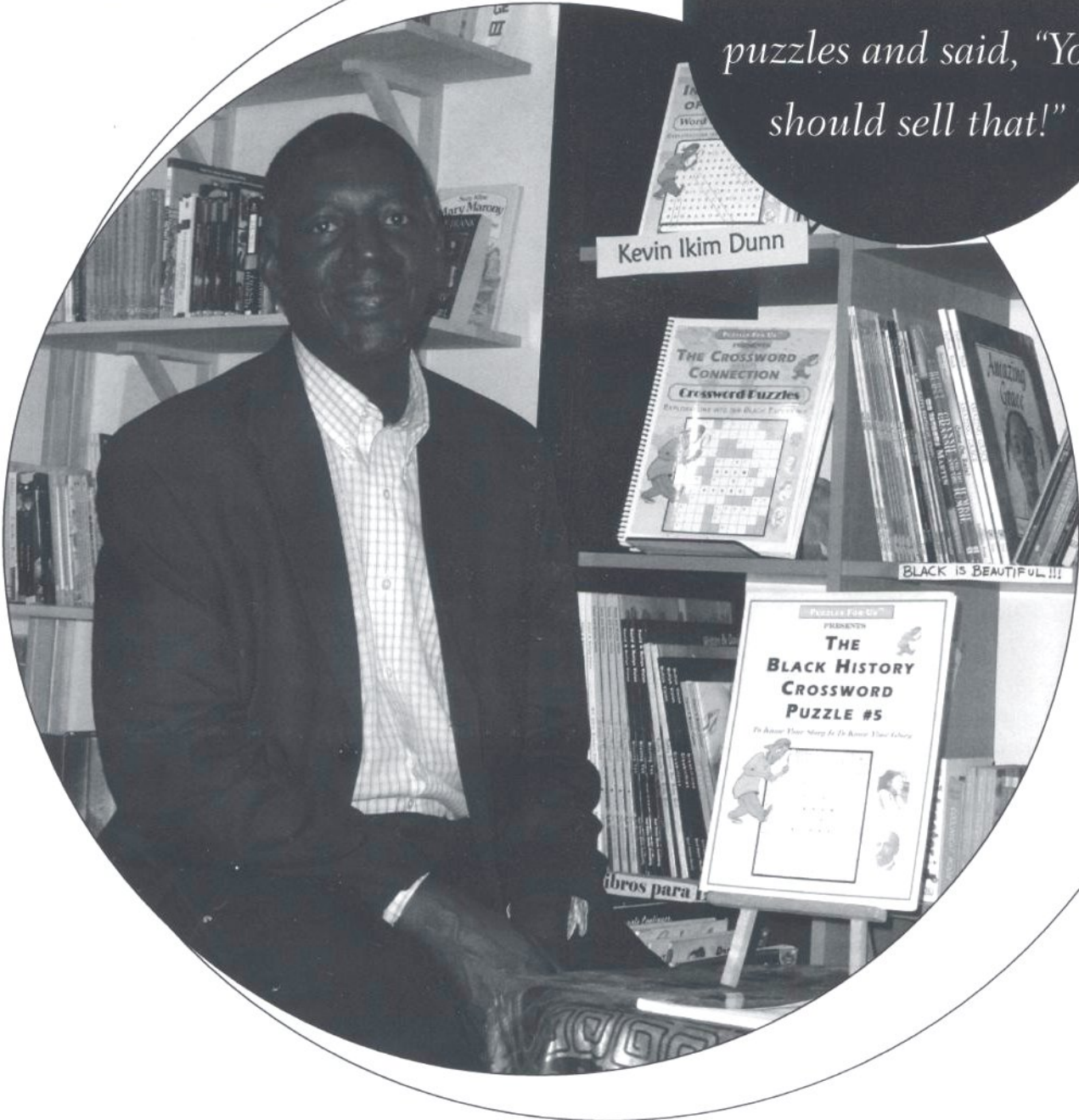


CHARLES B. BENENSON

Entrepreneur of the Year

Kevin's books tie together many threads of his life and experience. His computer skills enable him to do layout and production; his creativity and love for culture breathe life into the puzzles and accompanying essays. His work with youth led him naturally toward the education market. As his business moves forward, Kevin embodies the words that conclude the media packet he prepared on Puzzles For Us: "It truly is never too late (or too early) to live your dreams."

