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Big fans of FlexOps: Caretakers Tieysha Leak and Loranzo Brown with Dyckman Resident Association President Nathaniel Green (center).

Making Customer Service a Priority FlexOps Pilot Launches at 12 Developments

IT'S NOT EVERY day that NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye arrives at 6 a.m. and greets development staff with donuts and coffee, but July 5 was special: A new pilot program called FlexOps ("flexible operations") launched that morning at 12 consolidated developments.

For four months, service hours at these developments are extended beyond the historical 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. shift. Property management offices at these developments will stay open until 8 p.m. one day a week for scheduled appointments with residents. And at some developments, front-line NYCHA staff start at 6 a.m. or end later in the day at 7:30 p.m.

FlexOps is already getting rave reviews—from both employees and residents—at Dyckman Houses. Dyckman's seven buildings—home to more than 2,300 residents—circle a tranquil and spotless campus. Caretakers Loranzo Brown, Tieysha Leak, and Gary Carter are proud to help keep Dyckman's grounds so pristine. They and three other caretakers volunteered for the early shift there—6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Getting a Kick Out of Camp



Saesean Brown, 8, of 830 Amsterdam Avenue, shows international soccer star Christian Fuchs the fancy footwork he learned during Fuchs' Fox Soccer Academy summer camp.

THIS JULY, FIVE YOUNG NYCHA RESIDENTS had the opportunity to do something most kids in the U.S. don't normally get to do—learn soccer from international soccer stars. As participants in the Fox Summer Academy (FSA), they played alongside FSA's founder, Christian Fuchs, who plays for the Leicester City Football Club. During his first year on the team, Fuchs helped the team gain their first English soccer title as Premier League champions.

The one-week camp was held July 11 through 15 at Frederick Douglass Field in Harlem. FSA, based in Manhattan where Fuchs lives with his family, provided

nearly \$3,500 in scholarships to NYCHA participants. The scholarships were made possible thanks to a new partnership between NYCHA, the Fund for Public Housing, and FSA to bring the skills and passion for soccer to New York City public housing youth. "We wanted to give back," Fuchs said. "There are people who can't afford the camp, but they want to be here. I wanted to give that opportunity to the kids. I want them to know I'm here for them."

Mya Morrison, 12, of Amsterdam Addition, participated in the soccer camp. Though she loves sports—she plays third base and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

SUMMER SIZZLE

THINGS MAY SLOW down for some folks in the summer, but not at NYCHA: We've been repairing buildings, installing security enhancements, launching new programs, creating partnerships to provide residents with more opportunities—in short, planning for a brighter future for NYCHA.

On July 5, we launched the FlexOps pilot—for four months, staff at 12 consolidated developments will have staggered work schedules, with some front-line staff beginning work at 6 a.m. and property management offices open until 8 p.m. one day a week for scheduled appointments. Check out the cover story to read more about the program.

One of our most important activities is listening to residents and putting their feedback into action. On page 10, you'll meet the members of the NextGen Neighborhoods stakeholder committees at Wyckoff and Holmes. These residents, community members, and elected officials will work with the developers to make sure that resident feedback continues to be heard as the new units are constructed.

You'll find out how to help make your communities safer by signing up for the newly created Resident Watch Response Team, a program that combines NYCHA's Resident Watch with the City's Community Emergency Response Team to train residents how to assist their communities in disasters such as hurricanes, snowstorms, and fires (page 4).

You've seen me mention the wildly successful Food Business Pathways program that has helped more than 80 NYCHA residents get started with their own food service businesses, including *Journal* favorites the Harlem Pie Man, who sells his pies to Whole Foods; Lancelot Brown, owner of the Jamaica Grill Jerk Center; Shyritta Conley, who caters for Kate Spade; and Jaynine Taylor, who is Baking a Difference in the Bronx with her heart-healthy desserts. Now, REES, along with our partners



Citi Community Development, NYC Small Business Services, and BOC Network, is expanding the Business Pathways program and launching a new program for childcare entrepreneurs (page 15).

John Edward Dallas, a former NYCHA resident, teaches others how to become economically self-sufficient as a Jobs-Plus financial counselor in Brooklyn (page 9). Starting with our October 2016 issue, he'll be penning a regular financial advice column for residents. If you have questions you'd like answered about finances, send them to journal@nycha.nyc.gov.

And, just in time for back-to-school season, we have several inspirational stories about NYCHA students to share. A Section 8 voucher holder describes how she overcame significant obstacles to graduate from college, including becoming the primary caregiver to her brothers at age 18 when her mother passed away (page 3).

Seventeen residents are studying to become substance abuse counselors so they can give back to their communities, thanks to scholarships they received for certification training (page 9). And one resident explains how she's benefitting from a CUNY program that helps students get their associate degree as quickly as possible, through a range of financial, academic, and personal support (page 8).

But all this hard work doesn't mean that there was no play this summer! Five residents, ages 8 to 12, participated in a soccer camp with international soccer star Christian Fuchs, while Aaliyah Del Orbe, 13, of Amsterdam Houses, learned how to sing doo wop songs from the 1960s and performed onstage with legendary singers from 1960s girl groups at Lincoln Center (page 4).

As the summer season draws to a close, stay safe and have some fun!

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

Get Connected—Open a Free Email Account!

NYCHA encourages all residents to take advantage of the many ways to obtain a free personal email account. With email, you can:

- Receive repair, power outage, and bad weather alerts.
- Pay your rent quickly.
- Enroll in MyNYCHA and submit work orders, even on weekends.
- Receive the NYCHA Journal, newsletters, job alerts, and more.

Free email addresses are available from Gmail.com, Mail.com, Outlook.com, or Yahoo.com. Need help? Visit the NYCHA Digital Van, go to the library, or ask your property manager for assistance.

Residents calling NYCHA's Customer Contact Center (718-707-7771) now hear voice prompts in Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) and Russian, in addition to English and Spanish. Callers are then directed to representatives who speak those languages. The Chinese and Russian prompts were added in April 2016 as part of NYCHA's efforts to better communicate with limited-English proficient residents.

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NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

NYCHA'S BOARD MEETINGS, open to the public, take place on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the NYCHA 12th floor conference room at 250 Broadway. People who wish to speak during the public comment period must pre-register at least 45 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin and can only comment about items on that meeting's agenda. Each speaker's time is limited to three minutes. The public comment period concludes either when all speakers are finished or after the 30 minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever comes first.

Copies of the calendar for the upcoming board meeting are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary, 250 Broadway, 12th floor after 3 p.m. on the Monday before the meeting. Copies of the dispositions of prior meetings are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up from the Office of the Corporate Secretary no earlier than 3 p.m. on the Thursday after the board meeting. Any person requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Office of the Corporate Secretary at **212.306.6088** no later than five business days prior to the meeting. For additional information regarding the calendar of meetings, dispositions, dates and times, please call **212.306.6088**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

September 28, 2016
October 26, 2016

November 23, 2016
December 21, 2016

* Note: There will be no board meeting in August. The November and December board meetings are scheduled for the second-to-last Wednesday.

WARNING

Beware of Payment Requests for Public Housing or Section 8 Applications

NYCHA RECENTLY FOUND out about a website—www.newyorkcityhousing.nyc—which charged \$150-200 for assistance finding and applying for City-sponsored affordable housing for low-income households, including Section 8 apartments. The website even featured an altered version of NYCHA's official logo.

Don't fall for scams like this. Any request for payment for help obtaining or applying for subsidized affordable housing is fraudulent. Applicants do not have to pay a fee to apply for a public housing apartment or Section 8 voucher.

Upon learning about the scam, NYCHA immediately referred the matter to its Office of the Inspector General, which is part of the City's Department of Investigation, and worked with other City agency partners to shut down the website.



