

SBS IN THE NEWS

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Brooklyn Gets Four Honors at Neighborhood Achievement Awards

By: Gina Osnovich
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BROOKLYN — Brooklyn took home four awards Monday night at the Mayor's and Department of Small Business Services' 2009 Neighborhood Achievement Awards. Neighborhoods receiving accolades included Crown Heights/Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Red Hook.

Established in 2002, the awards honor organizations, businesses and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in enhancing the city's neighborhoods by fostering economic opportunity. The event took place in Gracie Mansion and was sponsored by Citi New York and Con Edison.

"One of New York City's strengths is the significant role local businesses and community members play in keeping our neighborhoods vibrant," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "The recipients of the 2009 New York City Neighborhood Achievement Awards reflect the diversity and dedication of New Yorkers."

The Placemaking Award was presented to the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership. The partnership created the "Home Grown & Locally Owned" marketing campaign to showcase the avenue's business community. Featuring the personal stories of local entrepreneurs, the campaign leverages the historic "mom-and-pop" character of Myrtle Avenue. Launched in January 2007, the campaign has increased local awareness of new business openings on Myrtle Avenue, broadened residents' familiarity with local business owners, and increased foot traffic on the avenue. Pedestrian counts have increased by nearly 30 percent over the last two years.

The Partnership Award was presented to the Heart of Brooklyn (HOB), a partnership of the leading cultural institutions in central Brooklyn, including the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park and the Prospect Park Zoo. HOB transformed Washington and Vanderbilt avenues by organizing a new merchants' association and spearheading district marketing efforts. Their efforts have proved extremely successful, with more than 40 new businesses opening in the area since 2005.

The Norman Buchbinder Award for Neighborhood Beautification was presented to IKEA in Brooklyn. During its first year of operation, IKEA's store here has demonstrated a commitment to the surrounding Red Hook neighborhood by creating a public esplanade along the waterfront. It features a paved bike and walkway, extensive new foliage and landscaping, well-lit seating areas and a publicly accessible pier extending into the Erie Basin. IKEA restored cranes, preserved shipyard artifacts, and constructed maritime mementos to highlight the waterfront past of the site. Also, In addition Brooklyn secured extensions of bus lines from the MTA, partnered with New York Water Taxi for ferry service and provided its own dedicated shuttle buses and bike parking.

Small Business of the Year Awards were presented to five businesses, including Greene Grape Provisions and Greene Grape Wine Store in Fort Greene. Greene Grape, founded in 2004, sells high-quality wine, cheese, meat, seafood, local produce and dairy.