



NEWS RELEASE

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University Settlement will honor Cathy Park Hong and its Frontline Staff at 2022 Gala, *City Stories: The Power of US*

New York, NY – University Settlement is pleased to announce that it will honor Cathy Park Hong, New York Times bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize finalist; and its frontline staff, for their unwavering commitment before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, at its annual gala, [*City Stories: The Power of US*](#), taking place virtually on April 7, 2022.

Cathy Park Hong will receive University Settlement's Charles B. Stover Award. Named for one of University Settlement's founders, an activist who spent his life advocating for and meaningfully achieving social reform in New York City, the award honors leaders who have brought real change to their communities.

A professor at Rutgers-Newark University, and the poetry editor of the New Republic, Hong has published three books of poetry, including *Dance Dance Revolution*. Her 2020 book *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* was a New York Times bestseller, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography, and earned her recognition on TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2021 list.

"University Settlement is thrilled to present this award to a writer whose courageous and unflinchingly honest work is raising people's consciousness of the racism, violence, and disregard Asian Americans face in this country," said **Melissa Aase, Chief Executive Officer of University Settlement**. "As I read the essays in *Minor Feelings*, I was struck by their honesty and vulnerability, by the tremendous literary and personal risks they take, and by the insights they offer into a set of emotions that are rarely acknowledged, let alone discussed; I also know that many members of our community and staff have also been deeply affected by the wisdom this book contains."

"I'm really honored to be celebrated by University Settlement, it's such an important organization," said **Hong**. "Art is a form of activism. Art has the ability to change the way we think, it has the ability to change our consciousness. If we are seeing the world with a veil thrown over it, art has the ability to rip that veil away. Changing consciousness is what

brings us freedom. Art is necessary to show us what is missing from our lives, what is missing from society.”

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, **University Settlement’s frontline staff** delivered 1,500 meals a week, partnered with hundreds of families to avoid eviction, conducted 10,000 wellness calls a week, delivered virtual mental health supports to 3,000+ NYC residents, sustained access to the arts for thousands, and provided many more essential services to keep their neighbors safe, healthy, and thriving.

“University Settlement is a team of dynamic, dedicated people embedded within communities in Brooklyn and on the Lower East Side,” said **Dr. Michelle Paige , Chief Program & Equity Officer of University Settlement**. “I have a tremendous sense of pride and appreciation for our teams. We’ve supported each other day after day. It really makes me pause and appreciate the Power of US. Power means that there’s structure, power means that there’s consistency, power means that there’s love.”

City Stories: The Power of US is a celebration of human connection and the community strength that is possible when neighbors are engaged in their powerful individuality. Honoring difference, insisting on complexity, and forging relationships are the pillars of this approach, one University Settlement has cultivated with their neighbors for the last 135 years.

University Settlement thanks all our donors for their partnership and generous investments in this important work.

[Click here learn more about City Stories and to register for the event.](#)

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About University Settlement

University Settlement partners with 40,000 New Yorkers on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn every year to build on their strengths as they achieve healthy, stable, and remarkable lives. For over 135 years, we’ve collaborated with our neighbors to pioneer highly effective programs that fight poverty and systemic inequality. Established in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, we bring the values of that movement into the 21st century by meeting New Yorkers where they live, listening deeply to all perspectives, engaging with every individual holistically, and creating space for people to organize. Joining together with our neighbors to advocate for justice and equality, we help build community strength.

We work with New Yorkers of all ages. We infuse a commitment to civic engagement, equity, and communal action into each of our programs, which include early childhood education, mental health and wellness, benefits assistance and eviction prevention, adult literacy and education, healthy aging, community and recreation centers, performing and visual arts, and youth development.

Learn more at www.universitysettlement.org.