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Volunteer Attorney Accomplishment for Internal and External News

Date: January 30, 2012
Name of Attorney: Emily Goodman Binick
Name of Corporation: American Express Company
Client Served: Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation
(“Chinatown Partnership”)

Accomplishment: Successfully negotiated a user agreement to lease a solar-powered waste compactor, “BigBelly,” aimed at reducing trash and rodent infestation, while promoting a cleaner, healthier neighborhood.

Specific Case Highlights: Established in 2004, Chinatown Partnership is a nonprofit that was formed to bring residents, business owners, and community groups together to rebuild the Chinatown district after September 11th. Chinatown Partnership designs, implements, and manages economic development projects intended to preserve the neighborhood’s unique culture, while ensuring its future vitality.

In addition to cultural and business initiatives, Chinatown Partnership also seeks to improve its neighborhood’s physical environment. One such project is the Clean Streets program, which is designed to work with residents and neighborhood business owners to make the district a cleaner, more attractive place to conduct business. In May 2011, Chinatown Partnership approached Lawyers Alliance for assistance with securing a public-access solar-powered trash compactor, known as “BigBelly,” aimed at decreasing the amount of garbage in the neighborhood’s streets.

Corporate attorney **Emily Goodman Binick of American Express Company** volunteered to assist Chinatown Partnership in negotiating an agreement with Direct Environmental Inc. to pilot test BigBelly. In November, Chinatown Partnership and community leaders, including Councilmember Margaret Chin and District Manager Susan Stetzer, unveiled the pilot compactor. Consisting of a computer and smartphone and powered by renewable solar energy, BigBelly securely stores up to five times the amount of garbage as a conventional trash container thus decreasing rodent infestation. Additionally, it reduces collection frequency substantially by notifying its nearest headquarters when it is full. The result is potentially a cleaner, more efficient Chinatown.

Chinatown Partnership’s executive director Wellington Chen praised Emily Goodman Binick, noting that she was “fabulous and did a very thorough job.” He added that not only did Ms. Binick complete the work “with a high degree of meticulous detail,” but that she took an interest in the organization’s work and neighborhood as she helped arrange a tour of Chinatown for her and her colleagues.

About Lawyers Alliance for New York: Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers. Each year, the staff attorneys at Lawyers Alliance and nearly 1,500 volunteers serve more than 600 clients.

Inquiries: Please contact Marketing and Communications Coordinator Emily Crossan at 212-219-1800 ext. 233 with questions or requests for additional information.