

MELTDOWN Presents First Annual 'Hank' Awards

Given to People Who Have Aided Social Service Group

Meltdown Inc., a social service and arts organization located in North Flatbush, and Brooklyn WAVE (Women Against Violence Everywhere) presented its first annual Hank community service awards in December.

The Hank awards are named after the later Henry Hansel Hitchcock, a futurist and political scientist who was active in Episcopal church groups and as a volunteer school worker. Hitchcock, who lived and worked in Virginia, died in December 1995.

Receiving the Hank awards were Laura Metallo, Craig Hammerman, Sheila Bankston, Tom Sawyer, and Stanley Chambers.

Laura Metallo, CSW, is co-founder of Voices of the Armory, a program established in 1993. As deputy director of the Northern Westchester Shelter, she developed violence prevention and education programs with Meltdown in shelters and high schools. She is now the director of a domestic violence shelter for Help Inc.

Craig Hammerman, a former science teacher, is now district manager of Community Board 6. He was honored for his support of Meltdown—he came to a Voices of the Armory program, and participated in Meltdown's forums on racism held last spring.

Sheila Bankston, a former shelter resident, was an original member of the Voices of the Armory. She continues to work with Meltdown at the Park Slope Women's Shelter and other shelters, and shares her personal stories with the shelter women.

Tom Sawyer is a writer and community activist serving as Meltdown's technical director since 1988. He is a trustee of the Park Slope Civic Council



and editor of both the Brooklyn Arts Council Calendar and the Civic News. He is a coach to many school children on Little League teams and is active with PS 321's PTA.

Stanley B. Chambers was one of the first members of the Teen Drama Program when Meltdown's youth program moved to the Brooklyn YWCA in 1993, establishing the Teen Dating Violence



and Peer Educator Training Program. He also was one of the first members of the Meltdown Teen Clown Company, and works as a peer counselor in school with the SPARK program.

At the ceremony, which took place at New York Methodist Hospital, the Meltdown Players also presented a play reading of "Voices of the Armory." This play, which the group has

Seen here, at the 'Hank' Awards ceremony, are, left-right: Brownwyn Rucker, MELTDOWN co-coordinator; honoree Sheila Bankston; honoree Laura Metallo; honoree Stanley Chambers; honoree Tom Sawyer; honoree Craig Hammerman; and Rick Russo, the other MELTDOWN co-coordinator.

Photo by Deirdre McDonnell

presented many times, gives a picture of life in the women's shelter, from both the residents' and social workers' perspectives.