

CONTACTS: Colleen M. Ryan, Director of Communications
518-462-5658, ext. 17, cryan@preservenys.org

For CiviCure
Barbara J. Sussman, Treasurer
518-686-5204, barbara@sussmanart.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preservation League Awards Grant from Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund *CiviCure in Hoosick Falls Secures \$6,300*

ALBANY, NY – March 2, 2015 – The Preservation League of New York State recently made a **\$6,300 grant** to **CiviCure**, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is the “revitalization of the Hoosick economy through active stewardship of our rich heritage and rural environs and the art inspired by them.”

The grant is the fourth made from the Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund of the Preservation League of New York State. The grant to CiviCure will support the cost of structural and code analyses of the Wood Block building.

The Wood Block is a three-story brick building, built in 1878 as the office headquarters for the Walter A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine Manufactory. The Wood Block is within the Hoosick Falls National Register Historic District at the corner of Main and John Streets.

The Wood Block has two large music halls on the third floor, which were used by choral and other musical groups, include the Mower and Reaper Band. After the Wood Manufactory ceased operations, the performance spaces continued to serve Hoosick Falls as a public theater. The spaces were renovated after a fire in 1909 and the south music hall has 1920s Art Deco light fixtures.

Currently, the Wood Block has offices occupying the three first floor storefronts, while the upper two floors have remained vacant for over 30 years. CiviCure would like to renew the third floor performance spaces for live performances, public gatherings, and special events. The second floor was subdivided into apartments many years ago. CiviCure would like to create artist housing on that level.

CiviCure has engaged a consultant to complete a market feasibility study for its proposed uses and is would like to use the NYS and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits on the rehabilitation project. CiviCure now needs to assess the physical condition of the Wood Block, determining its structural needs and how the organization’s proposed use can meet the NYS Existing Building Code.

(more)

Ryan Biggs/Clark Davis Engineering and TAP, Inc. will complete the structural and code reports, respectively.

“The League is New York’s only statewide organization providing comprehensive – and predominantly pro-bono – services to New Yorkers seeking to identify, preserve, protect, reuse, and promote historic resources as community assets,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “The mission of CiviCure, with its focus on the arts, architecture, history and the environment as a fulcrum for community revitalization, is a perfect match for a grant from our Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund. Their planned use of New York State and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits will serve as a model for other communities, and we’re so pleased to be able to help them realize their goals.”

“Thanks to this important grant from the Preservation League, CiviCure has received a tremendous boost today,” said Edward J. Gorman, Esq., the organization’s president. “Our goal of creating an arts and community based economic engine that will contribute to the revitalization of Hoosick focuses on the historic Wood Block Building. The Gratz Grant will permit the essential groundwork towards understanding the structure and potential uses of the Wood Block to serve as a rural arts and heritage center.”

The Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund was established in 2010 and is funded through a permanently endowed charitable contribution from Thomas J. Schwarz. The primary goals of the Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund are to fund professional services for important preservation projects that: illustrate the benefits of the New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, leverage other public and private investments, and enable the League to react quickly to preservation opportunities with financial resources. Previous recipients include Friends of Fort Plain in Montgomery County and Adirondack Architectural Heritage in Keeseville, Clinton and Essex Counties, and GARNER Arts Center in Rockland County.

As a metal fabricator in Long Island City, Donald Stephen Gratz worked with modern architects, industrial designers, sculptors and furniture designers from Mies Van der Rohe to I.M.Pei to Barnett Newman and Bill Katavalos. But he always had a soft spot for historic preservation and enthusiastically supported the work of his wife, Roberta Brandes Gratz, a longtime Preservation League Trustee. He loved attending League events.

Thomas J. Schwarz, who endowed the fund, is a member of the Preservation League’s Trustees Council. He serves as President of Purchase College, SUNY, and is a board member and alumnus of Hamilton College with great affection for upstate New York.

For more information on the Preservation League, please call 518-462-5658 or visit the League’s website at www.preservenys.org.