

## SAVING LOCAL HISTORY: LAS CASITAS ARCHIVES COME TO HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARY AS A UNIQUE DONATION FROM THE BRONX COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

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**When:** Opening Reception, Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 5:00pm

**Location:** Hostos Community College, A-Atrium, 475 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10451

(October 29, 2015 – Bronx, NY) Home is where the heart is, and that love will be on full display at Hostos Community College through a special collaborative exhibition honoring the *casitas* of Puerto Rico and showcasing the materials from *Las Casitas: An Urban Cultural Alternative*, created in 1991 by the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) Longwood Arts Project now located on the Hostos campus.

The November 4th unveiling and exhibit highlights the generous donation of the *Las Casitas* collection and exhibition resource materials to the Hostos Archives. The Library and academic departments will encourage ongoing research on the collection and deeper study of its value to Bronx arts and culture and to the many neighborhoods in which *casitas* presently exist in the Bronx.

As part of a month-long salute to Puerto Rican Heritage Month, Hostos will inaugurate original materials from the 1991 exhibit curated and produced by Betty Sue Hertz and Bill Aguado, both formerly of the Bronx Council on the Arts. The exhibit was mounted at the Smithsonian Institution in February of that year. New York's *casitas* are reproductions of working class homes and remain a vital expression of Afro-Puerto Rican culture in the diaspora. They have transformed abandoned urban spaces into sites of cultural and historical memory in the Bronx and beyond for decades.

On November 4, 2015, Hostos will unveil selected pieces of this important past through *Las Casitas Archives*. This archival collection epitomizes the creative ingenuity of a community recreating its surroundings into spaces of cultural continuity, survival and hope in the midst of hostile living conditions. The collection's worth lies in its value to various constituencies from students and faculty at Hostos, to researchers in anthropology and history, as well as to community-based arts organizations. Click [here](#) to view official flyer.

### About the Collection

The exhibition opened at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and went on to be exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts and Syracuse University. Later, in 2010, elements from the original exhibition were reconstructed and updated by BCA's Longwood Art Gallery with further research and programming throughout the community. *Las Casitas Revisited* opened at Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos and included photographs by the renowned photographer Martha Cooper. Due to the artistic and cultural value of this collection, along with the historic role of Hostos as an institution which serves the community, the Hostos Archives will serve as the permanent repository for these materials.

### About Hostos Community College

Eugenio María de Hostos Community College is an educational agent for change that has been transforming and improving the quality of life in the South Bronx and neighboring communities since 1968. It serves as a gateway to intellectual growth and socioeconomic mobility, as well as a point of departure for lifelong learning, success in professional careers, and transfer to advanced higher education programs. The College's unique Student Success Coaching Unit provides students with individualized guidance and exemplifies its emphasis on student support services.

Named one of the top 10 finalists for the 2015 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, Hostos offers 27 associate degree programs and two certificate programs that facilitate easy transfer to The City University of New York's (CUNY) four-year colleges or baccalaureate studies at other institutions. The College has an award-winning Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Development that offers professional development courses and certificate-bearing workforce training programs. Hostos is part of CUNY, the nation's leading urban public university, which serves more than 500,000 students at 24 colleges.