

Empire State Development News

Press Office

(212) 803-3740

www.nylovesbiz.com

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

4/11/2008

NY EMPOWERMENT ZONE BOARD FUNDS PROJECTS

Over \$2 million slated to stimulate growth in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan

The New York Empowerment Zone Corporation met today and approved funding totaling over \$2 million for five programs aimed at stimulating economic growth in the Bronx and upper Manhattan.

Among the programs approved were:

-- \$250,000 to the Ghetto Film School for construction costs associated with the build-out of administrative offices and editing suites supporting the media production facilities at the school's Digital Bodega film production studio.

Founded in June 2000, the Bronx-based Ghetto Film School engages youth in all facets of film production and gives them the knowledge, skills and confidence to compete in the film business and to further their education. The school operated as a summer program until 2003, when it began operating year-round. The school created Digital Bodega in 2001 as an income-producing film production studio. Digital Bodega began by producing wedding videos and small projects for private clients but now offers projects for broader audiences, including promotional videos for institutions and productions for HBO and the Independent Film Channel.

The total cost of the project is \$1,207,780, covering equipment purchases and construction. The New York City Council provided \$937,780 for equipment purchases.

-- \$678,193 to support the Hispanic Federation Inc.'s direct and indirect costs for incubating the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance and supporting its operating costs.

Founded in 1990, the Hispanic Federation is a non-profit, membership-based service organization serving Latino arts and cultural organizations and human services and health organizations in the Northeast region that promote the social, political and economic well-being of the Latino community. It provides a wide range of services via technical assistance, grant making and advocacy to support Latino institutions and culture.

The empowerment zone development corporation grant, to be disbursed over two years, will help fund a \$940,693 program to assist the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance establish itself and begin programs. By the end of the grant term, the alliance is expected to have obtained tax-exempt status, established relationships with donors, leveraged funds, re-granted an additional \$100,000 to individual artists and organizations, trained artists through workshops and convened artist gatherings.

-- \$500,000 to help the Manhattan Neighborhood Network renovate a historic East Harlem-based firehouse into a media arts and broadcast center.

Founded in 1992, the non-profit Manhattan Neighborhood Network provides Manhattan residents with opportunities to exercise their First Amendment rights through the medium of cable television and provides free training and resources for individuals seeking to produce public-access cable television shows. The network currently broadcasts more than 1,200 active shows in 20 languages, 24 hours a day.

The empowerment zone corporation grant will help fund a \$9,337,300 project to build a state-of-the-art community media arts and broadcast center in the historic 104th Street firehouse in East Harlem, a building formerly owned by El Museo del Barrio. The Manhattan Neighborhood Network anticipates this new center will generate an additional 3,500 hours of studio use, 8,000 hours of editing use and 6,000 hours and location camera use, as well as providing training for an additional 600 individuals. The facility will also include a stand-alone Youth Media Center, offering new skills and job training for youth 12-25 years old.

-- \$442,921 for the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Center Inc. for technical assistance, workforce expansion and associated organizational capacity-building activities.

The center, founded to extend the legacy of human rights espoused by El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) and Dr. Betty Shabazz, operates from the historic Audubon Ballroom at 3940 Broadway, where Malcolm X was assassinated. The center serves as a cultural, educational and civic resource for the Upper Manhattan community as well as for individuals seeking information about the lives and ideals of the center's eponyms. In the first two months of 2008, the center's programs attracted over 2,000 visitors.

This grant, to be disbursed over two years, will help the center hire staff and provide technical assistance for strategic planning, board development, fundraising, financial management, facilities management and archives planning and management. The grant will help fund a project whose total cost is \$1,917,089.

-- \$150,000 to the Opus 118 Harlem School of Music to implement key recommendations of a prior organizational assessment.

Founded in 1991, the Harlem School of Music is community-based music school that provides music instruction to over 600 students each year in its in-school, after-school and summer camp programs. The courses include instruction in violin, viola, piano, cello, guitar and voice.

This grant will help the school hire a director of development to plan and direct a fundraising development program as well as to hire a consultant to help implement recommendations in the organizational assessment.

The board also approved extending the geographical boundaries within which incentives will be available under the 125th Street Pilot Retail Incentive Program approved at the November 2007, meeting.

Created to revitalize Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx, the New York Empowerment Zone Corporation uses public funds and tax incentives to encourage private investments in these areas. Since its formation, the empowerment zone corporation has disbursed \$211,381,364 to support businesses and community groups in the zone.

The New York Empowerment Zone Corporation is a subsidiary of Empire State Development, New York's chief economic development agency, encompassing business, workforce and community development. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.nylovesbiz.com.

###