

# HARLEM COMMONWEALTH

## NEWSLETTER

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### Chairman's Note



**E. Randy Dupree,  
Chairman**

Commonwealth, is from my home town, Greenville, North Carolina. I knew her family very well before she moved

**I**t seems as if I have known about Harlem Commonwealth for a very, very long time. I met Jim Dowdy during my tenure with the Model Cities Program, working on some projects in the Harlem community.

Barbara Norris, the past president of Harlem

to New York at a very early age. We reestablished our relationship in New York and when she became President of Harlem Commonwealth, I was very proud of the job she was doing for the Harlem USA shopping center.

While working for the Department of Health as Assistant Commissioner for Environmental Health, I was given the task of setting up a City Animal Care and Control Center modeled after the ASCPA. I really needed people who knew about animals and that is how I met Dr. Joseph Tait, one of the city's leading veterinarians, who assisted in providing the technical knowledge I needed to know about animals.

I was appointed to the board of Harlem Commonwealth in June 2004 and elected Chairman of the board in September 2007. It has been quite a challenge; however, the challenges have been met with board members such as

Dr. Joseph Tait, Jonnie Marshall, Zelda Owens, Isaiah E. Robinson, Jr., Millicent Redick, Michael Johnson, Gloria Hartley, Barbara Askins, Skip Finley, and Nicholas Cherot, Esq. Special Counsel. The programs for both youth and adults are flourishing and our economic development plan and expansion programs are on target. I would also like to thank the staff, without them none of this would be possible.

On behalf of the board and staff, I express our condolences to the family of our past president, George Marquez, who passed away on September 24, 2009. He shared our vision of community services and had a positive impact on our agency. He will be sorely missed.

The mission of this agency to which we are committed is to provide the Harlem community with the very best programs available.

### Youth Volunteers Participate in Summer of Service

**S**ince the beginning of the new administration, President Barack Obama has called on all U.S. citizens to participate in the nation's recovery and renewal by serving in its communities. In response to the President's call, The Mayor's office, in collaboration with the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, Department of Parks and Recreation, NYC Housing Authority and New York Cares, launched a Summer of Service Initiative with volunteer projects throughout the five boroughs. These projects took place in city public housing developments and city parks. The volunteers were recruited from the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

HCC's staff and SYEP participants joined with other city-wide SYEP youth volunteers in two projects held in Manhattan. The first event took place on July



SYEP staff members Joanna Rosario and Andre Teel with SYEP participant Dina McFadden (far left)

24, 2009 at the Johnson Houses, a public housing complex in East Harlem; and the second took place on August 7, 2009 at Riverside Park in Upper Manhattan. The activities at both events were designed to enhance the quality of life in those communities. "We got dirty, had a great time and felt good about lending a hand in the Harlem community," said one HCC SYEP participant.



SYEP participant Dorian Feliciano volunteers at the Johnson Houses

After each project's completion, the day ended with a celebration to thank participants featuring tee shirt and water bottle give-a-ways, music, entertainment, a raffle, pizza and sandwiches.

"It was a great turnout and a very successful day," remarked Elisa Moore, Director of HCC's Special Projects. "Let's hope that ideas like the Summer of Service continue to spread and help community volunteerism throughout the City."

### HCC Puts Youth To Work

**T**hough the economic forecast for jobs in Summer 2009 was bleak, on July 1, 2009, 65 young people went to work citywide through the efforts of the Harlem Commonwealth Council (HCC). HCC was one of the selected administrators of the New York City-sponsored Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), a program that funds employment opportunities for youth and young adults ages 14-24.

