

# Hester Street Collaborative

## Newsletter

Winter 2004 Volume I Issue II

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*Hester Street Collaborative is a Design/ Build community based non-profit, created to work with New York City communities to improve their neighborhoods*



An IS 131 student working

### GROUND UP PROGRAM EXPANDS

#### THE "LIVING MAP" PROJECT IS INITIATED AT PS 134

This fall HSC expanded the *Ground Up* program into a second school, PS 134, on the corner of Grand Street and East Broadway in the Lower East Side. The new program has been working with the school's fifth grade students on a project to create a "Living Map" that celebrates the neighborhood's diverse cultural heritage within an existing garden space on the campus. HSC volunteers Andrew Magnes and Cristina Chang, and Executive Director, Anne Frederick, are collaborating with Adel Unterberg of PS 134's Art Department, who has been involved with the neighborhood for over thirty years, to engage the students in the study of the Lower East Side through research and local field trips (already the students have visited the Bialystoker Synagogue, once an underground railroad site; the Henry Street settlement houses of a 19<sup>th</sup> century local social advocate, Lilian Wald; St. Augustine's and St. Mary's Churches; and the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian and Chinese gardens). The classroom studies of the neighborhood context and its introduction to basic architectural concepts will culminate in the design of a "Living Map" garden installation in the spring, which will include new paving, planters, benches and fences, all inspired by the rich history and cultural diversity of this neighborhood.



Site of future garden at PS 134

#### GROUND UP STARTS A NEW PROJECT WITH A NEW SITE AT MS 131

After the successful completion of the "*Wishing Garden*" last summer, Hester Street Collaborative has extended its *Ground Up* program to work with a new class of seventh grade students to transform the opposite corner of the Sun Yat Sen School campus, at Hester and Forsyth Streets. As this is the corner of the school that faces the Parks Department's playgrounds and new playfields, the site provides an opportunity to connect to the neighborhood's open spaces. Anne Frederick and HSC volunteers, Corrie Rosen and Peter Demas, are working again with Alison Plump of MS 131's Art Department; and have received a creative curriculum grant from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council for their work in the school this year.

### PLAN FOR A NEW ECONOMIC JUSTICE CENTER IN SUNSET PARK, BROOKLYN

Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) and the Brooklyn-based non-profit, Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), have continued to progress their plans for a new Economic Justice Center (EJC) for a site that has been donated to FAC through the City's Third Party Transfer program in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. The EJC is an outgrowth of the Fifth Avenue Committee's Economic Justice Initiative (EJI), established to organize the neighborhood's growing contingent of low wage workers. The ultimate goal of the Initiative is to gain better, more equitable



Proposed EJC site in Sunset

conditions and compensation; to provide much needed services to low-wage workers, largely new immigrant population of southwest and central Brooklyn. Their services include legal advocacy, job training, adult education, childcare, health insurance, small business and worker cooperative support, and providing a place for art, music and culture. The EJC project also strives to stimulate a sense of community in the neighborhood. We have begun organizing within the local community to generate a community-defined strategy for developing the EJC. Through meaningful participation and collective labor, the community will have the opportunity to gain a sense of belonging, self-sufficiency, and investment. The goal is for the EJC to be a catalyst for change in individual lives and in the neighborhood at large. Currently in the predevelopment phase, FAC and HSC have begun working with the local Sunset Park community to discuss the project, and to solicit community involvement in the new Center. We have just learned that we have received a grant from The North Star Fund, a New York-based community foundation, for EJC pre-development activities.

### HSC FEATURED IN JANUARY ISSUE OF METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

Metropolis Magazine's January issue titled "Metropolis predicts the future of Design" focuses on the future of design on ten different scales and features Hester Street Collaborative's work in the community as example of work on a neighborhood scale. The 1 page story can be found on page 87 of this issue and discusses the work of *Ground Up* in both IS 131 and PS 134 in the community.