

NYC Commission on Women's Issues

Quarterly Update - Fall 2010

In this Issue

Youth:

Gracie Mansion Hosts Ladders for Leaders Graduation
See who won American Airlines tickets to visit colleges!

Finances:

Protect Your Finances!
Protect yourself and your family from debt collection fraud.

Family:

Helping Fathers Be Fathers
Learn how the NYC Fatherhood Initiative helps dads stay engaged in their kids' lives.

Business:

Calling All Technology Entrepreneurs!
Discover new funding options for your technology startup.

Resources:

The NYC Women's Resource Network
From childcare to legal aid, business advice to healthy living: find organizations that help New York City women!

Put it in your Calendar!

Discover new organizations and events through our Events Calendar.

In Other News

Events, Awards, and Updates of Interest

About the NYC Commission on Women's Issues

Learn more about what the Commission is doing for you.

Make a Suggestion

What would you like to see in the next issue?

Gracie Mansion Hosts Ladders for Leaders Graduation

On Monday, August 9th, 2010, Mayor Bloomberg recognized 190 New Yorkers ages 16-21 at Gracie Mansion during the celebration of their completion of the NYC Ladders for Leaders 2010 program. Graduates of the program celebrated the close of their seven-week paid summer internships at prestigious corporate, nonprofit,

and government sector offices. Many received free, customized SAT and college preparatory courses, and all eligible graduates will receive partial college scholarships to help pay for their tuition.

Winners of this year's American Airlines College Tour Competition were also announced. The competition awards Ladders for Leaders graduates with a pair of round-trip tickets to visit colleges and universities across the continental United States. In the coming months, Nikeya Alfred, Nadya Antoine, Lydia Bioh, Nacadia Facey, Wan Chao Guo, Maria Mejia, Silvi Shameti, and Yvonne Ye will travel with their parent or guardian to visit Dartmouth College, Duke University, Middlebury College, Pomona College, Rice University, Stanford University, Tufts University, University of Chicago, University of Miami, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, University of Notre Dame, University of Southern California, and/or Washington & Lee University- to name just a few.

Over 800 Ladders for Leaders members, mostly inner-city New York City youth, have graduated from the program, which is now in its fifth consecutive year, and have gone on to attend college. Among them is Simon Zheng, who will be attending Stanford University this fall as a member of the class of 2014. Some of our alumni have even been rehired for part-time employment by their previous internship employers. Michael Udensi, for example, was hired for the summer by Young and Rubicam to work on their Old Navy Campaign, and Kitty Tsang was hired part-time at the Estee Lauder Companies while she finishes school.

Created in 2005 as a joint initiative of the NYC Commission for Women's Issues (CWI) and the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), NYC Ladders for Leaders seeks to educate high school and college students about the importance of higher education and goal-setting in hopes of helping motivated, talented, and diverse students become future professionals with successful careers. The program is funded entirely through the contributions of private sector sponsors whose donations support participants' salaries, customized SAT and college prep courses, leadership workshops, and partial college scholarships.

To read more about the 2010 Ladders for Leaders program and to find out how to get involved with the 2011 program, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/cwi/html/programs/ladders.shtml>. Applications for the 2011 program will become available starting this fall so check back often if you are interested in applying!

Protect Your Finances!

New York City is making it easier for women and families to protect themselves from debt collection scams. Some of the new reforms state that debt collection agencies may not harass you in any way, they cannot wrongfully claim to be from a government agency, and they can not threaten to arrest you or take away your personal belongings.

Here are a few recommendations that you can follow if a debt collection agency contacts you:

- Check if the debt collection agency is licensed. Debt collection agencies must include their DCA license number on all documents sent to you. You can verify if an agency is licensed by calling 311.

- Make sure the debt collection agency provides you with the following required information: the name of the debt collection agency, the name of the original creditor, the amount of the debt, a call back number that is answered by a live representative, and the name of that representative.
- Request in writing that a debt collector send you proof of the debt as soon as you are contacted by a debt collector. The documentation provided to you must include proof that you owe the debt from the original creditor and documents that show the total principal amount you owe and additional charges or fees incurred.

For a full list of ways you can educate yourself about the debt collection process, visit the [Department of Consumer Affairs](#).

If you are interested in getting other financial tips, visit the [DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment](#).

Helping Fathers Be Fathers

The City knows a father's role is important for healthy child development. That's why in June 2010, more than a dozen City agencies came together to launch the NYC Fatherhood Initiative. Created to help fathers stay engaged in their children's lives, the program offers parenting classes, educational activities, and family-building events for fathers to participate in.

Among the organizations involved in this effort is the Department for the Aging, which is developing a mentoring program in public hospitals to connect fathers-to-be with more experienced fathers. This mentoring program complements the Health and Hospitals Corporation's encouragement of expectant mothers to involve soon-to-be fathers in the birthing process and parenting classes. CUNY is also developing workshops for fathers that include computer literacy, parenting, and health information. Additionally, the Department of Correction is opening new visiting centers with books, arts and crafts, and toys to provide incarcerated fathers with a safe and child-friendly environment where they can spend time with their kids.

For a full list of programs offered to New York City Dads, read the [NYC Fatherhood Initiative announcement](#)

Additionally, you can call 311 for more parenting information and resources for fathers.

Calling All Technology Entrepreneurs!

Have you ever thought about starting your own business or creating a revolutionary new product? Get ready for a new way to turn your dream into a reality!

In May 2010, the City created the NYC Entrepreneurial Fund, a \$22 million fund to help support up-and-coming technology companies based in New York City. In addition to the City encouraging entrepreneurship with special training resources

and tax breaks to start-up companies, the NYC Entrepreneurial Fund will provide entrepreneurs with additional funding opportunities.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for funds, [apply online](#).

Read the [Press Release](#) about the NYC Entrepreneurial Fund.

The NYC Women's Resource Network

Finding resources and services in New York City is now easier than ever with the NYC Women's Resource Network. The NYC Women's Resource Network is an online searchable database created by the Commission on Women's Issues for all New Yorkers to connect with nonprofit and government organizations throughout the City that help and support women and families. In fact, new organizations are added and updated on a frequent basis, so that the Women's Resource Network can be your most relevant source of information on services in the city.

Additionally, if you or anyone you know belongs to a nonprofit or government organization that provides services to women, we invite you to register that organization by visiting the Resource Network's [registration page](#).

You can easily access the resource network by visiting the [Commission on Women's Issues](#) and clicking on the left side tab labeled NYC Women's Resource Network.

In Other News

October is [Breast Cancer Awareness](#) and [Domestic Violence Awareness](#) Month!

Find out more about these issues throughout October.

[Protect Your Property!](#)

Find out how to protect yourself from Deed Fraud with the Department of Finance.

[New Bus Routes Take Affect](#)

Look at new bus options for travelling on 1st and 2nd Ave.

[Give Your Child a Head Start This Fall](#)

Need help finding childcare? Administration for Children Services has affordable options for your family.

About the NYC Commission on Women's Issues

The New York City Commission on Women's Issues (formerly the Commission on the Status of Women) was established by Mayoral Executive Order in 1975 as an advisory body to the Mayor on matters impacting the lives of New York City women. Currently, the Commission serves as an important vehicle through which women and families can connect with City services that support and address their needs.

We hope this newsletter will be an extension of this work. Not only will we share the newest initiatives and programs coming out of the City, but we will also help you understand how these efforts affect you as a woman.

For more information on our key programs such as the NYC Women's Resource Network, the NYC Young Women's Volunteer Summit, and the NYC Ladders for Leaders program, please visit www.nyc.gov/women to find out how you could benefit and/or participate today!

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