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BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD'S "TEEN INNOVATORS" WINS NATIONAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES YOUTH PROGRAM AWARD

Afterschool program benefitting Brooklyn teens receives national recognition for its innovative approach to job preparedness

Program leverages work experience at Brooklyn Navy Yard businesses

November 14, 2017 Brooklyn, NY—Emma Bannister, 18, of Brooklyn, NY was in the Nation's capital on Thursday to receive an award from all three federal arts and culture agencies on behalf of Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Navy Yard's Teen Innovators program. The program, was recognized for its effective approach to job preparedness. Its curriculum explores the history of work in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and concludes with paid internships at businesses operating in the Navy Yard today. Teen Innovators received the 2017 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the nation's highest honor for youth programs.

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award recognizes the country's best youth development programs, singling out for recognition those that most effectively use engagement in the arts and the humanities to generate a wide range of positive outcomes, such as increases in academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. 11 other winners—chosen from a pool of 350 nominations and 50 finalists—were also recognized. Established in 1998, the 2017 award is presented through a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), in cooperation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA).

"These 12 creative youth development programs represent the best of the best," said Pam Breaux, president and chief executive officer of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. "They are living proof of the power of the arts and the humanities to build the skills young people need to succeed in school and in life."

In addition to the national recognition bestowed by receipt of the prestigious award, Teen Innovators will also receive \$10,000 to support its programming and engage more young people in Brooklyn.

“We hope this award will draw attention to the fact that programs like ours are essential investments not just in the lives of our young people, but in our community, as well,” said Deborah Schwartz, President, Brooklyn Historical Society. “We are incredibly proud of our phenomenally talented Education department, and the young people who chose to dedicate themselves to Teen Innovators. This program also reflects the impact of an unconventional partnership between a cultural institution (BHS) and an amazingly innovative business venture: the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation.”

“The Teen Innovators program represents the best of a collaborative approach to preparing our youth to enter the workforce, and we were proud to co-sponsor this amazing project with the Brooklyn Historical Society,” said David Ehrenberg, Brooklyn Navy Yard President & CEO. National recognition for the program’s mission to provide pathways to fulfilling and good-paying careers and connect gifted local high school students with the Navy Yard’s many innovative companies is something we can all be proud of.”

Teen Innovators is a year-long afterschool and internship program that provides young people with a window or a bridge to a future that they might never have imagined. Through a deep dive into the businesses, careers, and culture of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, past, present, and future, Teen Innovators apply the skills of a historian to work-readiness. They explore careers, workplace etiquette, professional writing and communication, and the history of work and workers at the Yard over the past century. Additionally, students learn how to create a resume and dress for success, acquire interview skills, and complete Human Resource forms. The program culminates with a paid internship at one of the 330 businesses residing in the Brooklyn Navy Yard today. The program prepares students for careers and exposes them to the burgeoning fields of advanced manufacturing, film & media, and technology in particular.

“I have seen students who were reticent and shy flourish as a result of the knowledge and confidence they acquired from being part of [Teen Innovators],” said Karen Best, Assistant Principal, Dr. Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts. “In addition to increasing their academic knowledge and their passion for learning about history, the program afforded them an opportunity to apply the skills acquired in class in the real world.”

Since it was established in 2012, Teen Innovators has served 130 students, all from Title I schools in the Brooklyn Navy Yard’s surrounding communities. Over that time, teens have interned with businesses as varied as their interests, including the International Hispanic Television Network, Brooklyn Clay Industries, and The Brooklyn Grange rooftop farm. Almost all (99%) Teen Innovators are college-bound after their high school graduation, and many continue to work at Brooklyn Navy Yard companies as paid summer interns. For one recent graduate, this turned into a full-time position.

"The Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network [HITN] was thrilled to participate in the Brooklyn Historical Society and Brooklyn Navy Yard’s Teen Innovators program as we are always looking for opportunities to help young students interested in the television industry,” says Michael D. Nieves, President and CEO of HITN. “Our interns not only received exposure to the inner workings of a non-profit organization like ours but have also received first-hand experience in the fundamentals of television production and distribution.”

“Coming to Washington D.C. to accept this award on behalf of all the Teen Innovators and the Brooklyn Historical Society is an experience I’ll never forget,” said Emma Bannister. “It showed me that the power of programs like Teen Innovators to change students’ lives is recognized and valued.”

For more information about Teen Innovators, please visit <http://www.brooklynhistory.org/education/after.html> .
For more information about the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, visit <http://www.nahyp.org/>.

About Brooklyn Historical Society

Founded in 1863, Brooklyn Historical Society is a nationally recognized urban history center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary 400-year history. Located in Brooklyn Heights and housed in a magnificent landmark building designed by George Post and opened in 1881, today's BHS is a cultural hub for civic dialogue, thoughtful engagement and community outreach. In May 2017 BHS opened a second site in DUMBO’s Brooklyn Bridge Park.

About the Brooklyn Navy Yard

The Brooklyn Navy Yard is owned by the City of New York and managed by the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC), a mission-driven not-for-profit dedicated to creating accessible, middle-class jobs and securing a vibrant future for manufacturing in Brooklyn. BNYDC leases space in the Yard, promotes local economic development, and develops new, first-class urban manufacturing buildings. Established in 1801, the Brooklyn Navy Yard served as one of America's preeminent military facilities for more than 150 years. Today, the Yard is a thriving industrial park with more than 400 businesses that employ over 7,000 people. In 2011, BNYDC opened the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92—an exhibition, visitors and employment center—to celebrate the Yard’s past, present and future and its role as a national model for sustainable urban industry and job creation. Visit www.brooklynnavyyard.org for more information.

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