As a new SYEP administrator, HCC had to build a network of employers. The employers who hosted HCC participants were required to mentor and train them in a meaningful way. A team led by Elisa Moore, Director of Special Projects, assessed and successfully developed the participat-



SYEP participants attend International Youth Day at the United Nations on August 12, 2009. Front row: Kirk Campbell, Caroline Fuentes, Sabrina Coleman and Jazman Bland; back row: Tyreke Punch, David Mason, and Walter Nivens with SYEP staff member Andre Teel

ing worksites. HCC employer worksites were from the private and public sector and included: **The New York Amsterdam News, Harlem Flo, Globe Trippin', Hendrickson Cus-**

**tom Cabinetry, EO Agency, Housing Partners of New York, Inc., Manhattan's Physician Group, Harlem Masters, Jazzmobile, Inc., The Brownstone, Weiss & Associ-**

**ates, P.C., Year Up, Inc., Project Enterprise, Lutheran Social Services of New York, Hue-Man Bookstore, Bradlee International Ltd., Klauber Brothers, Inc., The Horticultural Society of New York, NYC Department of Small Businesses, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, Faces NY, Inc., Neighborhood Defender Services, Inc. and Uber, Inc.**

The diversity of worksites allowed HCC participants to be placed in a wide variety of jobs and to be exposed to a broad range of professional experiences and to gain valuable work skills.

In addition to en-

rolling youth in the program, placing them in jobs and monitoring their performance, HCC's SYEP staff members, who included Andre Teel, Joanna Rosario and Parris Whittingham, held weekly workshops that taught work readiness skills, college and career exploration, health and financial literacy, goal setting and presentation skills. During workshop roundtable discussions, participants were able to share their workplace experiences and provide each other with positive feedback on navigating their respective jobs.

Participants, during wrap-up assessment

(Continued on page 4)

## HCC OFFERS FREE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CLASSES

**H**arlem Commonwealth Council has been awarded a highly competitive DYCD Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Grant worth \$62,141 per year. The NDA program is designed to bring educational services to local Harlem residents who, as a result of various economic barriers, never obtained their high school diplomas. With this two-year grant Harlem Commonwealth Council will add an additional eight pre-GED classes per year allowing us to serve as many as 160 new

students.

HCC understands the challenges adult students face. Its classes are therefore designed to meet their unique needs. The 12 week courses meet mornings 9-12 a.m. Monday through Thursday or evenings 6-9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. This schedule leaves room for the adult students to deal with life responsibilities which is often what prevented their success in high school.

HCC has been running adult education classes since 2006. The success of these programs can be attributed to the enthusiasm of its teachers, who all have a proven dedication to this community, either through employment or volun-

teerism within the community. Additionally, HCC's administrative staff has a combined adult education work history at HCC of nearly six years. This makes them true experts in understanding the needs of the students. This experience is vital to any program's success.

HCC has had great success running pre-GED classes for The South Bronx Overall Economic Corporation during the last two years. With this continued collaboration, combined with the new NDA funding, HCC has positioned itself as a major community provider of adult basic education.

The Adult Education Department at HCC is committed to ensuring the continued success of these programs.

## GEORGE MARQUEZ In Memoriam 1949 – 2009

**W**e mourn the sudden passing of George Marquez, the recently appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Harlem Commonwealth Council.

During his brief tenure, Mr. Marquez was instrumental in securing new state and city grants for HCC's adult education and youth services programs. Mr. Marquez was passionate about designing and implementing programs for adults and disconnected youth that would prepare them to pursue meaningful career opportunities. It defined his life's work.

Mr. Marquez's distinguished career included service with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) as Senior Vice President of Education and Career Development. Under his leadership, SoBRO's youth department increased its capacity to serve the young. During his tenure as Vice



George Marquez  
1949-2009

President, SoBRO went from serving just a handful of teens to today having a department that employs close to 100 people and serves over 2,000 teens.

As a National Urban Fellow, he received his Masters in Public Administration from Baruch College and graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from The City College of New York.

George's life work and burning interest was human development. He felt that everyone had the capacity to be better, if given the opportunity. His role, and one he took very seriously, was to provide this opportunity.

