

# SMART MOBILE COOKING CLASSROOM

2013 CAPITAL PROJECT  
CHOSEN BY:  
NYC COUNCIL SPEAKER  
MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO &  
PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING NYC

## INTRODUCING SMART

Sisterhood Mobilized for AIDS/HIV Research & Treatment (**SMART**) was founded in 1998 to address the critical needs of women and youth living with or affected by HIV/AIDS within a safe, supportive community. SMART provides free, comprehensive HIV treatment education, including a highly successful nutrition, hands-on cooking, and wellness program that has improved health outcomes for participants and helps them live longer, healthier lives.

**SMART Body** became a formal nutrition education model in 2004. This hands-on cooking and nutrition program is taught in a commercial kitchen by a nutrition expert, and is supervised by a registered dietitian. Each class in the year-long, 24-week session connects nutritional topics with specific health issues including diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, Hepatitis C and high blood pressure.

SMART envisions the **Mobile Cooking Classroom** as a "kitchen-on-wheels" that will deliver the transformative, educational experience of SMART Body into the community-at-large. Building on our already extensive outreach network, the Mobile Cooking Classroom will travel to low-income communities of color—especially in East Harlem and the South Bronx—to engage with historically underserved populations: youth, seniors, immigrants, the homeless, and people with HIV/AIDS, among others.

## OUR COMMUNITY HAS SPOKEN..

There are many health issues present in low-income communities of color in New York City, neighborhoods including East Harlem where SMART's office is located, and the nearby South Bronx. SMART has become part of the solution by addressing poor access to healthful foods and the lack of nutritional information within our community.

The Mobile Cooking Classroom has incorporated the ideas and voices of community residents from the start. Inspired by self-assessments of SMART Body participants, we wanted to share these life-changing experiences to help build a stronger, healthier community. SMART was given that opportunity through the Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiative. In spring 2013, the Mobile Cooking Classroom was 1 of 6 winning projects through PB in District 8, and was approved by Council Speaker Mark-Viverito for capital funding! We then reached out to Hester Street Collaborative, another community based organization that specializes in large community engagement projects, to assist us in making our vision a reality for this innovative, custom-designed Mobile Cooking Classroom.



A view inside the commercial kitchen classroom, with a live broadcast of the class being screened outside the vehicle.



IDENTIFY NEED FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION



RESIDENTS VOTE TO FUND THE PROJECT



SMART GATHERS COMMUNITY INPUT FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING



SMART HELPS BUILD A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY!

## DESIGN, PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

The Design of the Mobile Cooking Classroom is a custom-built, handicap-accessible vehicle equipped with classroom space and a commercial-grade kitchen. There will be interior cameras, exterior large TV screens with speakers to show people “outside” what is going on “inside.”

The Programs of the Mobile Cooking Classroom are FREE nutrition education and healthy cooking demonstrations, to be staged in front of various locations throughout District 8. These include NYCHA developments, senior centers, hospitals, supportive housing sites, farmers’ markets, community centers, parks and community-based organizations.

Participants will learn how to:

- Read labels and understand the nutritional value of food.
- Shop wisely and eat healthfully on a budget in their neighborhoods.
- Become familiar with healthy ingredients; people will learn to cook and taste a variety of foods in the workshops.
- Learn to prepare traditional ethnic dishes in a healthier way.
- Replicate recipes at home for themselves, their families and friends.

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

During times of an emergency or disaster, the Mobile Cooking Classroom will be able to provide support in the community when it “transforms” into a **Community Preparedness Response (CPR)** vehicle.

SMART is working alongside the American Red Cross, other city-wide coordinating networks and private sector entities dedicated to emergency preparedness. With the CPR vehicle, we will be able to respond to the specific dietary needs of special populations.



The Mobile cooking classroom being used as a Community Preparedness Response vehicle during an emergency.

## POTENTIAL ADD-ONS “WISH” LIST

The capital funding we were awarded through Participatory Budgeting will provide a basic commercial kitchen and classroom. However, there are additional capital improvements that would increase the capacity and eco-friendliness of the vehicle as well as enhance our community “touch.” We are seeking funds to ensure that the Mobile Cooking Classroom is able to provide the best possible services.

**Solar Energy Sources** will allow us to provide our services and programs with a minimized carbon footprint. In addition, it will also result in less noise pollution and fewer emissions compared to a traditional generator.



**WIFI Network** would allow us to stream educational videos for cooking classes and be an important resource for information and communication during an emergency.



**Public Announcement System** will allow us to announce important messages and disseminate information quickly and efficiently.



**Human Powered Equipment**, by using a bicycle frame with a generator and inverter, we can create and store electricity from a good work-out.



## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

- VOLUNTEER WITH SMART!**
- SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER!**
- DONATE ONLINE OR BY CHECK!**

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

WWW.SMARTUNIVERSITY.ORG  
 307 East 116th Street  
 New York, NY 10029  
**Phone:** (212)-289-3900  
**Email:** Susan Rodriguez,  
 srodriguez@smartuniversity.org

\* Full report available upon request