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Henry Street Settlement opens doors of opportunity for Lower East Side residents and all New Yorkers through innovative social service, arts and health care programs. Here’s a snapshot of some latest news:

Henry Street Parties Like It’s 1899
Henry Street Settlement hosted the debut event for the first-ever Lower East Side History Month on May 3, 2014 — a free block party. “Party Like It’s 1899.” The party featured cake, crafts, tours of the historic Settlement and dancing in the street to celebrate the 147th birthday of founder Lillian Wald. Among the nearly 400 attendees were firefighters from the FDNY’s Ladder 18, Community Board 3’s Susan Silver and Gigi Li, and New York City Council Member Margaret Chin, who praised Henry Street’s staff and volunteers, noting, “They work hard, but they never know when to have fun!” She apparently does too. Chin later led the conga line that wove through the crowd, as DJ Mambo played the “Conga.”

RUTH TAUBE — Lower East Side Community Hero
Ruth Taube, Director of Henry Street’s Home Planning Workshop — and a Settlement employee for nearly 48 years — was one of three individuals honored as a “Lower East Side Community Hero.” She received her award at the Lower East Side History Month’s closing ceremonies held on May 1 at Pier 42.

ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT: Putting the “Street” Back in Henry Street
More than 200 members of the Lower East Side community gathered at Henry Street on April 6, 2014, sacrificing a beautiful spring day to make their voices heard at the Settlement’s first-ever Town Hall meeting.

They were joined by elected officials, including U.S. Congresswomen Carolyn Maloney and Nydia Velazquez, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, NYC Council Members Margaret Chin and Rosie Mendes, and representatives of the offices of State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, State Senator Daniel Squadron and State Assembliesman Brian Kavanagh.

The Town Hall included full group meetings and smaller discussion groups led by facilitators on pressing issues like housing, education, gentrification and employment. Council Member Chin led a group for seniors conducted in Chinese.

“The Town Hall leveraged the findings of the 30 plus focus groups we conducted with program clients and community residents over the winter,” said Jeremy Reiss, Deputy Development Officer for Public Policy and External Relations. “The day helped pave a roadmap for action.”

A full report of the Town Hall is available on our website at henrystreet.org/about/advocacy.html or by calling 212.766.9200 x216.

Henry Street @ WORLD BOOK NIGHT LAUNCH

The literal and the “giveaway” came together at the New York Public Library on April 22, 2014, at the public launch of World Book Night America 2014. Henry Street was a partner in the initiative, designed to deliver printed books to those without means or access.

David Garza, Executive Director of Henry Street, shared the stage with esteemed authors Garrison Keillor, Malcolm Gladwell and Tobias Wolff.

The following day, Henry Street distributed books to elderly clients of the Good Companions Senior Center; the Senior Companion Program and to Meals on Wheels recipients. “Instead of dinner and a movie, you get dinner and a book,” said Garza.

Dunk & Donate — A SLAM DUNK!
Henry Street’s first Dunk & Donate basketball tournament was a slam dunk as eight teams hit the court to support youth programs at Henry Street, competing for a trophy (and bragging rights).

KGM Consulting won the tournament after defeating Allen & Overy in a fierce championship game; the Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow team won the Fan Favorite social media contest.

Teams from UPS, KGM Consulting, First Manhattan Consulting Group Direct, Howie Boys, and SLS Capital (led by Scott Swid, President of Henry Street’s Board of Directors) also competed in the tournament, held on January 26, 2014, at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater New York (BGC). Sponsors of the event also included American Express, Forest City Ratner, and Barclays Bank.

Henry Street co-founded, is a partner in the program and helped identify potential living-wage jobs for the program because they are underrepresented in the bicycle industry.

The ten-week job program, an initiative of Henry Street and Recycle a Bicycle, combined hands-on classroom training with internships at local bike shops.

David Garza, Executive Director of Henry Street, congratulated the graduates, noting that the Academy is the latest in Settlement “firsts.” “We put the first nurse in a public school and opened the first shelter for homeless families,” he said. “And now, we’ve created the first bicycle mechanic skills training academy.”

One graduate, Steve Chubur, said, “This is a terrific program. I was really impressed with the large workspace filled with professional quality tools and equipment. When I saw that, I knew it was the real deal.”

The graduates are a diverse group. Nearly half are under age 25; and 25 percent are women. Karen Overtom, Executive Director of Recycle a Bicycle, specifically recruited women for the program because they are underrepresented in the bicycle industry.

The Lower East Side Employment Network (LESEN), a consortium which Henry Street co-founded, is a partner in the program and helped identify potential living-wage jobs for graduates.

This innovative program was made possible with funding from The Robin Hood Foundation, the Heckscher Foundation for Children and the Consortium for Worker Education.