COMMUNITY is all of us
In the Making a Difference program, young people honor neighborhood heroes and celebrate local communities through the arts.
Through hero interviews, walking tours, and community-learning activities, they discover what makes their communities unique and express this in literary, performing and visual artworks.
Students deepen their community learning by honoring local heroes and commemorating the multicultural history and traditions of our neighborhoods.
Students build bridges between diverse cultures and neighborhoods, use the arts as a tool for social and personal change, and share the community stories that connect us all.
With their creativity and distinct voices, students share a celebration of their communities with all of us!
Community Works programs are rooted in the belief that every community has its own unique history and legacies and that sharing these stories is a powerful way to inspire and connect us all. The following pages introduce 20 wonderful local heroes whose stories inspire us all to make a difference.

PS 80 Fathers Coalition
Joy Newball
Lidia Gonzalez
Docents from the Dwyer Cultural Center
Lee Olive Tucker
Sandra A. García Betancourt
Zead Ramadan
Rashidah Ismaill AbuBakr
Kaïssa Doumbe-Moulongo
Monique Martin
Paula Coleman
Dr. James Boyer
Dr. Hiren Muzumdar
Deborah Ann Byrd
Pam Johnson
Donna Pesce
Elizabeth Penn
Paula Shaw
Esther Jackson
Boniface Ndemping Wewe
Joy Newball grew up in Queens and attended PS 80 herself as a youngster. Her mother would buy her disposable cameras as a child, offering her early opportunities to demonstrate her natural talent and practice a skill that would become deeply important to her. She continued through the NYC Public School system, graduating from the Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School, where she studied math, science and health science through the Queens Hospital Center. At Queensborough College, Ms. Newball studied meteorology, astronomy and photography. She eventually purchased her own camera, experimenting with different kinds of equipment and learning new aspects of her craft hands-on. Ms. Newball currently works as a freelance photographer in New York City, venturing to various locations such as Central Park, natural environments out of state and old buildings in Brooklyn to capture compelling images. She has lived in southeast Queens for the last 25 years and is happy to have her family and raise her son in the community.

Eventually the parents and grandparents will move on and you guys are the ones who have to hold on to the community and keep it together.

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The mission of The Docent Training Program at Harlem’s Dwyer Cultural Center is to engage youth with their community, and cultivate a sense of responsibility and expertise in sharing the neighborhood’s unique narratives and legacies with the public. This year, students from the High School of Math Science and Engineering were prepared, through a series of in-depth training and mentoring sessions, to be experts on the Dwyer’s cultural offerings. Docent-facilitated tours provide a platform for discussion with patrons regarding the significance and connection between the Dwyer and the Harlem community. The Docents have focused their learning on the Dwyer’s current exhibit, Harlem is...The Gospel Tradition, and used their expertise on the subject to teach visitors the historical role of gospel to the social and political landscape of the Harlem community.

During their time with the Dwyer, the Docents have transformed into articulate young men and women who carry with them an enormous sense of commitment for and pride in Harlem. They are learning to be strong researchers, oral historians, journalists, public speakers and cultural preservationists. As docents, these students serve as models for other young adults to become respected and credible voices in telling their community’s history.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Adama Balde: In the hero interview, I got to see how the older kids in the program had the same moves that we had. They have a community crew just like we do and they work together for a beautiful goal just like we do.

Isaiah: I liked when they gave us a way to achieve some of our goals. I have big dreams and I want to go to high school and college. I have to stay focused and protect my community so that I can have a good place to be.

Most memorable quote: You can live in a neighborhood and not have it be a community. I think having one-ness, a common goal, the ability to fall back on each other and rely on each other is what helps us get a better understanding, and starts to change the community.

