

**Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and
Bedford-Stuyvesant History**

(Brooklyn, NY)

Messages in the Masquerade: Carnival From Brooklyn to Bahia

Total Award: \$35,000 over 6 Months

Presidential Authority Grant

To support *Messages in the Masquerade: Carnival from Brooklyn to Bahia*, an exhibition that analyzes and celebrates carnivals in the Americas with a special focus on the African-based traditions of Brooklyn, Cuba, Dominican Republic/Haiti, Puerto Rica, Trinidad, and Bahia Brazil. Aspects of Asian celebrations in New York are also illustrated in the exhibit. Using sculpture, photographs, colorful costumes and musical instruments, the exhibit presents carnival as a vibrant living tradition of the streets. In addition to being an unashamedly carnal celebration of music and dance, carnival also represents social/political commentary in its most popular and accessible form. Because of the festive nature of carnival such serious themes as overcoming slavery, resisting oppression, and reclaiming an African-based cultural legacy are often overlooked. Carnival and many other public festivals also celebrate ones national heritage. Moreover, carnival can serve as a "university of the street" wherein individuals, families and neighborhoods can learn about and commemorate their own histories. Carnival can provide a way to concretize a shared vision for a more fulfilling future.

Program Contribution Breakdown:

\$35,000 Arts and Culture Program: *Objective I, Strategy 1*