

## Brooklyn Community Services Announces its Inspiring Human Spirit Awards Honorees

By [wearebcs \(Brooklyn Community Services\)](#) | May 20, 2015



*Honorees (l to r) Price, Silver and Zakaria.*

(Brooklyn, NY) May 20, 2015 - Brooklyn Community Services (BCS) will host its annual BCS Human Spirit Awards gala dinner Monday, June 1, 2015, at the Grand Hyatt-Manhattan Ballroom (109 E 42nd St, New York, NY 10017). This year BCS will honor CNN Host and author/columnist, Fared Zakaria; Founder and President of Carol's Daughter, Lisa Price; and Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Mitchell J. Silver.

The Human Spirit Awards is BCS's largest fundraising event of the year and attracts over four hundred of New York's influential business, community and cultural leaders. Funds raised at the event provide vital resources to support BCS's mission to empower children, youth, adults and families to overcome obstacles, as we strive together to ensure opportunity for all to learn, grow and contribute to ONE Brooklyn Community. With nearly 25% of Brooklynites still living in poverty, this year's theme, "Impacting Lives at the Speed of Brooklyn," speaks to BCS's commitment to empower underserved communities. Through the efforts of 400 caring staff members and over 800 dedicated volunteers, at our 20 locations across the borough, BCS is helping to "change the math" for the communities it serves.

"The Human Spirit Awards is an important event for us because it helps support our many services throughout Brooklyn," said BCS Executive Director, Marla Simpson. "The generous people who attend this dinner also have a wonderful opportunity to connect with BCS supporters of diverse backgrounds who share our vision and are investing in the empowerment of Brooklyn's communities."

This year's gala is co-chaired by BCS Board Member Charlie Lewis, Senior Managing Director of Warburg Realty Partnership, and Sonya Lockett, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility for Black Entertainment Television (BET). "It's an exciting time to support BCS as it nears the milestone of 150 years of service," said Mr. Lewis. "Sonya and I are honored to co-chair an event celebrating BCS's rich history and its deep commitment to strengthening the lives of people living in poverty."

This year BCS will also recognize two companies that provided pro bono support for the design and construction of our new BCS Coney Island Community Service Center. Our "ONE Brooklyn Community Partner" awards will be presented to Baxt Ingui Architects, P.C. and Citnalta Construction Corp.

The Human Spirit Awards honor visionary business, civic and cultural leaders. Recent honorees include Mayor Bill de Blasio (as NYC Public Advocate), CNN contributor/image activist, Michaela Angela Davis and Executive Vice Chairman of Cushman & Wakefield, Charles Borrok.

### ***About Honorees:***

**Fareed Zakaria** hosts CNN's Emmy-nominated flagship international affairs program, "Fareed Zakaria GPS." Dr. Zakaria is also a columnist for the *Washington Post* and contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and a *New York Times* best-selling author. Dr. Zakaria's in-depth interviews with such leaders as the Dalai Lama, President Barack Obama, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the late Moammar Gadhafi have been broadcast in more than 200 million homes around the world. He has received numerous awards and commendations, including the 2010 National Magazine Award. *Esquire* described him as "the most influential foreign policy adviser of his generation," and *Foreign Policy* named him one of the top 100 global thinkers. Dr. Zakaria received his B.A. from Yale College and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. His recently released fifth book, *In Defense of a Liberal Education*, argues that access to education is a significant driver of economic progress, and he has been an outspoken supporter of early childhood education as an effective means of addressing economic inequality and mobility in America. BCS honors Dr. Zakaria for his national and international contributions to policy and culture, and for his commitment to education and justice.

**Lisa Price** is the founder and president of the multi-million dollar beauty products line, Carol's Daughter, an empire she started in 1993, working out of her Brooklyn kitchen. Through the 1990s, Carol's Daughter gained popularity at local flea markets and online and opened its first retail store in 1999. After an appearance on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 2002 and later that year a feature in *People* magazine, Carol's Daughter's online business grew and it opened its flagship store in Harlem in 2005. Carol's Daughter's strong growth into the national beauty product market attracted investors including Jada Pinkett, Will Smith, Jay-Z and Mary J. Blige. Carol's Daughter established itself as a national brand expanding into retail stores such as Macy's, Sephora and Target, and in 2008 on the Home Shopping Network, where it is the number one selling hair care product. In 2014, Carol's Daughter joined forces with L'Oreal USA. Continuing under Ms. Price's leadership, Carol's Daughter has expanded into more consumer markets and has helped solidify the company's place in the cosmetics and beauty products industry. Ms. Price

is the author of Success Never Smelled So Sweet, a memoir chronicling her road to becoming president of a multimillion-dollar business. She has been featured in *Black Enterprise Magazine*, *Ebony* and *Inc.* and has been the featured speaker at the National Black MBA Conference and National Association of Women Business Owners. BCS honors Ms. Price for her contributions to innovative enterprise, and for inspiring young Brooklyn entrepreneurs to strive for greatness.

**Mitchell J. Silver** was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2014, as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks). NYC Parks is the steward of 14% of the land area in New York City and oversees thousands of recreational facilities, including over 4,500 acres of parkland and approximately 850 athletic fields, playgrounds, pools and other recreational facilities throughout every corner of Brooklyn. With almost 30 years of experience, Commissioner Silver is the immediate past president of the American Planning Association (APA), and is internationally recognized for his leadership. Prior to coming to Parks, Mr. Silver served as the Chief Planning & Development Officer and Planning Director for Raleigh, N.C. His career has included roles as policy and planning director for former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, city planner at the NYC Department of City Planning and principal of a NYC-based planning firm. Commissioner Silver has been at the center of visionary plans, including Harlem on the River and Vision for Jamaica Center, and the revitalization of neighborhoods in New York City, Philadelphia, Washington and Raleigh. In 2013, UBM Future Cities named Mr. Silver one of the Top 100 City Innovators in the world. Commissioner Silver was born in Brooklyn and grew up near Prospect Park. He attended Midwood High School, received a Bachelor's Degree in architecture from Pratt Institute and a Master's Degree in urban planning from Hunter College (City University of New York). BCS honors Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver for his contributions to expanding access, sustainability and public health initiatives, in particular for the Framework for an Equitable Future, which is now creating thriving public spaces and targeting more equitable distribution of resources for better public parks for all New Yorkers.

**Baxt Ingui Architects** is an architecture and interior design firm with extensive experience in residential, institutional and commercial projects. Longtime BCS supporter and the firm's founding partner, Ben Baxt, created an innovative design for BCS's Coney Island Community Service Center, with beautiful work spaces for BCS staff that easily transform into a warm and welcoming community meeting venue. Mr. Baxt will accept the award.

**Citnalta Construction Corp.** is one of the leading general contracting companies in New York, and a proud member of the General Contractors Association of New York, which has also generously supported BCS. Citnalta is an active builder of schools and transportation projects, and is currently working on the rehabilitation of seven subway stations in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Senior Vice President Jay Dier will accept the award.

For more information, please visit: [http://www.wearebcs.org/bcs/news\\_events/HSA2015](http://www.wearebcs.org/bcs/news_events/HSA2015)

Follow BCS and the hashtag #HSAwards2015 for all of the coverage of the event on social media: @wearebcs on Twitter and Instagram; @BrooklynCommunityServices on Facebook