



UMEZ ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT IN A COMMUNITY-INSPIRED, EAST HARLEM-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TO LINK EMPLOYERS AND RESIDENTS

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NEW YORK, October 6, 2014

New York, NY - The Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (“UMEZ”) today announced the launch of an innovative workforce development initiative for the East Harlem community that will increase access of residents to jobs with local employers. UMEZ has awarded a grant of up to \$482,874 to STRIVE, the East Harlem based workforce development provider, to create a Talent Center as part of Hire East Harlem. Hire East Harlem is the first of a series of initiatives conceived by the East Harlem Community Alliance, a consortium of local organizations, including STRIVE, which is galvanizing community resources to enhance the vitality and well being of East Harlem.

“This project will create significant opportunities for East Harlem’s residents and employers and demonstrate the economic impact of partnership,” said **Ken Knuckles, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone**. “At the urging of a coalition of East Harlem’s businesses, nonprofits, faith-based, government and elected officials, the East Harlem Community Alliance built a workforce development initiative in which we are proud to be the initial investor.”

As a result of UMEZ’s investment, STRIVE will hire new staff, build a technology interface to enable residents and employers to learn about each other and determine the interests and value added to attract other funders. “Hire East Harlem is a real win for both local employers and local residents searching for employment,” said **Phil Weinberg, President & Chief Executive Officer of STRIVE** and Co-Chair of the Hire East Harlem initiative. “By joining together, employers and workforce providers in East Harlem are taking a stand to help jobseekers in the community gain better access to good local jobs.”

Founding partners in the East Harlem Community Alliance includes Union Settlement and Mount Sinai Hospital Health System. “This is a wonderful moment for East Harlem,” said **David Nocenti, Executive Director of Union Settlement Association** and Chair of the East Harlem Community Alliance. “It really is tremendous to see so many businesses, nonprofits, religious congregations and government officials coming together to benefit those who live and work in East Harlem.”

Brad Beckstrom, Director of Community and Government Affairs of Mount Sinai Health System and Co-Chair of the Hire East Harlem initiative said, “The Mount Sinai Health System, as the largest non-governmental employer in New York, is committed to providing jobs to local residents. Hire East Harlem is an excellent opportunity for local employers to find local employees to fill open job positions.”

“We are fortunate to have STRIVE New York located in our beloved community of East Harlem, where for three decades it has provided invaluable services to help numerous families and youths find employment and thrive in their workplaces. I commend the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation for their generous contribution to support the exciting new initiative envisioned by STRIVE and the Alliance to create more jobs and spur economic opportunities in our congressional district,” said **Congressman Charles Rangel**.

“The new Talent Center will connect hard-working New Yorkers in East Harlem with opportunities and good jobs and enable allow them to provide for their families,” said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “By connecting the community with local employers, this much-needed program will build up our neighborhood economy and add to the growth and vibrancy of East Harlem. I thank Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation for their continued commitment to the vitality of this community and the New Yorkers who live and work here.”

"The East Harlem Talent Center has the potential to be a game-changer for jobs in this part of town. By partnering employers with nonprofits to help local residents get local jobs, we can help East Harlem become a more sustainable community," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**.

Robert J. Rodriguez, New York State Assembly Member said "The Hire East Harlem Talent Center will be an incredible asset to the community providing connections and resources to local job seekers. It is exactly this sort of workforce development initiative that utilizes existing partnerships that I believe can be successful in providing opportunities for East Harlem. My congratulations go to the East Harlem Community Alliance for realizing this vision."

ABOUT THE EAST HARLEM COMMUNITY ALLIANCE: The East Harlem Community Alliance was formed in early 2012 as a small consortium of local organizations seeking to improve the quality of life in East Harlem. The Alliance has grown substantially over the past two years and now has more than 60 members. The Alliance allows local non-profits, businesses, religious groups and government official to come together and undertake join projects and activities designed to address the needs of the East Harlem community. The Alliance also serves as a forum through which members can create connections, share information, and continue to enhance the vitality of the neighborhood.

ABOUT THE UPPER MANHATTAN EMPOWERMENT ZONE (www.umez.org)
Since its founding in 1996, The Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ) has been a singular catalyst in the revitalization of Upper Manhattan. UMEZ's investments, upwards of \$220 million to date, have provided funding to numerous organizations, businesses and institutions that drive the local economy, create jobs, and add to the vibrancy of New York City. Significantly, these funds have also been leveraged to generate over \$1 billion in private capital investments into Upper Manhattan. UMEZ continues to be a leader in reestablishing the area as one of New York's most dynamic cultural districts through the creation of the Cultural Industry Investment Fund, established in 2004.

ABOUT THE UMEZ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUND
UMEZ's Workforce Development Fund provides financial and technical assistance grants to catalyze employment and training in the neighborhoods of Upper Manhattan. The goal of the fund is to facilitate access to quality jobs and career advancement opportunities for the unemployed and under-employed residents. The Fund strategically supports demand-driven workforce development that builds skills and knowledge of residents in response to the hiring needs of employers and prioritizes employment opportunities in high-growth, high-demand sectors of the labor market. Through these investments, UMEZ identifies innovative models in which residents acquire skills and employers recognize Upper Manhattan as a repository for a multi-talented and experienced workforce.

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