



FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**NEW YORK LEADERS IN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT JOIN FEDERATION OF  
PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES (FPWA) FOR THE PERSONALLY SPEAKING  
SERIES AT THE BRYANT PARK SCREENING ROOM**

June 4, 2015 (New York, NY) - The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) convened its Personally Speaking series on Wednesday, June 3 featuring leaders in the fields of Arts & Entertainment who have helped make New York a more vibrant and artistic city. FPWA's Personally Speaking is a speaker series featuring prominent people who help shape the nonprofit, philanthropic, civic and business sectors in New York City and beyond.

This installment of the Personally Speaking Series, Sponsored by American Express, focused on leadership and business in the Arts. The panelists' work, through both philanthropy and on the ground service, has helped some of New York City's most vulnerable. The panelists included: Cynthia López, Commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment; Tamir Muhammad, Director of Content and Artist Development, Time Warner, Inc.; and Martha Diaz, Founding Director, Hip-Hop Education Center. The evening's moderator was Edwin Torres, Deputy Commissioner of New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs.

Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director of FPWA opened up the evening with welcome remarks and saluted the panelists for exploring how the arts & entertainment communities can engage further with the NYC non-profit philanthropic sectors by uplifting and inspiring NYC's underserved. According to Jones Austin, "The Arts have a long history of enacting social change; they now have a unique ability to reach and help the City's most vulnerable. These panelists develop and oversee innovative, accessible methods of utilizing the Arts to educate and empower those in need. They are leaders whose work is important not only for the Arts industry but for all New Yorkers."

Cynthia Lopez, Commissioner of The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME), whose mission includes supporting relevant media and entertainment industries in New York City, talked to the audience about setting their own standards of excellence and not

letting anyone change that for them. She also urged them to accept rejection and move on when it happens.

Also joining the panel was Tamir Muhammad, Director of Content & Artist Development for Time Warner Inc., who is responsible for a new content initiative that creates meaningful ways for today's content creators to further engage Time Warner's divisions with the company's longstanding focus on the development of the next generation of storytellers. Mr. Muhammad was vocal about Time Warner's commitment to giving a voice for the voiceless and he urged the audience participants to be ready when opportunity knocks on the door and to make sure that they seek creative partners that are in sync with them.

The final panelist, Martha Diaz, is an award winning community organizer, media producer, archivist, curator, educator, mentor, and social entrepreneur. In 2010, Diaz founded the Hip-Hop Education Center to cultivate and professionalize the field of hip-hop-based education. Diaz is a Professor at New York University's Gallatin School and a Columbia University Community Scholar. Ms. Diaz said she pursued her path so she could challenge the media by becoming an independent film maker and she urged the audience to do the same.

Edwin Torres, Deputy Commissioner of New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs served as moderator of the panel and did a great job engaging the audience in the dialogue. He shared the commitment by the City to giving opportunities to New Yorkers in the Arts.

#### **About FPWA**

*The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) is an anti-poverty, policy, and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of nearly 200 human-service and faith-based organizations. Each year, through its network of member agencies, FPWA reaches close to 1.5 million New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities, and denominations. FPWA strives to build a city of equal opportunity that reduces poverty, promotes upward mobility, and creates shared prosperity for all New Yorkers. Keep up with the conversation at [Storify](#). Visit us at [www.fpwa.org](http://www.fpwa.org), and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*