

June Newsletter

We Are New York Wins Two Emmys

We Are New York won two New York Emmy Awards, local television's most coveted award at the 53rd Annual Emmy Award Ceremony on April 18th, 2010.

Anthony Tassi, Kayhan Irani, Leslee Oppenheim, David Hellman and Sandra Poster won an Emmy for best writing of a TV program. Sergei Franklin won the award for best photography of a TV program.

"We had a great crew and an important mission," said Anthony Tassi, the show's creator, "The stories we told come from New Yorkers. We showcased the hopes and aspirations of immigrants and also reflected the help that the city makes available to all New Yorkers. Winning the Emmy Awards is tremendously gratifying and validates the importance of using television to make a difference in real people's lives."

The Community Leadership Project is Off to a Good Start

Launching on March 1, 2010, The We Are New York Community Leadership Project now has trained more than 200 volunteers to lead conversation classes and placed most at community organizations that sponsor free conversation groups for immigrants to practice English.

The volunteers undergo an intensive five-hour training led by David Hellman, a CUNY ESL expert, to prepare them to lead conversation groups using We Are New York.

Conversation groups meet once weekly, and use the Emmy award winning, nine-episode We Are New York (WANY) television series as a basis for conversations about healthcare, domestic violence, healthy lifestyle and education. The discussions offer important and relevant information, while helping participants practice English.

Dozens of local organizations-libraries, schools, religious institutions, labor unions-are sponsoring conversation groups and more are scheduled to start over the summer. Hundreds of immigrants are speaking English and encouraging their friends and families to join groups, too.

The first groups are completing their ten-week programs and community sponsors are offering the classes again. New volunteers are signing up, even as others continue as conversation leaders. We are still recruiting community partners, volunteers and immigrant leaders. Join the project www.nyc.gov/learnenglish

Featured Sponsor: Adhikaar

On March 14, 2010, Adhikaar, a Nepalese social service and advocacy group, received an extraordinary 60 participants on its first day of class. Despite the bad weather and daylight savings time, Narbada Chhetri, the community outreach director, was kept busy welcoming the growing crowd, as she answered frantic phone calls for directions. One call of particular

concern to Ms. Chhetri came from a young woman, in tears because her boss would not give her the day off. "Can I start next week?" she asked between sobs.

Like the caller, many of the class participants are South Asian women and recent immigrants working in the service sector. Adhikaar, which means "rights" in Nepali, works to improve the lives of immigrants by conducting community-based research, advocating for domestic workers' rights and offering its own support services. In addition to We Are New York conversation groups, Adhikaar offers basic interpreting and literacy services, as well as computer classes.

The first series of conversation groups at Adhikaar ends this month, but the staff is currently preparing for even more participants the next cycle. Their dedication to social justice and immigrant service is commendable, and we are pleased to have Adhikaar as a partner.

We Are New York Website is a Big Hit with Viewers

The We Are New York website went live on June 25, 2009, and has grown in popularity each day. There have been over 60,000 visits to the website and visitors have enjoyed watching episodes online and downloading materials.

The We Are New York episodes have been viewed over 10,000 times and study guides have been downloaded over 30,000 times.

Upcoming Events

Curious about the project? Register in advance for one of the upcoming orientation sessions from 6 - 7 p.m. on June 10 or June 24 by emailing wany@cityhall.nyc.gov.

Ready to lead a conversation group? Sign up in advance for Facilitator Training 6-8:30 p.m on June 8 or July 6 at www.nyc.gov/LearnEnglish.

Orientation and Training are held at 100 Gold Street, 2nd floor, Manhattan.

Questions or Comments? Email us at wany@cityhall.nyc.gov