If you can start with working to change yourself and help other people, you can have a real impact on your community.
Monique Martin grew up in Berkley, CA. Her family exposed her to the arts at an early age, which led her to discover her passion for live performance. She moved to New York City to work as a Broadway stage manager, and then as an independent producer. Ms. Martin joined CityParks Foundation (CPF) in 2007; CPF produces SummerStage in Central Park and over 1,200 music, dance, theater and kids programs in 700 parks city-wide every summer. As Director of Family Programming, she brings her vision and youth expertise to families in New York City. Prior to joining CPF, she was an Associate Director of Programming for Lower Manhattan Cultural Council as part of the River to River Festival, where she presented music, dance and family programs. As an independent curator, producer and marketing consultant she has partnered with and produced for Joe’s Pub, Disney, Apollo Theater, Hip-Hop Theater Festival, Aaron Davis Hall/Harlem Stage, Queens Theater in the Park, NJPAC, HBO and Broadway productions.

That’s education; learning about how things have been done and why, and how you can do it differently.

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Mahalia Jackson

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Mariam Traore: I am happy that I have met a woman who is true and hard working, so I can have her as an inspiration.

Assa Bouare: The words that best describe her are smart, talented, and honest.

Imani Omar: She taught me to always follow my dreams and to never give up on them.

Fatima Sylla: Now that I’ve met her I think she is a good role model for young children.

Most memorable quote: The more you know, the more you have to give... Education is learning how things have been done and why, and how you can do them differently.
Dr. James Boyer

Dr. Boyer is responsible for directing and managing all aspects of the Botanical Garden’s student and teacher programs and staff. He joined the Garden in 2001 as the Manager of Professional Development for Teachers, and in 2006 was promoted to the Associate Director of Teacher Training. In early 2009, he was promoted to the Director of Children’s Education. Dr. Boyer holds a Masters in Botany from Southern Illinois University and a Ph.D. in biology from the State University of New York at Binghamton, where he studied the growth and evolution of the earliest plants to live on land. He also served as an expert for the National Assessment of Educational Progress to set the nation’s standards for science education. Dr. Boyer is the proud father of three children. The joy of sharing knowledge and continual learning is a constant source of inspiration for him.

When a community is informed they take more pride in where they live. And I love that.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Ibrahim Jobe: Now that I’ve met him I will stop killing plants and think more about plants.

Jarlina Brito: He taught us not to rush life and to learn a lot.

Nayelis Santiago: The words that best describe him are fun, interesting, and amazing.

Most memorable quote: There is a lot as humans that we can learn from plants. Plants are good role models—they don’t get to run away from life’s problems. Winter’s coming, you better have a good foundation or you’re not going to make it through life. And I’m sure the plants are not thinking this way, but what it says to me is you can weather adversity if you have a good foundation in life, a good root structure and good core strength.
Boniface Ndemping Wewe

Boniface Ndemping Wewe (Ngonyama Ka Brooklyn) was born in Cameroon, West Central Africa. He was educated in Cameroon and at the University of Pittsburgh, PA where he obtained his Master's degree in Library Sciences on a Fulbright scholarship in 1991. He joined the Brooklyn Public Library in New York in 1993. Mr. Wewe is currently a supervising librarian, specializing in young adult services. He is a winner of the 2003 New York Times Librarian Award for outstanding community service. Mr. Wewe is the author of three books, and has produced four video documentaries. Mr. Wewe is a permanent U.S. resident, and he has one biological daughter and an adopted son. He is an avid jogger, and likes to encounter new people and places. He speaks English, French and Yemba (Bamileke) fluently and is learning Zulu (South Africa), Ewondo (Yaounde, Cameroon) and Spanish.

We help people, give them information. The library is a place everyone is welcome; homeless, rich, poor. Everyone can get information.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Miguel Rivera: He taught me to believe in myself, work hard and be a joyful person.

Angelina Cartagena: I will always remember that Mr. Wewe loves our community and is kind.

Meleny Obando: He taught me to follow your heart, and to believe in yourself. We are all special and unique.

Katerin Guaman: He taught me to ignore anyone who says you can’t do it, to follow our dreams, and to learn about new things.