TOP 10 FACTS ABOUT DIGITAL VANS

1. NYCHA's Digital Vans are computer labs on wheels that bring technology directly to NYCHA communities that have limited or no access to high-speed internet service.
2. **NYCHA has just added a third Digital Van to its fleet!**
3. Each van has eight laptops, a printer/scanner, and wireless internet, as well as an on-site instructor to provide assistance as needed.
4. NYCHA residents use Digital Vans to search for jobs, update their résumés, check email, browse the internet, do homework, and complete annual online recertifications.
5. Since 2012, NYCHA's two Digital Vans have traveled the City to provide residents with the technology they need to succeed, visiting 18 developments biweekly.
6. Over 8,000 residents have used the vans—from seniors learning how to use a computer and open email accounts to children and teens doing research for their homework.
7. One resident earned a college degree using the Digital Van computers because she didn't have access at home.
8. With the addition of the third van, NYCHA will be able to reach up to 18 more underserved developments every two weeks.
9. The new van is funded through the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications as part of its efforts to expand digital access across the five boroughs.
10. The Digital Vans are part of a host of NextGeneration NYCHA initiatives—including the MyNYCHA mobile app and the NYCHA Self-Service Portal—to provide better customer service and improve the quality of life of residents through technology.

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.NYC.GOV/NYCHA

Overcoming Obstacles and Putting Her Family First

Recent College Grad Inspires All



PHOTO CREDIT: BIANCA JEANNOT

Bianca Jeannot and her brothers Paul Santos (left) and Michael Jeannot.

BIANCA JEANNOT GRADUATED this past spring with hundreds of other students from the College of New Rochelle, but in no way is she your typical undergrad.

From the ages of 4 to 10, Bianca and her mother and her two brothers were homeless, bouncing back and forth between shelters. Homelessness was especially challenging for Bianca's two older brothers: Her eldest brother, Paul, suffered from renal failure and had to use a portable dialysis machine every day, no matter where they were living, whether at a shelter or a friend's home. Her other brother, Michael, has Down syndrome and had to be constantly supervised.

"It was exhausting," Bianca said. "It was difficult, because the area has to be very clean and sterile [to do dialysis], which most of the time it wasn't." Bianca and her family lived this way until receiving a Section 8 voucher: "Section 8 is what got us out of the shelter system."

When Bianca was 18, her mother died, leaving Bianca to become the head of her household, caretaker of her brothers, and Section 8 voucher holder. That year, the Jeannots had to renew their lease. "My name was on the Con Ed bill, the phone bill, the Optimum bill...everything was in my name," she explained. Despite her overwhelming responsibilities, Bianca, who was then in

her senior year at Dewitt Clinton High School and applying to colleges, was set on continuing her education.

In addition to being the sole caretaker of herself, her disabled brothers (and her four cats), Bianca worked four jobs while going to the College of New Rochelle. Three jobs were on campus, at three different college offices. Off campus, she worked for a marketing company.

Yet, she still excelled in school, maintaining a 3.8 GPA and graduating with honors. She also wrote for the school paper and was editor of the school's literary and art magazine. She founded the college's Anime Club, which won "Best Program of the Year" two years in a row. She did this, in part, for Paul and Michael: "I knew my brothers would never have the chance that I did in college to be a part of clubs, to be active, to take advantage of every opportunity. So, I was doing it for me, but I was also doing it for them. When I came home, they were my motivation."

Bianca envisions her immediate future with her partner and brothers, balancing an animal rescue career with writing graphic novels on the side—and she is actively pursuing all those things. "I can do something I love, while coming home and doing something else that I also love with the people I love."

She's A Rebel

The Girl Group Project at Lincoln Center

LIKE MOST KIDS her age, 13-year-old Aaliyah Del Orbe's favorite music includes songs by pop sensations Beyoncé and Ariana Grande. But this summer, the young Amsterdam Houses resident got the chance to expand her horizons by learning doo wop songs of the early 1960s through a special Lincoln Center program.



Aaliyah Del Orbe, 13, Amsterdam Houses

She's A Rebel: The Girl Group Project is a one-of-a-kind program in which New Yorkers ages 12 to 18 learned how to sing in harmony over the course of 15 weeks. A special feature of the program was a master class taught by famous female singers of the 1960s. Del Orbe and two other young NYCHA residents participated in the program, which was created by Lincoln Center Education and Lincoln Center Out of Doors.

"*She's A Rebel: The Girl Group Project* was born out of a love for girl group harmonies and incredible songcraft," said Jill Sternheimer, Director of Public Programming at Lincoln Center. "In the world of Auto-Tune, it was also born out of a desire to pass the tradition of street-corner singers down to the next generation. Street-corner singing is about closeness, friendship, looking for the echo, and the blend. We tried to make this project a space for the girls to take a step out in the comfort of a small group and start to find their voice. They got to work with the original singers. The ladies told the girls the stories of their lives, and sang for the girls, showed the girls

photos and mementos from the 60s. The girls sang for the ladies, and then they sang together and shared the joy of the blend."

It was a unique experience for Del Orbe, learning songs that were popular well before she was born. "Back then they sang different," she said. "We sing more hip hop now and it's almost like the music we listen to now is all the

same style. There's more diverse style in these older songs."

Her favorite song learned through the program is "Remember (Walking in the Sand)," made famous by The Shangri-Las in 1964. Other songs she learned included "Dancing in the Street" by Martha & the Vandellas; "Tell Him" by The Exciters; "Be My Baby" by The Ronettes; and "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" by The Shirelles.

At the end of the 15-week program, the young women performed onstage with legendary 1960s singers Margaret Ross Williams of The Cookies, Louise Murray of The Hearts and The Jaynetts, Barbara Harris of The Toys, Lillian Walker Moss of The Exciters, Nanette Licari of Reparata and The Delrons, and Beverly Warren of The Raindrops at Lincoln Center's Family Day on July 23.

Del Orbe was excited to participate in the program and sing onstage with the singers: "They're like role models, because they were 12, 13, and 14 when they were making songs that were hits."

H. MARTINEZ FOR DAVID FLORES PHOTOGRAPHY



Del Orbe (third from left), along with the young girls in The Girl Group Project and legendary 1960s singers, entertained the crowd at Lincoln Center's Family Day with a medley of popular oldies.

NYCHA Teams Up with OEM to Better Protect Communities

Tenants Invited to Join New Resident Watch Response Teams

NYCHA HAS TEAMED up with the Office of Emergency Management to merge the existing Resident Watch program with the City's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), creating a more responsive community-based watch called Resident Watch Response Teams (RWRT). This effort will be an asset not just to NYCHA developments but also to surrounding communities. CERT trains volunteers for different types of disasters, including hurricanes, large snowstorms, fires, and more. Participating NYCHA residents will join their development's Resident Watch patrol and complete the 10-week CERT training program to

learn how to be prepared and assist in emergencies.

RWRT will be launched at the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) developments: Boulevard, Brownsville, Bushwick, Ingersoll, Tompkins, Red Hook, Van Dyke, Queensbridge, Stapleton, St. Nicholas, Polo Grounds, Wagner, Butler, Castle Hill, and Patterson.

RWRT is now recruiting members, ages 18 and older, for the fall. If you live in one of the MAP developments and want to help keep your community safe, contact the Office of Safety & Security Command Center at 212-306-8800 to apply for the Resident Watch Response Team at your development. Visit http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/community_business/nyc-cert.page to learn more about the NYC CERT program.



