
News from Henry Street

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photos: Susanna Shuran, Tom Brazil

A R T S

Ernest Hemingway may have had the Left Bank, but residents of the Lower East Side are finding their *joie de vivre* in the **Abrons Arts Center**

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above, l to r: From "What's Cooking?" Chee Wang Ng, *Eaten Your Fill of Rice*, *The Great Laughter*; visual arts student; outdoor dance demonstration; Urban Youth Theater *Holes* performance. right: Flamenco dancer

ABRONS ARTS CENTER

A FEAST FOR THE ART LOVER'S SOUL

On any given day, visitors will find a veritable cornucopia of classes, workshops, performances, and exhibitions from which to nourish their understanding and appreciation of the arts. Current and upcoming highlights include *Report from the Neighborhood*, a production of original work written and performed by Urban Youth Theater (UYT) teens; *What's Cooking?*, a two-part exhibition on the relationship of food to the community and the visual arts; *Bian Dan*, a performance of traditional Chinese and contemporary modern dance; a theatrical twist on Stephen Vincent Benet's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*; and our annual Music School honors concert.

These are just a few of the ways that the Arts Center continues to carry on its tradition of providing high quality arts experiences to residents of the Lower East Side. Thousands of people attend Arts Center events every year, and the numbers are growing. Many recent productions—including a stage-adaptation of Louis Sachar's award-winning children's book *Holes*, and *Nutcracker in the Lower*, a modernized version of the holiday classic—performed to sold-out houses and rave reviews. The Center's Artist-in-Residence and gallery programs have also received considerable attention for showcasing some of the city's most intriguing young artists.

Delgado Completes First Year

The Arts Center's teachers, artists, performers, and students are taking inspiration from the vision of its enthusiastic new director, Jane Delgado, who came on

board in January of 2002. With a background in fostering collaborations between community service and arts organizations, Delgado came to the post hoping to extend Henry Street's rich tradition of excellence both as a community school for the arts and as a multi-arts center committed to presenting work that reflects the Lower East Side community.

"As a multi-arts center in one of the nation's most culturally diverse neighborhoods, we strive to present work that reflects the 'new immigrant,' recognizing that America is made up of all the cultures that have come through it," says Delgado. Adding, "we want audiences to become familiar with the classics, while at the same time presenting some of the exciting new work being produced by contemporary artists."

One of the ways that Delgado nourishes the educational curriculum and programming of the Arts Center is through the continued selection of staff and faculty members, whose real world experience as contemporary artists infuses their work as teachers and administrators. "Right now, we have the highest caliber artists and teachers, a great team with which to move forward," she concludes.

Daniel Catanach Cultivates Dance

Another exciting artist working "in the now" is Daniel Catanach, who succeeded longtime Director of Dance Louis Johnson, who retired in September after an illustrious 15 years of teaching at the Settlement. Catanach has been teaching and choreographing dance and theater projects for the Abrons Arts Center for the past ten years. He participated in establishing the Urban Youth Theater (UYT), which has become a cornerstone project for the Theater Department, and is founding director of the Urban Ballet Theater (UBT), a professional troupe of young classical and contemporary dancers, many of whom trained in Catanach's inner-city artistic programs.

Since the fall, UBT has been rehearsing and presenting regularly at the Abrons

Arts Center. The fledgling company made its world premiere in October at the Center's Harry De Jur Playhouse with a performance of two new works: *Trouble*, and *Tangoed*, danced by New York City Ballet guest artists Carla Korbes and Amar Ramasar, an Abrons Arts Center alumnus.

Attendees at this year's production of *The Nutcracker in the Lower* got another taste of Catanach's uniquely urban style. Catanach set his Clara, Drosselmeyer, and corps of beloved characters on the modern day Lower East Side and updated the choreography to encompass the full range of dance styles taught by the school—from Flamenco to classical ballet to hip hop. "We did not expect it to be a very big event in the first year, but it turned out to be a big celebration...a real event for neighborhood families," says Catanach.

The Abrons Arts Center hopes to carry on its rich tradition of nurturing new dance talent with the development of an annual festival of dance styles and traditions that reflects the cultural diversity of the Lower East Side. The festival, scheduled to debut in April 2004, will offer performances and demonstrations by some of the city's most innovative choreographers and performers, who draw on such dance traditions as Flamenco, Davidic worship, Irish stepping, and Asian folkdance.

