

The Ford Foundation
Good Neighbor Committee

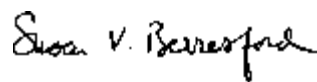


The Ford Foundation is an international grant-making organization with offices in New York and 14 overseas locations. Our mission is to be a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide. We have three major program areas: asset-building and community development; education, media, arts and culture; and peace and social justice.

Like many international organizations, we are often less visible to our immediate neighbors than to people and institutions around the globe. We wanted to change that and strengthen our ties to neighborhood organizations working on problems related to our mission. We were also looking for a way to give staff who are not grant-makers the opportunity to experience the core work of the Foundation.

In 1996, the Foundation created the *Good Neighbor Committee* for these purposes. The committee supports organizations and activities near our headquarters in midtown Manhattan that contribute to the area's civic spirit, vitality and liveliness.

The New York Good Neighbor Committee prepared this booklet and accompanying audio CD to orient new members and share what we've learned with other organizations interested in forming such a committee.



Susan V. Berresford
President

Ford Foundation and Tudor City Park looking west down 42nd Street





At any given time, the Good Neighbor Committee has 10-15 members who volunteer for one to two years. Committee members come from the administrative, investment and grant-making divisions of the foundation. However, participation is limited to those who do not normally recommend grants as part of their regular duties.

The committee is supported by staff with grant-making and administrative experience. The committee meets about once a month. Between meetings, members learn about and establish contacts with nonprofit organizations working in the surrounding area, conduct site visits, respond to grant proposals and prepare grant recommendations for review by the full committee.

While working together on the Good Neighbor Committee, staff members get to know each other and discover or share talents as they deepen their understanding of the grant-maker's role. The work of the committee also creates an important link with the neighboring community, fostering goodwill about the Foundation as a neighbor and communicating a better understanding of its worldwide mission.

In its first three years, the Good Neighbor Committee granted over \$850,000 to nearly forty organizations serving midtown Manhattan. Grant sizes have ranged from \$3,000 to \$50,000.

Bryant Park with New York Public Library in background



The first committee meeting, attended by staff who responded to an e-mail outlining Good Neighbor Committee goals, occurred in December 1996. The committee used data about the types of nonprofit organizations in the surrounding area to target a geographic area between 34th Street and 50th Street from the Hudson River to the East River.

We used the Foundation's mission and our understanding of the purpose of the committee to frame our own mission to support organizations and activities that contribute to a positive, nurturing environment in this community.

Our goals include:

- *Providing grant support for innovative activities offered in our target area*
- *Encouraging emerging and established organizations to participate in this grant program*
- *Exploring opportunities for neighborhood-based organizations to get to know each other and exchange ideas and resources.*



Initially, committee members compiled a list of nonprofit organizations in midtown Manhattan. We then walked the neighborhood to visit the locations and gather brochures, meet people and observe activities. Finally, we sent out a Request For Proposals (RFP), inviting a number of groups to apply for support.

Since our focus is on the community as a whole, we sent the RFP to organizations involved in the arts, civic activities, education and human services. In the beginning, we targeted both large and small organizations. We set an upper limit for the proposal amount. We considered both general and project support, and made the application process as simple as possible.

After receiving proposals, the committee reviewed them and raised a few key questions for site visits.

We then recommended grants to the Foundation's president. Once grants were approved, we invited the new grantees to meet at a luncheon hosted by Foundation officers and to an open house "information fair" for staff at the Foundation. To our surprise, many of our new grantee neighbors did not know each other; as a result, many ideas and phone numbers were exchanged.

We now work in subcommittees organized by area of interest. Each subcommittee is learning more about neighborhood organizations in their area of interest and discussing how to best use their share of the Good Neighbor Committee budget. We are exploring how to balance support for new and existing grantees. We continue to meet as a full committee to hear recommendations and to plan activities that cut across various interests.



