

Queens volunteer groups given grants by nonprofit

BY NATHAN DUKE

A city nonprofit that rewards community volunteer groups with money and training has given grants to 14 Queens organizations that range from \$500 to several thousand dollars in the midst of the economic downturn gripping the nation.

Citizens Committee for New York City handed out a total \$92,505 to 54 city groups that could be scrambling for funding as the state battles deficits in the billions during the upcoming fiscal year.

The nonprofit handed out grants last week to groups in a number of borough neighborhoods, including Astoria, Rego Park, Long Island City, Elmhurst, Rosedale, Springfield Gardens, Laurelton, Flushing, Bayside and the Rockaways. The committee also rewarded 40 other groups in the other four boroughs.

The group, formed in 1975, provides grants, workshops, technical assistance and training, networking opportunities and meeting space for a variety of resident-led community

organizations, including agriculture groups, city farms, new immigrant programs, block and tenant organizations, community gardens and financial empowerment groups.

"We believe that people can make important change happen on their streets and in their communities by working together," said Peter Kostmayer, president of Citizens Committee.

He said money from the group enables community groups to address a variety of neighborhood concerns, such as limited access to green space or low-income housing availability.

The borough groups that received this year's grants included the Astoria and Long Island City Community Support Agriculture groups, which are partnerships between organic farms and neighborhoods in search of fresher produce. Before the growing season, each CSA member purchases a produce share and receives a weekly share of the harvest once the season begins.

Far Rockaway's Culi-

nary Kids Day Camp and the Cornucopia Society food pantry, which serves Rosedale, Springfield Gardens and Laurelton, were other food-related organizations to win grants.

Three Queens schools were also awarded grants, including Elmhurst's Walter H. Crowley Intermediate School, Elmhurst's Pan American International High School and Springfield Gardens' Tri Community Junior High School 231, which also serves students from Rosedale and Laurelton.

A number of groups in the Rockaways received grants, including the Edgemere Neighborhood Action Community Team, the Rockaway Waterfront Alliance and Ready Rockaway.

Citizens Committee also recognized groups that either provided or fought for more green space in the borough, including Rego Park's Green Committee of the Parent Association of PS 139, Astoria's Two Coves Garden and the borough-wide Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces.

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