At his memorial it was said that "he is responsible for the careers of hundreds of people," a true testament to a good leader. George saw the possibility and got everyone on board to make it happen. The Harlem Commonwealth Council's directors, officers and staff send sincere condolences to the family of Mr. George Marquez.

## HCC RECEIVES NYS DEPT. OF LABOR GRANT

**H**arlem Commonwealth Council is the proud recipient of the Department of Labor's Disconnected Youth Training Grant. With this award HCC will serve 60 students, 18-24 years of age, who are in foster care, transitioning out of foster care or formerly in foster care. This program is designed to re-engage young people who are either not in school or not working. The students will attend classes working towards obtaining a GED in the mornings. With career and educational mentors in the afternoon, the students will devote time to career exploration, work readiness, skills

training and academic support. Students who successfully complete the required courses will receive a stipend and many will be placed in internships helping them gain important work experience. With the awarding of this grant, combined with the existing Summer Youth Employment Program from DYCD, HCC can increase its capacity to serve the disconnected youth population in Harlem, ultimately preparing more young people to enter the work force with the skills necessary to be successful. To learn more about this program, please contact Tara Canty at 212-749-0900 ext.123 or via e-mail:

Taracanty@harlemcommonwealth.org

## JB B.O.R.N. Acquires a Small Business Loan from Harlem Entrepreneurial Fund

**D**o you have a passion for fashion? Do you love high-end designers such as Carlos Falchi, Christian Dior and Chanel? Do you have to travel downtown to satisfy this need? Well Harlemites, you don't have to travel anymore.

The Harlem Entrepreneurial Fund has announced the completion of a \$10,000 small business loan to JB B.O.R.N. (Borrowed, Old, Refurbished and New), a chic boutique located at 52 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street. The loan will assist JB B.O.R.N. with small business expansion to further serve the needs of its clientele who reside in the Harlem community.

JB B.O.R.N. is a haven for the designer label-conscious shopper who desires a Fendi bag or a pair of Prada shoes, while achieving the seemingly impossible feat of staying price tag savvy. Since launching the store two years ago, the owner, Jonathan Bodrick, has managed to



Jonathan Bodrick, Owner JB B.O.R.N.

develop his vision, culminating in a perfect compilation of hip and trend-setting wearable looks that compliment the fashion-forward modern individual. "The loan will allow us to expand our retail

space and improve our merchandise which will undoubtedly attract more customers," said Mr. Bodrick.

The retail store has made its mark in Harlem

and joins the ranks of exceptional small businesses that are filling a retail gap in the community.

**T**he HEF loan program is Harlem Commonwealth Council's latest economic development initiative. to encourage and support business expansion and job creation in Harlem by assisting small businesses to succeed through the acquisition of loan capital and technical assistance. Since its inception, HEF has provided low interest loans to several Harlem-based businesses that have resulted in the creation of new jobs.

HEF micro-loans primarily serve eligible minority- and women-owned businesses operating in Harlem. Loans can be used for business expansion, machinery, equipment purchases, inventory and working capital. Each borrower must also commit to creating one or more jobs.

To learn more about HEF's small business loan program, please call Ericka Powell-Sinclair at (212) 749-0900 X122, or contact her via e-mail at epowell-sinclair@harlemcommonwealth.org or visit [harlemcommonwealth.org](http://harlemcommonwealth.org)

## Harlem Commonwealth Council Hosts Its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Internship Program

**H**arlem Commonwealth Council (HCC) hosted its 4th annual Summer Internship Program. It was another successful endeavor for young people in the Harlem community. This dynamic initiative places high school sophomores and juniors in settings with several Harlem Commonwealth Council business partners where they are exposed to the realities of the "world of work."

The application and selection process took place during the months of February through May 2009. Many thanks to Mrs. Maria Rial, guidance counselor at *Rice High School*, Mr. William Price, coordinator of student affairs at *Frederick Douglass Academy*, and Ms. Maritza Villegas, guidance counselor at *Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics*. They were instrumental in assisting HCC's selection of the eight young people who were chosen as the 2009 HCC Summer Interns.

