



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 29, 2012**

SPARC: ARTIST RESIDENCY, PUBLIC PROGRAM | NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

June 19, 2012

Brooklyn Magician, **Gary Dreifus**, selected by Brooklyn Arts Council, New York City Department for the Aging and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs to be an artist-in-residence with SPARC: Seniors Partnering with Artists Citywide, announces the graduation ceremonies and free public performance of the graduates of his **Magic for Mature Adults** Program. The showcase is scheduled for Tuesday morning, June 19, 2012 at 10 AM.

**Magic for Mature Adults** was developed by Mr. Dreifus and offered at the **Surf Solomon Senior Center**, located in Coney Island, since January 2012. Located at 3001 West 37th Street, corner Surf Avenue, the **Surf Solomon Senior Center** lights up the lives of numerous senior citizens with engrossing activities and a warm, friendly atmosphere. **Surf Solomon Senior Center** is a project of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, Inc. and is funded by the New York City Department for the Aging.

The weekly workshop is a systematic approach by which attendees have learned to focus and accomplish specific goals by learning the Art of Magic – simple tricks at first and then more complex effects as they progressed – and exploring the benefits of each.

The movements required to learn simple magic tricks has helped members of the program to acquire difficult physical skills while increasing motivational levels and self-esteem. People who are labeled "old" take great delight in being able to do something that most people cannot do. They are now capable of performing magic, and that is a great morale booster!

Most importantly, **Magic for Mature Adults** has been fun! Activities combined education and imagination to help the participants improve their abilities in planning, sequencing, organizing tasks and movements, fine motor skills, gross motor function/coordination, concentration, memory skills, communication, social behaviors and so much more.

The students of the program will now participate in a magic performance, demonstrating the skills they have acquired. This performance is open to the community, with local elected officials and businesses invited.

Seniors Partnering with Artists Citywide (SPARC) is a community arts engagement program that places artists-in-residence at senior centers across the five boroughs of New York City. The program provides selected artists with access to workspace in senior centers and a stipend in exchange for the creation and delivery of arts programming for seniors. Participating seniors will be engaged in an art project or series of cultural programs over the course of the residency, which will also include a public program component - a series of exhibits, open houses and other cultural interactions open to the surrounding community. This initiative seeks to connect artists with seniors in senior centers and positively impact the well-being of seniors through arts-based activities.

*SPARC* is a collaboration among the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Department for the Aging and the City's five local arts councils situated in each borough – Brooklyn Arts Council, Bronx Council on the Arts,

Council on the Arts and Humanities of Staten Island, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and Queens Council on the Arts. It was developed as part of Age-Friendly NYC, a citywide effort to make the City more livable for seniors, and previously ran as a successful pilot called *Space for Art*. The program is supported, in part, by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The **Surf Solomon Senior Center** offers an impressive array of recreational and educational activities to older adults living in and around Coney Island. Director **Grace Brandi** works hard to ensure that the seniors who attend Surf Solomon are able to experience days that are full of fun, companionship and exciting activities. While basic physical needs are certainly well taken care of – two hot and nutritious meals are served daily – the center has earned an excellent reputation for its diverse and stimulating programs.

These include:

- Computer Classes
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Dancercise
- Dance Instruction
- Ping Pong/Billiards
- Arts & Crafts and Ceramics Classes
- Painting Classes
- Sing-Alongs
- Chess Games
- Live Entertainment
- Monthly Trips
- Parties to Celebrate Special Occasions

And since January, MAGIC Classes!

The **Magic for Mature Adults** program was open to ALL individuals, 60 years of age and older.

For further information, contact the **Surf Solomon Senior Center** at:  
718 – 449 – 6363.

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**Gary Dreifus** has been performing magic for over 35 years. He has been teaching Magic classes for over 15 years, developing and teaching the Magic Classes at Kingsborough Community College. An accomplished entertainer and lecturer, his clients include many varied corporations and non-profit organizations. Gary has served as a consultant for some of the top illusionists and magic companies in the world, produces the magic shows for Coney Island USA and has designed and teaches the Coney Island Sideshow Magic Course.

Gary Dreifus has received numerous awards, both from magic and artistic communities. He is one of the few individuals to receive the coveted degree of Doctor of Magic from the International Magicians Society.

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