



BROOKLYN ADVISORY  
BOARD'S ANNUAL

# AWARDS DINNER

.....

**Monday, June 9, 2025**  
**6:30-9:30 PM**

**Gargiulo's**  
**2911 West 15th St, Brooklyn, NY 11224**

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## About VISIONS

Founded in 1926, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a vision rehabilitation and social service nonprofit that provides services to over 7,000 individuals annually throughout NYC, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland Counties, New Jersey, and the Lower Hudson Valley.

Our mission is to develop and implement programs to assist **people of all ages** who are blind or visually impaired to lead independent and active lives and to educate the public to understand their capabilities and needs. Services are provided in the home and community, at our Older Adult Center in Manhattan and at VISIONS Center on Blindness (VCB), our year-round residential facility in Spring Valley.

**Services are provided at no cost to participants thanks to government and foundation grants, our endowment, and private donations.**



## VISIONS Services Include:

### Vision Rehabilitation Training

Adaptive daily living skills instruction, including safe meal preparation, medication management, and more.

### Orientation & Mobility Instruction

Safe movement and travel skills to navigate pedestrian travel, public and para-transit, shopping, and more.

### Social Work Services

Includes individual and group counseling sessions, assistance with applying for benefits, and family support groups.

### Job Training and Job Placement

Includes career exploration, resume assistance, interview preparation, pre-vocational and vocational skills training.

### Assistive Technology Training

Instruction on hardware, adaptive software, and accessible smartphone tools.

### Year-Round Residential Programming

Offered at VCB, these programs promote rehabilitation and recreation for blind and multi-disabled individuals.

### VISIONS Center on Aging (Older Adult Center\*)

No-cost activities and services designed to encourage social interaction, physical activity, and healthy aging.

### Community Outreach, Education, and Training

Includes presentations to the public, corporate education and training, and outreach to elected officials.

*\*VISIONS Older Adult Center is partially funded by the NYS Office of the Aging, through NYC Aging.*



If you would like to learn more, e-mail [info@visionsvcb.org](mailto:info@visionsvcb.org), call toll free [888-245-8333](tel:888-245-8333), or visit [www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)



## **Brooklyn Advisory Board Awards Dinner**

### **Honorees**

**Brooklyn Botanic Garden**

**Antoinette A. Coleman, Ph.D**

*Provost and Senior Vice President, Medgar Evers College/CUNY*

**Teddy Kern**

*Director of Occupational Therapy/Medical Liaison, VISIONS*

### **Emcee**

**Kimberly Council**

*Deputy Brooklyn Borough President*

## Join A Community Advisory Board

**Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx-  
Westchester, Queens,  
and Staten Island**

Advisory Boards are a vital component of VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. VISIONS depends on community members to help promote services and support throughout the New York metropolitan area.



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Services are provided at no cost to participants through government, grant, corporate, and donor support.

## How Advisory Board Members Can Be of Service:

1. Help promote public awareness of the needs and abilities of people with vision loss.
2. Refer individuals who are blind/low vision and in need of services.
3. Organize and support fundraising activities to support VISIONS in the community and online.



For more information about our advisory boards, please call Amy Gordon at **(201) 819-8656** or email [agordon@visionsvcb.org](mailto:agordon@visionsvcb.org)

To learn more about VISIONS, scan the QR code or visit [www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)

**Natalia S. Young**  
Acting Executive Director/CEO

**Robert Schonbrunn**  
President, Board of Directors

## **Thank You to the VISIONS Brooklyn Advisory Board**

**BOARD CHAIR:**  
**Nandanie Appana**  
*Touch of Kindness, Inc.*

**BOARD VICE-CHAIR:**  
**Mike Berman**  
*Wells Fargo Advisors*

**Ty-East Alleyne-Bobb**  
*Community Volunteer*

**Bailey Binke**  
*Brooklyn Botanic Garden*

**Darnell Blackburn**  
*Community Volunteer*

**Yvonne Cotto**  
*Spanish Speaking Elderly  
Council - RAICES*

**Ene Crooks**  
*Attorney at law*

**Sowonee Duworko**  
*Medgar Evers College*

**Seema Goldstein**  
*Community Volunteer*

**Carla Lewis**  
*Community Volunteer*

**Jackie Love**  
*Grandma's Hands*

**Jessica C. Rivera**  
*Medgar Evers College*

**Nayeem Siddique**  
*N.N.A. Global Insurance Services*

**Cheryl Saunders**  
*Community Volunteer*

**Amy Gordon, Senior Director of Fundraising & Partnerships**



**HONOREE:**

# **Brooklyn Botanic Garden**

Founded in 1910, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) is an urban botanic garden that connects people to the world of plants, fostering delight and curiosity while inspiring an appreciation and sense of stewardship of the environment. Situated on 52 acres in the heart of Brooklyn and open year-round, the Garden is home to over 10,000 kinds of plants and more than 30 specialty gardens.

