



Lendlease, Union Theological Seminary and Morningside Heights Community Coalition award \$325,000 in grants from MHCF

August 09, 2022 - Owners Developers & Managers

Manhattan, NY According to Lendlease, a global real estate group; Union Theological Seminary (UTS), a 180-year-old center of theological education; and the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC), a leading neighborhood advocacy and community development organization based in Northern Manhattan, \$325,000 of grants have been awarded to date to community organizations from the Morningside Heights Community Fund (MHCF). The MHCF consists of funds deposited by Lendlease; LMXD, an affiliate of L+M Development Partners; and Daiwa House Texas, Inc. under a joint community investment agreement with UTS, as well as a donation from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Since the fund's inception in 2018, the NYCT has awarded three rounds of grants to 24 local nonprofits as part of an ongoing investment in the Morningside Heights neighborhood.

“Our organization was founded in large part to advocate for the residents of Morningside Heights at a time of increasing high-end real estate development in the neighborhood,” said Dave Robinson, president of the MHCC Board of Directors. “In the case of Claremont Hall, MHCC has been pleased with the receptivity of the Lendlease team leading the project. We are thrilled to collaborate with them to provide funding for community development and direct service programs through the Morningside Heights Community Fund.”

“Our collaboration with MHCC to help establish the Morningside Heights Community Fund underscores our commitment to building up and partnering with the Morningside Heights community,” said Brian Reardon, vice president of development, Lendlease Development. “This type of partnership is truly unique, and we hope to provide a blueprint for other developers looking to forge neighborhood relationships that benefit the communities they serve.”

Lendlease's partnership with MHCC emerged from their plans to develop Claremont Hall, a transformative 354,000 s/f mixed-use academic and residential building adjacent to the Columbia University campus and immersed in the cultural and academic neighborhood of Morningside Heights. Iconic New York architecture firm Robert A.M. Stern Architects designed the 41-story Claremont Hall project in collaboration with UTS to integrate architecturally with the broader campus and surrounding neighborhood. Once fully constructed in 2023, Claremont Hall will provide 54,000 s/f of modern classrooms, academic offices and faculty-designated apartments, as well as approximately 165 condominium residences.

During the first two rounds of funding, grants were made to 16 different organizations in Morningside Heights and West Harlem, for essential services such as food pantries, literacy, health, youth and senior programs, as well as advocacy on pressing neighborhood issues. These grants focused on immediate COVID-19 relief and programs addressing the devastating social and economic impacts of the pandemic on the community. In the third round, awards went to 13 organizations addressing many of the same needs, as well as issues such as civic engagement in public housing, the multifaceted needs of immigrant workers, art programs for dementia patients, building community bonds, and addressing climate change through enhancing a decades-old community garden.

“Thanks to the Morningside Heights Community Fund’s generous support of our soup kitchen’s take-out system, we have been able to safely and efficiently continue to provide hundreds of warm, delicious, and nourishing meals to our hungry neighbors each week,” said Isaac Adlerstein, executive director, Broadway Community.

Established in 2017, an advisory committee composed of members of the MHCC Board of Directors and community residents issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and evaluates each proposal submitted to make funding recommendations. Final decisions on grants and administration of the MHCF are handled by the New York Community Trust (NYCT).

The MHCF is part of the development partnership’s \$5 million pledge toward the Morningside Heights community to protect and support its neighbors. Over the course of the five-year pledge, \$1.1 million will go to community groups based in Morningside Heights, including the MHCF and P.A.’L.A.N.T.E Harlem, a group that fights homelessness and the displacement of vulnerable tenants. The remaining \$3.9 million pledged will be released at the completion of the project and will enable social justice programming to develop the next generation of community leaders.

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