

## Volunteer Groups Get Grants From Citizens Committee of NY 23 Groups From Brooklyn Get Awards

BROOKLYN – What happens when dedicated and creative Brooklynites receive a seed grant from Citizens Committee for New York City to transform an abandoned lot?

A new community garden in Southside of Williamsburg — with a budding apple tree, pine trees and a nursery bed for cilantro and beans.

“Dozens of young people and neighbors pitched in to transform this once abandoned lot,” said Antonio Reynoso, president of Garden Friends of Los Sures. “The seed funding from Citizens Committee helped us to jumpstart our dream to have this green space in the neighborhood.”

Garden Friends of Los Sures is one of the fall 2008 recipients of New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods awards. With the grant, the residents will build a nursery plot in the garden to attract butterflies to the neighborhood.

Citizens Committee for New York City announced the fall 2008 recipients of New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods and Mollie Parnis Dress Up Your School awards. Fifty-four initiatives throughout the city, including 23 in Brooklyn, received a total of \$92,505 in funding.

In addition to grants ranging from \$500 to \$3,000, the 54 groups and schools in economically under-resourced neighborhoods will receive one-on-one assistance, skills-

building workshops, and a resource center that offers access to computers and an equipment loan library.

“We believe that people can make important change happen on their streets and in their communities by working together,” said Peter H. Kostmayer, president of Citizens Committee for New York City. “We are honored to support groups that address neighborhood concerns such as limited access to green spaces, diminishing availability of low-income housing, and lack of opportunities for community building.”

Citizens Committee offered funding through two grant opportunities:

The bi-annual New Yorker for Better Neighborhoods awards — awards of \$500 to \$3,000 — are available to grassroots volunteer groups in economically under-resourced neighborhoods for community improvement projects that bring neighbors together. Thirty-five groups in all five boroughs received the awards this fall, including 16 groups in Brooklyn, 10 in Queens, five in Manhattan and four in the Bronx. Projects supported include increasing access to greenmarkets among low-income New Yorkers and organizing residents to advocate for better housing conditions.

The bi-annual Mollie Parnis Dress up Your School awards — awards of \$500 to \$3,000 — are

available for public school-based, student-led projects that beautify schools or neighborhoods immediately surrounding their schools. Nineteen schools received the awards this fall, including seven schools in Brooklyn, four each in the Bronx and Queens, and two each in Manhattan and Staten Island. Student projects supported this cycle include painting murals, building community gardens and launching school recycling programs.

For more information about Citizens Committee’s New Yorker for Better Neighborhoods grant program, please visit the Citizens Committee web site at [www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org). The spring 2009 grants cycle will be announced in January. The deadline is March 14, 2009.

For more than 30 years, Citizens Committee for New York City has been building stronger neighborhoods in every part of the City. Through strategic grant making and technical assistance, this nonprofit organization funds community supported agriculture groups, city farms, community gardens, tax benefit outreach, financial empowerment, block and tenant organizations, neighborhood beautification and programs for new immigrants. Visit [www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org) or call (212) 989-0909.

