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**THE CITY OF NEW YORK RECEIVES OUR TOWN GRANT FROM
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

Space for Art program is among 51 grants selected nationwide

Partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Department for the Aging will place artists-in-residence at senior centers across the five boroughs

New York, New York—The City of New York today announced that it will receive an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), one of 51 grants awarded nationwide. The Department of Cultural Affairs was awarded a \$200,000 grant in support of *Space for Art*, a partnership with the Department for the Aging that places artists-in-residence at senior centers across the five boroughs of New York City. *Space for Art*, which previously ran as a successful pilot, was developed as part of Age-friendly NYC, a citywide effort to make the City more livable for seniors. The local arts councils will announce the application process for artist participants in the coming weeks, with artist residencies in senior centers to begin in the fall.

“Older New Yorkers and artists are both major contributors to the life of our City, and Space for Art gives them new opportunities to work together,” said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. “Thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts ‘Our Town’ grant, this creative program will continue to contribute to our efforts to improve the City’s quality of life for people of all ages.”

“This award is a great source of pride for the Council and the entire city,” said New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “Countless senior New Yorkers depend on their senior centers for a vast array of programs and services, including valuable art programs that enrich their lives. I look forward to seeing all the great work that is accomplished as a result of this grant and partnership with talented local artists.”

Our Town is the NEA’s new grant initiative that focuses on projects with partners from both the public and private sectors. These projects strategically shape the physical and social character of a community around arts and cultural activities.

In 2009, Mayor Bloomberg, the City Council and the New York Academy of Medicine launched the Age-friendly NYC initiative to bring together older New Yorkers, government agencies, nonprofit leaders, members of the business community, and a variety of other stakeholders to assess New York’s “age-friendliness” and to make recommendations on how to improve the quality of life for this lively and burgeoning part of the population. Several of the initiative’s proposals involved engaging older New Yorkers more actively in artistic and cultural activities.

Space for Art responds to Age-friendly NYC’s findings that many older New Yorkers desire greater access to a wide variety of cultural and artistic activities, as well as additional studies that show positive

effects on the well-being of older adults as a result of community-based art programs involving professional artists. The program provides selected artists of all ages with free studio space in senior centers and a stipend in exchange for the creation and delivery of arts programming for seniors. The projects also include a public component - a series of exhibits, open classes and other cultural interactions made available to the surrounding community. In this way, the program leverages the strength of New York's existing infrastructure and creative community to better serve older residents and artists alike.

"Communities across our country are using smart design and leveraging the arts to enhance quality of life and promote their distinctive identities," said National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Rocco Landesman. "In this time of great economic upheaval, Our Town provides communities an opportunity to reignite their economies."

"We developed Space for Art to engage senior center residents with high quality artistic programming, and to help artists in need of affordable workspace," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin. "After a successful pilot program, we are thrilled that the National Endowment for the Arts 'Our Town' grant will support the next phase of this important program, activating cultural spaces in senior centers and enabling more artists to produce and exhibit their work for audiences of all ages and backgrounds."

"The 'Our Town' grant from the National Endowment for the Arts is great news for older New Yorkers as it will support our Space for Art program at senior centers and will provide seniors with greater opportunities for artistic expression and exploration," said Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Commissioner for the New York City Department for the Aging. "I want to thank the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Art Councils, and our senior centers for their ongoing commitment to public-private partnerships."

The first phase of the *Space for Art* program took place in the 2009-2010 calendar year. Local arts councils in each borough facilitated the program by posting a call to artists, soliciting and reviewing applications from artists, and working with senior center directors to place artists in residence in centers citywide. Projects were developed by each individual artist according to their artistic interests and the needs of the senior center participants and often involved a public exhibition or presentation to the surrounding community. Plans for the next phase of *Space for Art* will be announced this fall.

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs is the largest funder of the arts in the United States. The agency supports more than 900 cultural organizations through \$152 million in annual program and operating support, and has committed \$615 million in capital funding for 170 institutions over the next four years. The agency also supports the City's cultural community through extensive technical assistance and advocacy.

The New York City Department for the Aging works for the empowerment, independence, dignity and quality of life of New York City's diverse older adults, and for the support of their families through advocacy, education and the coordination and delivery of services. The Department is the largest Area Agency on Aging in the United States. It is federally mandated to plan, coordinate and fund services for the 1.3 million elderly New Yorkers in the city's five boroughs. DFTA administers New York City's senior centers and an array of other senior programs and entitlements.

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

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