CELEBRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

What’s your next step?
our mission

Business Outreach Center Network’s mission is to improve the economic prospects of traditionally underserved groups, with a focus on low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs and their communities, and thereby create genuinely brighter futures.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that whatever their differences, people and communities share a common goal: to achieve economic stability and growth. Working in partnership with culturally diverse individuals and organizations in support of this shared goal is the hallmark of BOC.

what’s your next step?

bocnet.org
our services

BOC Network helps with all aspects of business including business plan development, training, financial management assistance, pricing strategies, business regulations and access to financing whether it is from micro-lenders or mainstream sources of capital. Local BOCs help low-income entrepreneurs build credit and coordinate entrepreneurial networking groups in areas such as industrial, e-commerce and fashion.

special projects

Aetna-sponsored Healthy Choices, Brighter Futures
BOC Bronx Business Incubator
Business American-Style Workshops
Child Care Business Development Project
CWE Jobs to Build On
Microenterprise Development Services
NYC Industrial Business Solutions
NYC SBS Immigrant Business Initiative
NYC Technology Coalition
NYS Entrepreneurial Assistance Program
OCS Community Economic Development Programs
ORR Microenterprise Development for Home-Based Child Care
ORR Refugee Individual Development Account Program
SBA-sponsored Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Collaborative Program
SBA-sponsored Program for Investment in Microenterprise
SBA-sponsored Women’s Business Center
Community Development Financial Institution
ESDC Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses/Surdna Foundation
Mobilization Loan Fund
NYC EDC Capital Access Revolving Loan Guarantee Program
NYC EDC Kick Start Loan Program
NYC EDC Money Matters Program for Construction Contactors
NYC SBS Up Front Capital Loan Program
SBA Microloan Program
BOC is a network of collaborating non-profits that focuses on building community economic capacity among disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, women, minorities, and other people with limited economic capacity and connection. BOC integrates these aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and small business owners into the greater economic mainstream by building capacity, credit, and business opportunity within their communities. BOC adds substantial value to our neighborhoods and communities by supporting business growth and development, job creation, and the overall economic growth and well-being of the neighborhoods it serves. New economic activity from all segments of our community must be nurtured, creating a vibrant community that benefits all.

Community organizations such as BOC are vital and require your continued support. The Network’s collaborative approach among its member community-based organizations throughout NYC and beyond stimulates higher productivity, access to credit, development of new and creative ideas and approaches, and is recognized as an effective model for interaction among economic development organizations everywhere.

Cities in general, and New York City in particular, are less about attracting existing business and business retention than about new business development, enhanced business activity, and job creation. Cities provide the raw materials: creative inspiration, motivation and opportunity to become business owners and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs and business owners employ people. The BOC Network provides the micro-loans, linkages and services to make a coordinated and collaborative approach to help entrepreneurs be successful and grow small businesses. We add energy and direction by providing insight, capacity, connections, funding, information, business-to-business links, mentoring, a business plan, and access to public economic development and other public and private businesses resources.

Sincerely,

Leslie Winter
BOC Network Board Chair
Hamzeh Alwawi’s is a story of fighting against the odds and winning. It’s a story, in other words, of what it takes to succeed in the face of disaster.

When he reopened Princess Beauty Supply after Hurricane Sandy, Mr. Alwawi was working every shift at his retail store, seven days a week, only locking the door for fifteen minutes each day to go home for a quick break. Just five months earlier, five feet of water had destroyed his Coney Island business - and any inventory that hadn’t been destroyed had been looted. Sand and debris choked the ruined plumbing and had badly damaged the electrical and security systems, and the front gate.

But it is Mr. Alwawi’s belief that if you are faithful and good, you will persevere.

And persevere he did, by picking himself up and rebuilding the business, even after learning, immediately after Sandy, that he didn’t qualify for federal or city disaster loans.

Rooting for him was a base of loyal customers, which he had developed, since opening the store in 2009, three years after he had immigrated from Jordan. In fact, Mr. Alwawi believes that his strongest asset as a businessman is the bond he forms with his customers and community. “To me, the most important thing is the relationship we have with our customers. We know everyone. When I stand outside my store, everybody says hi to me. It’s important to be part of the community.”