*Years before,
his sister had seen his
puzzles and said, "You
should sell that!"*



KEVIN IKIM DUNN INVISION PUBLICATIONS

THE BUSINESS

Crossword and word search puzzle books that celebrate the Black experience

THE CHALLENGE

Capitalize on unique idea and turn it into a niche business

THE PROJECT ENTERPRISE LOANS

\$1,470 in 2005; \$1,000 in 2005; \$3,528 in 2006

THE INVESTMENT

Creation and printing his first puzzle book; website creation; second book printing; vending fees and licensing

THE PROJECT ENTERPRISE DIFFERENCE

- ☑ Turned love of puzzles into a business
- ☑ Has cut back hours at "other job" to devote to his business
- ☑ Developed marketing strategy to target schools and libraries
- ☑ Became vendor with Board of Education

FUTURE GOALS

Work at Invision full time and add poetry to future books

CONTACT KEVIN:

www.puzzlesforus.com

KEVIN IKIM DUNN

Invision Publications

Even as a child, Kevin had a knack for figuring out puzzles and breaking codes. While many daydream on the subway, Kevin is always working on his business. A newspaper headline inspires a crossword clue and a cultural t-shirt's slogan becomes the theme for a word search. Kevin is always looking for ways to use popular culture to teach African-American history. Now that passion is also a business: Puzzles For Us, also known as Invision Publications. Kevin's first two published books use crossword puzzles and word search as enjoyable ways to explore and learn about Black culture and history.

After being downsized from his job as a database programmer, Kevin found himself without health insurance and unable to keep up with rent. To make ends meet, Kevin looked for freelance computer work, but the growing trend toward overseas outsourcing made such work scarce.

So in 2003 he began to reorganize his life and finances, he utilized the city's welfare program to help him get on his feet and found a roommate to help with rent. Years before, his sister had seen his puzzles and said, "You should sell that!" So he decided to turn his hobby into a business and came to Project Enterprise to give it a try.

First, PE equipped him to organize and track his finances. In addition to learning about financial statements, Kevin began to budget and keep records both for his business and for his personal accounts. The second area where PE has made a difference has been sales and marketing. "I'm a computer guy," says Kevin with a smile, "so I am not accustomed to being so assertive with people." But he has learned to "come out of my shell," as he puts it, in order to network and sell.

A commitment to his enterprise, supported by PE and his fellow group members, has also made Kevin more focused. He works on his puzzles and his sales prospects whenever he can — early and late, in breaks between part-time jobs.

In 2005, Kevin received his first loan for \$1,367. The loan from Project Enterprise made it possible to print 100 copies of *In Search of Yourself*, a book of word search puzzles on Black history and culture interspersed with short essays on the theme of each puzzle. Kevin also used the money to trademark his business name, copyright the work, and acquire an ISBN number for the book. With the first printing a success, he accessed a second loan in 2005 to help him redesign his cover and print another 200 copies.