"With Catanach's leadership, the Abrons Arts Center hopes to be at the forefront of developing major dance artists of the future," says Delgado.

Arts Learning and Instruction

More than 1,000 students, ranging in age from 3 to 83, benefit from the Arts Center's instructional courses in dance, theater, visual art, and music, as well as the Barbara L. Tate Summer Arts Camp. An additional 20,000 children from New York City public schools participate in its Arts-in-Education program.

This year, the Arts Center has drawn more participation from adults in the community with its introduction of classes



Anthony Jones

like martial arts and yoga. Also new to the Arts Center's curriculum is a comprehensive Early Childhood Art program, designed to awaken the creativity and imagination of children ages 2 to 5. Children and their caretakers engage in age-appropriate learning experiences in music, visual arts, movement, and storytelling/drama taught by professional artists with training in child development. "Studies have shown these activities to be invaluable for a child's early brain and motor-skill development, and they provide a wonderful retreat from the day's busy activities for mother (or caretaker) and child," says Delgado.

Arts-in-Education

In December, the Abrons Arts Center was delighted to learn that its Arts-in-Education *Architecture & Design/Community Studies* project was among 13 nationwide community arts programs to receive the prestigious *Coming Up Taller Award*. Given by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the annual award recognizes "excellence in community-based, after-school arts and humanities programs."

Since 1978, Arts-in-Education programs have worked to supplement diminishing arts programming in New York City public schools. The program currently places resident teaching artists in more than 50 schools in all of the city's five boroughs, where they carry out unique learning modules, designed to work within the school's curricula. "While not every child will pursue the arts as a livelihood, each one deserves the highest caliber of training regardless of his or her economic means," says Delgado, adding: "When people have an opportunity to experience their creative abilities, it is a wonderful, self-affirming experience. No matter their choice of profession, we will have developed strong appreciators of the arts." ■

President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities



Henry Street Receives 2002 Coming Up Taller Award

In December 2002, representatives from Henry Street Settlement's Abrons Arts Center traveled to Washington, D.C., to receive the *Coming Up Taller Award*, given by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Henry Street's "Architecture & Design/Community Studies" project was among 13 recipients selected from across the nation to receive this prestigious award.



For more information about the Abrons Arts Center, spring 2003 performances & exhibits, and a current schedule of classes, please visit: www.henrystreet.org/abronsarts



Arts Center Gets Face Lift

In October, Henry Street completed a Capital Campaign, raising over \$4 million in contributions from members of its Board of Directors, private individuals and foundations, corporations, and public agencies. A major goal of the campaign was to increase the agency's capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver programming.

Thanks to the success of the campaign, a number of critical repairs were completed on the c. 1970 Abrons Arts Center structure, including the repair and remodeling of the main entrance and the bathroom on the ground level and an upgrade of the main lobby heating and air-conditioning system. Work on the exterior amphitheater stairs and masonry scheduled for the spring of 2003 will prevent any future damage to the building's interior.

"This was a very challenging project," says Chief Administrator of Operation, Catherine Cullen. "We needed to provide an accessible restroom on the same level as our National Historic Landmark Playhouse, as well as create a welcoming and visually exciting entrance through which hundreds of people enter every day."

From the Executive Director

In the months following my succession of longtime Executive Director Daniel Kronenfeld, who retired in August 2002, the Executive Office has been a-buzz with activity. Danny, the Board of Directors, staff, and friends have all been gracious in helping me get acclimated to my new home, where we have been working hard to prepare for the challenges ahead.

When times are difficult, social service agencies are often called on to tackle a seemingly impossible task: to service a larger population of individuals in need of services, while at the same time dealing with cuts in funding and programming by city and federal agencies. While we are cognizant of the struggles we face, Henry Street is inspired by its recent successes and confident that it will carry on its strong record of achievement in bringing quality services to its neighbors.

