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## **ELEVEN NEW YORK CITY ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED AS FIRST ARTS PARTNERS IN NEW CITYWIDE NeON ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

**New Initiative Connects Local Artists and Arts Organizations with Probation Clients  
Throughout New York City, Creating Programming Available To The Whole Community**

**NeON Arts Programming Offered in Spring 2014 Includes Music, Theater, Dance,  
Poetry, Visual Art, and Digital Media in Seven Community-Based NeON Locations**

*(March 10, 2014; NEW YORK, NY)*—The New York City Department of Probation (DOP), in partnership with Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute, today announced the names of eleven New York City organizations to be awarded grants supporting arts programming as part of DOP’s new citywide **NeON Arts** initiative.

Building on DOP’s successful efforts to increase public safety by engaging probation clients in the arts, NeON Arts is a public/private initiative that funds local arts projects in seven communities that are home to significant numbers of probation clients. NeON Arts connects community-based artists and local arts organizations to probation clients who report to [Neighborhood Opportunity Network](#) (NeON) locations, as well as community members. Through the NeON Arts program, which is currently funded for two years of work, artists, clients, and community members will collaborate on projects in a variety of disciplines, including dance, music, theater, visual art, poetry, and digital media. In addition to creating meaningful art projects that will benefit their local community, participants will learn important new skills and develop positive peer relationships.

The seven NeON neighborhoods are Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn), Brownsville (Brooklyn), East New York (Brooklyn), Harlem (Manhattan), South Jamaica (Queens), Staten Island, and the South Bronx.

The eleven organizations selected to create programming for the first round of the NeON Arts initiative, which lasts through June 30, 2014, are:

- Bedford-Stuyvesant: **The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions** and **Xmental**
- Brownsville: **Young New Yorkers**
- East New York: **ARTs East New York**
- Harlem: **Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation**, **Roundabout Theatre Company**, and **Voices UnBroken**
- South Bronx: **Free Verse**, **Music Beyond Measure**, and **Voices UnBroken**
- South Jamaica: **Life Light Street Productions**
- Staten Island: **The Animation Project**

“Congratulations to the eleven organizations receiving inaugural NeON Arts grants!” said NYC Department of Probation Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi. “Recent studies have proven what many of us have long taken as an article of faith: the arts can help people in the justice system turn their lives around.

NeON Arts is advancing our larger, agency-wide goal of connecting probation clients to advocates and allies in their home communities.”

An integral part of the development of NeON Arts has been hands-on participation by local community members. The arts organizations participating in the first round of the initiative were selected by local NeON stakeholder groups, which are comprised of probation clients, DOP staff, and local business and cultural leaders.

[Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute](#)—an ongoing arts partner of the NYC Department of Probation—serves as an intermediary organization, providing support and facilitation for NeON Arts.

**Spring 2014 programming will include:**

### **BROOKLYN**

*Bedford-Stuyvesant*

[The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions](#) will work with Bedford-Stuyvesant NeON Arts participants to produce *What It Iz*, a twenty-first century urban parody remixing L. Frank Baum's classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the 1970s Broadway musical-turned-motion picture, *The Wiz*. The play was created specifically for youth and young adults who reside in communities with high rates of arrests and incarceration. The Center, an independent research, training and advocacy Human Justice think tank, founded and developed by academic professionals with prior experience within the criminal punishment system, will host a final public performance of the production later this spring.

[Xmental](#) will introduce Bedford-Stuyvesant NeON participants to the basics of graffiti art while also teaching the difference between legal and illegal graffiti. This spring, the organization will host a public viewing and auction of art produced by participants that will also include performances by local hip-hop artists. Xmental is a coalition of community organizers, artists, and teachers committed to mentoring and educating urban youth through art and creative projects.

*Brownsville*

[Young New Yorkers](#), a restorative justice arts program providing alternative sentences for 16- and 17-year olds who have open criminal cases, will offer a specially designed arts curriculum to the Brownsville NeON community addressing the issue of gun violence. Participants will use photography, film, illustration, and design to tell their stories followed by a final public exhibition of work developed during the program later this spring.

