



PRESS RELEASE

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LISC NYC's Communities for Healthy Food expands through \$644,000 grant from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund

Funding will help bring better food and food awareness to more NYC neighborhoods and families

NEW YORK (**March 10, 2016**) – Local Initiatives Support Corporation New York City (LISC NYC) today announced the expansion of [Communities for Healthy Food](#) to two additional New York City neighborhoods – increasing the communities served by the program to six – in order to increase access to affordable, healthy foods for thousands of community residents.

The [Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund](#) has awarded LISC NYC a grant of \$644,000 to expand Communities for Healthy Food to two additional high-need neighborhoods in partnership with community development corporations (CDCs) in 2016 and 2017: [Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association](#) in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx and [Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation](#) (OBCDC) in the Rockaways.

The grant, building on prior support of \$1.6 million, will also allow the program to enhance and deepen its work in the initial four New York City neighborhoods funded through the Illumination Fund's prior support, including Cypress Hills and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, Mt. Eden in the Bronx, and West Harlem.

Since the program's launch in 2014, Communities for Healthy Food has created 15 farmers markets, farm shares, and gardens, trained 100 employees, enrolled 1,350 families to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, served more than 50,000 residents through food pantries, and reached over 15,000 residents through program events, including nutrition workshops, urban farming activities, youth food education programs, and community chef training.

“We are thrilled that LISC NYC is able to expand its programming and deepen its impact across New York City,” **said Laurie M. Tisch, president of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund.**

“Communities for Healthy Food exemplifies an innovative approach to increasing access to healthy food and nutrition education, and opportunities for food-related jobs. We are proud to be longtime partners of

LISC NYC and are grateful for their shared vision and dedication to our mission to increase access and opportunity for all New Yorkers.”

LISC NYC’s Communities for Healthy Food is a place-based initiative that addresses the interrelated issues of obesity, poverty and unemployment. The program’s partners are CDCs with deep roots in their neighborhoods, who own and manage affordable housing and commercial spaces and deliver an array of social and economic development services. Each CDC convenes and collaborates with neighborhood organizations and resident groups as well as citywide organizations such as City Harvest, Just Food, Harvest Home Farmer’s Markets, and Corbin Hill Farms.

To supplement the Illumination Fund’s grant, LISC NYC and its CDC partners have leveraged over \$1.3 million in additional public and private support for Communities for Healthy Food for 2016 and 2017, including funding from the NYC City Council, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Levitt Foundation and other foundations, corporations and government agencies.

A network of Community Development Corporation partners collaborated with the City Council, including Councilmember Inez Dickens and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, to secure \$500,000 for fiscal year 2016. Councilmember Dickens was the prime sponsor for the funds with the help of West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc.

Over the next two years, Communities for Healthy Food will deepen its impact in New York City’s most vulnerable low-income communities and continue to make healthy and affordable food accessible in ways that are relevant to residents’ lives, by using food access and education as a community-building tool and economic development opportunity.

Recent projects have been innovative and varied:

- In Cypress Hills/East New York, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation partnered with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) East New York Diagnostic and Treatment Center (ENYDTC) to open the **Pitkin Verde Farmers Market** outside of the health center. The ENYDTC provides families with nutrition education classes and “prescriptions” for them to eat more fruits and vegetables. Patients then receive “Health Bucks” that can be used at farmers markets throughout the city. The market also provides employment opportunities to residents, including positions for youth employees to operate and run the market, community chefs and a Farmers Market Manager.
- In Bedford Stuyvesant, Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation (NEBHDCo) opened the **Golden Harvest Food Pantry**, which offers healthy foods using a “client choice” model, where visitors can choose from a variety of foods instead of receiving pre-packaged items. The pantry also hosts cooperative business workshops and trains residents to become community chefs and leaders to facilitate family, youth and adult culinary and nutrition classes.
- In West Harlem, West Harlem Group Assistance opened the **Community Healthy Food Hub**. The health hub also offers West Harlem residents a “client choice” food pantry, similar to the Golden Harvest Food Pantry. It provides nutrition workshops, hosts cooking classes and organizes grocery store tours to help families on a budget buy food.

- In the Bronx, New Settlement Apartments partnered with Corbin Hill Food Project to operate a **weekly farm stand** at the New Settlement Community Center. Customers pay \$14 a week (or \$7 with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, formerly known as food stamps) for a box of vegetables, often including neighborhood favorites like cilantro or collard greens.