New Security Cameras for Three Brooklyn Developments

Since 2014, nearly \$65 million has been invested in installing and upgrading security cameras and security doors at NYCHA developments, bringing the total number of cameras at all developments to more than 13,000. NYCHA works with residents and local elected officials to determine where security cameras will be placed. Cameras are installed as they are funded, and NYCHA continually seeks new funding for security enhancements. City Council Member Laurie Cumbo and Assembly Member Walter Mosley recently allocated over \$1.6 million for security cameras at three Brooklyn developments: Whitman Houses, Farragut Houses, and Lafayette Gardens. "Providing safe communities for our residents is NYCHA's top priority—and we continue to work with our partners in government to enhance safety at our developments," said NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye. "This collaborative effort will help ensure residents feel secure in their neighborhood."

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

MAKING CUSTOMER SERVICE A PRIORITY

"When tenants come out in the morning, they see the elevators clean, the steps clean, the lobbies and front of the buildings clean," explained Mr. Brown, who has worked at NYCHA for almost 21 years, the last eight at Dyckman. "Just this morning, a tenant saw me cleaning the elevator when she was leaving for work and said 'thank you.'"

"I love FlexOps," said Ms. Leak, a NYCHA employee for 13 years and resident of Washington Houses. "I have doctors' appointments for my thyroid, so FlexOps works for me. After work, I can also go shopping, do a little cleaning, spend time with my kids, and still get to bed at a good time."

"I think it's a good idea," said Mr. Carter, who has been a caretaker at Dyckman for eight years. "We're doing the same work, just earlier. The goal is to get more things done before people come down in the morning. And now I have more time to get things done in my personal life. I can pick up my son from school and make doctors' and dentists' appointments."

"Residents appreciate the extra effort," noted Dyckman's property manager, Jacqueline Frazier. "I've heard positive things." In fact, according to a survey, 94 percent of NYCHA residents support this property management industry standard at their development.

"I think it's excellent, a great program," said Nathaniel Green, Dyckman's Resident Association President, who has been a resident leader there for about a decade. "It helps residents because workers are able to get their jobs done better. Residents work closely with caretakers and property management, putting our two cents in



Caretaker Gary Carter in the Dyckman Houses storeroom.

on FlexOps. Residents are satisfied."

Visit NYCHA's website (www.nyc.gov/nycha) to learn more about FlexOps, including details about service hours expansion at each participating development. Residents at FlexOps developments can contact their property management office to schedule an evening appointment with office staff. If applicable at their development, residents can call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771 to schedule routine repairs through 7:30 p.m.

FlexOps Pilot Developments BRONX

- Forest Consolidation (Forest Houses, McKinley Houses, & Eagle Avenue—East 163rd Street)
- Marble Hill Houses
- Mott Haven Houses
- Murphy Consolidated (Murphy Houses & 1010 East 178th Street)
- Pelham Parkway Houses

BROOKLYN

- Glenwood Houses
- Wyckoff Gardens Consolidated (Wyckoff Gardens, Atlantic Terminal Site 4B, & 572 Warren Street)

MANHATTAN

- Chelsea-Elliott Houses (including Chelsea Addition)
- Dyckman Houses
- Isaacs Consolidation (Isaacs Houses, Holmes Towers, & Robbins Plaza)

QUEENS

- Hammel Consolidated (Hammel Houses & Carleton Manor)
- Ravenswood Houses



Chair Olatoye greets employees the morning of the FlexOps launch.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

GETTING A KICK OUT OF CAMP

shortstop on The Royals softball team—she was a beginner soccer player prior to camp. "The only time I've played soccer is sometimes during gym," she said. "But camp made me determined to play more soccer."

Brothers Daveyon Brown, 9, and Saesean Brown, 8, of 830 Amsterdam



Mya Morrison, 12, of Amsterdam Houses is already a pro at softball; she loved meeting new friends at camp and hopes to continue learning the ins and outs of soccer.

Avenue, both loved learning to play soccer.

"Camp is really great," Daveyon said. "I like learning tricks." Saesean interrupted to say, "I like shooting goals and doing a lot of tricks. Our coaches teach us things like defense. I want to play soccer after camp." Daveyon heartily agreed.

Fuchs said the camp is about more than teaching kids soccer, that "It's also about learning how to behave in a community and in a group. To follow certain rules, to have respect for your teammates...you can apply that to any other situation in your life."

Soccer Fields To Be Built at NYCHA Developments

NYCHA residents at Cypress Hills Houses in Brooklyn and South Jamaica Houses in Queens will have the chance to play soccer right outside their front doors in the near future. In July, Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, the New York City Football Club, and Adidas announced the launch of the New York City Soccer Initiative, a public-private partnership that will build and maintain 50 soccer fields in underserved neighborhoods across the five boroughs over the next five years. Fields will begin to open for play as early as next year.



Saesean Brown, 8, and his brother Daveyon (not pictured) said the best thing about soccer camp was learning cool tricks.

NYCHA and NYC Votes

THIS FALL, NEW YORKERS will make history. We will help elect the next **President of the United States** as well as our representatives in Congress and in the State legislature in Albany. The decisions we make as voters can help to shape the course our lives will take for years to come.

So circle and share these key dates:

- **Tuesday, September 13** – primary election to choose candidates for State Assembly and Senate
- **Friday, October 14** – last day to register to vote in the Presidential election
- **Tuesday, November 8** – National Election Day!

Want to register to vote right now? Download a voter registration form (available at www.nyccfb.info/nyc-votes/registering) and mail it in.

It's never too early to make a plan to vote!

1. Use the nonpartisan NYC Votes Voter Guide to **learn about the candidates** (www.nyccfb.info/voterguide).
2. **Look up your poll site:** nyc.pollsitelocator.com.

3. Polls will open at **6:00 a.m.** and close at **9:00 p.m.** on September 13 and November 8.

Know your rights:

- You have the right to bring materials, including the NYC Votes Voter Guide, into the polls when you vote (be sure to take it with you when you leave).
- You have the right to ask an election worker how to vote.
- You have the right to assistance if you need help voting. Assistance can be provided by a person of your choice (except your employer or union representative), including poll workers.
- If you need an interpreter, call the NYC Board of Elections (866-Vote-NYC) for more information.
- You have the right to cast a ballot, known as an "affidavit ballot," even if a machine is broken or your name is missing from the list of voters at your poll site.
- There is no voter identification requirement in New York State. (However, if you did not include your Social Security number or driver's license number on your voter



registration form, you will be asked to present identification when you vote for the first time only.)

Want to lead a voter registration drive in your building? Call NYC Votes at 212-409-1800.

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Bill de Blasio
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- 15% off Citi Bike membership
- Discounts on prescription drugs through BigAppleRx
- Save at Food Bazaar supermarkets
- Use IDNYC as your library card at all public libraries

\$67M Reconstruction Project Begins at Ocean Bay-Oceanside Development

THAT NEW YORK spirit of resiliency was on display at a June 24 ceremony at the Ocean Bay-Oceanside development in Far Rockaways, Queens, marking the start of a \$67 million project to reconstruct and improve the development following Sandy-related damage.

The project is funded by a \$3 billion grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—FEMA's largest grant ever—which NYCHA received to repair a total of 33 developments severely impacted by Hurricane Sandy. The reconstruction work will not only repair the Sandy damage but will also make the developments more resilient against future weather challenges. So far, more than 110 NYCHA residents have been hired as part of the Sandy recovery work. On NYCHA's website (on.nyc.gov/nycha-sandy), an interactive map shows all the Sandy recovery work that's in progress and upcoming.

Senator Charles Schumer, Congressman Gregory Meeks, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, City Council Member Donovan Richards, and NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye were among those gathered at the Ocean Bay-Oceanside groundbreaking. In a statement, Mayor de Blasio remarked, "Many of us still remember the weeks of cold and darkness after Sandy—including thousands of NYCHA residents. People across all five boroughs are still feeling the impact today. However, with this \$67 million investment, we will continue to fortify NYCHA buildings and create a more resilient City so that residents never have to go through this again. We have thus far made much progress, from increasing the amount of elevated boilers and standby generators to flood protection."