This year, Brooklyn Botanic Garden celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Alice Recknagel Ireys Fragrance Garden. This unique area was the first sensory garden of its kind in North America, designed specifically to welcome and accommodate visitors who are blind or have low vision.

The Garden continually strives to become more accessible and inclusive to visitors of all abilities, and offers accessible programming designed for disability communities, such as verbal description and sensory tours, and a brand-new audio description tour of the Fragrance Garden coming to the Garden's website and Bloomberg Connects later this year.

Learn more about accessibility at the Garden at [bbg.org](http://bbg.org) or by emailing [access@bbg.org](mailto:access@bbg.org).



**HONOREE:**

**Dr. Antoinette  
A. Coleman**

***Medgar Evers College/CUNY***

Dr. Antoinette A. Coleman is Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Medgar Evers College (MEC), a role she assumed in 2022. As MEC's Chief Academic Officer, she drives excellence across all academic areas. She provides pivotal leadership in advancing MEC's strategic vision through fostering innovation in academic programs for student success, developing industry career pathways for students to meet workforce demands, promoting continuous federal funding from U.S. Senators representing New York, supporting the reaccreditation of the Associate and Bachelor's degrees in Nursing, and Bachelor of Science in Social Work programs, demonstrating a commitment to faculty development, to name a few. Prior to MEC, she served as Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University System of Maryland, where she developed academic programs, advanced policies and procedures, and led statewide transfer initiatives. Her extensive experience also includes roles as Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs at Morgan State University, and Dean of the College of Professional Studies at Bowie State University, where she consistently advanced student success, faculty development, and institutional effectiveness.



## **HONOREE:**

**Teddy Kern**

***VISIONS/Services for the Blind  
and Visually Impaired***

Teddy Kern, a practicing Occupational Therapist for over 60 years, has been a pioneer in the field of vision rehabilitation.

As a result of her work at VISIONS, she was responsible for introducing this special discipline to her profession at a time when blindness and low vision were virtually unrecognized in the spectrum of rehabilitation.

Tonight, Teddy celebrates 40+ (44) years with VISIONS where she currently serves as the Director of Occupational Therapy and Medical Liaison, providing direct services in the field and contributing resources to her profession, colleagues and students.

She is recognized nationally and internationally for her expertise in the field, as a provider, conference presenter, national consultant and advocate. Teddy has co-authored seminal texts and articles and has been published in professional journals and training manuals throughout her career. She continues to be dedicated to VISIONS ideals, humanity and the way we serve the community.

Spoiler alert: Teddy is a professional ballroom, opera and theater choreographer, and has been the owner of a premier social dance studio in Chelsea for over 30 years. This is her parallel passion!



**EMCEE:**

**Kimberly Council**

*Deputy Brooklyn Borough President*

Deputy Borough President, Reverend, and fierce community advocate are all words you can use to describe Kim Council. All her life, Rev. Kim Council has dedicated her career to the communities and people of Brooklyn, focused on finding ways to better lives and strengthen opportunities for all. As Deputy Borough President, she carries this work out on a borough-wide scale, working with faith-based and community leaders to find solutions for some of the biggest challenges facing our borough from housing to food insecurity and violence.

Brooklyn-born and -raised, Kim grew up in HUD-subsidized housing as the oldest of five children. Her family grew up working hard to provide – fighting evictions and food insecurity despite both her parents working full-time jobs.

While there wasn't much spare cash in the home, there was boundless love and support. And in Bed-Stuy, neighbors always had each other's backs.

Fast forward some years, Kim is known as many things – law librarian, assistant pastor, and a former executive no-profit leader. Guided by her faith, her work is extensive and always on the forefront of the issues pressing Brooklyn. As the executive director of the Berean Community and Family Life Center, she provided preventative health care, built affordable housing, and created youth development programs and violence prevention programs. As vice chair of the Local Development Corporation of East New York, Kim was vital in providing resources and support to small businesses. And while president of the East Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation, she spearheaded the construction of over one thousand units of affordable housing.

