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Manny Cantor Center Convenes [City-Wide Service Summit](#) to Mobilize Volunteers to Support Our Communities In Challenging Times

The volunteerism summit was hosted as part of Educational Alliance and Manny Cantor Center's ["We the People" Initiative](#) launched to combat hate and bigotry in New York City

Lower East Side, NYC (February 17, 2017) - Educational Alliance's Manny Cantor Center (MCC), a Lower East Side community center serving more than 1500 New Yorkers each day, convened over 100 non-profit leaders and veteran volunteers from across the five boroughs yesterday for an innovative idea exchange on how to leverage volunteerism to promote civic engagement, support the vulnerable, and build cohesive strategies in service of our communities.

Hosted by Manny Cantor Center's nationally-recognized More Hands More Hearts volunteer program, and co-sponsored by New York Cares, NYC Service, and UJA-Federation of New York, MCC gathered a broad coalition of nonprofits, including Harlem Children's Zone, Hetrick-Martin Institute, iMentor, New York Public Library, and Staten Island Museum to connect, engage, and mobilize around volunteerism.

"We, like many of you, saw an immediate increase in the number of people interested in volunteerism after our recent election. We wanted to harness the energy and idealism we saw," Joanna Samuels, Executive Director of MCC said in her welcoming remarks to summit attendees. "Our question today is how do we keep volunteers with us, and how do we help them to see themselves as issue advocates for the important needs in our city, the important needs in our country, and the ways that all of us will work together to see that those needs are met.

"When people come to us, they come to us at their finest moment," Gary Bagley, Executive Director of New York Cares said in his Opening Remarks. "It is a moment when they want to help. We take the great responsibility of having found that moment and direct energy in the right place."

The program opened with "This Volunteer Life," a panel of veteran volunteers who shared true stories of their volunteer experiences with the gathered group of non-profit professionals. Following this, attendees split into Open Space discussion groups to brainstorm on key volunteerism topics such as "Motivating Volunteers," "Finding the Right Partners," and "Turning Volunteers Into Agency Ambassadors."

The summit closed with "Service As Advocacy," a speaker series on the importance of building a bridge between volunteerism and issue-based advocacy, with Merrill Zack, Senior Program Director For Community Engagement at HIAS, David Hind, Managing Director of Nutrition, Work & Wellness Center at GMHC, and Christina Tasca, Executive Director of the Muslim Community Network.

"Today, the challenges in the community are greater than ever. Nonprofits are doing more and more with less. Expanding the reach of our volunteers by matching their abilities and interests with service needs is a transformative way of meeting communal challenges, while at the same time providing substantial opportunities for people to get involved," said Eric S. Goldstein, CEO, UJA-Federation of New York, reflecting on the motivation behind the summit.

"New York City's greatest strength is its 8.5 million residents," said NYC Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin. "With this renewed interest in volunteerism and service, it is critical that we leverage the power of our people to serve each other and ensure we continue to strengthen the City we are all so proud to call home."

Following the summit, MCC More Hands More Hearts Volunteer & Community Engagement Manager Deb Scher will release key reflections from the Open Space to act as a blueprint for strategic service for the challenges and conversations ahead.

See photos from the event [here](#), and [contact](#) Di Jayawickrema for more photos or information.

About Manny Cantor Center

Manny Cantor Center is a living laboratory of the universal Jewish values of inclusion, diversity, and community. Housed in the flagship building of the historic Educational Alliance, the newly renovated community center offers award-winning programs, critical services, and exciting events for toddlers, teens, young adults, and older adults. With light-filled early childhood classrooms, a state-of-the-art fitness center, spacious art studios, and a top-floor community space for public events, our LEED-certified Center serves people of all ages and backgrounds. We work for and with our vibrant and diverse neighborhood to create experiences that make a difference in our lives and in our world. www.mannycantor.org

About Educational Alliance

Educational Alliance serves New Yorkers from all walks of life. From our beginnings as a place for Jewish immigrants to learn how to acclimate to the U.S., we serve everyone regardless of the language they speak, where they come from, or their socioeconomic status. To date, we have helped four million New Yorkers. Driven by Jewish values and the belief that learning is a lifelong process, we strive to create programs and services that embrace innovation and build community. We have re-defined how to serve a community,

offering a wide variety of engaging and educational opportunities for everyone in each stage of life. www.edalliance.org

About NYC Service

NYC Service, a division of the Office of the Mayor, promotes volunteerism, engages New Yorkers in service, builds volunteer capacity, and mobilizes the power of volunteers and national service members to impact New York City's greatest needs. To learn more about NYC Service and connect to volunteer opportunities across New York City, visit nyc.gov/service.

About New York Cares

New York Cares is the largest volunteer network in the city. In 2016, more than 64,000 New Yorkers made the city a better place by volunteering on New York Cares programs at over 1,300 nonprofits and schools- improving education, meeting immediate needs, and revitalizing public spaces. To learn more, visit newyorkcares.org.

About UJA-Federation of New York Time For Good

UJA's new Time for Good volunteer program aggregates high-impact, engaging, and meaningful volunteer opportunities from UJA's wide network of nonprofit partners and grantees to change how Jewish New York volunteers. To learn more, visit timeforgood.org

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Manny Cantor Center and Educational Alliance's More Hands More Hearts volunteer program is made possible by a generous grant from the UJA-Federation of New York.

Through More Hands More Hearts, Manny Cantor Center and Educational Alliance are [Points of Light](#) Certified Service Enterprise. Learn more [here](#).

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