast economically between these two different worlds," Rochford said. "We wanted to find a common ground for the entire community to come together, and we found it around the arts."

St. Nick's employs 14 artists-in-residence in its afterschool centers. They interweave the area's rich racial, ethnic, and religious diversity with the vibrancy of the newer artistic community. The Renaissance Center has become a hub for that. Several thousand people have visited in the inaugural year to take free classes or to check out the art shows, all of which tie back into the community.

"The Brooklyn Community Foundation really has a picture of the whole."

The Community Foundation helped make this possible. "The Brooklyn Community Foundation really has a picture of the whole," said Rochford. "They're active in the civic infrastructure. They help us to advocate for more resources. They're reaching out to people to invest right in their own neighborhoods."

That deep knowledge of the landscape has done more than help St. Nick's, Rochford said. It has helped to preserve and foster a better Brooklyn.

"If all of the people of modest means are forced out, I don't think we'd have the rich experience that embodies Brooklyn," Rochford said. "We're grateful for the leadership the Community Foundation has provided in offering support for the revitalization of communities like ours."

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Please help support programs like these alongside additional charitable interests of your choice through our Donor-Advised Fund Program. Learn more at BrooklynCommunityFoundation.org/donor-advised-funds





The Brooklyn Community Foundation fosters the development of green spaces, jobs, and neighborhoods by encouraging the protection and creation of open space, parks and community gardens, environmental awareness through grassroots programming and job training in green careers. So far in 2011, with support from our generous donors, we've given **\$270,500 in grants to 15 nonprofit organizations** working in Brooklyn through this fund.

Meet a Grantee: United Community Centers of East NY

Ana Aguirre is making the rounds through United Community Centers of East New York's vibrantly painted building. Upstairs a group of preschoolers sit in a circle with a teacher, erupting in animal noises. Below, children pedal red tricycles across a multi-purpose room that will later host a meeting of local activists.

"Good afternoon Miss Ana!" the children chorus, greeting the executive director by name.

Aguirre is a familiar face all around these streets. She is the face of this organization whose roots bore deep into the earth here at the end of the 3 train.

For half a century, UCC has worked for social change in East New York. They offer day care, health and education programs, and immigrant services to one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. Then a decade ago, long before vegetables came to the White House lawn, they started East New York Farms to bring fresh food to an area bereft of grocery stores and quality produce.

In 2001, The Brooklyn Community Foundation was the first, and for many years the only, supporter of cultivating youth involvement in the farm project.

"They were the only ones who said, 'that makes sense.'"

"They really believed in our youth internship," said Aguirre. Aguirre thought it important, in a neighborhood where money and jobs are always lacking, to pay the youth for their time and commitment to the project. The Community Foundation agreed. "They were the only ones who said, 'that makes sense,'" Aguirre recalls.

Years later, rows of carrots, beets, and sugar peas reach up from the earth across the half-acre plot adjacent to the Center. Each Saturday from June through November, residents come to buy lettuce and local honey at the market. Between art performances put on by a local group and close-knit relationships among regulars, the program does



more than make up for far-away grocery stores and wilted bodega produce. "It's also the market as a social space," Aguirre says.

Brooklyn Community Foundation has continued its support for the organization's work, including a **\$35,000** grant this year for stipends for youth interns who run the farm and farmer's market program and to support operating expenses like keeping employees paid. That includes Aguirre, who wears a tower of hats atop that of executive director.

In addition to running the building, fundraising, and health classes, Aguirre helps facilitate civics classes for those seeking citizenship. She stops one of the day care teachers in the hall whose parents are in the midst of applying.

"Are your parents coming later?" Aguirre asks. The woman says that her mother will be at the class, but her father has to work. "Tell him I want to see him next time," Aguirre says.



DID YOU KNOW?

46.3% of adults in East New York report they have to walk 10 minutes or more to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.



NEW INITIATIVES FROM THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Brooklyn Greens

In August, the Brooklyn Community Foundation officially launched a three-year **\$750,000** action plan to help three distinct Brooklyn communities in their efforts to meet important environmental goals.

Working collaboratively through the Pratt Center for Community Development, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, and El Puente of South Williamsburg will go on to create a “green roadmap” of replicable strategies and tools to be implemented across all of Brooklyn’s neighborhoods.

The launch brought our community partners and elected officials together atop a Williamsburg apartment building for a white roof painting. The simple act can reduce a building’s energy consumption by 15-30% in the summertime.



Peter Jay Sharp Arts Fellowship

Through the generous support of a three-year **\$75,000** Peter Jay Sharp Foundation grant to the Brooklyn Community Foundation, ten Brooklyn high school students will meet with arts executives in Brooklyn, attend professional performances and trainings, and receive expert advice and support on pursuing careers in the arts throughout the 2011-12 school year. The Brooklyn-based arts organizations that nominated the fellows for the new program will each receive \$2,500 toward scholarship support.

Brooklyn Community Foundation Senior Program Officer Stuart Post will take the fellows on behind-the-scenes visits to the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Mark Morris Dance Center, Brooklyn College, and the Brooklyn Museum. The first meeting of the program took place on October 13th at BAM, where students met with BAM President Karen Brooks Hopkins, toured the Peter Jay Sharp Building, and attended a performance of Daniel Bernard Roumain’s *Symphony for the Dance Floor*—part of BAM’s Next Wave Festival.