He also credits BOC with helping to put him on his feet again and grow his store back after the storm. He expressed his appreciation for his BOC business counselor, Christine Silletti, who guided him in managing cash flow, alternative financing and with referrals to other professional assistance, saying, she “supported me all the time, with the loans, the store design, the help with the attorney, even making me decorate the store during the holidays.” Above all, he added, “she made me laugh when things were difficult.”

“BOC had faith in me.”

BOC Capital’s $10,000 loan also allowed him to make repairs and purchase additional inventory, “It kept the store going and gave me a basis to grow back.” A few months later, he was able to hire his first post-storm employee and this year he has been able to move to new space double the size, and, incredibly, now has four employees.
Brooklyn native David Harari has been an entrepreneur for over three decades. To him, business is another form of family, representing opportunities for Mr. Harari to demonstrate his generosity of spirit. His strong values of family, integrity and hard work were tested in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, when his business, GLI PRO, was devastated by rising flood waters, which inundated its warehouse full of professional sound equipment.

The business, based in Coney Island, was among thousands which were severely impacted by the storm. Five feet of water destroyed his inventory, IT systems, paper files and furniture, sparing nothing. But that didn’t stop Mr. Harari, who has long been motivated by an ethic of doing right by others.

Feeling a strong sense of responsibility to his employees, suppliers and business partners, and to honor his commitments, as well as to rebuild his business and recoup its losses, he worked for nine grueling months, putting in twelve hour days—many in severe cold and in dark conditions—to make GLI PRO fully operational once again.

During this time, he often thought back to his father’s words, “Before you eat, pay what you owe.”

Throughout the recovery, Mr. Harari saw the best in people, confirming his mantra that “there is more to business than money.”

And throughout the recovery BOC worked closely with Mr. Harari to secure financing from the city, helping with the paperwork, and to ensure that he was continually updated about opportunities to access supplies and resources at reduced costs. As a result of this help, Harari gained the low-interest recovery loans and grants he would need to rebuild. “Kevin [Chu, BOC Industrial Business Account Manager] never got tired of listening. [It’s] good for your spirit to know someone cares,” Mr. Harari says, “because it gives you the strength to push and go forward.”

Over the years, Mr. Harari has combined his entrepreneurial bent with a passion for music and electronics to build GLI PRO, one of the original trendsetters in the DJ Industry. Mr. Harari is proud of his reputation and his longevity (same business, same name, same phone). He is fuelled by the dynamic spirit that marks many entrepreneurs, and by the care that marks many of the best in New York City, creating businesses and communities that last.
Proud to be part of the economic engine of Brooklyn, Brian Leventhal and John Stires, owners of Brooklyn Winery, are model entrepreneurs with a community conscience. Inspired to bring a winery to the Brooklyn marketplace, they established the business in 2009 as an urban winery which handcrafts signature small-batch wines, paired with a wine bar and non-traditional event space. Their observation that New Yorkers have a thirst for all things local helped inform their winning vision.

The founders also actively mentor budding entrepreneurs, providing insight and guidance into the competitive NYC food and wine industry. “We hope to bring a sense of potential and possibility to New York entrepreneurs,” said Mr. Leventhal, “by acting as both a sounding board and experienced guides.”

Mr. Leventhal and Mr. Stires previously worked together at an internet startup. While there, they began making their own wines along with a group of co-workers. After realizing how much fun winemaking could be, and with several years’ winemaking experience to build on, they quit their jobs to open the business.

Brooklyn Winery was a success from the start, initially offering tastings to locals and focusing on the art and craft of small-batch wine and food. Taking the next step, the owners realized that the winery itself was a compelling and beautiful event space. As a result, in 2011, the business secured a loan from BOC Capital that acted as seed money to renovate an existing open-air courtyard into a glass-enclosed celebration area with a vertical garden, equipment and amenities extending its use year round.

Brooklyn Winery is responsible for creating over 40 jobs in the community, and its event space is booked for events over a year in advance. The dedication of the two owners permeates every aspect of Brooklyn Winery, from the wines they craft to the service they and their team provide.
When Carolyn Aston-Reese and Nancy Nix created Wicked Stitches, they chose entrepreneurship in their home borough of Staten Island over a return to corporate life. Together, they launched Wicked Stitches in 2004, a personalized gift and embroidery business that allows Ms. Aston-Reese and Ms. Nix to both tap into their unique strengths and work closely with their customers to create beautiful gifts for all occasions. They are particularly proud that their business involves customers in the creative process.

