

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Neighborhood Development Center Honors Inner-City Entrepreneurs at its Annual Recognition Banquet

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St. Paul, MN-Neighborhood Development Center (NDC), a St. Paul-based non-profit whose mission is to build inner-city economies from within, hosted it's annual Entrepreneur Recognition and Awards Banquet on Saturday, April 25th, 2009 at The Ukrainian Event Center in Minneapolis, MN.

Each spring, NDC celebrates the accomplishments of the small businesses it works with and highlights the many contributions they make to twin city neighborhoods. Helping to honor this years winners were Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Elect Al Franken.

The Senator Paul and Sheila Wellstone Twin Cities Small Business of the Year Award winner is **Robin Hickman of SoulTouch Productions**. The vision and commitment of SoulTouch Productions is to present the powerful, passionate and positive voices and images of multicultural people and communities. Through various productions such as "Don't Believe the Hype", "Hoop Dreams" and "Lovin the Skin I'm In" Robin and SoulTouch Productions has offered our youth and communities a different way of seeing, feeling and acting.

The Longevity and Sustained Impact Award goes to **Shong Yang of Southeast Asian Health Services, Inc.** Shong Yang immigrated to the US from Laos in 1980. In 1995, Shong opened the first home health care business focused on services to Southeast Asian seniors. Over the past 14 years, the company has expanded many times and currently serves 350 clients annually and provides employment for 360 community members.

The 2009 Thomas McBurney Community Impact Award goes to **Daniel Ward II, of The Bethel Group, Inc.** Daniel Ward has a long history of community involvement which includes participating on community councils, land-use committees, planning commission and other local community driven organizations. Daniel brings over 20 years of construction experience to The Bethel Group, Inc. The company offers design, consulting, development, analysis, construction and real estate sales. The Bethel Group, Inc. has rehabbed or built 20 homes in the North Minneapolis Area, creating a sense of place and a place to call home for many local residents.

The 2009 Business Achievement Award goes to **Hayat Mohamed and Maaruf Yusuf of Hayat Beauty Salon**. Hayat Beauty Salon is a full service beauty salon located in the Seward neighborhood. They offer a full range of services for the entire family as well as offering a line of hair, skin and body care products. This business has been steadily growing its customer base and revenues and added an additional 1,000 clients over the past year.

The 2009 Business Creativity Award goes to **Michelle Gayer of Salty Tart**. While there are plenty of bakeries in the Twin Cities, Salty Tart is one of a kind. Opening at the Midtown Global Market in 2008, the Salty Tart has added a beautiful storefront as well as numerous unforgettable treats including, their famous macaroons, and unique offerings such as chocolate Guinness stout cake and black olive chocolate chip cookies.

Located in St. Paul's Frogtown neighborhood, Neighborhood Development Center is a community based non-profit organization that works in eleven low-income and five ethnic communities throughout Minneapolis and St. Paul. The organization's goal is to build strong neighborhood based businesses that create new jobs, fill storefronts and generate a renewed sense of economic vitality. During its first decade, NDC has trained over 3,800 entrepreneurs which have resulted in over 500 businesses starting or expanding.