



Arts and Culture Committee Meeting Minutes

Dec 01, 2025

Quick recap

The Arts and Culture Committee Community Board 9 held their December meeting where members introduced themselves and discussed various community arts initiatives, including oral history projects and youth programs. The committee reviewed upcoming events and opportunities from various organizations, including West Harlem Arts Alliance's holiday events and the Hamilton Palace RKO Theater's potential community space development. Multiple arts organizations presented their programs and initiatives, including dance education, theater interventions, and art enrichment workshops, while the conversation ended with reminders about paperwork submissions and future meeting participation.

Next steps

- Michael to send Children's Art Carnival fundraiser and holiday art sale information to Tina and Walter for distribution
- Daria to set up biweekly meetings with William Hamer and team regarding Arts for Seniors project
- Tina and Walter to distribute Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance Women in the Heights submission information
- Shantae to forward grant readiness event information to committee members
- Michael to send West Harlem Arts Alliance flyer for Holiday Tree Lighting event to Daria and distribution committee
- Daria to coordinate with Children's Art Carnival regarding printmaking workshop schedule in January
- Stephanie Nelson Dance Group to send contract details for Columbia University Miller Theater performance once signed

Summary

Harlem Arts Collaboration Meeting

The Arts and Culture Committee Community Board 9 held its December meeting, where members introduced themselves and their organizations. The committee emphasized the importance of collaboration and information sharing among attendees. Michael Palmer, the Executive Director of the West Harlem Arts Alliance, and Gina Lumenly, co-chair of the committee, highlighted the need for efficient time management due to a full agenda. Several members, including Daria Hardeman, Juana Guerre, and Leah Tubbs, shared details about their artistic and cultural initiatives in the Harlem community.

Manhattan Meeting on Park Updates

The meeting began with Manhattan calling it to order and adopting the agenda. Cam provided updates on district needs, highlighting the request to retrofit and refurbish Annunciation Park for arts and community use, which was approved. The committee discussed the distribution of arts-related emails, with Tina and Walter clarifying their process and addressing concerns about duplicates. The conversation ended with a reminder for committee members to be online and counted during roll call.

Community Grant and Holiday Events

Shaunte Styles, a CNN employee and co-chair of the Cannabis Task Force, announced a grant readiness event on December 11th at 55 West 125th Street from 10 to 12, offering community grant reinvestment programs and New York State funding opportunities. Michael reported on West Harlem Arts Alliance's final event of the year, an ecumenical and community holiday tree lighting and menorah lighting on December 16th at 5:30 PM in Montefiore Park, followed by a holiday fiesta at the Hamilton community room. The group is also planning for their 2026 season and budget. The conversation ended with a discussion about the Hamilton Palace RKO Theater, a historic landmarked venue at 146th Street and Broadway, where Walter Alexander is working to secure community space and housing, including potential senior and artist residents, while maintaining the theater's original facade.

Harlem Arts Initiatives Overview

The meeting discussed various community arts initiatives, including an oral history project for older adults in Harlem and a youth showcase event. Manhattan explained the details of the West Harlem Story Lab project, which aims to celebrate living history through interviews with older artists and performers. The group also reviewed upcoming events and opportunities from Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, including calls for submissions for the Women in the Heights exhibition and the Uptown Art Stroll Poster Contest. The conversation ended with a reminder about the community updates section of future meetings, encouraging brief submissions from organizations about their upcoming events.

Art and Community Healing Initiatives

Michael Kunthank from the Children's Art Carnival discussed their upcoming fundraiser on the 11th and holiday art sale on the 14th, both at their Hamilton Terrace location. He explained their partnership with the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop to open a new community print shop in January, and described their facilities including a black and white darkroom. Reverend Rhonda from Blackberry Productions presented their COP Project, a healing centered theater intervention between police and youth designed to build trust and communication skills through role plays and discussions.

Community Policing and Dance Initiatives

The meeting covered several topics, including a community policing initiative that involves role-playing exercises to help officers and youth understand each other's perspectives and address biases. Stephanie Nelson from the Stephanie Nelson Dance Group presented their upcoming events, including a performance at Columbia University's Miller Theater, two events at Broadway Presbyterian Church, and a 25th anniversary gala. The group is seeking dance instructors for their inclusive classes in Queens and the Bronx, offering \$50 per hour. The meeting also touched on the process of securing space at a theater in West Harlem, which is managed through the West Harlem Development Corp.

NDI's Dance Education Impact

Sophie Wang, Manager of Institutional Giving at National Dance Institute (NDI), presented on their 50-year-old organization's mission to provide dance education to children, with a focus on their in-school program at PS161 in Manhattanville. She detailed NDI's impact, including their reach of over 2 million children globally, and explained their teaching methodology which includes live music and

performance opportunities. Manhattan inquired about distributing NDI's event information page and invited them to participate in the West Harlem Youth Day at LemFest on May 16th, while Yuien asked about the summer program's cost, which Sophie confirmed was free.

Arts Outreach and Cultural Initiatives

Manhattan highlighted the success of their outreach efforts, including digital ads reaching 800,000 impressions and securing reviews for artists, emphasizing the importance of objective and fair critiques. Mano a Mano discussed their upcoming art enrichment program, focusing on workshops and concerts to highlight cultural connections, while MODA's Collective presented their upcoming dance festival aimed at supporting women of color in leadership roles. The conversation ended with a reminder for West Harlem Development Corporation recipients to submit paperwork for signatures.