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## Bank, developer form \$1M alliance for local youth programs

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Barclay's Bank - which paid \$400 million for naming rights to the planned Brooklyn Nets arena - Thursday teamed up with its developer to announce \$1 million a year for local youth programs.

Dubbed the Barclays/Nets Community Alliance, the new project aims to support educational and sports organizations that work with kids in Brooklyn.

"This is about understanding what the community's needs are and then putting vital resources behind solving those needs," said Bruce Bender, a vice president with Forest City Ratner, which is developing the 18,000-seat arena and 16 residential and office towers at Flatbush and Atlantic Aves.

So far, the new alliance has handed out only one grant - \$150,000 for the renovation of schoolyards in Brooklyn.

"This will allow us to create real play spaces for thousands of children in Brooklyn," said Andrea Wenner, a recent Columbia Business School grad who founded Out2Play two years ago and already has rehabbed 15 schoolyards in the city and has 25 more in the works.

Developer Bruce Ratner was blasted last winter for teaming up with the British-based bank, which activists charged benefited from the slave trade and had alleged apartheid ties. The company vigorously denied the allegations.

At the time, even some of Ratner's staunchest black supporters joined the fray, including Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries (D-Prospect Heights) and former Assemblyman Roger Greene, who insisted that Barclays should pay "reparations" to the community.

Jeffries could not be reached for comment Thursday. Vocal critic City Councilwoman Letitia James (WFP-Prospect Heights), said the new fund hasn't changed her opinion.

"This is Barclays version of reparations for financially benefitting from 200 years of slavery," James said. "Clearly, \$1 million is not enough."