"NYCHA is putting FEMA's historic investment to work," Chair Olatoye said. "The new construction with resiliency planning will preserve public housing for this and the next generation. Through City, State, and federal collaborations, we can build safer, cleaner, and more connected communities across New York City."

The recovery and resiliency work at Ocean Bay-Oceanside involves a full roof replacement, standby generators for backup power, new electrical systems and flood-protected equipment annexes, flood prevention measures, upgraded playgrounds and recreational areas, and new lighting, security cameras, and state-of-the-art security doors.

"I think we're all excited about this project," said Oceanside Resident Association President Jacqueline McMikle. "It makes everyone feel much better that we will be better protected."



Senator Charles Schumer, Congressman Gregory Meeks, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, City Council Member Donovan Richards, and NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye were among those breaking ground on work to repair and improve the Ocean Bay-Oceanside development.



Bright Lights and a New Court at Boulevard Houses

Boulevard's residents (including Resident Association President Inez Rodriguez and Vice President Clara Woods), NYCHA staff, and Assembly Member Charles Barron celebrated the reopening of a renovated basketball and handball court at the development's Family Day on July 23. Earlier that month, Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye announced that more than 500 state-of-the-art, energy-efficient lights were installed at entrances, walkways, and parking areas at Boulevard Houses. As part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), \$140 million of security lighting, CCTV cameras, and layered-access control doors will be installed at 15 NYCHA sites. So far this year, NYCHA has completed lighting installations at three MAP sites. "Creating safer, cleaner, and more connected communities means brightening our developments to ensure residents feel secure in their neighborhoods," said Chair Olatoye.

Make This Your Child's Best School Year Yet

PARENTS, ARE YOU READY? The first day of school (September 8) for New York public school students is less than a month away! Check out the City's Department of Education (DOE) website for tons of useful info about programs that can make this your child's best school year yet. Here are two great programs:

DISTRICT 75

If you have a child who is on the autism spectrum, has serious cognitive delays, is severely emotionally challenged, or multiply disabled, you need to know about the DOE's District 75. It provides educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for children with special needs in more than 300 sites throughout the five boroughs and in Syosset, New York. Find out more information here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/D75>

FAMILIES FOSTERING SUCCESS (FFS)

FFS is a partnership between the DOE and Learning Leaders, a non-profit organization that helps recruit, train, and place parent and community



volunteers in NYC schools. FFS trains family volunteers to take on leadership roles in their children's schools. Some schools in the program even receive workshops for parents in their native languages to help build a volunteer network at the school. Having a strong network of volunteers helps bring more resources to the schools, and having parents invested in their children's schools may also help boost student academic success. FFS is currently partnering with 69 schools in 7 districts: District 75, District 4, District 9, District 16, District 29, District 30, and District 31. Find out more information here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/FACE/ParentEvents/FamiliesFosteringSuccess.htm>

Visit the DOE at: <http://schools.nyc.gov>.

Don't Delay, Look Into CUNY ASAP

WANT TO PURSUE a college degree, but need to fit your classes into an already jam-packed schedule, avoid debt, and be sure you've selected the right major? It may sound impossible, but CUNY has made it simple, with the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, or CUNY ASAP. Thousands of students have earned their associate degree within three years through a range of financial, academic, and personal support that includes textbook vouchers, tuition waivers, and free MetroCards.

Dedicated advisors from entry to graduation steer students through early registration and blocked courses that best accommodate their work schedules, personal obligations, and academic interests. ASAP students are generally grouped with others in the program to foster community and

build networks. ASAP students also get help with transferring to bachelor degree programs or transitioning into the workforce, depending on their goals.

Asia Smith, a 21-year-old resident of Manhattan's Elliott Houses, speaks highly of the program. "CUNY ASAP helps me in many ways. Academically, if I'm not understanding something in the curriculum, I can get help from my advisor. Financially, it helps pay for my textbooks." Ms. Smith just completed her first year at the College of Staten Island and expects to get her associate degree next spring. She plans to then earn a bachelor's degree in psychology and eventually become a pharmacist.

ASAP is one of CUNY's most successful initiatives, with students graduating at a rate more than double that of similar students. The program will expand to 25,000 students by 2018

PHOTO CREDIT: CUNY ACCELERATED STUDY IN ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS



CUNY ASAP students receive a range of financial, academic, and personal supports to help them earn their associate degree as quickly as possible.

at the following nine CUNY colleges: **Borough of Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community College, College of Staten Island, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia**

Community College, Medgar Evers College, New York City College of Technology, and Queensborough Community College. Visit www.cuny.edu/asap to learn more, including how to become an ASAP student.

Scholastic Superstars Six NYCHA Residents Win Scholarships

SIX NYCHA RESIDENTS were recently awarded Cannon Heyman & Weiss (CHW) Scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 to help them pursue their higher education goals. CHW, a law firm that specializes in affordable housing and community development, created the scholarship fund in 2013 and has so far bestowed \$72,250 in scholarships to students living in affordable rental housing developments across New York State, including NYCHA public housing residents and Section 8 voucher recipients.

First-place awardee Francisco Rodriguez, an 18-year-old resident of Drew-Hamilton Houses, is entering his first year at Boston College, where he plans to study math and economics. "College has always been a goal of mine," he said. "But financially, it was a problem. This scholarship is helping my family, and it's making my education goals possible."

Ilham Moumou, a 20-year-old resident of Queensbridge Houses, is using her award to help pay for her tuition and textbooks at Cornell University, where she just finished her second year. "I would like to thank CHW for providing students like me the opportunity

to receive this funding," she said. "It's already difficult enough to grow up economically disadvantaged, so funds like these really allow us to strive to reach for the best. College is expensive, but I believe that money should never cause a detour in one's educational pursuits."

Ms. Moumou is studying business with a concentration in entrepreneurship and is interning at the Hot 97 radio sta-

PHOTO CREDITS: ILHAM MOUMOU; FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ



Ilham Moumou is studying business at Cornell University.



Francisco Rodriguez is going into his first year at Boston College.

“Don't let money stop you from pursuing your dreams. If you have a goal, push for it. With research, hard work, and patience, everything will align.”

—Ilham Moumou

tion this summer. She plans on graduating from college a year early and then starting a career in the music industry. Her words of advice for her peers: "Don't let money stop you from pursuing your dreams. If you have a goal, push for it. With research, hard work, and patience, everything will align."

Jacqueline Martinez, a 21-year-old resident of Morris Houses, will apply her scholarship to fund her civil engineering studies at Syracuse University, where she just wrapped up her third year. After getting her bachelor's degree, she intends to get a master's degree. "I am interested in transportation and want to ensure that the public can be safe as they travel to wherever they desire."

McKinley Houses resident Adriana Toribio, age 17, is grateful that she can cover the gap in her tuition at Utica College with the scholarship. She plans to study criminal justice and wants to go to law school.

Residents interested in applying for next year's scholarships should stay tuned to CHW's website at www.chwattys.com/about. Applicants must submit an essay and two letters of recommendation and may also include an academic transcript. Scholarships can be used for full- or part-time study at approved colleges, junior colleges, technical colleges, and other post-high school institutions that confer a degree, diploma, or certificate.

Making Sense of Dollars and Cents

Changing Lives with Financial Counseling



Jobs-Plus financial counselor John Edward Dallas has helped hundreds of NYCHA residents become fiscally smart and stable so they can pursue their goals and dreams.

JOHN EDWARD DALLAS, who grew up in Baruch Houses, was recently honored by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs for his record-setting work as a financial counselor for Jobs-Plus.

