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**CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER LEVIN AND SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES
COMMISSIONER WALSH ANNOUNCE ART HANDLER TRAINING PROGRAM**

Bronx Council on the Arts Development Corporation Selected to Administer the Program

Initiative to Promote Workforce Development in the Arts

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin and New York City Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Robert Walsh today announced the selection of Bronx Council on the Arts Development Corporation (BCADC) to administer an Art Handler Training and Placement Program. BCADC will oversee a selection of fifteen individuals to receive training in art handling methods involving the safety, care, handling, packing, installation and transportation of art and artifacts, and a certification upon completion. Participants in the Art Handler Training Program will also have access to employment services provided by Department of Small Business Services Workforce1 Career Centers. The Program is funded through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), to help support workforce development, training and employment in the arts in New York City.

“New York City’s museums and galleries are major employers, and supporting our vital creative workforce is important to the City’s economy and quality of life,” said Commissioner Levin. “The Art Handler Training Program will provide significant training to expand the range of career options for participants.”

“We are helping more New Yorkers access quality training that will lead to promising and diverse careers as a result of the federal stimulus funds,” said Commissioner Walsh.

“As the first professional training program of its kind, the BCA Development Corporation’s Art Handler Training Program is part of a vision to create a back office arts-related service industry in the Bronx that trains residents and artists, and places them in meaningful career-oriented jobs,” said BCADC President Bill Aguado.

Program participants will receive formal training in art handling best practices, under the supervision of a lead trainer, an assistant trainer, and specialized field consultants. The professional curriculum will include certification standards in art handling, as well as life skills training and career counseling. Training will take place in space provided by Transcon International, a Bronx art shipper.

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BCADC has an 11 year track record of training art handlers. BCADC has expanded its personal development services, preparing graduates to assume higher positions and pursue other entrepreneurial paths. Additional training topics include understanding credit and financial management planning, business plan development for independent contractors and leadership training for crew chiefs. Once certified and vetted, professional art handler technicians are promoted in the *Creative Bronx! Black Book* online directory of art service businesses. The Program will target displaced, underemployed and unemployed workers, including artists and staff of cultural institutions.

Applications for participation in the program will be posted on BCADC's website, www.bronxarts.org, and are due January 8, 2010. All selected participants must meet eligibility requirements under WIA and ARRA. Museums and galleries seeking art handler interns and employees are encouraged to contact Kim Hamilton-Shakir, Director, at 718-401-9558.

For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/culture or www.bronxarts.org.

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