Last year, Henry Street Settlement came to the aid of more than 100,000 people. We accomplished this with a staff of 1,000 full and part-time social workers, teachers, and administrators. In order to maintain this success, we have set four overarching goals that embody the immediate focus of the Executive Office, Board of Directors, and staff of the Henry Street Settlement, and have begun to address them head on. They are:

- 1. Financial Stability** Henry Street currently receives about 80% of its funding from federal, state, and city sources. As the economic crisis threatens to make painful cuts, Henry Street must find ways to stabilize its funding, now and for the future. This includes increasing the percentage derived through individual and private donations, in a sense re-adopting the grassroots approach of our founders, who worked tirelessly in the era before public assistance. We have already begun to cultivate new avenues of giving by participating in special fundraising events like the Washington Mutual *Walk-On-Home*™ for affordable housing held in September and like *Miracle Day*, a holiday event sponsored by CIBC World Markets, both of which helped raise funds and publicize Henry Street programs.
- 2. Communication** While Henry Street's rich history makes it a recognizable New York City institution, many people are not aware of the scope of services available at the agency. Its multiplicity of programs, as well as its geographic diversity, makes Henry Street many things to many people. A renewed focus on outreach and marketing are helping to make the community more aware of its offerings, as well as to communicate Henry Street's broader mission to the public. Henry Street made a significant step in this area by launching its beautifully designed website, which is updated regularly with information on programs and activities.
- 3. Capacity Building** The agency's goal for capacity building is two-fold. First, it aims to clearly define its models of service to its constituency. Many Henry Street initiatives have been widely recognized in the field of social work. By defining and assessing our current practices, we intend to further hone our techniques and continue that tradition of excellence. Secondly, we will work to shore up the foundation of an agency that, over the past twenty years, has tripled in size. We must strengthen our infrastructure in order to sustain the agency's rapid growth and ensure its effectiveness in the future.
- 4. Collaboration** Henry Street has experienced recent success in the area of collaboration with the creation of a comprehensive Workforce Development Center. The Center joins already existing efforts from youth, behavioral health, and shelter services with new resources designed to address the needs of out-of-work New Yorkers. The Center also collaborates with external relief agencies and has extended its reach beyond the immediate neighborhood. Henry Street is investigating other possible intra-agency collaborations, as well as ways to share resources and information with other organizations.

I am confident that the strategic improvements outlined here will help Henry Street move with the impending winds of change. Henry Street Settlement vows to continue bringing its broad range of quality services to the community, to maximize its current functioning, and to meet the continuing needs of the community. ■



News Briefs

Geniria Armstrong Leads Shelter & Supportive Services



Henry Street congratulates Geniria Armstrong on her appointment as Chief Administrator of Shelter and Supportive Services. A self-described "natural born social worker," Armstrong holds a master's degree in social work from Fordham University and has worked at Henry Street Settlement's Urban Family Center for sixteen years, most recently serving as Associate Director of Homeless Services.

Henry Street's shelter programs have always focused on job training and self-sufficiency, and recent collaborative efforts with the new Workforce Development Center promise new opportunities in the area of job training and placement. "We remain committed to providing formerly homeless individuals with the tools they need to sustain themselves once they leave the shelter system," says Armstrong.

100 Years of School Nursing

In October of 2002, Henry Street helped the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) kick off its 100 Years of School Nursing celebration. The association, which represents over 11,000 school nurses across the country, chose to host its opening ceremony in front of the Settlement's headquarters at 265 Henry Street, from which the first school nurse was dispatched to a New York City public school in 1902.

On hand for the celebration were NASN president Linda C. Wolfe, R.N., and New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Antonia Novello. Guests enjoyed a presentation on the history of school nursing in America, followed by a luncheon and tour of Henry Street buildings.

Susanne Shuman



Knocking on Doors for Our Small Business Neighbors

Like so many small business owners in Lower Manhattan who were impacted economically by the World Trade Center disaster, Juan Rodriquez was fed up with trying to navigate the maze of post-9/11 relief available through state and private agencies. Throughout the winter and spring of 2002, struggled for ways to keep his multi-service travel agency on Clinton Street alive, often forfeiting his own salary so that he could retain his employees. Like many immigrant business owners in Lower Manhattan, Rodriquez was frustrated, intimidated by the paperwork, and about to give up all together. Then he met Dorothy Scarimbolo, Business Liaison for Henry Street's Emergency Employment Clearinghouse (EEC). Since the programs inception in May 2002, Scarimbolo had been reaching out to small business owners in the area to inform them about Henry Street's free Business Development services.