A national program with nine sites in New York City, Jobs-Plus helps public housing residents become economically self-sufficient. According to the Jobs-Plus philosophy, getting a job is the first step; the second step is continued financial counseling—even after a participant lands a job.

Mr. Dallas has held more counseling sessions than any other employee at his Jobs-Plus site in Brooklyn, which is operated by the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, a community-based organization and REES Zone Partner. Most sessions are one-on-one and in-person. He and his clients discuss issues around bank accounts, student loans, debt collection, and credit.

In his counseling sessions, Mr. Dallas emphasizes how NYCHA residents have access to resources and programs that can help them advance economically, and that public housing provides a pathway to all kinds of opportunities. He believes that this approach has contributed to

his award-winning success as a financial counselor.

Mr. Dallas explains that his own background has greatly influenced his style of work. He sees his personal journey to economic independence as proof that low-income does not mean limited opportunities. One of the job's most rewarding aspects for Mr. Dallas is the chance to serve the NYCHA community. "It's a spiritual homecoming for me, an actual giving back to my community," he said. "I am honored to help residents achieve knowledge and skills that could facilitate their pursuit of the American dream through financial competence, financial stability, and financial self-reliance."

The efforts of Mr. Dallas and his Jobs-Plus colleagues are paying off: average earnings increased by 16 percent for residents in developments with a Jobs-Plus program, and remained at that level for three years following the end of the program.

Registering to participate in the Jobs-Plus program is simple. According to Mr. Dallas, a resident just has to provide ID and proof that they live in a public housing development, such as a piece of mail addressed to them. "We will help you find work and help you get your financial house in order," he promises.

Paying It Forward

NYCHA Residents Receive Scholarships for Substance Abuse Counselor Training

JULIAN BROOKS, a resident of Beach 41st Street Houses, credits his desire to become a substance abuse counselor with the assistance he once received from one. "I was an addict and somebody helped me, so it's my duty to help somebody else and the community," he said. "I want to do something good. Plus, I have two kids who look up to me, and I have to show them a better way in life."

He and 16 other NYCHA residents or Section 8 voucher holders got a considerable leg up in their quest to become substance abuse counselors—they received scholarships for free training to receive their Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) Trainee certification. Thanks to funding from the Robin Hood Foundation, tuition for the eight-month training program from the Outreach Training Institute is covered, as well as the cost of books, the exam, and related fees. In addition to classroom training, participants intern in the field and receive job placement assistance.

Zenae Pearson, a Section 8 voucher holder, found out about the opportunity through an email she received from REES. "I was immediately interested and knew it was for me, because I was looking forward to going back to school and working in human services." Ms. Pearson knows the toll that substance abuse can take on individuals and families, because her brother suffered from alcoholism. She wants to work with adolescents in particular. "Not a lot of people have

patience for them, but that's where it starts. If we can intervene at a young age and get people to recognize that they're going down a destructive path, we can stop it there."

Ms. Pearson enjoys all the elements of the training—the lectures, reading assignments, and the knowledgeable professors. "We're learning how to work with the entire family, through family therapy, and that's been really interesting and something I want to focus on." Ms. Pearson has an associate degree and plans to apply her CASAC credits toward a bachelor's degree once she completes the training.

Liliane Drago, director of the Outreach Training Institute, believes participants are poised to do a lot of good in the community. "There's a high need for trained substance abuse counselors," she said. "Through this program, we're enabling people who are concerned and interested and living in the community to participate in the workforce and contribute to the solution of the problem of drug and alcohol abuse."

On top of his training, Mr. Brooks interns as a recovery coach at an outpatient drug program in Queens. After receiving his counseling credential, he hopes to help addicts currently in prison. Although balancing his internship, training, and parenting is not always easy, he finds it all very gratifying. "I'm a single parent. I'm doing a lot, doing what I have to do to show my kids that education and a positive path matter. It's not always easy, but I get it done!"



Julian Brooks (left) and Zenae Pearson are among the 17 NYCHA residents or Section 8 voucher holders studying to become certified substance abuse counselors, thanks to a scholarship they identified through REES.

Staking a Claim on Progress

NextGen Neighborhoods Announces Stakeholder Committees for Holmes Towers and Wyckoff Gardens

NEXTGEN NEIGHBORHOODS IS NYCHA's program to build 50 percent market-rate and 50 percent affordable housing units on underused NYCHA land, with revenue from these new buildings to be reinvested into NYCHA developments. The first two NextGen Neighborhoods are Wyckoff Gardens in Brooklyn and Holmes Towers in the Upper East Side. Resident input has been key throughout the NextGen Neighborhoods process, which launched at these two developments last September. To keep residents involved as developers begin work, a stakeholder committee for each development has been formed.

To make sure that diverse resident perspectives are represented, the committees are composed of NYCHA residents, including at least one youth (ages 18-24), one senior resident (ages 64+), and one general resident (no age requirement); a resident from the community; representatives from community-based organizations and advocacy groups; and elected officials.

Vivian Iturralde is the newest resident on the Wyckoff Gardens committee, having moved into the development in November 2015. She applied to be on the committee "to be able to speak one-on-one with the developers and the NYCHA staff as the building work progresses. It's important for me to have a say about what goes on in my community. Being a mother of four kids and two grandkids, it's important for me to know what's going in my community."

The Wyckoff committee also includes long-time resident Craig Holmes, who explained, "I applied for the stakeholder committee because I know I can help. I've lived in this community for over 50 years. It's an interesting task, maybe I can make a difference if they let us. I'd like to monitor them and keep them on their toes. We need a better sense of communication."

Also on the Wyckoff committee is the Office of New York City Council Member Stephen Levin, who represents the 33rd District in Brooklyn. "I have high hopes for this committee," Council Member Levin said. "By including public input at all stages of the process, especially the beginning, we can ensure the end result is closely aligned with the community's vision. Through this collaborative process, residents can expect a transparent and sincere engagement with all stakeholders."

For more information about NextGen Neighborhoods and to see a full list of stakeholder committee members, visit:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/nextgen-neighborhoods.page>.



Getting Down for a Good Cause

Social Events Promote Safety, Community Beautification

This past May and June, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Young Men's Initiative (a multi-city agency collaboration), and NYCHA partnered with a variety of community organizations to host 15 fun and educational community gatherings at the 15 NYCHA sites that are the focus of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety. More than 1,000 residents participated in activities that ranged from youth socials and community beautification days to anti-gun violence events.

More Sandy Recovery Job Opportunities



Over 80 NYCHA residents and resident leaders from Red Hook and Gowanus Houses attended NYCHA's Sandy Recovery Opportunity and Resource Info Session at the Miccio Community Center. The event, sponsored by Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez (in the front row, second from right), connected residents to union opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, financial literacy resources, and continuing education providers.

Working from Home



EVELYNDA SANTOS HAS a really easy commute—this resident of the Lower East Side's LaGuardia Houses runs a City-licensed family day care business out of her home. For the past year, she has given the parents of eight children from the neighborhood a priceless peace of mind, knowing that their little ones are safe and sound during the workday.

Ms. Santos said that NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES) helped her get her business up and running. "They connected me with NYCHA partners such as the New York City Department of Small Business Services, which provided me with business training," she explained. "I was also connected to Kiva Zip, where I secured a loan through their crowdfunding platform to start my business."

Before she started her family day care business, Ms. Santos worked with infants

and children in a variety of jobs for several years, including through afterschool programs and the New York City Early Literacy Learning program at NYCHA community centers. Her advice for others who want to start a home-based business is, "Follow your dreams and they will become a reality if you work hard and stay focused." Residents with their own entrepreneurial ambitions can get connected to partners that can assist with the various aspects of launching and operating a business by calling REES at 718-289-8100 or registering for an upcoming information session or resident business development orientation at www.opportunitynycha.org.

