



National Endowment for the Arts Chair Visits Successful Bronx Organizations

A couple of Bronx non-profits that received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts received a visit from the organization's chairwoman to show the good they are doing. NY1's Erin Clarke filed the following report.

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National Endowment for the Arts chair Jane Chu got a glimpse of what grants her agency has provided are doing for the Bronx.

The independent federal government agency gave a total of \$40,000 to non-profit organizations DreamYard and WHEDco to make sure the arts are accessible to everyone.

"Our mission really is to make sure there's arts everywhere so there's an arts grant in every congressional district in the United States," said Chu.

Considering that several South Bronx neighborhoods fall into the country's poorest congressional district, one that residents often say is overlooked, they and local leaders are grateful for the help and a spotlight on these organizations that are helping out.

"Arts plays a major role in education and for many of my constituents, our residents, our young people don't experience that all the time," said Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson.

But that is changing as organizations like DreamYard are growing. Two decades ago it was just an idea.

"We created a play with a group of young people at a community center called DreamYard, and it was about a place where kids could go and their parents had forgotten how to get there," said Tim Lord, co-founder of DreamYard.

Now it's developed into the largest arts organization in the borough, with programming in and out of the classroom at 45 public schools including its own DreamYard Prep High School.

And at the non-profit WHEDco's Bronx Music Heritage Center, grant money has supported the Living Legends Performance Series concerts that not only honor and celebrate Bronx musicians, but also makes music and music education accessible to all.

"When we have a project, we would have a performance and it would be like a hip-hop performance you would have everything from the smallest children coming in to, you know, elderly women and families coming together," said WHEDco organizer.

And that's fulfilling NEA's promise to support arts programs that help communities blossom.