

[EXTERNAL] Testimony in Support of HEArts Center – Former Lincoln Recovery Center

From MottHaven TenantAssociation <tenantassociationmotthaven@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/17/2025 9:00 PM

To Land Use Testimony <landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov>

To: New York City Council, Land committee

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to strongly support the proposal to transfer control of the former Lincoln Recovery Center through a 99-year lease so that it can be transformed into the HEArts Center. This space represents a vital opportunity to return a historically important institution of recovery back to the community, while reimagining it as a hub for healing, wellness, arts, and culture.

The Lincoln Recovery Center was once a cornerstone of public health, serving with compassion and dedication to people who needed care. Today, our community continues to face challenges related to addiction recovery, mental health, and access to culturally responsive spaces. The HEArts Center would not only honor that legacy, but expand on it providing a place where health, creativity, and community can come together.

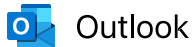
By approving this transfer, the City Council would make it possible to:

- Restore and repurpose a historic site with deep community significance.
- Create programs rooted in recovery, wellness, and trauma-informed care.
- Provide space for arts, cultural expression, and intergenerational healing.
- Demonstrate the City's commitment to equity, justice, and community-driven development.

The HEArts Center can become a national model for how cities invest in people, culture, and recovery. I urge you to approve this lease so that our community can continue to heal, grow, and thrive.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,
Deborah Aviles



[EXTERNAL] Testimony for NYC H+H Former Lincoln Recovery Center to be leased to Mott Haven Port Morris Community Land Stewards

From Yahoo [REDACTED]
Date Thu 9/18/2025 3:48 PM
To Land Use Testimony <landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov>

[REDACTED]

Melissa Barber

[REDACTED]

Bronx, NY 10454

September 18, 2025

Dear City Council members of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions:

My name is Melissa Barber. As a South Bronx native, a voting constituent of Council District 8, and president of the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Steward community land trust, I testify in favor of the NYC Health & Hospital Corporation leasing the former Lincoln Recovery Center to the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards, Inc. to create the HEArts Community Center. This holistic community center, which will focus on the three pillars of health, education, and the arts will be a crucial addition to the uplifting and vitality of this community. The HEArts Center, which will not only provide a home for many of the amazing non-profit CBOs in the neighborhood that are currently undergoing and/or facing displacement due to gentrification and high rents, the center will foster an environment where holistic health methodologies and artistic expression will help to provide wellness and wholeness in a neighborhood, which has long been neglected and overlooked.

Over thirteen years ago, the founding members of our community land trust conducted community envisioning sessions to hear the voices of our community. We asked them to dare to dream and tell us what they

wanted/needed within the space, which had been abandoned and accumulated over \$10 M in damages. All of the community's desires for the space encompassed the three pillars, health, education, and the arts, which drive our mission for the center.

Since that time, we have carried the voices of the community, progressively putting actions to their ideas and ultimately, having learned that the answers and solutions to heal our community will mainly come from within. Our goal of bringing this holistic community center into fruition was something bigger than us. However, in faith, we took progressive steps to create a plan that included obtaining feasibility studies, asking elected officials to help us obtain the land and give supportive funding, making connections and collaborations with developers and academic institutions to further the progress of our mission, applying for grants and other funding to support the work, and growing our board and membership base.

Now, thirteen years later, at this pivotal moment, we are seeking an approval from this committee to release this land and lease it to us in order to bring the community's dream into fruition. Will you do it? We, the community land trust members and staff, have jumped through every hurdle presented to us; we have outlasted several elected officials and many times had to start over again with each new elected; we have campaigned and have raised most of the funding required to bring this \$43M project into fruition. Please help us to hold true to our promise/commitment to carry the voices of our community and once again help to heal it.

Sincerely,

Melissa Barber, MD

President & Founding Board Member, Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards, Inc.

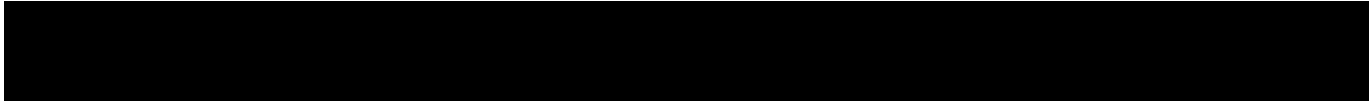
Co-Founder, South Bronx Unite

Melissa Barber



[EXTERNAL] Former Lincoln Recovery Center

From Rey Allen [REDACTED]
Date Fri 9/19/2025 9:40 PM
To Land Use Testimony <landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov>



To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Rey Allen. I am the Executive Artistic Director and founder of Theatre International, Inc. I am also the Community Outreach Coordinator for ASPIRA Beam One Beacon, since January 2018, located at 345 Brook Avenue Educational Complex. I also teach, write and direct dramas and musicals for M.S. 224, M.S. 343, International Community High School, P.S. 30, P.S. 17 and P.S. 179 and also involve with the Brook Avenue Garden and attend Community Board One meetings on the last Thursday of the month.

I have lived, went to school and work in the South Bronx since 1968. I am on the Board of Trustees for the Harriet Tubman Charter School, which is celebrating it's 25th anniversary. I'm also a paid -up member of the Estella B. Diggs Democratic Club. A former member of Community Board 3 for many years, and Chairman of the Morrisania Revitalization Corporation and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Resource Center.

A few months ago, it gave me great pride and joy to attend the in-person hearing at Lincoln Hospital auditorium and to testify on behalf of the great need of having the HEArts Center for the next 99 years at the former Lincoln Recovery Center, located at 349 East 140th Street, Bronx, New York 10454.

Today, once again, I am grateful to have the pleasure of testifying to the Land Use Committee of The New York City Council. I am sorry I could not attend yesterday in person due to Harriet Tubman Charter School business. However, I take this opportunity, on behalf of Theatre International, Inc., and Southern Diaspora Research and Development Center, Inc., an NGO to the United Nations, in which I serve as CEO and President, to testify for the HEArts Center, to occupy the former Lincoln Recovery Center for the next 99 years.

The HEArts Center will become the "jewel"... a "Beacon" of light not just for the Motte Heaven community but for the entire Bronx Community. The HEArts Center have the three pillows that drive any community.

1. Health: Without good health, we are nothing.
2. Education: When you read, and write, you then understand the complicities of "MAN" and the world we live in.

3. Arts: The Arts are the "SOUL" the "HEART" of any community.

Therefore, please let the heavenly light SHINE on the HEArts Center.

Thank you.

Best wishes for Peace Profound.

Rey Allen



Rey Allen

I'm building a vibrant arts program in the South Bronx. Support our work through Donors Choose:

<https://www.donorschoose.org/theatre-international>