*East New York*

[ARTs East New York](#) In keeping with its mission to empower the East New York community via the arts, ARTs East New York will collaborate with NeON participants through the multimedia project *Light! Camera! Action!* Culminating in the production of a music video, young East New Yorkers will be introduced to a wide range of skills employed within the music recording and video production industries. A public screening of the final music video, along with a panel discussion, will take place this spring.

## **MANHATTAN**

### *Harlem*

[\*\*Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs\*\*](#) are committed to bringing dance into classrooms, communities, and lives of people of all ages in accordance with Alvin Ailey's dictum that "dance is for everybody." [\*\*The Ailey organization's\*\*](#) team will present a variety of lecture-demonstrations, dance classes, and interactive workshops as part of its spring residency at the Harlem NeON.

[\*\*Voices UnBroken\*\*](#)—a non-profit committed to providing under-heard members of the community, primarily youth, with the tools and opportunity for self-expression through creative writing—will lead a 12-week poetry workshop at the Harlem NeON, including opportunities for public readings.

[\*\*Roundabout Theatre Company\*\*](#), a top not-for-profit theater company recognized as a leader in theater-in-education, will offer a 10-week series of theater workshops for the Harlem NeON community which will incorporate attendance at Broadway performances.

All three arts partners will work together with NeON participants to create a production to be performed later this spring at Harlem's Dempsey Center. The program will feature dance from the Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs residency and spoken word pieces created by participants working with Voices UnBroken. Roundabout Theatre Company Teaching Artists will mentor participants in production design disciplines (sound, lighting, costume), stage management, and marketing.

## **BRONX**

[\*\*Music Beyond Measure\*\*](#), an organization that uses music and the creative process as a means of enriching the lives of individuals with physical, mental, or emotional trauma, will engage South Bronx NeON participants in a series of "Sing Your Story" songwriting workshops as part of their residency.

[\*\*Free Verse\*\*](#), the journal of poetry and prose born in the probation center waiting room in the South Bronx NeON, will host a poetry program for community members alongside poetry workshops also led by [\*\*Voices UnBroken\*\*](#). **Voices UnBroken** will also be leading poetry workshops at the Bronx NeON's satellite office at the Castle Hill YMCA.

Later this spring, all three arts partners will host free performances that will give Bronx NeON participants a chance to share their work in front of a public audience.

## **QUEENS**

### *South Jamaica*

[\*\*Life Light Street Productions\*\*](#), a non-profit that teaches documentary production to young adults exiting the criminal justice system and to youth from under-resourced communities, will engage with South Jamaica NeON participants in a series of interactive workshops, resulting in a documentary film exploring a theme related to their community. The organization will host a public screening of the documentary with a panel discussion in early summer.

## **STATEN ISLAND**

**The Animation Project** will teach Staten Island NeON participants how to create an original computer animated video using professional digital art computer programs. Later this spring, participants will share the animation they created at a public screening for the community. The Animation Project is an organization dedicated to using digital art technology as a therapeutic medium and a workforce development tool with at-risk youth.

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A calendar of free public events to be presented this spring by NeON Arts in all locations will be posted online in May. Click [here](#) to find addresses for all NeON locations.

The next round of NeON Arts programming will be offered from July 1 through October 31, 2014. Arts organizations interested in participating are invited to submit a proposal by completing an application at [carnegiehall.org/NeONArts](http://carnegiehall.org/NeONArts). The application deadline for this round is April 15, 2014.

**NeON Arts** is a program of the NYC Department of Probation in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute.

NeON Arts funding is provided by the Open Society Foundations through a grant to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City to support New York City's Young Men's Initiative (YMI).

**The NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI)** transforms lives by connecting young men of color with the tools they need to succeed. YMI views each young man as a valuable asset to his family, his community and his city. It invests in our common future by providing Black and Latino young men with innovative programs, services and policy solutions focused on education, employment, health and justice. By focusing New York City's resources in a smart and strategic way, this unprecedented public-private partnership has created a global model for helping young men to reach their goals, break the poverty cycle and build stronger communities. To learn more about YMI, visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/youngmen>.

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