The Brooklyn Bureau

This fall, the Brooklyn Community Foundation and City Limits, an independent, investigative journalism organization, are launching a website exclusively dedicated to news coverage of Brooklyn. The project is a winner of the 2011 John S. and James L. Knight Community Information Challenge, which encourages community foundations to support endeavors that inform and engage residents.

As part of the challenge, the Brooklyn Community Foundation will match a Knight Foundation grant of **\$50,000** over two years.

Via *The Brooklyn Bureau*, City Limits will produce in-depth enterprise journalism on local issues and activities of the borough’s nonprofit sector, civic institutions, and communities, as well as aggregate and amplify existing news coverage from local news outlets.

“Brooklyn Community Foundation and others like it are part of a growing number of community and place-based foundations working to ensure residents have the information they need to make important decisions about their communities,” said Trabian Shorters, Knight Foundation’s vice president for engaging communities.



MEET A DO GOODER

ALAN ROSEN OF JUNIOR'S



When people think of Brooklyn, a few things come to mind. There are the long-lost Dodgers, the legendary Bridge, and that down-home spirit. Then there is Junior's world-famous cheesecake.

Junior's is more than a restaurant. It is a family business, a Brooklyn tradition, and an American story.

Harry Rosen opened up the first Junior's on election day in 1950. The restaurant quickly became a meeting place for politicians and local journalists, the orange booths a place to see, be seen, and to eat the creamy cheesecake. Six decades later it has a booming online business and branches in Manhattan. But for Brooklynites, that original bright red sign on DeKalb and Flatbush Avenues remains a symbol of home.

This year, Harry's grandson Alan Rosen, who now runs Junior's, went looking for a partner to help give back to Brooklyn. The Community Foundation was a natural ally.

"A Brooklyn-based philanthropic organization is the way we wanted to go," says Rosen. "Since our roots were in

Brooklyn for over 61 years, it just makes sense. It's our home. It's our base. It's where we got our legs about us."

This year Junior's Holiday Swirl cheesecake will do more than bring the famous Brooklyn taste to tables around the country. In December, the restaurant will donate a percentage from each Holiday Swirl cheesecake sold in stores to the Brooklyn Community Foundation.



Pick up your Holiday Swirl Cheesecake to benefit the Brooklyn Community Foundation at Junior's Flatbush Avenue Extension, Times Square, and Grand Central locations this December!

"We're always looking to give during the holidays, but we always had trouble deciding who gets what," Rosen says. The Community Foundation took a weight off. By pairing with an able partner with deep knowledge of Brooklyn's needs, and the organizations that meet them, Junior's donation would go further.

The money will help support a vision of Brooklyn Junior's and the Brooklyn Community Foundation share. "Brooklyn to me has a real soul, and it beats every day," Rosen says. "It's a true community. It's very big, but at the same time, it's very small. Everyone who lives here feels like it's theirs."

The Brooklyn Community Foundation helps to turn that feeling of ownership into philanthropy. Whether long established or recently settled, new and native New Yorkers turn to the Community Foundation to better their Brooklyn community. The Community Foundation's longstanding relationships with many organizations here bolster efforts to improve Brooklyn from East New York to the Columbia Street Waterfront.

"Let them focus on what they do best, and we can focus on what we do best," Rosen says. "It's sort of like a two way street. It just made a lot of sense."

Rosen sees the partnership as the beginning of a new Junior's tradition.

"Hopefully the partnership will work well this season and grow," he says. "I hope 20, 30, 40 years on, my kids can keep doing this."

This season, we give special thanks to those helping us do even more good right here.

A longtime supporter, this holiday the bank is making a \$15,000 challenge grant to the Brooklyn Community Foundation to address barriers to success among low-income students through our Education and Youth Achievement Fund. Help us do even more for Brooklyn students by making a contribution to this effort.



Through the encouragement of New York State Assemblyman Jim Brennan, the cable company is pledging \$10,000 to help seniors in need. Selfhelp Community Services and the New York Memory Center will each receive \$5,000 through our Caring Neighbors Fund to expand their services in Brooklyn.



Brooklyn-based businesses, small and large, are giving to their communities this holiday:

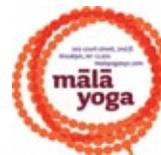
The nearly century-old association is calling on members of Brooklyn's business community to help the neediest in the borough.



The group of 900+ New York City-based crafters and artists who sell through the online shopping site Etsy.com has chosen the Brooklyn Community Foundation as their charity partner for the 2011 holiday. Learn more at BrooklynCommunityFoundation.org!



This Thanksgiving weekend, instead of asking for canned good donations, the Cobble Hill yoga studio is doing more by getting members to donate to the fight against hunger in Brooklyn through our Caring Neighbors Fund.



DO GOOD RIGHT HERE

Please become part of the Brooklyn Community Foundation family and help support Brooklyn with your own unique gift. Contact us today to explore the possibilities. Visit BrooklynCommunityFoundation.org or call (347)750-2310.



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