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Simone Development Companies, Stagg Group are AI Sponsors of Bronx Chamber Gala Featuring Anything is Possible Theme, Robot Emcee

Humanoid Master of Ceremonies Shows Possibilities of AI at Bronx's Largest Business Event

(Bronx, NY – October 1, 2024) – Anything is Possible was the theme as The Bronx Chamber of Commerce held its 21st Annual Gala on September 19 at Marina del Rey in the Throggs Neck section of the borough. The 2024 Gala showcased the transformative advancements made possible for commerce in the Bronx and beyond by artificial intelligence, featuring [SOPHIA](#), an AI-powered humanoid Master of Ceremonies created by Hanson Robotics. Bronx-based developers Simone Development Companies and Stagg Group served as AI sponsors for the event.



“The Bronx Chamber is thrilled to be the first association to feature the one-of-a-kind *SOPHIA* and provide an experience for the Chamber network to experience her vast capabilities, demystifying AI and demonstrating its potential to fuel the growth of our business community,” said Lisa Sorin, president of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. “More than 600 members, partners and supporters gathered together to recognize the contributions of our honorees with an eye toward the future of commerce in our borough and beyond.”

SOPHIA, a humanoid robot that served as emcee for the event, was developed by scientists at Hanson

Robotics with a persona “combining cutting- edge work in symbolic AI, neural networks, expert systems, machine perception, conversational natural language processing, adaptive motor control and cognitive architecture.” She is able to recognize human faces, see emotional expressions, and express her own human-like emotional responses. She can generate her own ideas and behaviors, while holding meaningful conversations with people. She is designed to serve real world uses in medicine, education, and scientific research.

The program was co-hosted by Michael Max Knobbe, Executive Director of BronxNet Community Television, and featured a live performance by Bronx-born singer Steven Maglio as well as other local entertainers.

“Simone Development Companies is proud to support the ongoing work of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce and to highlight, along with our co-sponsor Stagg Group, the limitless potential of artificial intelligence as a tool for business growth,” said Joe Simone, president of Simone Development Companies. “The annual Chamber gala offers a wonderful opportunity to recognize our fellow businesses and celebrate the fact that anything is possible when we work together.”

The 2024 Bronx Chamber Gala honored four organizations who have demonstrated their commitment to strengthening the Bronx business community through their distinct contributions:

- **D&J Transportation** - Business of the Year
- **Monroe University** - Community Organization of the Year
- **Lemle & Wolff Companies** - Developer of the Year
- **Amazon** - recipient of the Joseph P. Kelleher Award of Excellence

"Our honorees this year exemplify the innovation, dedication, and resilience that drive the Bronx forward," said Anthony Mormile, Chairman of the Bronx Chamber Board of Directors. "Each has made a unique impact on our community that we are proud to celebrate. As we honor their achievements, we are also excited to showcase the future of commerce with SOPHIA, who embodies the potential of technology for business. This event not only reflected on past successes, but also looked ahead to the limitless possibilities that AI can bring to our borough."

Special thanks were extended to the 2024 Gala Sponsors:

- *Bronx AI Sponsors:* Simone Development Companies, Stagg Group
- *Bronx Champions:* Amazon, D&J Transportation, Lemle & Wolff
- *Bronx Partners:* DoorDash, Bally's Casino, Monroe University
- *Bronx Supporters:* Affinity by Molina Healthcare, KZA Realty Group, Ponce Bank, Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts, Orange Bank & Trust Co., Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy, Montefiore, RiteCheck, Kasirer, and Eye Mind Strategies

The annual Gala raises vital unrestricted funding for the Bronx Chamber, with 100% of all contributions supporting its business and economic development programs.

About The Bronx Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1894, The Bronx Chamber of Commerce is one of the most influential voices for business in Bronx County, known for its role in economic and workforce development and strong commitment to legislative advocacy. The Chamber hosts a wide range of programs, events, and

services for its members, ranging from large corporations to cultural institutions, universities and colleges, hospitals, and medical centers, and small to mid-sized businesses. Follow the Bronx Chamber on [social media](#), visit bronxchamber.org, or call 718.828.3900 for information on events, programs, membership benefits, and more.

About Simone Development Companies

Simone Development Companies is a full-service real estate investment company specializing in the acquisition and development of healthcare, mixed-use, office, industrial, retail, and residential properties. Headquartered at the Hutchinson Metro Center, it boasts a portfolio of over 7 million square feet throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Long Island, Westchester County, Orange and Fairfield Counties and New Jersey. With expertise spanning acquisition, development, construction, finance, asset management, accounting, leasing and property management, Simone Development Companies is set apart by its vertically integrated management team, long-term asset ownership and its pursuit of visionary development.

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