In the early years, Wicked Stitches was operated out of Ms. Nix’s garage, taking online orders through its website. Although they were living out the entrepreneurial dream – for a full ten years they shivered through the winters, sweated through the summers, and never had enough room for the business they were running, especially as it grew. Finally, this year, the two moved into their first official retail location on Castleton Avenue with great success.

It was the growing demand that Wicked Stitches was enjoying that led the partners to seek guidance from Staten Island BOC in their search for larger space. It was a big step to make the decision to open a retail space. Having taken the plunge, Ms. Aston-Reese and Ms. Nix are now thrilled with their new store which showcases their products. Customers now have the opportunity to come in and discuss their ideas with Ms. Aston-Reese and Ms. Nix in person, resulting in gifts that demonstrate the thought and care that went into them.

Wicked Stitches also collaborates with local vendors on everything from monogramming baby clothing for nearby boutiques to securing larger contracts with high schools and colleges that want to show spirit and support a local business in their community. This networking has introduced them to the incredibly vibrant entrepreneurial spirit alive in their community, which they are thrilled to be part of, and has welcomed them with open arms.
Jennifer Ahmed is a strong and determined entrepreneur, dedicated to her own business, as well as to the needs of immigrants who make their livelihood as livery drivers in New York.

Ms. Ahmed has also been transforming her company, Pia Car Limo, into an entirely green fleet with both compressed natural gas and 100% electric vehicles. Pia Car Limo is a family-run business that has been in operation since 2009. The business employs fourteen full-time administrative staff and has a car service base that supports 500 independent drivers.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Pia Car Limo’s compressed natural-gas vehicles stayed on the road, making all-important medical transports.

Ms. Ahmed is highly involved in her local community. She noticed that the voices of immigrant Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups were missing in important policy conversations, and formed the Asian Base Owners Association (ABOA). The NYC Taxi & Limousine (TLC) Commission has recognized the value of the organization, and has collaborated with Ms. Ahmed to do outreach with Asian taxi drivers. ABOA has translated materials from the TLC to disseminate them among its members. They have hosted events and helped over 3,000 members file applications for the Green Borough Taxi program.

Ms. Ahmed is generous with her drivers and fights for their success. She encourages home ownership and has programs to help her drivers improve their credit and purchase vehicles. As a result of her management, Pia Car Limo was awarded the “Base of Excellence” award for maintaining a three-year spotless record with NYC TLC. Pia Car Limo is the Official Car Service for the Brooklyn Academy of Music and contracts with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) among others.

BOC Network was able to help Ms. Ahmed with certification as a Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE) and financing to purchase additional vehicles in order to successfully bid for a contract with the MTA. Ms. Ahmed, owns three additional companies, including Five Boroughs Taxi, All Kings Brokerage and Zealestate. “You’ve got to be creative as a business owner, and most importantly, persevere.”
Karen Lai and Annie Lim first met while working on the same fashion design team as colleagues. Sharing, in their own words, “a mutual creative urge,” they decided to team up and launch a whimsical infant and toddler product line, with a mission driven by design. To them, infant and child garments offer “creative freedom,” and the ability to reach a range of customers and demographics.

And so began The Owl Workshop, a young, spirited newcomer in New York’s fashion industry. The Owl Workshop’s products, including packaging, are all organic, sourced in the U.S., and assembled in New York City.

They reflect the pride of the owners in the integrity of their brand and the great care they take to make a superior product - from award-winning package design to inspired, hand silk-screened goods. From its home-based beginnings, The Owl Workshop now sells in two full-time markets in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and in seasonal markets throughout the year.

The Lai/Lim partnership is guided by shared inspiration, a commitment to quality and careful planning. For many years, the two ran their company while holding down full-time jobs elsewhere and working late into the night to grow their business. When the partners approached CMP BOC, they received help in everything from business planning and referrals, to legal, accounting, real estate and financing, while the business transitioned from a part-time labor of love to a full-time business structured as an LLC.

Ms. Kim and Ms. Lai consider themselves hugely fortunate. As a sign of their gratitude to the many who supported them, they go out of their way to mentor new designers, openly sharing their experience and lessons learned.

The success of The Owl Workshop is “a dream come true,” shared Ms. Lim.
Anderson Inniss, owner of Inniss Construction Inc., exemplifies what it means to be a dynamic business owner: a commitment to excellence, learning, sharing and growth. In 2014, Inniss Construction tapped into BOC Capital Corp.’s new loan fund for construction contractors, capitalized by Goldman Sachs and Surdna Foundation.

