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## Bronx Council on the Arts awards 5 grants

The Bronx Council on the Arts announces five seed grants to local artists/entrepreneurs to jumpstart their art-related business plans. Awarding the grants was the final step in a new business model to develop creative businesses in the Borough. The \$500 grants will strengthen, empower and equip local artists/entrepreneurs to grow competent small businesses.

BCA congratulates the grant recipients Nancy Benignus who will use the award to help Arts of the Ordinary incorporate and receive its 501(c)(3) status as well as offset other initial start-up costs; Cindy Casado who will start up her mobile animal care company, SugaBear Pet Care; Ron Kavanaugh who will use the seed money to kick start The Literary Freedom Project; Ariel Quinones who will seed a fee-based adult dance program at Diversity in Arts and Nations for Cultural Education, Inc; and Alba Sanchez who will apply her funds toward Latina Talks, a motivational speaker's bureau.

Co-sponsored with the Bronx Business Alli-

ance, BCA hosted a free five-part business development series, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, designed to help emerging creative industry members to identify competition, develop a comprehensive business plan, obtain financing and develop a marketing strategy.

At the conclusion of the series participants were asked to write business plans with an understanding that the five best plans would be awarded \$500 seed money.

Key to the success of the MYOB program was the staff at the Lehman College Small Business Development Center who taught some of the classes, provided one-on-one business plan counseling, reviewed the business plans and made the final determination of the top five.

The MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS series is a new strategy of BCA's successful Cultural Venture Fund which was started in 2000 to engage local arts organizations to create and implement asset-based earned-income plans. MYOB targets individual artists/entrepreneurs.