



50 Years and Moving Forward

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**The Bronx Council on the Arts receives Big Read Grant**  
**The Bronx to Read and Celebrate *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston**  
**during The Big Read in Spring 2014**

(August 22, 2013—Bronx) The Bronx Council on the Arts today announced that it has received a grant to host The Big Read in the Bronx for the fifth time. The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. It is designed to revitalize the role of literature in American culture and to encourage citizens to read for pleasure and enlightenment. The Big Read is managed by Arts Midwest. The Bronx Council on the Arts is one of 77 nonprofit organizations to receive a grant to host a Big Read project between September 2013 and June 2014. The Big Read in the Bronx will focus on *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. Activities will take place in March and April 2014.

Maria Teresa Romano, Director of the Bronx Writers Center, said, "The Bronx Council on the Arts, through its core programming at the Bronx Writers Center, has supported and encouraged reading and writing for two decades. For five of those years, we have successfully run The Big Read in the Bronx. Together, we have read books as diverse as *To Kill a Mockingbird*; *Sun, Stone and Shadows*; *In the Time of the Butterflies*; and *Fahrenheit 451*. This year, we will read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and hope to distribute over 1,000 free books and hold events throughout the borough. For the third time, we are proud to be partnering with the Westchester Square Branch of the New York Public Library." Bronx organizations, schools, reading groups and libraries are encouraged to contact the Bronx Council on the Arts for more information about participating.

NEA Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa said, "It's wonderful to see that these 77 communities are making reading and the celebration of books a priority. I look forward to seeing the innovative ways they find to engage their communities in these great works of classic and contemporary literature."

The Big Read provides communities nationwide with the opportunity to read, discuss, and celebrate one of 31 selections from U.S. and world literature. The 77 selected organizations will receive Big Read grants to promote and carry out community-based reading programs featuring activities such as read-a-thons, book discussions, lectures, movie screenings, and performing arts events. Participating communities also receive high-quality, free-of-charge educational materials to supplement each title, including Reader's, Teacher's, and Audio Guides, which also are available for download on [neabigread.org](http://neabigread.org). For more information about The Big Read please visit [neabigread.org](http://neabigread.org).

The **Bronx Writers Center** supports and develops the appetite for writing and reading in the Bronx. The BWC searches for and promotes new voices and audiences and engages the community in literary and literacy programs. The **Bronx Council on the Arts** is celebrating 50 years as a private, non-profit membership organization that is the official cultural agency of Bronx County. Recognized nationally as a leading arts service organization in providing cultural services and arts programs, BCA serves a multicultural constituency of almost 1.4 million residents. BCA provides an array of services to 5,000 artists and more than 250 arts and community-based organizations.

*The National Endowment for the Arts* was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov).

**Arts Midwest** promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 25 years. For more information, please visit [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org).

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