Now, as Brooklyn's Deputy Borough President, Kim is a fearless community leader who has been continuously devoted to fighting for the best for Brooklyn communities across the borough. Leveraging on her expertise, within her first year at Borough Hall, she launched the administration's first roundtable on how faith-based organizations can champion affordable housing in Brooklyn, built momentum to end gun violence boroughwide, and brought resources to Business Improvement Districts and merchant associations to help support local businesses.

On the day-to-day, she meets Brooklynites and local organizations and businesses across the borough while problem-solving how to bring resources to the table to our communities that have been long underrepresented. Deputy Brooklyn Borough President Rev. Kim Council is Brooklyn's own powerhouse of advocacy, wit, and hard work moving our borough forward.

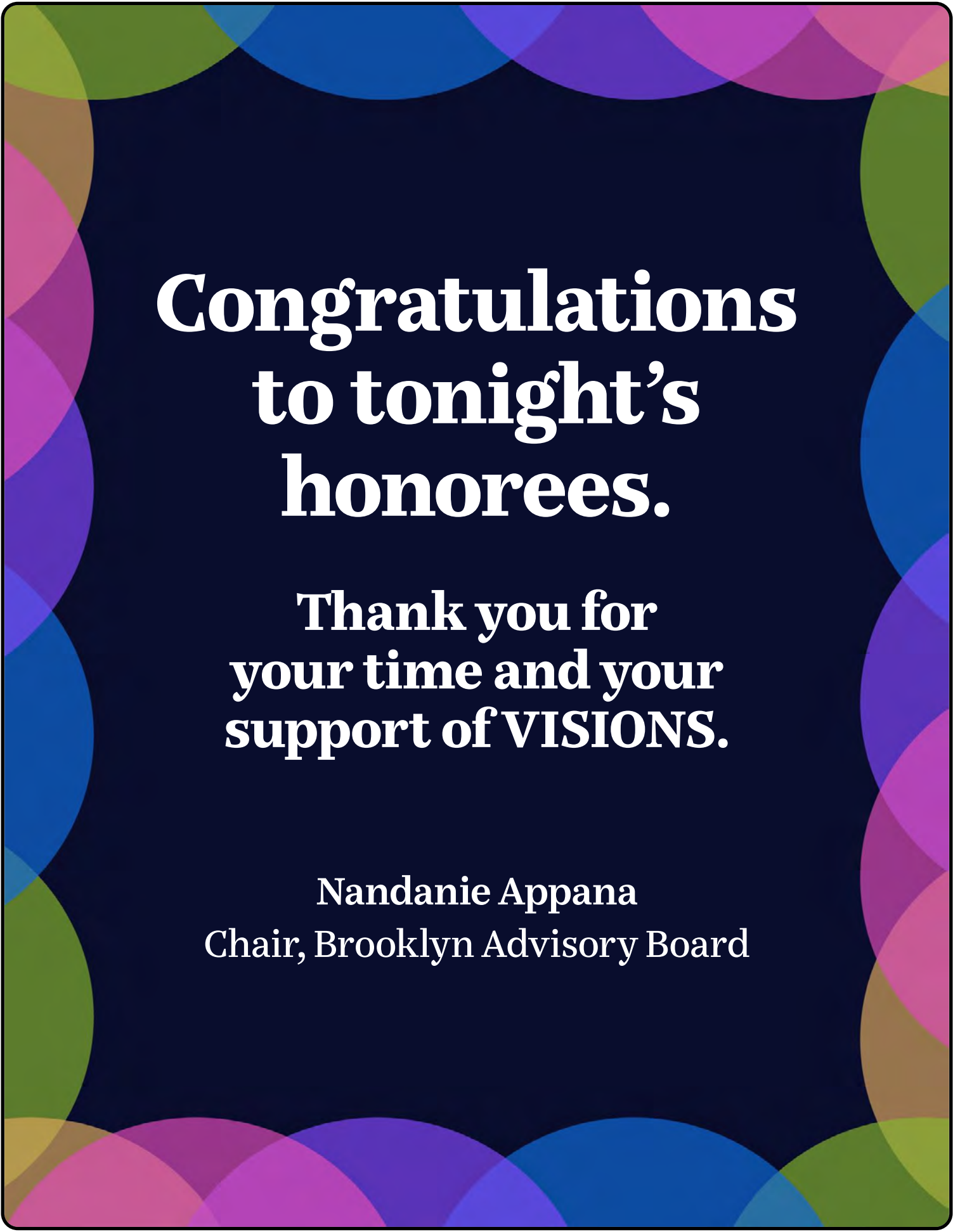
Today, Deputy Borough President Council calls Cypress Hills home, where she lives with her daughter and son, Nicole and George.



