



IN THE BOROUGHS BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN

Financially at-risk nonprofit hits reset

A Park Slope-based nonprofit that operates a summer program combining arts, sports and education to equip at-risk teens across central Brooklyn for future success is struggling to reopen its doors.

After a big donation fell through, three-year-old Horizons was forced to cancel its summer program this year just days before it had been due to start. Now founder Chris Johnson is hoping to revitalize the organization by restructuring the board and developing a long-view fundraising strategy. "We started from scratch with 100% grassroots funding," said Mr. Johnson. "We tapped into a lot of our own networks to get space and services donated, which sustained us for the past few years."

But the recession caused many small donors to cut back. Holly Delany Cole, co-director of the Community Resource Exchange, which consults with nonprofits, noted that many small groups like Horizons are struggling to maintain their funding even as the economy recovers. She said that it is imperative to develop a strong board of directors to rally resources.

"You have to start a nonprofit with a community," said Ms. Cole. "It's good to have eight or 10 people who are doing this with you."

Mr. Johnson has taken note. He is developing a "dream team" board of directors, focusing on people with a background in fundraising; the former board's strength was in programming.

—LAURA LORENZETTI