Visit www.opportunitynycha.org/business-development/home-based-business to learn more about the kinds of businesses that are permitted in a NYCHA apartment.



Evelynda Santos operates a City-licensed family day care out of her LaGuardia Houses apartment.

NYCHA Plans \$1 Billion in Major Upgrades to 5,200 Apartments

13,000 Residents Would Benefit from the Federal RAD Program

NYCHA IS SEEKING to upgrade 5,200 apartments at 178 buildings through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Through RAD, major repairs are made to participating developments when their federal subsidy shifts from the public housing program to the Section 8 rental voucher program. Under the program, resident protections and rights are maintained, the apartments remain permanently affordable, and residents continue to pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. In addition, NYCHA continues to own the land and oversee all major decisions related to the properties.

Major improvements that could be funded through the program include: comprehensive mold remediation; roof or façade replacements; new kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring; renovation of hallways and stairwells; and upgrades to lighting, fencing, doors, windows, and common areas such as basketball courts.

"In the face of federal disinvestment

in public housing, the Rental Assistance Demonstration program is the best tool we have to protect and make the necessary repairs to NYCHA developments," said City Council Member Ritchie Torres, who is chair of the Council's Committee on Public Housing.

"I am proud to support the RAD program—and proud to say we helped hammer out the principles that will define the program here in New York," said Diane Blackwell, Frederick Samuel Houses' Resident Association President. "Residents had a seat at the table since day one, guaranteeing our voices were heard throughout the process, and the support of HUD gives us confidence that this program will be a success."

Through RAD, NYCHA is in the process of upgrading 1,400 apartments at the Ocean Bay-Bayside development in the Far Rockaways. NYCHA has been meeting monthly with residents there to update them on renovation and repair plans, tenancy rights, and the benefits of the Section 8 program.

BEFORE RAD



AFTER RAD



An example of the type of upgrades that may be completed through the RAD program.

New Energy System Coming to Red Hook Houses

Will Provide Heat, Hot Water, and Power to Residents, Even in Weather Emergencies

AS PART OF NYCHA's efforts to infuse resiliency and sustainability into our developments, the Authority plans to build an onsite steam generation and distribution system that provides heat and hot water to residents of Red Hook Houses' 28 buildings, combined with a microgrid—an electrical system that provides power to the residents in case there's an outage on the larger grid. This energy system, which will replace the eight steam plants that were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, will be housed in flood-proofed buildings with backup generators, making it resilient to the impacts of climate change, including weather-related power outages.

NYCHA announced in June that it is seeking partners who will finance, design, construct, and operate the energy system. "As part of NYCHA's Sandy Recovery program, we are working to build back stronger and more resilient than ever before," said NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye. "A new resilient energy system at Red Hook Houses will ensure that more than 6,000

residents—many of them seniors and children—are protected in the future."

"We are extremely excited about NYCHA's commitment to a cogeneration

system and microgrid in the Red Hook Houses," said Jill Eisenhard, executive director of Red Hook Initiative, a community-based organization. "Residents will

be getting the housing infrastructure that they need and deserve. Red Hook will now have the tools and resources necessary for improved resiliency and sustainability."

PHOTO CREDIT: KPF



Annual Recertification Paper Packets Have a New Look!

TENANTS COMPLETING ANNUAL REVIEWS on paper will notice that the packet has a new look! The new packet has pre-populated information about you and your family, making completion of the booklet much simpler. While the layout of the packet has changed, questions remain the same.

The new packet will come with instructions. Tenants should complete packets as usual and return them to their local property management office. Tenants can also contact a housing assistant for help.

Translations of the new packet are available in Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. Contact your management office for a copy, and please visit www.nyc.gov/nycha for more information.

NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

A. PUBLIC HOUSING AFFIDAVIT OF INCOME ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION

1. NAME	3. ACCOUNT NUMBER
2. RESIDENT ADDRESS	4. CASE NUMBER
	5. ANNUAL REVIEW QUARTER
	6. PERIOD COVERED
	7. DUE DATE

8. This form should be filled out by Head of the Household ONLY.
The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) may ask for proof of all statements you made. Failure to submit this annual recertification by the due date or willful submission of false information may result in a backcharge for rent, termination of your lease and civil or criminal prosecution.

B. LANGUAGE INFORMATION

1. CAN YOU SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND ENGLISH? ☐ a. YES ☐ b. NO *

* 2. IF NO, SELECT A LANGUAGE THAT YOU CAN SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND - OR, CHECK OTHER AND ENTER THE LANGUAGE YOU CAN SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND.

3. PLEASE CHECK ONLY ONE LANGUAGE

☐ a. CHINESE ☐ b. RUSSIAN ☐ c. SPANISH ☐ d. OTHER

4. CAN YOU READ AND UNDERSTAND LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS IN ENGLISH? ☐ a. YES ☐ b. NO *

* 5. IF NO, SELECT A LANGUAGE THAT YOU CAN READ AND UNDERSTAND - OR, CHECK OTHER AND ENTER THE LANGUAGE YOU CAN READ AND UNDERSTAND.

6. PLEASE CHECK ONLY ONE LANGUAGE

☐ a. CHINESE ☐ b. RUSSIAN ☐ c. SPANISH ☐ d. OTHER

C. PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

1. LAST NAME

2. FIRST NAME

3. MIDDLE NAME

4. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

5. ALTERNATE ID NUMBER (IF NO SSN)

6. DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy)

7. MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM RESIDENT ADDRESS ABOVE)

a. ADDRESS

b. CITY

c. STATE

d. ZIP CODE

8. DOES ANYONE NOT LISTED ON THIS AFFIDAVIT OF INCOME USE YOUR ADDRESS AS HIS/HER MAILING ADDRESS? ☐ a. YES * ☐ b. NO

9. * IF YES DISPLAY PERSON'S NAME AND ADDRESS

a. LAST NAME

b. FIRST NAME

c. ADDRESS

d. CITY

e. STATE

f. ZIP CODE

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3 Easy Options for Paying Your Rent!

1 ePayment from NYCHA's Website

<https://secure4.billerweb.com/nch/inetSrv>

- Available 24/7
- Use an eCheck or debit card
- Free when you sign up for eBilling
- Costs less than a stamp if you don't (\$0.30)
- Automatic payment options (weekly, biweekly, or monthly)

2 Your Bank's Website

- Pay through your bank's online system or bill payment network
- Automatic payment options are usually available at no cost

3 By Phone

- Use the MyNYCHA app on your smartphone to access the eRent website
- Or call 1-866-315-6355 to use an automated phone payment system
- Both are available 24/7 for either eCheck or debit card payment

Need to pay with cash? Your property management office has a list of banks and credit unions that take cash rent payments which are then submitted electronically to NYCHA.

Someone paying on your behalf? If you are a senior or disabled, an authorized third party can pay on your behalf. Tell them about these convenient electronic payment options!

I earned Social Security and Medicare, and when I couldn't afford healthy food, **SNAP HELPED.**

- ANDRES, RETIRED BUSINESS OWNER Harlem

▶ WATCH MY STORY AT FoodHelp.nyc

Now it's easier to apply online at FoodHelp.nyc

Need help applying for food help or public health insurance, or having trouble making rent? Call 929.221.0050 to reach an Outreach Specialist, available on-site at several NYCHA developments in all five boroughs.

Call 311 for more information

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Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Steven Banks
Commissioner



National Night Out



National Night Out, which brings together residents and the police to make communities safer, was celebrated across the country on August 2. NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye and Ingersoll Houses Resident Association President Anthony Sosa (in red) stand with members of the NYPD's Police Service Area 3, who received a mayoral proclamation recognizing their partnership with the community.

