

PROJECT ENTERPRISE HONORS INNOVATION, DRIVE AND TENACITY AT 10TH ANNIVERSARY ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARDS CELEBRATION



(l-r) Deon Levingston, General Manager of WBSL/WLIB / State Senator Kevin Parker, Entrepreneur of the Year Kevin Dunn of Invision Publications and Project Enterprise Executive Director Arva Rice / PE Founders Nick & Debra Schatzki, Project Enterprise Entrepreneur of the Year Maribel Martinez-Lieberman of MarieBelle New York, Charles B. Benenson Entrepreneur of the Year Kevin Dunn of Invision Publications, and Project Enterprise Executive Director Arva Rice

More than 300 entrepreneurs, donors and guests gathered at the 10th Anniversary Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Gala, to help honor the recipients of this year's Charles B. Benenson Entrepreneur of the Year Award and the Project Enterprise Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The annual celebration was held at the elegant Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem and featured guests included Gala Chair Deon Levingston of WBSL/WLIB, State Senator Kevin Parker, Cleon Edwards, Office of Hillary Rodham Clinton, Cordell Stuart, Office of State Senator Bill Perkins, and honorees, Nick & Debra Schatzki, Project Enterprise founders, Maribel Martinez-Lieberman, MarieBelle New York and Project Enterprise Entrepreneur, Kevin Ikim Dunn, InVision Publications. The event was emceed by Jasmine Sanders of WBSL.

The evening opened with warm greetings from 2006 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank. Dr. Yunus sent a taped greeting congratulating Project Enterprise on its 10th Anniversary of applying the Grameen Bank's model of microenterprise development in New York City. "I am so excited to cele-

brate 10 years with Project Enterprise, it is quite a milestone," he said. "I am very proud of the work of Project Enterprise."

The first award of the evening was presented to Project Enterprise founders Nick & Debra Schatzki, who jointly received the Champion of Entrepreneurship Award for their vision in creating Project Enterprise, and their commitment to supporting entrepreneurs throughout New York City. Project Enterprise is the brainchild of Nicholas Schatzki, a voice over announcer and narrator of hundreds of television documentaries, and Debra Franklin-Schatzki, President of Weiser Capital Management. Nick and Debra started Project Enterprise to end poverty in New York City by using the power of microcredit.

Kevin Ikim Dunn of Invision Publications received the distinguished Charles B. Benenson Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The coveted Benenson Award is named for Charles B. Benenson (1913-2004), a lifelong real estate entrepreneur and prominent philanthropist, who enjoyed an illustrious career amassing an impressive portfolio of buildings throughout New York City and across the United

States. He was responsible for the building and renovation of more than 200 properties, including the World Bank building in Washington D.C and the Cross County Shopping Center in Yonkers.

Invision Publications publishes crossword and word search puzzles that explore and celebrate the Black experience. Kevin had always loved solving puzzles and in 2005 decided to turn his passion into a business, which is what brought him to Project Enterprise. Kevin utilized the financing and business training available at Project Enterprise to publish his first and subsequent puzzle books, getting his business off the ground. Today, Invision Publications puzzle books are available online, through Kevin's website www.puzzlesforus.com, in several area book stores, and through the NYC Department of Education. Kevin spoke about why he is so moved to educate people while entertaining them through puzzles: "Telling American history without celebrating the contributions of African-Americans doesn't give the whole story. Likewise, telling the history of Project Enterprise without including its founders Nick & Debra Schatzki would be doing an injustice to the organization."

Guests were able to bid on auction items including two roundtrip tickets and stay in a Barbados vacation villa generously donated by Air Jamaica and Becky's By the Sea, and tickets to exclusive up-close and personal performances by Alicia Keys and John Legend generously donated by WBSL.

The last award of the evening was presented to Maribel Lieberman of MarieBelle New York, purveyors of fine chocolates and treats. She received the Project Enterprise Entrepreneur of the Year Award for her perseverance and success as an entrepreneur. Maribel has built an edible empire from scratch out of her delectable chocolates. Her chocolates are available at upscale retail stores like Neiman Marcus, through her website and SOHO boutique. A true entrepreneur, Maribel also opened a new store on Madison Avenue the same evening.

Each year, Project Enterprise hosts this gala to honor the diligence and perseverance of one of its members, as well as the lifelong success of a well-known entrepreneur in the New York community.

For more information, visit www.projectenterprise.org.