“We thank LISC NYC and the Illumination Fund for partnering with us to increase access to healthy, affordable food,” said **Patricia Simon, executive director of OBCDC**. “This is another step forward in our pursuit to improve the health and employment opportunities for the Rockaway community.”

“LISC NYC is proud to continue our partnership with the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund,” said **Sam Marks, LISC NYC’s executive director**. “Communities for Healthy Food is an example of how LISC mobilizes support from organizations like the Illumination Fund to provide local groups with the tools they need to revitalize communities. We look forward to working with the Illumination Fund to bring healthy food to more neighborhoods throughout New York.”

Long-time CDC partners also applauded the grant.

“At New Settlement Apartments we continually strive to find new opportunities to improve the health and well-being of our community residents,” said **Jack Doyle, Executive Director of New Settlement Apartments**. “We are very pleased to continue our strong and effective partnership with LISC NYC and the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, as we work together to rebuild neighborhoods and work with community residents to ensure they succeed.”

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About Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association

Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, Inc. is a nonprofit community development corporation located in the South Bronx. Our mission is to contribute to a revitalized, safe and economically vibrant South Bronx through the development and management of affordable housing and the provision of targeted human services. Annually, we provide direct services to approximately 5,000 residents and support services to the community at large. We empower residents through supportive services and vocational, educational, and cultural programs that assist in the retention of affordable housing accommodations and foster self-sufficiency and collective capacity through self-help, mutual aid and cooperation. For more information, visit <http://www.bkcianyc.org>

About Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

The mission of Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation is to build a strong, sustainable Cypress Hills and East New York, where youth and adults achieve educational and economic success, secure healthy and affordable housing and develop leadership skills to transform their lives and community. We serve over 9,000 local residents each year, through affordable housing development, sustainability planning, housing counseling, community organizing, college access and persistence programs, career and education programs, and youth and family services. For more information, visit <http://www.cypresshills.org/chw>

About the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund

The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund is a New York City-based foundation that strives to improve access and opportunity for all New Yorkers. Founded in 2007 by philanthropist Laurie M. Tisch, the Illumination Fund plays an active role in supporting innovative approaches to education, the arts, healthy food and civic service in order to illuminate strategies that transform our urban landscape. For more information about the Illumination Fund, visit www.lmtilluminationfund.org.

About the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

LISC combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to help nonprofit community development corporations revitalize distressed neighborhoods. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$12.9 billion to build or rehab 298,300 affordable homes and apartments and develop 49 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. For more information, visit www.lisc.org.

About New Settlement Apartments

New Settlement Apartments is a community development organization based in the Mt. Eden community of the Southwest Bronx, with a 25-year demonstrated commitment to increasing preparedness and access to high-quality public and post-secondary education, expanding opportunities for healthy and active living, fair and sustainable employment, and safe and affordable housing. New Settlement has provided 1,022 affordable homes in 17 multi-family buildings. Grounded in its commitment to affordable housing and a thriving neighborhood, New Settlement collaborates with community residents and develops partnerships to create services and opportunities that celebrate the inherent dignity and potential of individuals and families. For more information, visit http://www.settlementhousingfund.org/new_settlement.html

About Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation (NEBHDCo)

A leading affordable housing developer since 1985, NEBHDCo has developed and self-manages 929 residential units and 17 commercial units in 92 buildings in Central Brooklyn, and also provides tenant and community services. As one for four CDCs in LISC NYC's Communities for Healthy Food initiative, NEBHDCo works with many local partners on a multi-faceted community healthy food access program. Components include: a range of culinary and nutrition education/knowledge sharing programs, for youth, adults, families and seniors; community garden programs that work with local schools and also teach paid teen interns urban farming and other skills; working with NEBHDCo commercial tenant bodegas on expanding healthy food options; training for neighborhood residents to start cooperative food businesses; and planning for a Bed-Stuy Cooperative Council and revolving loan fund for food business startups. For more information, visit <http://www.nebhdco.org>

About Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation

Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation is a community-based nonprofit corporation that works with residents living in all the New York City Housing Authority developments in the Rockaways and residents living in the surrounding community to provide opportunities for socio-economic improvement that will create a healthier, safer, more prosperous, better educated and revitalized community. For more information, visit <http://www.oceanbaycdc.com>.

About West Harlem Group Assistance (WHGA)

West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. is a community based development corporation was established in 1971 to revitalize the under-invested West and Central Harlem communities riddled with dilapidated and abandoned buildings. Since 1971 WHGA has developed 1037 units of affordable housing and owns 43,676 square feet of commercial space in West Harlem. For more information, visit <http://www.whgainc.org>