The interns were placed with the following companies: A.A. Truck Renting Company, City National Bank of New Jersey, Cogswell Realty, Van Wagner Communications, Inc., Gotham Construction, Grid Properties and Harlem Commonwealth Council, Inc.

HCC board members and staff coached and mentored the selected interns in a series of intense Saturday workshops in May and June that included: Appropriate Business Conduct, Business Etiquette, Interview and Presentation Skills, and Time Management. The workshops were developed to strengthen presentation skills and incorporated various role play scenarios.

*Sam Haigler, a junior at Rice High School, worked as a 2009 summer intern under Drew Greenwald, President and CEO, and Jim Tuman, Chief Development Officer at Grid Properties, Inc., a development partner of Harlem USA. Sam is the fourth intern to serve at Grid.*

Sam worked on an array of diverse assignments that introduced him to the world of real estate development. For example by using the internet, Sam researched potential development sites in New York, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. He looked at par-



2009 Summer Interns celebrate the end of the program at HCC. Seated: Elisa Moore HCC Director of Special Projects, HCC Board Chair, E. Randy Dupree, HCC Board Member Michael C. Johnson. Standing: Dr. Joseph L. Tait, President/CEO (far left) with Billy Dixon, Anton Hanton, Le-Aisha Meyers, Anthony Bland, Kennie Davis and Samuel Haigler. Missing: Walter Nivens and Tito Melvin

cels adjacent to highways and public transportation in areas underserved in retail. He also did market research by identifying retailers in different locations and evaluating the types and number of retailers in targeted areas. Sam was also assigned the task of conducting a physical inspection of the Harlem USA building. Using Power Point software, he produced a thorough and helpful document with pictures and text, highlighting areas in need of repair by Grid.

"He was pretty good with the computer," remarked Tuman, "He had good instincts for someone who had not previously worked in real estate. He was diligent, conscientious, responsible and displayed remarkably good instincts. We would welcome him, and like-minded students, to intern at Grid. We appreciate the high quality of students that HCC sends to Grid."

"Clearly, Sam is a young person who would do well in a high performance environment. The higher the bar is, the better he would do," mused Greenwald.

*Tito Melvin, a junior at Rice High School, worked as a*

*2009 HCC Summer Intern under Ross Jacobs, a partner at the Cogswell Realty Group, Wayne Gordon, its building manager, and Prince Potee, its assistant building manager, at Cogswell's two office buildings in Harlem. Tito is the fourth intern to serve at Cogswell.*

Tito was introduced to various aspects of building management and maintenance, and participated in leasing operations. He was also introduced to the basic principles of accounting and record-keeping.

"Tito was the youngest intern we've had. He started out shy and introverted," said Jacobs. "While at Cogswell he showed terrific progress. There was tremendous growth in his maturity, presentation skills and in his personality. He asked intelligent and probing questions and made relevant suggestions."

Jacobs concluded by saying "I would say his experience with us changed his life dramatically. He really grew up a lot in the course of two months. He came around big time."

# The New Ventures Program

## A New Ventures Program Participant Spotlight

**T**he late Ewing Marion Kauffman viewed entrepreneurship as the most powerful strategy to help individuals gain economic independence and to serve as a catalyst for creating jobs and wealth in society. The Kauffman Foundation is devoted to advancing entrepreneurship as one of the fundamental aspects of life in the United States with Fast Trac® programs. These programs are part of a wide range of resources developed in collaboration with hundreds of successful entrepreneurs who have shared their knowledge, insights and stories so that others may learn from them.

