



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## **Sanders Brings Resources for Artists to the Community; Hosts Artists Circle in Jamaica**

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Seeking to encourage and promote the growth of local arts and culture, State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) hosted a Southeast Queens Artist Circle on January 20th at the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, which featured information on how to obtain grants funding and other financial sponsorship.

"A thriving arts and culture scene contributes to the vibrancy of a community and makes it more alive," Senator Sanders said. "We need to invest time and resources to help creative visionaries share their gift with others, locally and globally."

More than two dozen people including dancers, actors, film makers, community organizers, musicians, photographers, visual artists, and college students attended the two-hour long event which centered upon a panel discussion featuring representatives from the Foundation Center, The Field, Indiegogo and Fractured Atlas. Senator Sanders held a similar event in December.

Susan Shiroma, senior librarian at the Foundation Center, a library/learning center based in Manhattan, spoke about the resources the non-profit offers including a vast database where visitors can search through thousands of available grants. The database can also be accessed at the Jamaica branch of the Queens Library on Merrick Boulevard. In addition, the Foundation Center features videos from grant experts and has a staff of dedicated librarians that can answer any questions patrons may have.

Also featured at the Southeast Queens Artist Circle was Shawn René Graham, artist services manager, at The Field, an organization that has been providing assistance to performing artists for three decades and acts as a fiscal sponsor for its members

The Field provides services including overlooking grant applications to ensure that artists are submitting the best proposals possible, writing official letters to sponsors, and connecting members with in-kind donations. The Field helps manage artists grants from organizations, crowd funding platforms and more.

Graham also spoke about Fieldwork, a forum for artists to share developing works and exchange feedback, peer to peer. Incisive and stimulating critiques are guided by an experienced facilitator. The session culminates in an open final workshop for invited guests to:

- • Gain new insight into your artwork
- • Hone your critical perception
- • Be motivated by a weekly deadline
- • Perform in an open studio showing

Indiegogo, a global crowdfunding platform, was also featured at the Artist Circle event. Kristen Konvitz, the New York-based Director of Film for the website, explained that it is open to all kinds of people from different walks of life including filmmakers, entrepreneurs, techies, educators, just to name a few. Indiegogo is another vehicle artists can use to raise funds directly from those who are interested in sponsoring their projects.

Konvitz noted that crowdfunding is a great way to increase diversity in areas like film making, which have historically fallen short, by providing a non-traditional method of raising money. It also allows the creator to keep authority over his or her own work.

Another way artists can obtain funding is through Fractured Atlas, a nonprofit technology company that assists with the business side of creative work. Jason Tseng, community engagement specialist at Fractured Atlas, stated that it is the country's largest arts fiscal sponsor offering resources that include health insurance to members, a ticket platform called Artful.ly and a space rental marketplace.

We would like to thank our event sponsors: Starbucks, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Queens Council on the Arts and Partnership for Parks.