We proudly celebrate the  
**VISIONS  
BROOKLYN  
ADVISORY BOARD**  
and congratulate  
this year's honorees.

We are inspired by your dedication  
to the communities we serve.

Your friends at NYU Langone Health.



**Congratulations  
to tonight's  
honorees.**

**Thank you for  
your time and your  
support of VISIONS.**

**Nandanie Appana**  
Chair, Brooklyn Advisory Board



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

**BROOKLYN ALUMNAE**

**CHAPTER**

*Congratulates*

**visions**

services for the blind and visually impaired

on your

Brooklyn's Advisory Board's

**ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER**

June 9, 2025

**FORWARD WITH FORTITUDE**



Kenya C. Johnson, President



*Honoring Teddy for  
her years of service*

*With love.*

*The Kern Family*

*Mary Sue, Maurie, Ron, Steve, Amy and Scott*



BROOKLYN  
BOTANIC  
GARDEN

**Celebrating 70 Years  
of Inclusive Horticulture  
at Brooklyn Botanic  
Garden**

Thank you, VISIONS, for honoring  
seven decades of sensory-rich  
programming.

Here's to growing an even  
more inclusive future  
together.

Visit us online at **bbg.org**.



**Congratulations to Teddy  
Kern for over 40 years  
working at VISIONS!**

We love seeing the positive transformation  
you make in blind people's lives.

With best wishes,  
Nancy and Jerry Miller



**Teddy has proudly dedicated  
44 years of exceptional  
service to VISIONS.**

VISIONS is deeply honored to have  
Teddy as a valued member of our team.

Joy Bieder, Diana Cruz, Katherine Healey, Bill  
Hixson, Eric Levy, Grace Quiñones, Flora Shao, Lisa  
Sluszka, Julie Spodnick, and Natalia S. Young

*Teddy's friends  
want to  
congratulate her  
on their award  
for her dedication  
and passion  
for VISIONS*



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**Yvonne Cotto**

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PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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**We Apologize in  
Advance for Any Errors  
in This Journal.**

**On behalf of all of VISIONS  
participants, I would like  
to thank the Brooklyn  
Botanic Garden, Antoinette  
Coleman, Teddy Kern,  
and Kimberly Council  
for their support and  
participation this evening.**

A very special note of appreciation  
to all of the members of the Brooklyn  
Advisory Board for their ongoing  
efforts on behalf of the organization.

**Amy Gordon**

Senior Director of Fundraising  
& Partnerships



## How to Support VISIONS



### Make a Donation

Whether you give us an individual donation, or a lead to a Foundation Grant, or Corporate Sponsor that is aligned with our mission, every effort helps!

#### Ways to Donate:

1. Online, at:  
[visionsvcb.org/donate](https://visionsvcb.org/donate)
2. Donor Advised Fund
3. Gifts of Appreciated Stock
4. Qualified Charitable Distributions
5. Include VISIONS in your will\*

\*If you would like to consider naming VISIONS in your will, or making a testamentary gift, simply share the following information with your lawyer:

1. **Legal Name:** VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
2. **Tax ID:** 13-1624210
3. **Address:** 500 Greenwich Street, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10013

If you have any questions about ways to donate or know of individuals, foundations, or corporations interested in supporting VISIONS, please contact Russell C. Martello, Chief Development Officer at [rmartello@visionsvcb.org](mailto:rmartello@visionsvcb.org).

## Contact Us

#### VISIONS Headquarters:

500 Greenwich Street, Suite 302  
New York, NY 10013-1354  
Phone: (212) 625-1616

#### VISIONS at Selis Manor

135 West 23rd Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: (646) 486-4444

#### VISIONS Center on Blindness

111 Summit Park Road  
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[info@visionsvcb.org](mailto:info@visionsvcb.org) | [www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)