As a Certified Fast Trac® provider, Harlem Commonwealth Council currently offers the New Ventures curriculum to aspiring entrepreneurs. The 16-

session New Ventures program is offered three times per year. Participants learn the fundamentals of smart business ownership in a classroom setting that is highly interactive, with multiple workshops led by entrepreneurs and business professionals who share their knowledge and experiences. Classes include Marketing, Business Presentation Skills, Business Plan Development, Creating Financial Statements and Time Management.

The most recent New Ventures Program ended June 2009. Entrepreneurial aspirations of the program's participants included: an accounting and tax service, technology solutions, real estate management, dry cleaners / laundry, spa services and body products, a pastry café and a movie theater.

The next New Ventures Program starts January 2010. For more information please contact Elisa Moore, Director of Special Projects at (212) 749-0900, ext. 111.



**R**osinna Tavares, shown above, is a graduate of the New Ventures Program Spring

2009. With a love and a talent for creating delicious pastries, she has decided to open a gourmet shop/café, *Pastry Delight*. She has extensive experience in the fields of pastry arts and hospitality. She also has a Grand Diploma in Pastry Arts from the renowned *French Culinary Institute*.

*"It is so important for entrepreneurs to share business ideas and concepts with other like-minded individuals."*

Rosinna says the time spent learning necessary business fundamentals in the New Ventures Program has prepared her to open her shop. "I feel confident that I know how to run my business and how to use the resources that will take me to the next level of business growth. The New Ventures Program was just what I needed. As I learned, I also developed a great networking group with members of my class. It is so important for entrepreneurs to share business ideas and concepts with other like-minded individuals."

(Continued from page 1) **HCC Puts Youth To Work** exercises shared the following:

"This was my first work experience. I really enjoyed it. I got to work side by side with the president of the company"  
"I loved gaining new experiences and getting paid. I learned how to use a cash register and answer the telephone professionally and improved my typing skills."

"I enjoyed going to work everyday. I learned that I can multi-task well."

"My best experience was working with the children. I also liked participating in the Summer of Service Initiative. I learned that volunteer service can be fun."  
"I went to an event at Gracie Mansion and had my picture taken with the Mayor."

Ms. Moore observed, "We had a hectic, but highly productive summer with the young people. We were able to expose them to the realities of work and provide them with an assortment of resources for planning their future. It is our hope that we assisted them onto a path toward suc-

cessful futures."

HCC extends its appreciation to all of the employers that formed the SYEP network and participated in its program. They provided entree and valuable "real world" work experience to the young people assigned to their worksites. As employers, they were consistently responsive and supportive of the young employees in their care. Collectively, they were great manager-mentors to HCC's SYEP participants. HCC welcomes future employers to participate as part of its SYEP employer network.

## HCC Awards Healthcare Scholarships

In September 2009, Harlem Commonwealth Council announced the recipients of its annual scholarship awards to deserving students who are training to become healthcare professionals. Three Harlem residents received scholarship grants ranging in amount from \$500 to \$1,500 that will help them defray the costs of tuition and books at their respective schools. The 2009 scholarship recipients included **Wilson Li**, a 32-year old clinical nursing student pursuing a two-year A.A.S. degree at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). Mr. Li's anticipated graduation date is December 2010. Mr. Li states, "Upon my graduating, it is my desire to work in public health nursing so that I can serve the Harlem community. This will provide me opportunities to practice healthcare with many who need public medical services." A second recipient, **Daniella Daniel**, is a 34-year old single working mother of three children



Dr. Joseph L. Tait with HCC Board member Michael Johnson and Board chairman E. Randy Dupree (Back row, left to right) with HCC Scholarship recipients Wilson Li, Natalie Green and Daniella Daniel.

who is pursuing a two-year A.A.S. degree in nursing at the Helene Fuld College of Nursing. Ms. Daniel's anticipated graduation date is November 2010. The

third recipient, **Natalie Green**, is a 31-year old single working mother of two children who graduated from Westchester Community College with an LPN

certification and who is currently pursuing a two-year A.A.S. degree in nursing at Helene Fuld. Ms. Green's anticipated graduation date is November 2009.

