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Bronx Reading Team finishes *Hunger Games* Reading/Writing Program on Nov 12th

(Bronx, NY – November 25, 2013) The Bronx Reading Team, a small group of Bronx youth led by writer and teaching artist Orlando Ferrand, capped off a month-long reading and writing program on November 12th. The group read and discussed Suzanne Collins' novel *Hunger Games*, in preparation of the release of the movie based on the sequel. This public celebration marked the fifth Saturday afternoon gathering for the program and was held in the lobby of a Chestnut Holdings building located in Grand Concourse. The free workshops were led by the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) and sponsored by Chestnut Holdings as part of a commitment to bring arts, culture and literacy closer to home for children in the Bronx.



The Bronx Reading Team finishes *Hunger Games*, courtesy of the Bronx Council on the Arts and Chestnut Holdings.

“Reading makes the difference for kids. It comes hand-in-hand with critical thinking skills and with success in other subjects, especially science and math. But it can't feel like a chore. We try to make reading fun, social and connected to what is happening in the world,” said Maria Romano, Director of the Bronx Writers Center, the Bronx Council on the Arts division that develops literacy and writing projects.

“The Bronx Council on the Arts is passionate about literacy at a local level, and Chestnut Holdings wanted to provide a means to bring these programs to kids in the neighborhood,” said Jonathan Wiener, President of Chestnut Holdings. “BCA's partnership with Chestnut is the first of its kind that we have seen in residential buildings in the Bronx. These children are eager for creative expression and Chestnut is happy to offer them an opportunity to share their experiences in the Bronx – a neighborhood that we are proud to be a part of.”

BCA developed the Bronx Reading Team with the input and support of Chestnut Holdings as a free 5-week, 10-hour (total) special project for local kids, ages 10 and up. Every effort was made to accommodate participants and make the program easy and enjoyable. The program was local, free and in the lobby of a neighborhood building where the building manager arranged tables and chairs and provided snacks each week. Participants were rewarded with movie tickets, journals and other small gifts.

The **Bronx Council on the Arts** celebrates its 50th year 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 multi-cultural constituency of almost 1.4 million residents. BCA provides an array of services to over 5,000 artists and more than 250 arts and community-based organizations.

Chestnut Holdings of New York is a family-owned real estate investment and property management firm with a 15-year track record of successful, responsible and reliable management. Chestnut is a hands-on owner-manager that acquires, manages and improves multi-family properties throughout New York City.

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