BOC’s connection with Inniss Construction was forged during BOC’s contractor financial management training, sponsored by NYC Economic Development Corporation and Columbia University. During the training, Mr. Inniss distinguished himself as a business owner who not only sought opportunities to take his general contracting business to the next level, but demonstrated a generosity of spirit in sharing his knowledge and experience. Within weeks, Mr. Inniss gained contract financing for a new government project with a BOC Capital loan.

Mr. Inniss, an accomplished professional, has grown his business with a high value for discipline and quality. He spent over fifteen years in the aviation industry, advancing to management, where he oversaw aircraft maintenance for one of the world’s largest airlines.

Today, Inniss Construction is a certified Minority-Owned Business, which has contracts with city and state agencies, as well as private clients. The business currently has ten full-time workers and contracts with, and supports, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, asbestos and painting subcontractors.

As an entrepreneur and lifelong instructor, Mr. Inniss is committed to giving back by forming mentoring relationships with small construction companies. “I am delighted to share my experiences with those in the minority business community,” said Mr. Inniss, “and hope to motivate and inspire contractors to strike out on their own, being aware of the challenges but also the benefits of entrepreneurship.”

With its loan to Inniss Construction, BOC Capital Corp. reached $10 million dollars in lending, marking a major milestone in the funds’ history.
Liz Gutman and Jennifer King epitomize the rising tide of small food manufacturing in New York City and are proud to be part of Brooklyn’s artisanal food movement. They share a passion for quality handmade products, using as many local and seasonal ingredients as possible to create fresh, delectable, responsibly made sweets. They also share a commitment to business excellence, to their employees and to their community.

Their story began in 2008, when the business partners met in culinary school at the International Culinary Institute. There they developed an interest in starting a business together. Looking around the city for inspiration, the would-be entrepreneurs identified the under-exploited candy market. Liddabit Sweets soon moved from idea to reality with a stand at the Brooklyn Flea, selling handmade candy bars, caramels and lollipops. Today, Liddabit Sweets sells to over 50 stores and employs a total of eleven people between their commercial kitchen and retail space, at Industry City in Brooklyn, and their kiosk at Chelsea Market in Manhattan.

Liddabit Sweets and its owners have also been widely acclaimed, by everything from Zagat’s “30 Under 30 New York City 2013,” which celebrated Ms.Gutman as an up-and-coming culinary star, to a multipage spread in Oprah Magazine, featuring their partnership and products. The partners also co-authored the Liddabit Sweets Candy Cookbook, which gained recognition as a 2013 IACP Cookbook Award finalist.

BOC met Ms. King in 2011 and became a resource for business and financial technical assistance in support of the business’s growth. And, when the partners were ready to build-out their space at Industry City in Sunset Park, BOC connected them with South Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation, which directed them to financing through the NYC Food Manufacturers Growth Fund to finance their expansion.

The partners both express their love for the creativity that entrepreneurship offers and embrace the challenges that come with being independent business owners. “You always have to be ready for anything,” shares Liz. They also make it a priority to give back and make a difference, by supporting local charities, theaters, schools, and other worthy causes. Ms. Gutman, Ms. King and their valued employees represent the promise of manufacturing for the City of New York.
Iris Burgos was inspired to become an independent child care business owner as a result of her experience in counseling and family assessment. This experience included leadership roles in the homeless shelter system and in programs dedicated to breaking the cycle of homelessness. It was there, at the front lines, that Ms. Burgos saw first-hand the impact that early interventions could have on individual lives and communities. She became determined and relentless in her concern about children’s futures.

Ms. Burgos’ experience in social work has shown her that many children’s problems stem from challenges facing their families, and so she makes parents a priority in her work and many seek her counsel. A mother herself, Ms. Burgos always had a strong support system.

But life did not come easy. She worked hard, went to school during the day and worked in the evening. She understood how difficult it could be to live in the city and raise a family. Moreover, Ms. Burgos realized that she could use the best of her work experience to build business structures that would support her mission to provide much needed high quality child care services to those without means.

