



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2025

Contact:

dhughes@universitysettlement.org

University Settlement will honor Trinity's Neighborhood Council and SUNY Chancellor Dr. John B. King, Jr., at its 2025 Gala *City Stories: A Place to Grow*

New York, NY – University Settlement is pleased to announce that it will honor **Trinity's Neighborhood Council**, an advisory group that helps Trinity Church understand and address the needs of its Lower Manhattan neighborhood, and **Dr. John B. King, Jr.**, the 15th Chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY), at its annual gala [City Stories: Powered by Humanity](#), taking place at Angel Orensanz Foundation on the Lower East Side on Thursday April 3, 2025.

Each honoree will receive University Settlement's Charles B. Stover Award. Named for one of University Settlement's founders, an activist who spent his life advocating for and meaningfully achieving social reform in New York City, the award honors individuals and organizations who bring real change to their communities.

"University Settlement is so proud to honor the incredible Lower Manhattan leaders who make up Trinity's Neighborhood Council alongside SUNY Chancellor Dr. John B. King, Jr., one of this country's most dedicated and innovative public education leaders," said **Melissa Aase, Chief Executive Officer, University Settlement**. "Trinity's convening of its Neighborhood Council demonstrates its serious institutional commitment to deep listening, grassroots community development and smart community-building. And we've been so inspired over the last two years by Chancellor King's impressive revitalization of SUNY, the largest comprehensive system of public higher education in the United States, which has included expanding dedicated funding for mental health services and students with disabilities. Our gala theme this year is '*Powered by Humanity*,' and we believe what the Council's work makes possible and Chancellor King's amplification of accessible education are terrific examples of the exponential power of authentic relationships. It's pure joy to honor a group and a leader who share our vision for building community strength."

"The Trinity Church Neighborhood Council works every day to build a better community for our neighbors and a better New York for everyone," said **Trinity's Chief Community Impact Officer Lorelei Vargas**. "The Neighborhood Council is a model for local civic leadership powered by a deep love for our community and for our neighbors. Its success is a reminder that love is one of the most powerful tools for change in our world."

"University Settlement and I share a commitment to increasing access to opportunities for young people, mental health care for students, and robust community support that lays the foundation for neighborhoods to thrive," said **Dr. John B. King, Jr., SUNY Chancellor**. "Being honored in this

way makes me feel a deeper connection to the powerful social history of settlement houses in this country, and I am proud to receive the Charles B. Stover Award."

In 2024, the members of Trinity's Neighborhood Council were:

- **Thomas Armstrong** (Trinity Church congregation member)
- **Darren Bloch** (Executive Director, Greenwich House)
- **Mary Cannon** (Resident & Community Outreach Volunteer, Jacob Riis Houses)
- **Gisele Castro** (Executive Director, Exalt Youth)
- **Wellington Chen** (President & CEO, Chinatown BID/ Chinatown Partnership LDC)
- **Minerva Diaz** (United Nations Representative; New York Metropolitan Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolence)
- **Barbara DiGangi** (Director of Families Thriving, University Settlement)
- **Tareake Dorill** (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Dorill Initiative Inc)
- **Alejandro Epifanio** (Executive Director, Loisaida)
- **David Garza** (President & CEO, Henry Street Settlement)
- **Frank Gonzalez** (Founder, Loisada Realty; Lower East Side Community Concerns)
- **Donald 'Don' Hong** (Executive Director, UA3)
- **Jaime Inclán** (Founder & Director, Roberto Clemente Center)
- **Samara Karasyk** (President & CEO, Hudson Square BID)
- **Kelsey Louie** (Chief Executive Officer, The Door & Broome Street Academy)
- **Chui Man Lai** (Manager of Community Affairs, NYP-Lower Manhattan Hospital)
- **David McCorkle** (Social Worker, St. Marks in the Bowery)
- **Alison Overseth** (CEO, Partnership for After School Education)
- **Cecilia Scott-Croff** (Executive Director, BMCC)
- **Tiffany Winbush** (Lower Manhattan resident)
- **Eva Wong** (Director, Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health)

Every person contains enormous possibility that we can express most fully in partnership with one another. For 139 years, University Settlement has harnessed the alchemy of human relationships to build collaborative programs that empower New Yorkers to realize our full potential. **City Stories: Powered by Humanity** is our celebration of this amazing city, and the even more amazing people who are part of our community and make our work possible.

Founded in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, University Settlement brings the values of our movement into the 21st century by fighting poverty and systemic inequality with responsive programs, engaging all our neighbors, from newborns to elders, and nurturing the whole person. We build community strength in partnership with 40,000 New Yorkers every year.

University Settlement thanks all our donors for their partnership and generous investments in this important work. To learn more about City Stories and to register, visit universitysettlement.org/citystories/

###

About University Settlement

University Settlement partners with 40,000+ New Yorkers in Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn every year to build on our collective strengths as we achieve healthy, stable, and remarkable lives. For nearly 140 years, we've fought poverty and systemic inequality by building highly effective social services in collaboration with our neighbors.

Established in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, we bring the values of our movement into the 21st century by meeting New Yorkers where they live, listening deeply to all perspectives, and creating space for responsive cooperation.

Joining with our neighbors to make stable foundations where people of all ages can grow and pursue their dreams, we build community strength.

We infuse a commitment to civic engagement, equality, and communal action into each of our programs, which include early childhood education, youth development, healthy aging, mental health and wellness, housing advocacy and benefits assistance, English classes for adult immigrants, community centers, and the arts.

#NYCisUS. What can we do together? Learn more at www.universitysettlement.org