

HCCI HOSTS 10TH ANNUAL AWARDS GALA ENTITLED "LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER"

By: Peter Cooper



(L/R) George Hulse, Vice President of External Affairs, HealthFirst, Inc.; John Liu, NYC Comptroller; Cheryl Wills, Anchor, NY1 News; India Ogelsby; Derek E. Broomes, HCCI president and CEO; Pastor Charles D. Eatman, Mount Pleasant Community Church; Dr. Joan O. Dawson, 1st vice chair of HCCI board of Directors.



The musical group "Legacy"



(Sitting L/R) Honorees George T. McDonald; William C. Thompson, Jr.; City Council Member Inez Dickens; George Hulse; Adolfo Carrion, Jr. (Standing) India Ogelsby, recipient of the Rev. Canon Frederick Boyd Williams Scholarship



India Ogelsby, recipient of the Rev. Canon Frederick Boyd Williams Scholarship; Pastor Charles D. Eatman, Mount Pleasant Community Church; and Cameron Oglesby

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Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. (HCCI) hosted the 10th Annual "Let Us Break Bread Together" Awards Gala on Thursday, April 19 at The Prince George Ballroom, 15 East 27th St., in New York City. The event honored individuals for their outstanding achievements in the Harlem Community. This years honorees included - Inez E. Dickens, New York City Council, as the Recipient of the Community Builder Award; Mr. Adolfo Carrión, Jr., HUD Regional Administrator, as the recipient of the Canon Frederick Boyd Williams Community Service Award; Mr. George Hulse, Vice President of External Affairs, HealthFirst, Inc., as the recipient of the Neighborhood Partner Award; Mr. George McDonald, President & Founder, The Doe Fund, as the recipient of the Humanitarian Award; and Mr. William C. Thompson, Jr., Former New York City Comptroller, as the recipient of the Visionary Award. The recipient of the Rev. Canon Frederick Boyd Williams Scholarship was India Ogelsby.

The event began with a wonderful cocktail reception followed by an exquisite dinner catered by Norma Jean Darden's' Spoonbread of Harlem. The succeeding award ceremony was

hosted by Cheryl Wills, Anchor, NY1 News. Derek E. Broomes, HCCI president and CEO, passionately expressed, "HCCI has a wonderful future, but it is true partnership that moves us forward."

Inez Dickens brought fire and determination to the elegant room when she accepted the Community Builder Award, "on behalf of the entire Village of Harlem." Dickens continued, "we have dedicated our lives to working in a community that for many years was left devastated and no one wanted to invest in Harlem. Today everyone looks at it as the jewel, the diamond, that is really has always been, but people didn't look at it that ways just a mere few years ago. No one wanted to bring money into the community ... but because of so many of you, we now are rebuilding the community." Dickens honed in on the importance of ownership in the Harlem Community, "we have to change the way we think, because if you own your community, then you cannot be removed from your community, but if you don't own it you can be moved at anytime."

Mr. William C. Thompson, Jr., Former New York City Comptroller, gave a special acknowledgement to former NYC Mayor, David

Dinkins, as his mentor and role model and continued, "HCCI, over the years has stood up and made sure that many were able to stay and able to have housing that was affordable. They didn't have to say goodbye to the community they grew up in, and we ... need to do so much more across the city of New York to make sure that those who want to stay here, those who want to continue to make this the greatest city in the world can do that, and HCCI has helped to establish the model. We need to replicate it, we need to grow it, and we need to make sure that those at the top of government understand that we are one city, and we need to make sure that it not a city of just the rich and just the few but a city of all of us!" Thompson nodded and acknowledged, "HCCI, let me thank you for what you have done to show that it can be done!"

Entertainment was provided by "Legacy" who performed such classic songs as 'Soul Train', 'I'll Be There' and others.

Dinner Chairs include Congressman Charles B. Rangel; Joyce and David Dinkins; Councilmember Robert Jackson; Adrian Council; Senator William Perkins; Faye and Karl Rodney; Lynn Whitfield; Rev. Reginald Williams. The Gala Committee included Mr. George H. Weldon,

Jr. - Chair; Dr. Joan O. Dawson - Co-Chair; Dr. Charles A. Curtis; Rev. Jeffrey M. Crenshaw; Mr. Landon Dais; Rev. Gwendolyn Watts; Derek E. Broomes.

HCCI is an interfaith consortium of congregations established to revitalize the physical, economic, cultural, and spiritual conditions of the Harlem community. HCCI has made a substantial impact on the social and living conditions of Harlem by developing over 2,500 units of low to moderate income housing and more than 40 commercial spaces; securing employment for more than 1,800 Harlemites; creating supportive health and human service facilities including 60 units of scattered site housing for those affected by HIV/AIDS; and housing/supportive services for young adults aging out of foster care through their Independence Starts at Home program; providing commercial development opportunities to local businesses; and so much more.

For more information visit www.hcci.org.