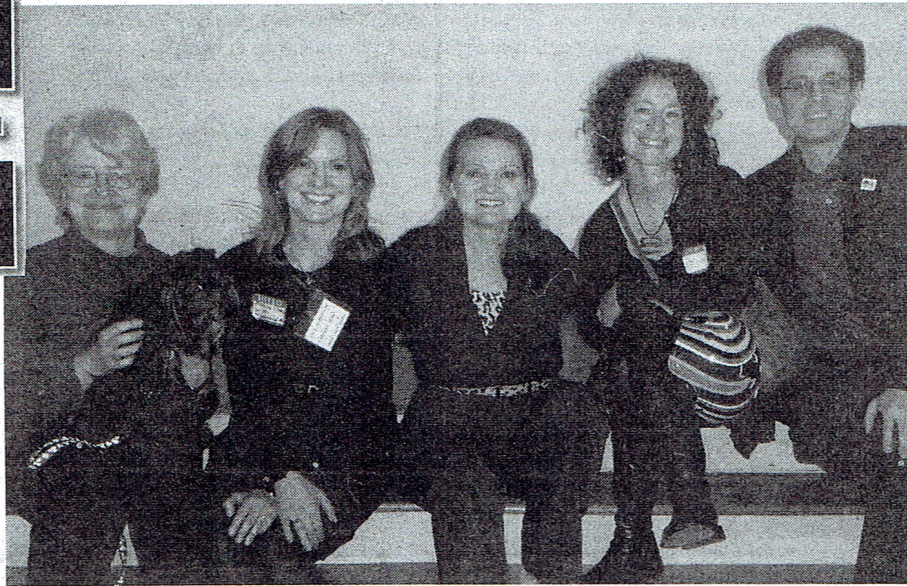


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Community leaders from left to right: Christine Gorman, Melissa Elstein, Dee Rieber, Chana Widawski, Dan Rieber.

## Coalition of Block & Community Leaders Gather to Find Common Ground

**"Blocks for Blocks" symposium encourages more powerful civic voice**

By Alissa Fleck

This year's "Blocks for Blocks" symposium event held in April attracted community leaders from several boroughs, community board members, businesses, non-profits, elected officials and more. Symposium break-out sessions addressed such topics as making communities greener, increasing civic participation, improving organizational infrastructure, utilizing technology and social media for outreach, marketing, creating community events, and fundraising.

Sessions dedicated to "greening" communities included conversations about hydro-fracking, recycling, planting trees, fossil-fuel divestment, transportation

alternatives and more.

Sessions also focused on creating social media buzz, planning community events in public spaces, non-profit status and how to interface with local businesses.

The Coalition of Block and Community Leaders NYC (CBCL) originated from a group of community organizers on Manhattan's West Side. The organization began conducting surveys to see which issues mattered most to community members.

"Unique about this Symposium is that these participants, from these varied areas, joined under one roof with the common denominator being their passion for NYC, and their interest in trying to improve New York City," according to a West 80s Neighborhood Association statement.

City Councilmember Gale Brewer and State Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal were in attendance and thanked the symposium attendees for all their hard work.