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**“Earned-Income Planning Workshop Series”
Bronx Council on the Arts’ Inaugural Program at New Arts Headquarters**

(November 30, 2011) This past April, Mayor Bloomberg and JPMorgan Chase came to Westchester Square to announce the Bronx Council on the Arts' (BCA) future headquarters on 2700 East Tremont Avenue. With the move, BCA pledged to bring an expansion of support and services to artists, businesses, and families alike.

BCA kept its word and delivered on this promise with its "Earned-Income Planning Workshop Series", the first official program to take place at the new building. Throughout November, the series taught artists and cultural organizations the art of networking and creating earned-income/business plans based on assets they already have. In late December, five seed grants of \$2,500 will be awarded for the most accomplished and best prepared plans with support from the New York Community Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts. Winners will also receive access to consultants who will rework and help improve the business plans even further.

This inaugural program marked a new era for BCA in Westchester Square. The "Earned-Income Planning Workshop Series" helped Bronx artists and cultural organizations to develop business planning skills, improve financial competency, and adopt the latest marketing techniques to achieve organizational growth and stability. This was part of a broader role of service and support that BCA will continue to provide in Westchester Square.

The series reflects BCA's mission to aid the professional advancement of artists, featuring in-depth instruction from reputable finance and marketing experts. "There's a professional way to communicate a message to a bank or a venture capitalist," said Ellen Pollan, BCA's Deputy Director for Development and Programs. "Artists need a business plan to clearly communicate that message and we're going to help them develop it."

Networking was another key ingredient of the series. "What is clear to me is that Bronx artists don't get enough opportunities to talk with each other," Pollan said. "But if we compound the skills of our local artists and integrate them with the local institutions and associations, then what we're doing is building community. That's the big picture for what BCA is doing here."

Just as the series taught how to garner success from already-existing assets, BCA will put this method to the test in its efforts to revitalize Westchester Square. The neighborhood already possesses an abundance of public transportation, a growing ethnic diversity and several cultural sites, such as the Bronx Writers Center, the Huntington Free Library and Owen Dolen Recreation Center. BCA plans to build on these resources to develop and maintain programs that will attract artists and families alike.

BCA's future headquarters serves as the springboard for cultural revival. "When the light goes on for a public event, it won't be on just here but in the entire neighborhood," Maria Romano, Director of BCA's Bronx Writers Center, said at the announcement of the new building this past April. "We will be part of the revitalization of this community." With the move, BCA will be more accessible to Bronx residents, artists and cultural and community organizations.

A spike in cultural participation, in turn, will help rekindle what was once a vibrant economic district. By continuing to sponsor concerts, workshops and holiday events in the Square, as well as expanding Bronx Writers Center programs, BCA will boost local businesses and bring an influx of new potential customers to the area.

The Bronx Business Alliance, the Westchester Square Merchants Association, Congressman Joseph Crowley and Council Member James Vacca have been some of BCA's main collaborators in these efforts. They have assisted with fundraising and small business development in the Westchester Square community.

In 2012, BCA will celebrate its 50th year as a private, non-profit membership organization. It is recognized nationally as a leading arts service organization. Services include financial support to individual artists and non-profits, information services, technical assistance, education and community programming, advocacy, the operation of Longwood Arts Project – an exhibition gallery and cyber arts program, and the Bronx Writers Center which nurtures the creative and professional development of writers. Visit www.bronxarts.org for a complete listing of BCA programs and events.

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