L eemah Saced once had her 12-year-old granddaughter help her navigate the sea of health care forms that are hallmarks of modern life. But thanks to a partnership between Columbia University’s Community Impact (CI) and West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. (WHGA), she now performs those tasks herself. Saced is one of many West Harlem residents who have completed computer literacy courses offered at the Urban NET Community Technology Center.

Located at 500 W. 134 St., on the corner of Amsterdam Avenue, the Urban NET (Urban Neighborhood Empowerment through Technology) computer lab is a collaborative effort of CI and WHGA and provides low-income residents of West Harlem with greater access to technology with the hope of closing the digital divide. The facility, designed by students from The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science’s Gateway program, offers General Education Development and English as a Second Language and computer training classes. School and community services are also available, and the center is home to America Reads, a literacy and mentoring program for youth. All classes are free and open to the public.

At the grand opening ceremony on Oct. 28, Donald Notice, executive director of WHGA, and Sonia Reese, executive director of CI, were joined by teachers and graduates of the program, neighborhood residents and others in hailing the power of the joint effort. “This program is a vital, essential link to equip our residents with access to better jobs, better lives,” Saced said.

The link between computer literacy and greater employment opportunities is crucial for people trying to climb out of poverty, particularly those in the changing college economy. Lionel McIntyre, adjunct assistant professor of urban planning and director of the Urban Planning Program at Columbia’s School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, pointed out during the ceremony that “today’s economy is knowledge-based.” Information is the commodity that drives it. And being able to manage and manipulate information is a powerful tool that can help eliminate income disparity. McIntyre hopes that alliances like the one between CI and WHGA will replicate the Urban NET project and repeat its success in other neighborhoods.

Magdalena Rodriguez, a teacher in the program, is struck by the lengths to which her students go to attend class. “Students come all the way from Brooklyn and Queens because these types of programs aren’t available in their neighborhoods. She has learned as much from her students as she has taught them.” Many of my students live in homeless shelters, and I have learned something valuable [about education]. The students who come here depend 100% on Community Impact to provide them the opportunity to learn,” she said. “It’s their only way out of poverty.”

Before Urban NET opened, classes were taught in a cramped space, and there were never enough computers. Now, the lab boasts 15 new computers and flat-screen monitors. Made possible by a grant from the United States Department of Education’s Community Technology Centers Program and numerous other donors, Community Impact applied for the grant and helped WHGA procure the equipment.

The sense of ownership in the program is palpable. Former student Saced offered enthusiastically, “I have a lot of classes. I think should be offered the next go round.” Writing courses topped her list, ranging from fiction and prose to business plans. If she gets her way, Urban NET may have to consider offering tax preparation classes for entrepreneurs.

For more information about West Harlem Group Assistance Inc., call (212) 862-1399 or visit www wd2.sas.columbia.edu/cic/ci.

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Kingma Hall, the Columbia University building devoted to science education, is engaged in science education. The University also mandated that the Earth Institute break new ground in educational programs that are devoted to sustainable development. Since then, the Earth Institute has supported the creation of a Ph.D program in sustainable development, the Earth Institute Fellows Program and the master’s degree program in climate and society.

For more information about these and other programs, go to www.earth.columbia.edu.

Columbia Hawkins was the first great saxophonist of the jazz movement, and Columbia’s Center for Jazz Studies paid homage to him with a symposium and exhibit that opened here Nov. 9. The event examined the history, music and poetry of Hawkins and was timed to also celebrate Hawkins’ 102nd birthday on Nov. 23. The tenor saxophone was not considered an instrument for serious study until Hawkins’ mastery turned it into jazz’s premier solo instrument. The symposium included discussion, performance and readings with saxophonist Jimmy Heath, Robin Kelley, professor of anthropology, African American studies and jazz studies; drum-mer Ediith Letex; poet Nathaniel Mackey; and Dan Moglenstein, director of the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University.

Above, Hawkins’ daughter, Colette Hawkins and other family members attend the reception in Faculty House.

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Patricia Malizia

Senior defensive tackle Michael Quarshie has been named to the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame (NFF) scholar-athlete class.

The Lions’ co-captain, ranked second in Division I-AA in tackles for a loss this season, is one of 15 players in the nation, and one of 3 players in the division, to earn the distinction. He is the third Columbia athlete to be so honored. Archie Roberts, CC’66, and John Sefcik, CC’71, were the other honorees.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to recognize college football’s best students and athletes who have demonstrated strong leadership and citizenship.

Quarshie, a political science major, will be honored at the NFF’s 57th Annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 7 at the Waldorf-Astoria. Bill Campbell, CC’82, a university trustee and a former Columbia football captain, will be the top honoree as the NFF’s 2004 Gold Medal winner.

Each scholar-athlete receives an $18,000 postgraduate scholarship. The Draddy Trophy will go to the top scholar-athlete in the nation, increasing the scholarship to $25,000. The recipient will be announced at the event.

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

In the Community

Computer Lab Opens Doors for West Harlem Residents

By Sheri M. Whitley

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia

Open House Draws Hundreds

By Sheri M. Whitley

Quarshie Named to College Hall of Fame

By Particia Malizia

Body & Soul: Exhibit Honors Jazz Great Coleman Hawkins

By Particia Malizia