Grand Central Terminal



Grantees supported by the Committee so far undertake a wide array of activities. In **the arts**, funds have been granted to organizations working on the following:

- *theatre workshops for local youth (52nd St. Project)* • *a college graduate theatre training program (American Place Theatre)*
- *a children's fine art and photography exhibit (Boys & Girls Clubs)*
- *cultural activities for residents of midtown Manhattan (Bread & Roses)* • *live cultural events (Hospital Audiences, Inc.)* • *fundraising and marketing strategies of an organization promoting Latino artists (INTAR)* • *community workshops (International Center of Photography-Midtown)* • *performances of Japanese marionette theatre (Japan Society)* • *arts-in-education programs to the midtown community (ArtsConnection)* • *enabling NYC public school students to see live theatre (New 42nd Street)*

The Committee has also made a number of grants that contribute to the **civic spirit and vitality** of the community. These include grants to organizations working on the following:

- *community outreach programs at a botanical garden (Enid Haupt Garden)* • *a bicycle and pedestrian improvement campaign (Transportation Alternatives)* • *operation and maintenance of several nearby public parks (Tudor City Greens and Turtle Bay Association)* • *planting and maintenance of trees and flowers in Turtle Bay (Turtle Bay Tree Fund)* • *strengthening leadership of trustees serving neighborhood nonprofit boards (Volunteer Consulting Group)* • *matching of individuals with volunteer positions at local nonprofit agencies (Volunteer Referral Center)*

New Victory Theatre on 42nd Street



A number of grants have also been made in the field of **education**. Funds have supported organizations for such activities as:

- *computer training for children (Emergency Family Center)*
- *acquiring a collection of electronic bibliographical material relating to the history of Spain and Latin America (Cervantes Institute)* •
- *volunteer tutors in New York City public schools (Learning Leaders)*
- *public school arts education programs (New Professional Theatre)*
- *expansion of the English classes for speakers of other languages (New York Public Library)* • *a public school outreach program of a community music school (Turtle Bay Music School)* • *an employment skills training program at a New York City public school (Lexington YMCA)*

Finally, the Committee has made a number of grants to organizations working in the area of **human services**. These include grants to organizations working on the following:

- *a family mental health clinic (Center for Children and Families)*
- *outreach to elderly homeless people (Project Find)*
- *a website and a micro-credit loan program for mentally handicapped adults (Fountain House)*
- *meals for those homebound and living with AIDS (God's Love We Deliver)*
- *a drop-in center for homeless adults in Midtown Manhattan (Grand Central Neighborhood Social Services Corp.)*
- *social services in the community (Hartley House)*
- *housing facility for homeless gay and lesbian youth (Hetrick-Martin)*
- *immigration legal services, consultation and referral (Interfaith Community Services)*
- *activities of an organization serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive victims of hate crimes (Anti-Violence Project)*
- *job training for homeless, mentally handicapped adults (Project Renewal)*
- *senior citizens' services in the community (United Neighbors of East Midtown, Medicare Rights Center, Council of Senior Citizens Centers of NYC)*
- *managed care for homeless adults (Urban Pathways)*



Turtle Bay Music School



Located in midtown Manhattan, this community music school used grant funds to expand a Public School Outreach Program.



The Japan Society



The Japan Society used grant funds to show an exhibition titled "Japanese Theater in the World" and to support performances of a Japanese marionette theatre.

Tudor City Greens



Tudor City Greens uses grant funds for the operation and maintenance of Tudor City Parks.

Cervantes Institute



The Cervantes Institute is using grant funds to acquire a collection of electronic bibliographic materials related to the history of Spain and Latin America.

Emergency Family Center



The Emergency Family Center used grant funds to launch a computer training program for children.



Medicare Rights Center



The Medicare Rights Center used grant funds to support a Hotline Data Collection and Evaluation project to inform the public about Medicare benefits and rights.

Project Find



Project Find used grant funds to provide outreach for the aged at two Times Square senior centers.

God's Love We Deliver



God's Love We Deliver used grant funds in support of its mission to provide meals for those homebound and living with AIDS.

THE NEXT STEP



*All inquiries regarding the Good Neighbor Committee
should be addressed to:*

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*To learn more about the Ford Foundation
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CREDITS

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in the making of this CD and booklet*



*We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of
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in making the Good Neighbor Committee a success.*

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