"I chased him down," laughed Scarimbolo. "I was literally pounding the pavement, trying to meet local business owners to inform them of the relief services available to them." Scarimbolo explained to Rodriquez that because of the location and nature of his business, he was definitely eligible for a number of post 9/11-relief packages. She helped him complete applications for a state grant, as well as a subsidy to cover wages for 14 weeks, both of which he received.

The small, family-owned dry good stores and take-out restaurants that make up the business community in Chinatown and the Lower East Side are some of the most vibrant examples of the American dream at work.

Henry Street's Emergency Employment Clearinghouse (EEC) is part of the agency's larger Workforce Development Initiative, developed in order to help small businesses in Lower Manhattan recover from the economic impact of 9/11. Originally intended to help Chinatown and Lower East Side merchants retain their employees with wage subsidies and small loans during the critical months following the World Trade Center atrocity, the program has since broadened its range of services to help businesses survive during the city's ongoing recession.

The EEC office provides emergency assistance and outreach services for small businesses, helping them apply for grants from city and state agencies and for non-traditional loans, educating them about planning for business development, as well as linking them to legal and technical services and qualified job



candidates. The center maintains a comprehensive library of information on the wide range of programs providing 9/11 relief, including city and state grants, federal and private loans, legal resources, and special initiatives like Adopt-A-Company, which offers pro-bono support to small businesses hurt by 9/11. A bi-lingual staff helps business owners navigate the literature and resources and provides individual counseling and follow-up services.

The small, family-owned dry good stores and take-out restaurants that make up the business community in Chinatown and the Lower East Side are some of the most vibrant examples of the American dream at work. They are also some of the most vulnerable—sometimes just a week's sales away from missing the rent. "Most of the businesses the EEC deals with have annual revenues of under \$300,000, and ninety-five percent of them are immigrant-owned," says Scarimbolo. "These people have put everything into their businesses and work seven days a week. During the economic boom of the 1990s, they made a decent living. Now its tough to make ends meet."

The good news is Henry Street has already made considerable strides toward reviving the small business community. Since its opening, the EEC has reached out to more than 1,000 merchants in the area and provided intensive counseling to 205 small businesses. The center awarded \$700,000 in wage subsidies, grants, and loans to 31 businesses through a partnership with the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) and Seedco and helped 73 businesses access approximately \$600,000 in state grants related to post 9/11 recovery. In less than a year, Henry Street has become known as a "one-stop" source for emergency assistance among Lower East Side and Chinatown business owners.

The quick success of these programs is no doubt a testament to Henry Street's longstanding reputation for successfully adapting to and meeting the needs of its neighbors. Since its

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Our Small Business Neighbors
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founding in 1893 as a Settlement House for Lower East Side immigrants, Henry Street has continuously served some of the country's newest arrivals. Henry Street's work with small business owners has again put the agency on the front lines. "Knocking on doors and crossing cultural lines can sometimes be difficult, but Henry Street has always been able to meet the challenge and gain the trust of its neighbors," says Christine Koenig, Chief Administrator for Workforce Development.

In addition to its business development activities, Henry Street, through its network of workforce development programs, currently works with 65% of welfare recipients and other out-of-work individuals living from Madison Street north to 14th Street. While several of the programs existed prior to 9/11, many have been instituted only within the past year. This growth has prompted the establishment of a new Workforce Development Center facility, which will open on the corner of Essex and Delancey Streets this spring. The state-of-the-art center will offer a wealth of job training resources and referral services to out-of-work individuals, as well as resources and services for small business owners. Placement services will be available with tax incentive and wage subsidy opportunities for prospective employers. ■

For more information on Workforce Development, please visit www.henrystreet.org/workforce



Youth Services at Henry Street
www.henrystreet.org/youth

From the time they enter Kindergarten until they are ready to enter college and the workforce, Henry Street children benefit from year-round opportunities for academic, recreational, and social enrichment. Visit our website for comprehensive program updates, including information on 2003 Summer Camp registration!

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