



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York, New York
August 28, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT

Susan Puder – (212) 828-6024
spuder@unionsettlement.org

**UNION SETTLEMENT ANNOUNCES LAUNCHING OF “EAST HARLEM 360°”
COMMERCIAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

East Harlem, NYC – Union Settlement (www.unionsettlement.org), the oldest and largest social service provider in East Harlem, today announced the launching of “East Harlem 360°”, a community development program intended to revitalize the local economy and trigger economic growth in East Harlem. The East Harlem 360° program is being conducted in collaboration with two other local organizations – Hope Community and Uptown Grand Central – and is funded by the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Neighborhood 360° grant program. The Neighborhood 360° Program was created by SBS to identify, develop, and launch commercial revitalization projects in partnership with local stakeholders.

“Union Settlement is delighted to be launching this exciting new program,” said David Nocenti, Executive Director of Union Settlement. “East Harlem has wonderful stores, restaurants, cultural organizations and other attractions, and has great potential as a commercial and tourist hub. The East Harlem 360° program will allow us to build on those assets and further strengthen our small businesses and the local economy.”

“Strong neighborhoods are the backbone of our city, and the \$1.49 million in investments to East Harlem is going a long way towards revitalizing key commercial corridors,” said Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services. “By working with Union Settlement, we are responding to local needs to support small business growth and build more vibrant neighborhoods for all New Yorkers.”

"We are excited to be collaborating with Union Settlement and Hope Community to showcase East Harlem culture and small businesses," said Carey King, director of Uptown Grand Central (formerly NHEMA). "Through 'placemaking' concerts and street art, we are able to highlight the energy and creativity that makes our part of New York City great. Through our pop-up shop under the Metro-North tracks at 125th Street & Park Avenue, we are able to bring more attention to many of the unique and culturally significant items made by small businesses here in the neighborhood."

“Hope Community, Inc. is proud to work alongside our N360 project partners Union Settlement and Uptown Grand Central,” says Walter Roberts, Executive Director of Hope Community. “East Harlem is a special neighborhood in New York City with many renowned cultural institutions, authentic world-foods and award winning restaurants, public arts, and unique retail shopping. Please go to Visitelbarrio.com to stay connected with the neighborhood.”

The East Harlem 360° program focuses on the four major commercial corridors in East Harlem – East 125th Street, East 116th Street, East 106th Street, and Third Avenue (between 106th Street and 125th Street) – and has six primary components:

- Cleaning/Beautification
- District Marketing
- Merchant Organizing
- Business Support and Retention
- Coordination
- Placemaking.

Each component is designed to revitalize the community and take advantage of all of the economic opportunities that East Harlem has to offer. A beautification plan is currently underway and includes planting greenery, fixing tree pits, installing bike racks, and improving street lighting.

The East Harlem 360° program focuses on small business support and sustainability. Working in partnership with Hope Community and Uptown Grand Central, East Harlem 360° provides small businesses with marketing support, organizes local events, trainings, workshops, and concerts by local musicians. East Harlem 360°'s affiliation with the East Harlem Community Alliance ensures that all local stakeholders -- elected officials, business owners, religious organizations, non-profits, and government agencies – are engaged in the process and actively supporting the endeavor. Current and planned East Harlem 360° activities include:

- A Mexican Independence Day celebration, held on 116th Street, between Second and Third Avenues on September 16, 2017, from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. Entertainment will include traditional Mexican folkloric dancers, Mariachi bands and a live disc jockey. The traditional saying of “El Grito de Dolores” will be held the evening before, on September 15, 2017 with members of the Mexican consulate, at Hot Jalapeno, 219 East 116th Street; at 7:00 pm;
- A new district marketing campaign is displaying street banners on the corridors, and advertising through LinkNYC kiosks and the MTA;
- A “Keep It Clean East Harlem” contest, through which local school children will work to keep their neighborhoods litter free, and create public awareness on the importance of trash removal and recycling;
- Sidewalk cleaning, litter removal and plantings along the major East Harlem commercial corridors;
- A collaboration with 100 Gates, which commissions local artists to paint beautiful murals on storefront gates along the commercial corridors;
- Events at La Placita at La Marqueta (Park Avenue and 116th Street), including a domino tournament, and Old School Jam Mix, which brought a DJ into the community to play hits from the 1970s and 80s; and
- Weekly merchant “pop up” events held at the community plaza on 125th Street & Park Avenue to expose consumers to the cuisine of East Harlem and all the goods and services it has to offer.

###

About Union Settlement

Union Settlement is an on-the-ground resource for East Harlem residents of all ages, and a passionate advocate for the needs of underserved communities. Since opening our doors in 1895, we have brought education, wellness and community-building programs to our neighborhood, empowering New Yorkers with opportunities to better their lives. With a staff of more than 350 and services that impact 10,000 people, Union Settlement is building the vitality and success of East Harlem. For more information visit www.unionsettlement.org.

About Neighborhood 360°

The Neighborhood 360° initiative was launched by SBS to identify, develop, and launch commercial revitalization projects in close partnerships with community-based organizations. Through Commercial District Needs Assessments, SBS identified the needs and opportunities for local neighborhood revitalization, with recommendations for merchant organizing, public programming, district marketing and branding, streetscape enhancements, business support services, and other quality of life improvements that will be funded by the Neighborhood 360° Grants.

The Neighborhood 360° initiative also funds a fellowship program for full-time community development professionals to work with community-based organizations in these targeted commercial corridors. The fellows help coordinate and implement commercial district improvements, including those recommended in last year's Commercial District Needs Assessments. Earlier this year SBS announced that the fellowship program will soon launch a second cohort of participants.

For more information on Neighborhood 360°, please visit www.nyc.gov/neighborhood360.

About the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS)

SBS helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building vibrant neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information, visit nyc.gov/sbs, call 311, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Hope Community Inc.

Hope Community, Inc. is a community-based not-for-profit affordable housing organization. Founded in 1968, the organization also enriches the lives of the people who live and work in East Harlem and surrounding neighborhoods through cultural arts, economic development, and social service alliances. Hope seeks to rebuild the physical infrastructure of East Harlem by creating attractive, high-quality affordable rental and owner-occupied housing. Hope seeks to strengthen the neighborhood's social fabric by assisting in the growth and success of local businesses, by assisting residents to enhance their lives and incomes, and by sponsoring community programs. For additional information, visit: <http://www.hopeci.org>.

About Uptown Grand Central

Uptown Grand Central ("Uptown Grand") is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that puts advocacy in action to build a thriving East 125th Street. Since 2013, when we got our start as the New Harlem East Merchants Association (NHEMA), we have brightened hopes for the community via programs that include organizing our small businesses, hiring formerly homeless individuals to clean our streets, beautifying our commercial corridor, sponsoring street festivals and promotions, and adopting the space underneath the tracks at 125th & Park as a community plaza that showcases all that makes our part of Uptown "grand." For more information: www.uptowngrandcentral.org.