

Grants Advance Open Doors

The OPEN DOORS program received three grants this year. The first was a Creative Engagement grant from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, which supported spring and fall poetry workshops led by World Slam Finalist Steven Willis. The workshops culminated in performances by OPEN DOORS members with Willis at the RIVAA gallery on Roosevelt Island and Communita, a café in Queens.

The second was a Quality of Life grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation – the fourth Quality of Life grant Angelica has received from the Reeve Foundation. This award went toward an arts ethnographer who worked with OPEN DOORS members to capture their stories in podcasts. Feedback from the podcasts has been incredibly positive – they were featured at our Art Show at Coler Hospital this fall and are available to stream online via the OPEN DOORS website (opendoorsnyc.org).



Open Doors participants gave performances at the RIVAA Gallery on Roosevelt Island.

Angelica's largest grant to date came from the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, our second grant from this organization. This gift will fund arts and activist workshops, leadership training, and grants to cover OPEN DOORS members' transportation to school and job training, course fees and other education costs.

In 2018, OPEN DOORS is planning to provide more opportunities for members to help at-risk youth understand the reality of gun violence. They hope to spread awareness by sharing creative work that inspires people of all ages and backgrounds to come together and help build safer communities.

Angelica Advocate Donors' Corner

Thank you to all of our donors who make our programs possible! Your support is appreciated and has a significant impact on the lives of many of our fellow New Yorkers. Angelica is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If your company has a matching gift program, please consider us in your contribution plans. Donations of any size are welcome.

Please mail your donation to Angelica Patient Assistance Program, 555 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10022 or go to www.angelicaprogram.org to give online.

An Interview with Tito Cruz

By Andres Molina

I recently had the opportunity to interview Ramon "King Tito Love" Cruz about his upcoming album being recorded at Coler Nursing Facility. Cruz feels pretty optimistic about the album, thanking OPEN DOORS for the tools provided by them to make this happen.

"OPEN DOORS has given me hope," Cruz said. "It has revived dreams that I thought were dead. It's like the rainbow after the storm."

Cruz has been an aspiring artist since he was young. Coming from a musically oriented family, his father was a percussion instrument player for one of the most famous merengue bands in the Dominican Republic. I asked Cruz how this album relates to his life before and after the wheelchair. He took a deep breath and answered, "This album is about my experiences and the things I've seen in my life growing up. It's more like an awareness to kids about gun violence but in a musical and entertaining way, for people to educate and enjoy themselves."

He also spoke about the personal importance of this album. "It has been a dream of mine to become a hip hop artist, but due to my injury, I thought it would never happen. Through OPEN DOORS and Angelica I have the opportunity to make my dreams come true."

Cruz finished by discussing how comfortable it is to work at Coler and why he is making a bilingual album. "It's not common to make a bilingual album," he said. "I want to captivate two types of audiences," he added. Cruz finished the interview with his favorite phrase, "one time for your mind," giving me a little taste of his music that definitely left me asking for more.

Andres Molina is an aspiring writer/healing justice activist residing in Coler Nursing Facility. After a life in the streets, he became ill and almost died, spending three years in a hospital bed. With the help of OPEN DOORS and Angelica he has been able to discover his inner artist and has become the newest member of the OPEN DOORS communications team.

Angelica Launches New Program with NY Cares

This fall we launched a new computer course with New York Cares at Coler Hospital. The class provides one-on-one training and takes place twice a month on Sunday afternoons. The recent upgrade from PC's to new Apple computers in the computer lab was the impetus behind this initiative.

The volunteers train residents to operate the new Mac's and explain the differences between the two systems. They also assist when it comes to more individual challenges – such as setting up email accounts, doing research, using various programs and accessing web sites such as Facebook.

In addition to this instruction, NY Cares also runs our popular weekly variety night at Coler Hospital. Thank you to NY Cares for being a fantastic partner!