Ultimately, Ms. Burgos made the decision to transition from a career in social work, to that of the CEO of Ciditty Kiddies Group Family Daycare. In making the move to entrepreneurship, both Ms. Burgos and daughter, Josette Aguiar, took advantage of the BOC Child Care Means Business training to develop business management skills.

Ciditty Kiddies Group Family Daycare has grown dramatically in the last five years. Together with her daughter—as well as three additional full-time and three part-time employees—Ms. Burgos cares for 32 children at two independent sites in the Bronx. She is proud of the fact that she and her daughter are respected members of their community. Mother and daughter have a shared vision for themselves and the families they impact every day.
Rosa Echeverri
Go Babies! Child Care

“I’m proud to bring my own culture, beliefs and principles to my community.”

Originally from Colombia, Rosa Echeverri came to United States in 2010, married and settled in Elmhurst, Queens. With her, she brought elementary school teaching experience from her home country and experience teaching foreign language from Germany.

Ms. Echeverri quickly found her niche in early childhood education and entrepreneurship. From her start working in daycare, she soon decided to open her own business as a home-based family daycare provider. Since then, her business, Go Babies! Child Care, has grown thanks to Ms. Echeverri’s dedication and professionalism. With a reputation for high quality bilingual curriculum and a close connection with families, Go Babies! now cares for twenty-two children and has a long waiting list of families.

Ms. Echeverri credits BOC with supporting her every step of the way. She completed BOC’s 60-hour Child Care Means Business Training, then immediately expanded her business capacity and, within a year, made plans for a second group family daycare, which is now open and thriving. Ms. Echeverri took advantage of all that BOC Network has to offer to advance her business, from training in business management and nutrition to probono legal assistance. “All obstacles were easy to manage with BOC Network’s help,” she says enthusiastically.

Ms. Echeverri shares her value for professional development with her staff and supports fellow child care providers by speaking at workshops, hosting site visits to her business and providing personal guidance. With Go Babies! Child Care, Ms. Echeverri is following her calling as an educator and her path as a creative and independent business owner: “I am making money doing the thing I most enjoy in life.”

Facebook.com/gobabies.childcare
BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS

BROOKLYN BOC/Business Outreach Center Network, Inc.
85 South Oxford Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217
Tel. 718.624.9115 email: northbrooklyn@bocnet.org

CHINATOWN, MANHATTAN BOC/CMP
70 Mulberry Street 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10013
Tel. 212.571.1690 email: chinatown@bocnet.org

QUEENS BOC/Business Outreach Center Network, Inc.
96-11 40th Road, Ground Floor, Corona, NY 11368
Tel. 718.205.3773 email: queens@bocnet.org

BRONX BOC/Bronx Business Incubator
1231 Lafayette Avenue, 2nd Floor, Bronx, New York 10474
Tel. 718.532.2926 email: bronx@bocnet.org

STATEN ISLAND BOC/West Brighton Community Local Development Corp.
705 Forest Avenue, 2nd Floor Rear, Staten Island, NY 10310
Tel. 718.816.4775 email: statenisland@bocnet.org

UPPER MANHATTAN BOC/Washington Heights & Inwood Development Corp.
57 Wadsworth Avenue, New York, NY 10033
Tel. 212.795.1600 email: uppermanhattan@bocnet.org

NEWARK BOC/Greater Newark Enterprises Corporation
60 Park Place, 18th Floor, Newark NJ 07102
Tel. 973.242.5562 email: info@gnecorp.org

INDUSTRIAL AREAS
QUEENS WEST INDUSTRIAL AREA
BROOKLYN EAST INDUSTRIAL AREA
MANHATTAN INDUSTRIAL AREA

CHILD CARE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SITES
BEDFORD STUYVESANT
WILLIAMSBURG/BUSHWICK
CORONA
FAR ROCKAWAY
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS/HARLEM

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
CROWN HEIGHTS YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS
WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CENTER, Westchester

bocnet.org
CELEBRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTER NETWORK
board of directors

Board Chair
D. Leslie Winter

Treasurer
Gregory J. Libertiny
Theorem Inc.

Kevin Brady
The Wicks Group of Companies LLC

Eileen V. Thornton
Citibank, NA, Commercial Banking

Michael Mueller
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

Tameeka Smith
Aetna

Nancy Carin
Business Outreach Center Network

Member Directors
Dennis Reeder
Washington Heights and Inwood Development Corp.

Steven Gomez
Greater Newark Enterprises Corporation