

Kate Spade and the Bronx



Kate Spade signature store in the Galaxy Macau mall. (wikimeida commons)

by Gary Axelbank

June 10, 2018

Last week's news of fashion icon Kate Spade's suicide hit everyone hard, but it was particularly devastating in the Bronx at WHEDco (Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation) because she became a personal supporter of their mission to give the south Bronx access to resources that create thriving neighborhoods, including high-quality early education and after-school programs, fresh, healthy food, and cultural programming, and economic opportunity.

According to WHEDco President Davon Russell, the relationship began in 2013 when Spade and common friends of the much-beloved fashion mogul toured their facilities. She was so taken with the importance and quality of their programs, he said, "she wrote us a check on the way home on the bus."

Two years later Spade hosted a 'friendraiser' party in her east side apartment, where she invited WHEDco youngsters to come in and talk about their lives and how they've succeeded because of WHEDco.

"It was lovely," Russell said. "She also had a series of books on style and made an arrangement that we would receive some of the proceeds from the books. All of a sudden we started to receive checks from her that were worth hundreds of dollars at a time."

The support continued with contribution of exclusive items for auction with proceeds going to WHEDco.

In a public statement about her death WHEDco said, "given her celebrity, tragic news like this can often be sensationalized by the media and delivered in a way that creates a sense of distance between the individual and the general public. But Kate Spade was someone WHEDco knew and loved personally, and we are devastated by this loss."

Russell added, "We will never forget how welcoming she was to our staff, alumni of our youth programs and donors when she hosted an event in her home to benefit WHEDco in 2015 – quite literally opening her door to strangers as a way to promote our work."

"She was really wonderful," he told *thisistheBronX*.

Link: <http://www.thisisthebronx.info/kate-spade-and-the-bronx/>