

Block Magazine Teams with MUSICA Monday, Dec 20

On a very cold night in December, Block Magazine editors Evan Tobias and Eric Harris Pavony hosted a party to help in a yearly food drive for Musica Against Drugs, Inc., a Puerto Rican/Latino community based organization serving the needs of persons and families affected by HIV/AIDS and drug addiction.

The drive was held in a gallery space at The Art Center for Community Healing, a three-story building that houses Musica Against Drugs, located at 622 Broadway (between Gerry and Wallabout).

The evening yielded 371 lbs. of canned and dry goods. The biggest donation (by the pound) was contributed by Katie Feola and her family, who were awarded a \$50 gift certificate to Mikey's Hook-Up! one of the event sponsors. Original Sin Cider was also an event sponsor.

"With increasing cost of food, especially the cost of fruits and vegetables, and with a budget that stays the same, we've been challenged," said Alma Villegas, Executive and Artistic Director of Musica. The food drive is an ongoing endeavor, she said.

Musica was founded in 1989 by Manny Maldonado (1953-1995) and offers crucial services for 1,500 people each year suffering from drug addiction, HIV and AIDS began modestly in the basement of a building with a single phone and a table

and few chairs. A year ago, the warehouse building was leased at an affordable rate to the organization by a local business owner Harvey Scheckter for ten years, allowing the organization to consolidate three locations, including a kitchen.

This October, 500,000 dollars was allocated through the Brooklyn Borough President's office toward renovating the Art Center. It will include a café/gallery space that will be open to the public in about a year, said Villegas.

"Drug addiction, AIDS and HIV are serious problems for the world, for America—and, sadly, especially for Brooklyn. We commend Musica Against Drugs for not only using the power of arts and culture to make life better for those that are suffering—but for truly representing the best—el mejor—of Brooklyn," said Boro Pres. Markowitz.

Musica Against Drugs provides counseling, nutritious food, community health education, and referral services to help clients deal with the physical aspects of drug addiction, HIV and AIDS. Their creative arts program focuses on emotional support, and includes theater presentations, art exhibitions, music shows, poetry readings and more.

Anyone who would like to donate dry and canned foods, can call Musica at (718) 218-7640.



photo by Adrian Hernandez

FOOD DRIVE: Block editors (l.) Eric Harris Pavony and Evan Tobias (in back) hosted a festive holiday food drive. Left to right: Ashley Nylin, Block reporter; Maria Sanchez, Community Relations Supervisor of Musica, Rubin Bonilla, Director of Client Services (front) of Musica. Center: Dr. Alma Villegas, Executive and Artistic Director of Musica; and food donaters, Katie Feola (holding rice) and family, who together contributed 135 lbs. of canned and dry goods.