

# SBS IN THE NEWS



## SQUARE FIRE VICTIMS RECEIVE CITY FUNDS

May 8th, 2009

A month after an early-morning fire displaced a row of small businesses on Westchester Square, the New York City Department of Small Business Services joined the Association of the Merchants & Business Professionals of Westchester Square on Monday, April 27, to present emergency grants to five of the displaced businesses.

Several of the shops that were burned nearly to the ground on Sunday, March 22 have already found new locations, including On the Square Flower Shop and Peking House, with more relocations to be announced soon. The business had been located at 122-29 Westchester Avenue.

The funds came in the form of grants that will help displaced merchants pay their bills and redevelop or relocate their businesses. Councilman Jimmy Vacca was also on hand as Bernadette Nation of the SBS presented the checks.

These are privately donated funds that are not from city taxes that will help these merchants pay some outstanding bills or help them with a new venture, said Joe Regina, of the merchant organization. It makes them feel that they are being supported by the community. Everyone in the Westchester Square community wants to see the merchants affected by the fire get back on their feet as soon as possible.

One of the businesses that received funds from the SBS was Peking Chinese Restaurant, which has been a fixture on Westchester Square for many years. Their new location is 2422 E. Tremont Avenue.

The response from the Small Business Services will help me as a merchant, said Jack Huang, of Peking Chinese Restaurant. I have gotten a check and this has helped me purchase equipment for the new restaurant.

Five out of the six businesses that were affected by the blazing inferno on the morning of March 22 received the grants from the emergency response unit of SBS. These businesses include 21 Latin Lounge, National Restaurant, Peking House, Osvaldo Barber Shop & Unisex, and On the Square Flowers.

The emergency response unit of SBS was on the scene the day of the fire and assisted the businesses by conducting a site assessment, interviewing impacted business owners, scheduling recovery meetings to link affected business with services available to them, and helping them obtain the necessary permits to reopen.