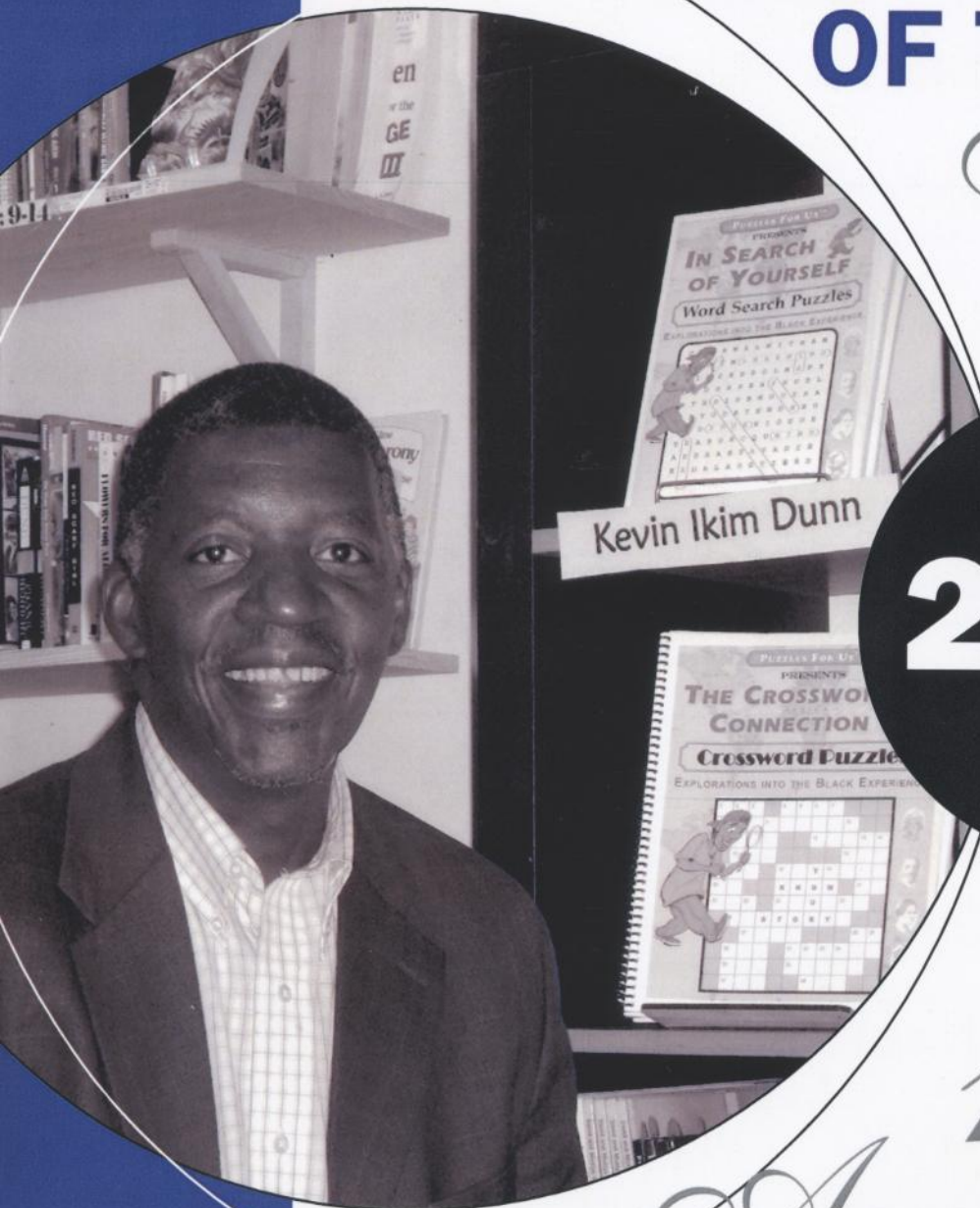
This isn't Kevin's first time being nominated for the Charles B. Benenson Entrepreneur of the Year; he was a finalist in both 2005 and 2006. One of the many perks of being a finalist is the opportunity to work with a team of business consultants that helped him further develop his growth plan.

In 2006, Kevin received another loan of \$3,528 to print his second puzzle book, a crossword puzzle book. The loan also helped him develop a marketing strategy to target educators and acquire necessary licenses and materials to do business with the NYC Department of Education. Kevin has been able to become a certified vendor with the Board of Education, enabling librarians and teachers to purchase his books with their other classroom resources. He has also begun targeting teachers and parents through educator tradeshow. Most recently, Kevin has been creating specialty puzzles for different organizations.

Project **Enterprise**

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Awards



2007

*10th
Anniversary
Celebration*