MissionMakeover

AS PART OF the Authority's efforts to upgrade buildings to safer, cleaner, and more sustainable dwellings, NYCHA is launching MissionMakeover: Painting with Purpose, a new initiative that involves repainting every apartment in our portfolio. We will be transitioning from oil-based paint to water-based latex paint because water-based paint cleans up with soap and water (oil-based paint must be cleaned with paint thinner), has less of an odor (oil-based paint smells), and it dries faster than oil-based paint.

MissionMakeover is expected to take five years to complete. LaGuardia Houses and Wyckoff Gardens will be the first two developments to get new paint jobs. Prior to painting the surfaces, NYCHA will make any necessary repairs to them, including plumbing (to prevent mold conditions), plasterwork, and carpentry. Residents will be notified as their building and apartment are scheduled for this work.



A bright, new paint job at LaGuardia Houses.

Getting In on the Ground Floor More Businesses and Services Coming to NYCHA

ONE WAY THAT NYCHA is working to generate more revenue to make repairs and renovations is by leasing ground-floor spaces in developments to businesses and services that NYCHA residents need. In the past year, we have leased over 41,000 square feet in 16 formerly vacant spaces to commercial and community-based tenants. These new tenants are generating more than \$500,000 a year that we can apply to repairs and other urgent needs.

One new retail tenant, Dr. James Kim, operates an optometry practice on the ground floor of Williamsburg Houses. "All New Yorkers deserve access to great neighborhood services, especially health care," he said. "Providing the same high-quality care to everyone in Williamsburg, including NYCHA residents, is not only good for my practice but the right thing to do."

In a neighborhood where long waitlists are the norm for quality child care and educational services, a City-licensed child care center opened last year in the ground floor of Washington Heights Rehab. The Mamá Tingó Childcare Learning Center, run by a community-based organization, provides 110 children with Universal Pre-K and ACS EarlyLearn NYC programming. The center's first UPK class, composed of kids from the Washington Heights and Inwood community, graduated this June. Administrative Director Felix Arias said that the center's programming is "a vital resource for local parents, many of whom are single, working parents. We're looking to expand to the Bronx and want to see if NYCHA has any available sites there."

Dilma Ortiz, proprietor of the Fabric Barn Corp., had been selling fabrics and textiles to the Williamsburg community out of the same storefront location for 25 years. "But the owner of that build-



Felix Arias is the administrative director of the Mamá Tingó Childcare Learning Center in Washington Houses Rehab.

ing wanted to sell the building and wouldn't renew my lease," she said. Ms. Ortiz wanted to keep her business in the neighborhood but found that most of the rents were out of reach. Fortunately, she found the perfect place, in the ground floor of Williamsburg Houses, which provides the stability she desired for her long-standing business.

Up next, an exciting development at Harlem River Houses: a New York Public Library branch will open there in a formerly vacant, 3,400-square-foot ground-floor space.



Dr. James Kim shows off some frames to a customer at his optometry practice in Williamsburg Houses.



Dilma Ortiz (right) is the proprietor of the Fabric Barn Corp. in Williamsburg Houses.

NYCHA Residents
Join Citi Bike for

\$5

per month



citi bike

NYCHA Residents

Citi Bike is a fun and affordable mode of transportation! Join for only \$5/month (with annual commitment), and get access to thousands of bikes around Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

Membresía anual sólo \$5 al mes para residentes de NYCHA.

NYCHA 居民若成為 Citi Bike 年度會員，月費只需 \$5。

VISIT
citibikenyc.com/nycha

OR CALL
1-855-BIKE-311

An Oasis of Support for DV Survivors on Staten Island

First Lady Opens New Family Justice Center



New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray welcomes everyone to the opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center; now domestic violence survivors in all five boroughs have a safe, welcoming place to get help.

ON JUNE 29, New York City's First Lady Chirlane McCray helped open the doors to the new Staten Island Family Justice Center (SIFJC), located at 126 Stuyvesant Place.

"The first worry of many victims of domestic violence is where to find help or how to find a safe space for herself and her children to sleep," First Lady McCray said. "Family Justice Centers are exactly what their name suggests—one central place where clients can restore balance to their lives. A survivor in need can meet with a prosecutor, look for housing, apply for financial assistance, and get mental health support, all in a safe, welcoming environment. This is how survivors can begin to rebuild healthy lives."

The SIFJC provides free and confidential services, including: civil legal representation for immigration and Family Court matters, prosecution of domestic violence crimes, safety planning and risk assessment, assistance with emergency shelter and housing, assistance with filing police reports, public benefits, onsite childcare, counseling for

victims and child witnesses, support groups, financial literacy, and job and vocational training.

"Over a decade ago, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence opened the first New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn. Today we are proud to say that, with the opening of the Family Justice Center in Staten Island, there is now a Family Justice Center in each of the five boroughs," said Commissioner Cecile Noel of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV).

OCDV projects that the SIFJC will handle an estimated 3,000 client visits in its first year. Since the "soft" opening of the SIFJC earlier this month, more than 56 people have sought services at the Center.

New Yorkers in every borough can access the City's Family Justice Centers by simply walking in during business hours—from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday—or by calling 311. For help from the Family Justice Center near you or to support the Family Justice Center Initiative, visit www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence or call 212-788-3156.

FREE MOVIE MATINEES IN AUGUST!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 is NYCHA Movie Day in all five boroughs. The Mayor's Office of Media & Entertainment (MOME) is providing residents with vouchers to see family-friendly movies in participating theaters. MOME has 2,000 vouchers available; limit 4 vouchers per household. Vouchers are first-come, first-served, so reserve your vouchers now. To reserve, call 718-707-5401 by Monday, August 22. After your residency has been confirmed, Resident Engagement will call you to let you know your voucher(s) is available for pickup. Pick up your vouchers by Monday, August 29, and on Movie Day, just head to one of the participating theaters listed below, present your voucher(s) at the box office, and enjoy the show.

Vouchers will be distributed at Borough Offices in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx, and Queens. Staten Island residents can pick up their vouchers at the Family Services Office at Cassidy-Lafayette Houses (address listed below).

- Bronx**
1200 Waters Place, 2nd. Fl.
Bronx, NY 10461
718-409-8699
- Queens**
International Tower, Apt.2R
90-20 170th Street
Jamaica, NY 11433
718-206-3286
- Brooklyn**
816 Ashford Street, 2nd Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11207
718-688-8204/8254
- Staten Island**
90 Lafayette Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-816-1521
(pick up tickets starting August 22)
- Manhattan**
45 Allen Street, 1st. Fl.
New York, NY 10002
212-334-2506



Participating theaters:

Borough	Theater	Address
Bronx	Concourse Plaza Multiplex	214 E. 161st St., Bronx, NY 10451
Brooklyn	Linden Boulevard Multiplex Cinemas	2784 Linden Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11208
Brooklyn	BAM Rose Cinemas	30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11208
Manhattan	AMC Loews Lincoln Square 13 (AMC)	1998 Broadway, New York, NY 10023
Queens	AMC Loews Fresh Meadows 7 (AMC)	190-02 Horace Harding Expy, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365
Queens	Regal Kaufman Astoria Stadium 14	35-30 38th St., Astoria, NY 11101
Queens	Jamaica Multiplex	15902 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica, NY 11432

POP IN TO GET YOUR IDNYC



NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye signed up for a free IDNYC card at the August 2 opening of the Sedgwick Community Center pop-up IDNYC enrollment center in the Bronx—the first pop-up center to be held at a NYCHA development. At the center, NYCHA residents and community members enrolled in the program to receive the free government-issued ID, which allows card holders to open bank or credit union accounts, provides free membership to 40 of the City's best cultural institutions and discounts on health care services and prescription drugs, and can be used as a library card.

