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**The Bronx Council on the Arts Awards Seed Grants  
Boosts Local Art-Related Businesses**

(March 27, 2012 — Bronx) The Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) announces five seed grants to local artists/cultural organization leaders 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 \$2500 grants and the business plans will enable local artists/organizations to achieve greater financial stability, self-sufficiency and success.

BCA congratulates the 2012 seed grant recipients (below, l. to r.): **Marisol Diaz** who will use the grant to help advertise her photography business; **Andrew Geddis** who will put the money toward the technological enhancement of his company *Musica Elysii*; **Ray Felix** who will allocate it toward marketing his annual Bronx Heroes Comic Con; **Laura Napier** who will use it to expand her work as a visual artist; and **Milteri Tucker** who will apply the funds toward product development for her *BOMBAZO* dance company.



With funding from New York Community Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts, BCA hosted a free four-session "Earned-Income Planning Workshop Series," an asset-based approach to helping creative industry members identify competition, develop a comprehensive business plan, obtain financing and devise a marketing strategy. Prince Thomas (Lehman College Small Business Development Center), Steve Franciosa (Iona College), Dart Westphal (Support Center), and Jennifer Edwards (Edwards and Skybetter) conducted the sessions, offering professional advice and guiding participants through the business plan process.

Participants were asked to create their own business plans, with the five best plans being awarded \$2500 seed money and unique one-on-one consultation with business experts Anita Colby (Ipsos UU), Susan Schear (Artisin LLC), and Westphal.

Key to the success of this professional development program was Prince Thomas, who taught two of the sessions, oversaw the one-on-one counseling, critiqued the business plans and made the final determination of the top five.

The "Earned-Income Planning Workshop 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.

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