

## Batya Lewton

I am a retired teacher, school librarian, Coordinator of Instructional Technologies and a full-time community activist.

I received a BA from Brooklyn College and a MLS (Masters in Library Science) from Queens College. I am eternally grateful that both CUNY Colleges were free.

A west sider for 78 years, I am currently a Vice-President of the Coalition for a Livable West Side. My responsibilities include community outreach, writing Coalition's excellent and informative newsletters and maintaining its database.

I spent 1952-1953 with the 2nd Workshop in Israel on Kibbutz Kfar Blum. The vibrancy, intellectualism, and dedication of the kibbutz members had a profound influence on me. That year was a defining period in my life. I decided that I had to make a difference in children's lives and in my community. I deeply cherish the friendships that I made on the workshop fifty-seven years ago. Am Yisrael Chai.

1986 - Named "Landlord Buster of the Year" by my fellow tenants after successfully leading a 20 month rent strike.

1989 - Became active in the Coalition for a Livable West Side.

1993 - Recipient of the 1993 Leadership Award from the David and Dovetta Wilson Scholarship Fund for being a positive, dedicated role model, making a difference in the Harlem community.

1996 - The David and Dovetta Wilson Scholarship Foundation created "The Batya Lewton Award of Inspiration" in "recognition of her tireless efforts to inspire generations of Harlem's school children". The David and Dovetta Wilson Scholarship Foundation was created by the nine Wilson children to honor their parents.

1998 - Named a "West Side Hero" by The West Side Spirit, a local newspaper, for "her efforts to improve everyone's quality of life through her community activism, both in the public eye and behind the scenes".

2002 - Recipient of Community Service Award from the West Side Federation of Neighborhoods and Block Associations.

My major accomplishment in education was my ability, as both teacher and librarian, to teach children how to think and question. I am still in touch with a number of my former students.

I am very proud to be a community activist fighting for the environment and fighting against over-development because I love the west side, its people, its energy, and its diversity.