Each of the scholarship recipients shows exceptional perseverance and tenacity in the face of very challenging circumstances. Despite the hardship of their situations, each is doing well in their respective studies and forges on, absolutely determined to succeed in their studies and careers. They demonstrate an authentic commitment to serve as healthcare professionals in the Harlem community.

The HCC Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to eligible Harlem residents who are pursuing careers in various aspects of the healthcare profession. For more information on the program, please visit the HCC website [www.harlemcommonwealth.org](http://www.harlemcommonwealth.org), or call (212) 749-0900 Extension 111.

### The Honorable Inez E. Dickens and the New York City Council Award \$3,500 to HCC

Councilwoman Inez E. Dickens of the Ninth District continues to support Harlem Commonwealth Council's efforts to provide a wide range of educational programs for adults in the Harlem community. With Councilwoman Dickens' help, HCC was awarded \$3,500 from the City Council to help fund the operating expenses of classes in Adult Basic Education.



HCC Chairman E. Randy Dupree with Councilwoman Inez E. Dickens, Majority Whip of the New York City Council

Since the inception of HCC has consistently demonstrated the demand for these services in the Harlem community and its commitment to delivering quality educational programs to its constituents.

HCC greatly appreciates the assistance received from Councilwoman Inez E. Dickens, Council Speaker Christine Quinn and the New York City Council.

## Long Live Think and Create!



Isaiah, 11 years old, plans to be a doctor

*Through the eyes of Isaiah Roberts, a 2009 graduate of C.S. 154, a student of The Think and Create Afterschool Program.*

"Think and Create was very intense. I loved doing hands on work. Think and Create helped develop my mind through a variety of ac-

tivities. I would love to come back to Think and Create but I am going to middle school. I am very grateful for being selected to work with my schoolmates. It was a wonderful experience."

#### About Robotics

The students are encouraged to use their imagination when building their robots. The results often vary depending upon their personalities or special interests. People who build through the use of their imagination like to explore using their minds.

C.S. 154 has just completed its third year of the Think and Create program and is ventur-

ing into its fourth. Thanks to Harlem Commonwealth Council 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students have had amazing experiences in photography, drumming, robotics, soccer and engineering. They have had many opportunities to be creative by designing cars, making life-size self-portraits, programming robots, and drumming.

Using the skills they learned in drumming they produced and performed their graduation march.

This new school year brings promising opportunities for leadership for young people in the Harlem community.

## HARLEM COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL'S EXPANSION PLANS

Harlem Commonwealth Council's 5 million dollar development plan to expand its building moved forward in Summer 2009 with the commencement of construction in June. HCC's expansion plan will add two upper floors to its existing 4-story building for a total of 7,900 square feet. During the first phase, the building will undergo a process of renovation of its infrastructure, followed by construction of the new floors. The two floors will be largely dedicated to new classroom space with state-of-the-art equipment.

HCC's constituents in the Harlem community will be the main beneficiaries of these improvements. Since 2005, when the HCC Board of Directors and Dr. Joseph L. Tait focused on investing in the residents of the Harlem community by providing programs that would meet their educational and workplace challenges, there has been a steady increase in student demand and enrollment. HCC's programs are designed to enhance youth and adult educational skills, provide computer and information technology tools, foster professional growth in the health-related fields and provide financial and technical assistance for small minority-owned businesses.

"The response by the community to HCC's pro-

grams has been so overwhelming that in order to address the demands adequately, the Board of Directors approved expanding our space by new construction," said Dr. Tait, "This decision was not made lightly considering the state of the economy."

Once expansion is completed, the building will be able to accommodate the growing number of students participating in HCC's day and evening educational classes. The on-site classes currently serve 770 students annually; the expansion will allow HCC to accommodate more than 1,500 students annually.

Completion of the expansion is anticipated to be in April, 2010.

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