



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Senator Montgomery congratulates Red Hook Initiative for winning \$100,000 Grand Prize in NBCUniversal Foundation's "Project Innovation" competition

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY April 13, 2018

| ISSUE: **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES, YOUTH CAREER PATHWAYS, STEM/STEAM YOUTH PROGRAMMING**



NBC New York and Telemundo 47 present a \$100K check to Red Hook Initiative as the Grand Prize Winner of the NBC Universal Foundation's "Project Innovation" grant competition. RHI's Digital Stewards program was recognized for preparing low-income young adults for tech careers by training them to install/maintain Red Hook WIFI, a community effort to close the digital divide, create economic opportunity and improve quality of life in Red Hook.



9

*It's a wonderful thing to see that we can make a difference in the lives of young people and Red Hook Initiative represents that to me, said Senator Montgomery.*

Senator Velmanette Montgomery proudly joined Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, NBC 4 Anchorwoman Pat Battle and Telemundo Anchor Edgardo del Villar in presenting the \$100,000 Grand Prize to Red Hook Initiative (RHI). This first annual Project Innovation grant challenge recognized local non-profits who leverage technology to solve everyday problems in the areas of civic engagement, skills for the digital economy and STEM/STEAM youth programming.

Senator Montgomery recognized the work of Red Hook Initiative and congratulated this anchor in our community for creating Brooklyn's own “geek squad”. Each year, **RHI’s Digital Steward Program works with young adults (16-24 years old) to provide a paid, 8-month training program** through which participants maintain and promote the Red Hook WIFI network, coordinate tech-related projects and events, and gain tech skills and knowledge. RHI teaches students the expertise necessary to succeed in the flourishing world of technology, and provides hands on experience serving their community.

Red Hook Initiative began in 2002 as the Red Hook Health Initiative, a community health project of a local hospital. It was formed in response to the severity of health and social issues in Red Hook, as well as a belief in the community’s strengths. RHI's Founder and Executive Director, Jill Eisenhard, trained ten community residents in reproductive health. The program provided health education. Young people were immediately drawn to RHI. Their desire to get involved and call RHI ‘home’ spurred the development of additional programming to meet their needs and fuel their resiliency.

In 2006, Red Hook Initiative (RHI) became a independent 501(c)3 in order to expand in scope to better meet community needs. As RHI's programming bloomed, and their roots in the community deepened, RHI's vision and mission clearly emerged as youth development supported through community building efforts. RHI moved into a brand new community center in February 2010.

*q*

*As RHI celebrates their 15th Anniversary, Senator Montgomery took the opportunity to pay tribute to this outstanding organization for their unwavering commitment to community empowerment, leadership development and creating educational and career pathways for young people in Red Hook.*

*b*

For more information on Red Hook Initiative, visit: <http://rhicenter.org/>

Twitter: @rhookinitiative

Facebook: @RedHookInitiative

For more information about this event, visit:

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Project-Innovation-Grant-Recipients-NBC-4-New-York-Telemundo-479168353.html>