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# PENTA

## The Winter Show Fair of Art and Antiques Allows East Side House to Think Big

By **Abby Schultz** Jan. 12, 2024 3:38 pm ET



Co-chair Lucinda C. Ballard, director Helen Allen, East Side House executive director Daniel Diaz, co-chair Michael Lynch, and East Side House Student Ambassadors at the Winter Show last year.

Bre Johnson/BFA.com

## THE WINTER SHOW

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The first iteration of the Winter Show in New York was in 1954 at the National Antiques Show at Madison Square Garden, where the associate directors of the community organization East Side House Settlement had taken a table.

The idea was to sell “some of the redundant luxuries donated to the Settlement’s thrift shop,” Arts & Antiques Magazine wrote in December 2003. By the following January, the organization opened the Winter Show at what is now the Park Avenue Armory, replacing the “redundant luxuries” with booths by reputable dealers of 18th-century American furniture, among other works of art and design.

Today, the fair—celebrating its 70th anniversary with 70 dealers from across the world—continues to be fully operated by East Side House, bringing in about US\$1.2 million annually for the organization’s programs serving 14,000 people in the South Bronx and northern Manhattan, about one-third of its private fundraising revenue. The group, with an annual budget of about US\$30 million, also receives government funding.

The money the fair receives from tickets to the Winter Show and benefit events allows Daniel Diaz, the group’s executive director “to dream,” he says. Diaz, 44, who has led the East Side House since 2017, likens the annual injection of funding to venture capital but with no strings attached, allowing him and East Side House to “produce innovative programs that we would not be able to do otherwise.”

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East Side House's primary focus is education and workforce development. Funding from the fair in January 2020 also allowed Diaz to provide hot spots for families who didn't have internet access in the early days of the pandemic, provided cash at a critical moment, and helped sustain pay for staff "while the city was figuring out what they were doing," he says.

By supporting the East Side House's general operating budget, the Winter Show is also playing a role in one of the organization's key projects: an 8,000-square-foot commercial teaching kitchen that will provide workforce training in the restaurant trades for 50 young adults a year in addition to creating food for the community.

The idea for the kitchen was spawned during the pandemic when East Side House received 42,000 pounds of potatoes that had been collected by private donors from farmers who would have otherwise discarded them because there were fewer restaurants to supply at the time. The donation prompted East Side House to start food distribution to about 5,000 people a week.

"Then I said, 'well, wouldn't it be great if we can figure out a way to create a workforce out of this?'" Diaz says.

The organization currently provides home-delivered meals to about 1,000 older adults a day, relying on caterers that provide pre-packaged hot and cold food. By creating a commercial kitchen, East Side house can train its young people in practical skills while supplying 8,000 meals a week, including to the older adults. The organization is also working with local restaurants to provide jobs for up to 20 trainees.

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Another huge project on the horizon is Haven Charter High School, a career and technical education (CTE) program recently approved by New York City and scheduled to open in the fall of 2025. The school will feature a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum and basic skills training in medical and technology fields.

Graduating students will receive a high school diploma and a CTE certification and the opportunity to intern or get a job with organizations partnering with the school, such as New York-Presbyterian.

The idea for a school grew from a dream Diaz had to provide marketable skills to graduating high school students as a path to a career should they not choose to go to college, or if college turns out not to be the right path for them, he says. East Side House is currently looking for a building to house Haven Charter, which will open with about 100 students, eventually growing to serve about 370.

"We're viewing this as a different type of economic mobility where we're not just giving you training but we're also hooking you up with an employer," he says.

The school will build on programs East Side House has long pursued for high school-age students, including "post-secondary pathways"—a school-to-work initiative offering students credentials to pursue careers that don't necessarily require a college degree. In all, East Side House partners with about 16 high schools and serves about 5,200 teenagers a day, in addition to its educational programs for pre-K through middle school students.

Though the group's budget depends on government dollars, the unrestricted funds from the Winter Show and other private donors allow the organization to test an unproven project or to add on to existing programs that are underfunded, Diaz says.

"I can tap into the general operating support that I received from the Winter Show and other general operating support dollars to pilot something and then to have some proven results before the city, the state, or the [federal government] will go ahead and start funding it and sustain it as it moves forward," he says.