Cleaning His Way to the Top

MEKEL BENNETT HAS always been an entrepreneur. As a little boy, he sold lemonade, iced tea, and Kool-Aid at a stand. In college, a street vendor told him, "There's nothing like owning your own business." He took those words to heart, purchased \$200 worth of miscellaneous goods, and sold them on the sidewalk—tripling the money he spent in one day. Now, Mr. Bennett is the CEO and Owner of BK Cleaning Services, Inc. and a NYCHA vendor, providing his specialized services to more than 20 developments.

"I came from poverty but I will not let it hinder me or stop my progression in life," Mr. Bennett said. "I know being an entrepreneur is the way to go. If you have integrity, flexibility, and tenacity, you can be an entrepreneur, be a CEO, be an owner of any business of your choosing."

Mr. Bennett, who now lives in Queens, is a former resident of both Williamsburg and Grant Houses. His uncle, Joseph "Joe-Boy" Crumpty, who passed away last year, was instrumental in help-



NYCHA vendor Mekel Bennett, Owner and CEO of BK Cleaning Services, says it's important to him to hire NYCHA residents to be part of his team.

ing him start his business. Before his uncle died, he told Mr. Bennett, "Mekel, tell me that you can do it and that you're going to do it." He did it—starting BK Cleaning Services, Inc. in 2015.

"You'll See the Difference" is the slogan of BK Cleaning Services. NYCHA staff at the various developments his business has serviced—including Melrose, Jefferson, and Tilden Houses—have seen the difference. He specializes in a number of cleaning services, including stripping ceilings, waxing floors, basement cleaning, sewage backup cleaning, janitorial services, power washing, and more.

It's important for Mr. Bennett to give back to NYCHA residents. "I hire staff from NYCHA. I go to various developments and I give a couple of guys a chance to work," Mr. Bennett said. "I once was in their shoes so I take the initiative to hire my employees from the developments. I'm in Melrose Houses right now, and I put on about 15 workers from various NYCHA developments in Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. That's me giving back to NYCHA for the beautiful chance they gave me to excel. It's only right that I give back to the residents of NYCHA."

His advice to residents who want to become their own bosses: "If you are very serious about it, don't let your dream be forgotten, stick with it and fight through all the adversity. Don't let anything discourage you because at the end there's a pot of gold, because the rainbow always has a pot of gold at the end of it—that pot of gold will be the reward you receive for starting your own business and excelling."



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A Tree for Miss Susie

NYCHA Celebrates the Life and Legacy of the World's Oldest Living Person

JULY 6, 2016, would have been Susanah "Miss Susie" Mushatt Jones' 117th birthday. At the time of her death in May 2016, she was the world's oldest living person, according to Guinness World Records. She was also the last living American born in the 19th century. Miss Susie is survived by more than 100 nieces, nephews, and godchildren.

NYCHA and Trees New York celebrated Miss Susie's life by planting a tree on her birthday at the Vandalia Senior Center at Vandalia Houses in Brooklyn, where she lived since 1983.

State Senator Roxanne Persaud, Assembly Member Charles Barron, and City Council Member Inez Barron joined NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye, Trees New York Executive Director Nelson Villarubia, and staff from Vandalia Houses at the event.

"Miss Susie was a tenacious and admirable woman who sought to improve others' lives with love and positive energy," NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye said at the event. "In the more than 30 years she called public housing home, she was an inspiration, beloved by all. This tree will stand for years to come, in tribute to



Miss Susie's commitment to strengthening her community over more than a century."

"Trees New York is happy to honor Miss Susie by donating this redbud tree in her memory," Mr. Villarubia added. A few of

Miss Susie's family members helped plant the tree; and residents and senior center staff gathered at the dedication ceremony to honor her long and rich life and to remember Miss Susie's legacy: her commitment to education and community. She helped send her nieces to college with her small salary and funded The Calhoun Club, a college scholarship for African-American students. Miss Susie was active in her neighborhood for almost 30 years, participating on the Resident Watch until she was 106.

Now, when residents of Vandalia Houses and the larger community pass the tree, they'll have a reminder of what Miss Susie once said was the key to her long life of happiness: love and positive energy.

Coming Soon to the Bronx: Nearly 200 New Affordable Homes for Seniors

THANKS TO A collaboration between NYCHA, the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the NYC Housing Development Corporation, the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, and Enterprise Community Partners, 197 brand-new units of affordable housing will be built in the Bronx for low-income and formerly homeless seniors.

The nearly \$100 million development, Serviam Heights, will involve the construction of a new nine-story building containing 140 apartments, the conversion of a former convent building into 57 apartments, and the conversion of a former chapel into a senior community center. NYCHA will provide project-

based Section 8 vouchers for all units, meaning that residents will pay no more than 30 percent of their monthly income toward rent. Apartments will be available to seniors earning no more than \$30,250 for an individual or \$38,850 for a household of three. Thirty apartments will be set aside for homeless or formerly homeless seniors. Tenants for the development will be selected from NYCHA's Section 8 waiting list.

Located on part of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula school campus, the development is expected to be completed by the end of next year. Its buildings will include "green" features such as energy-efficient windows, lighting and plumbing fixtures, and appliances.



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If you are interested in applying for a School Crossing Guard position please visit:

<http://nypdcivilianjobs.com/schoolcrossingguard/>

and provide your information and you will be contacted by an NYPD representative.



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Queens Library: The Community's Classroom



literacy services in the evening; Queens Library at Arverne is just across the street from NYCHA and offers a robust job skills training schedule, including workshops that culminate in certifications to become a home health aide, a security guard, or OSHA qualifications to work in construction.

What types of programs are available for seniors, young children, and young adults?

They all offer early childhood programs, story times, and summer reading programs for young children; great ways to help children develop a love of reading and the skills they'll need to be good readers. Seniors enjoy many of our daytime educational, cultural, and social programs, whether it is a crocheting group, a jazz concert, an exercise program or a computer workshop just for them. And if they can't come to the library, we offer free Mail-a-Book services for the homebound. (Call 718-776-6800 for more information.)

QUEENS RESIDENTS: HAVE you visited your local library this summer? With 65 branches, there's one near you. Besides books, Queens Library offers programs and services for residents of all ages. The *NYCHA Journal* spoke with Dennis M. Walcott, who joined the Library as President and CEO in March 2016.

A lifelong resident of Queens, Mr. Walcott has spent his entire career in public service and education. As Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education from 2011 to 2013, he led transformational change across the nation's largest school system. Before that, he served as Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development, overseeing the Department of Education, the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Mayor's Office of Adult Education.

Approximately 38,000 Queens residents live in NYCHA's developments. How does the Queens Library serve NYCHA's residents?

Everyone in Queens is within a mile of a Queens Library and all the resources and services that it provides: access to computers, free Wi-Fi, homework help for kids, lifelong learning opportunities for adults, and more. Several Queens Libraries are close to NYCHA communities. Queens Library at Ravenswood, for instance, has a fully accredited Universal Pre-Kindergarten and offers family

Queens Library's Job and Business Academy offers job search services, from teaching computer and job skills to resume writing and mock interviews to help land the job. One of our most successful programs is Young Adult Literacy for young adults who have left school before graduation, providing an opportunity to earn their diplomas at their own pace, with robust support, at the library.

How does the Queens Library help with education and opportunities for residents?

Queens Library is the community's classroom. People come to the library every day to learn. They may be researching a family tree, learning how to create their own website, learning basic Romanian for an upcoming trip, or finding out how to use email for the first time.

How can libraries help parents and children prepare for going back to school?

Every child should have his or her own free library card. Walk into any Queens Library with a photo ID or go to www.queenslibrary.org. An IDNYC also doubles as a library card. Every library has resources to help with school work, from the earliest grades, through college and on to professional studies.

Visit the Queens Library online at www.queenslibrary.org.