



Friends Profile: Robin Bell-Stevens

Robin Bell-Stevens is the Director and Executive Producer of **Jazzmobile**, the oldest not-for-profit arts organization created solely to present, preserve, and promote American's classical music, jazz, through education and performance programs. Jazzmobile has been a Lawyers Alliance client for 25 years.

Q. When did you first get involved with Lawyers Alliance, and why has Jazzmobile remained a long-time client?

I joined Jazzmobile in 2003 after the retirement of the long-time Executive Director. It was during his tenure that Jazzmobile began collaborating with Lawyers Alliance. When I took the leadership position Lawyers Alliance provided important legal counsel that helped stabilize our organization. Over the years Lawyers Alliance and its volunteer attorneys provided legal assistance on contract negotiations, bylaws reviews, real estate, and other administrative and organizational legal matters. The professionalism, knowledge, and resources provided by Lawyers Alliance are, as the now clichéd statement goes, "Priceless!" As we continue our plans to grow capacity – plans that also have us moving into new permanent office space in 2024 – we are pleased that we can count on the Lawyers Alliance legal team.

Q. Tell us about how Jazzmobile brings music to New Yorkers through concerts and educational programs. How have your activities changed the past couple of years?

Jazzmobile provides fully accessible (free) education and performance programs featuring acclaimed and emerging musicians, empowers students, and entertains audiences by bringing jazz to "the people" on neighborhood streets, in parks, community and senior centers, and other art and cultural organizations in Harlem, all the five boroughs of New York, and beyond. We lead the field in nurturing emerging talent, supporting established practitioners, and preserving this classical American art form. For nearly six decades Jazzmobile has contributed to the cultural, economic, and spiritual health and enrichment of New York's diverse communities.

During the pandemic while many art and cultural organizations had to halt or present previously screened programming from their libraries, Jazzmobile continued with new programs. With support from donors and other stakeholders, we were able to record multiple acts and concerts to continue New York City's longest running jazz festival, SUMMERFEST. We also created new virtual and in-person educational programming for senior centers and public schools. Virtually, we continued our pioneering performance training programs for Title 1 high school students. The feedback from the students, and audience members, reconfirms that Jazzmobile is an invaluable public service organization that offers much-needed cultural services, contributing to emotional well-being during a time of uncertainty.

Q. Why is it important to support Lawyers Alliance through contributions and referrals?

Lawyers Alliance depends on contributions (at all levels) to support its mission. With a rich legacy of providing legal counsel to not-for-profits, Lawyers Alliance is a leader in its field. The need for the important work that Lawyers Alliance has done for decades continues to grow. Following the pandemic and economic downturns and other challenges, an increasing number of charitable organizations struggle to maintain and stabilize programming and grow capacity. To help not-for-profit organizations achieve these goals, a personal referral by a friend to Lawyers Alliance is a strong first step.



Robin Bell-Stevens

About

Employment includes:

Jazzmobile

Jazz at Lincoln Center

Jackie Robinson Foundation's "An Afternoon of Jazz" Festival

Graduate of:

Cambridge College

Other activities include:

Carter Burden Network

The Jazz Forum for the Arts

The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation

Jazz Studies at Columbia University

PJS Jazz Society

The Women's Committee Board of Directors of the Central Park Conservancy

The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce

This profile is one in a series about people who have helped to build or been involved in Lawyers Alliance for New York since our founding in 1969.