

Neighborhood Builders on Long Island

Nonprofits play a key role in providing local services to individuals and families in need. Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders® program was designed to bolster these organizations' effectiveness in improving the quality of life for the people they serve. On Long Island, the program was established in 2005, and has provided more than \$3.2 million to help nonprofits continue to fulfill their critical missions.

Neighborhood Builders

Since its inception in 2004, the Neighborhood Builders program has recognized nearly 700 outstanding organizations across the country with \$200,000 in general operating support grants, and rigorous leadership training. More than 95 percent of last year's Neighborhood Builders are serving critical needs in the areas of health and human services, education and community development.

The leadership training provided through the program includes two four-day workshops where the nonprofits' senior executives gather to explore a variety of management topics, including strategic-thinking, business planning and leadership development. Additionally, emerging leaders from each organization gather for three four-day workshops where they discuss developing organizational management skills, managing strategic opportunities, forging alliances and building communities.

To select the Neighborhood Builders award recipients, Bank of America convenes a panel of previous winners and people within the community who are familiar with local economic and social priorities. For 2013, the Neighborhood Builders panel on Long Island selected Adelante of Suffolk County (Adelante) and Transitional Services of New York for Long Island (TSLI) as award recipients.

For forty-seven years, Adelante has provided services to the culturally diverse communities of Suffolk County in the areas of health, education, employment, supported housing, leadership development, volunteerism and culture. Adelante was founded by a group of concerned Hispanic citizens who advocated for the need to improve the quality of life of their community members, to promote Hispanic culture and civic responsibility, as well as to foster the educational, economic, social and cultural awareness and pride of the community.

"This funding will dramatically change the outcome of our community and our youth's future, helping to better their lives not only for today but for tomorrow," said Miriam Garcia, executive director, Adelante.

Part of the grant will go toward the organization's computer skills training program. Interest in this program has grown but there have not previously been enough funds to expand the program. With this grant, Adelante can offer this training program to families at both the Brentwood and Central Islip locations. They will learn how to utilize Microsoft Office, in a bilingual format, through lessons designed to prepare students to perform in a variety of scenarios. For more information about Adelante, visit <http://adelantesc.us/>.

TSLI, the second 2013 Long Island Neighborhood Builder, is a human service agency that provides housing and support services to mentally ill and homeless individuals and families. The organization's goal is to enable participants to live in the community at the highest level of independence possible. TSLI provides job training and personal skill development to mentally ill persons pursuing reintegration into

the competitive workforce. The overall objective is to develop each participant's work skills and increase marketability, resulting in an increased level of self-sufficiency.

"Having a job is vital for our participants to feel a sense of purpose, viability and self-actualization," said Lindsay Meyer, director of operations, TSLI. "With these funds we will be able to provide more services that make our participants viable candidates in the workforce."

TSLI will put their Neighborhood Builder grant toward their Special Employment Program, which provides job training experience to adults with a psychiatric diagnosis, some of whom may also be chemically addicted. The program employs individuals in various aspects of building maintenance such as office cleaning, painting, minor repairs, floors waxing and outdoor maintenance. With the funds provided through the Neighborhood Builder grant, TSLI will be able to double the amount of individuals that participate in the program, as well as expand their support staff. For more information about the TSLI, visit <http://www.tsl-hhb.org/>

Past Grants, Lasting Impact

The Neighborhood Builder award is designed to not only support high performing nonprofit organizations in their current activities, but also to have a lasting impact on their ability to serve their communities. For example, the 2012 Long Island Neighborhood Builders, Concern for the Independent Living (Concern) and The Interfaith Nutrition Network (The INN), have used the funding and training to strengthen their programs in 2013 and enrich their offerings for years to come.

Concern's mission is to provide housing and services that enrich lives and strengthen communities. The Medford-headquartered organization develops high quality housing and a provision of services, including supportive services and vocational opportunities that help people thrive in the communities of their choice. Concern currently serves more than 800 low-income individuals and families, and is the largest non-profit provider of supportive housing on Long Island, managing over 220 sites throughout Suffolk County and Brooklyn.

"The Neighborhood Builders Award benefited our agency in numerous important ways. The unrestricted funding allowed us to advance crucial initiatives we were in the process of developing geared at housing homeless veterans," said Ralph Fasano, executive director, Concern. "The recognition we received with this award helped us secure additional funding to achieve our objectives. Last but not least, the extraordinary training activities made us better leaders and gave us an opportunity to network with our peers from across the nation."

Funding received through the award has been put toward the development of several veteran housing initiatives, including the opening of Concern Amityville, a community of 60 one- and two-bedroom apartments with comprehensive supportive services for homeless veterans and their families set to open in early 2014. The funds will also allow Concern to lease space in the Amityville Community Center, a space where ten local nonprofits will collaborate to serve as a one-stop location offering services and support to veterans and other homeless populations. For more information about Concern, visit <http://www.concernhousing.org/>.

The INN addresses hunger and homelessness on Long Island by providing food, shelter, long-term housing and supportive services in a dignified and respectful manner to low-income wage earners, homeless and hungry individuals. The Hempstead-headquartered nonprofit is one of the largest human

service agencies of its kind on Long Island. It consists of 16 soup kitchens in 22 locations, three homeless shelters, a home for homeless veterans, and a Long-Term Housing Program which provides housing to 25 formerly homeless families. The INN employs 52 full time staff, 27 per diem staff and hosts approximately 4,000 volunteers who lend their expertise, time and talents each year to provide The INN's vital services.

"The INN continues to remain amazed, humbled and inspired by being chosen as a recipient of Bank of America's Neighborhood Builder Award for 2012," said Jean Kelly, executive director, The INN. "The fact that the award contained the exceptional grant of \$200,000 spread over two years and also included the leadership training opportunity for our executive director and our new managing director was an unprecedented gift in the history of The INN's thirty years of existence."

Since receiving the award in 2012, in addition to the increase in need from victims of Hurricane Sandy, the organization was faced with reductions and now eliminations in funding from federal food resources. The INN also experienced major government cutbacks on reimbursements for three emergency shelters where it houses approximately 100 people each night. The Neighborhood Builder funds allowed The INN to sustain its network of soup kitchens where 400,000 people are fed each year, emergency shelters and its long-term housing program where 25 families and seven veterans receive housing and support services to attain economic independence. Without the Neighborhood Builder grant, the organization would have had to consider reducing its services at a time of increasing need.

"We truly cannot thank Bank of America enough for being so insightful, generous and inspirational in not only giving the critical funds, without strings attached, but also giving us the added tools of training and re-training the current leadership team at the agency," said Kelly. "The leadership training programs gave us incredible tools covering every aspect of the not-for-profit field and amazing insights into similar efforts being offered in other parts of the country."

For information about The INN, visit <http://www.the-inn.org>

As nonprofits continue to confront greater local challenges with fewer resources, corporate support is more important than ever. The Neighborhood Builders program underscores Bank of America's long-term commitment to the communities it serves.