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New CCTV Cameras Installed at 31 Developments

NYCHA recently completed a major security upgrade at 31 developments throughout the city: the installation of 988 new CCTV cameras and upgrades to 152 existing CCTV cameras in 219 buildings. NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye announced this important safety news at Adams Houses in the Bronx on January 19. Adams received 72 new CCTV cameras.

"Integral to our role as landlords for over 600,000 public housing residents is our responsibility to provide the safest buildings possible," Chair Olatoye said. "NYCHA's CCTV system has proven vital in many instances in identifying those involved in criminal acts, and our residents have been vocal in their desire to see the program expanded. We are proud to announce this significant expansion, as well as the ongoing growth of our modernized layered-access program."

CCTV, or video security systems, has been very important in NYCHA and the NYPD's efforts to identify suspects involved in criminal acts. In addition to CCTV, ongoing security upgrades will include layered-access control (LAC) — small, lightweight electronic nubs which, when tapped against an electronic reader, provide building entry access to residents. The LAC technology is linked to authorized public housing residents and the accompanying key-fob technology can be deactivated when misplaced, and cannot be duplicated.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



Girls practice their dribbling skills at a session of the NYCHA Skills Development Academy for girls ages eight to 13. The Skills Academy was held at Williamsburg Community Center in Brooklyn.

FOR SIX SUNDAYS in January and February at the Williamsburg Community Center, 200 eight- to 13-year-old girls from NYCHA developments in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan learned the ins and outs of basketball—from shooting, passing, and dribbling to offense and defense—as part of NYCHA's Skills Development Academy (SDA) for girls.

NYCHA's Sports Manager Curtis Williams created the SDA because he believes young girls are not being taught fundamental basketball skills since coaches tend to focus their hopes on preparing boys for professional basketball careers and endorsements. The SDA was taught by a team of six experienced coaches and helped girls develop new skills in a non-competitive environ-

ment. The program was made possible through a partnership with the Brooklyn Nets.

"In addition to the quality training sessions, the girls also participated in nutritional sessions that address the importance of maintaining a healthy diet," Williams said. "The girls benefitted from being mentored by our trainers, all who have had successful collegiate and professional careers. As youth these very same trainers played in our Citywide Basketball League, they all credit their participation as providing a springboard to their success. It is my dream that one day the girls involved with the SDA will be able to say the same thing years from now."

LaToya Ellington, a resident of Independence Towers, signed up her daughter Zoé Grey, 9, (CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR MOVING FORWARD

Last month I told you about a lot of the wonderful work we accomplished, with your support in 2015. At the end of January we released our first quarterly report on NextGeneration NYCHA, our strategic plan launched last May that actually documents NYCHA's work to date on the 15 strategies we outlined to change the way we are funded, how we do business, how we repair and rebuild our properties, and how we engage with our residents.

We've made many strides since the plan was launched, including the roll out a new recycling program at over 99 developments, introducing the MyNYCHA app to streamline the repair request process, creating new design standards with a focus on being safe and accessible, and starting OPMOM (Optimal Property Management Operating Model) at 18 developments. With OPMOM, we've reduced the time it takes to complete a maintenance request from an average of 21 days to eight days, and we've decreased the turnaround time for an apartment to be re-occupied by 43 percent. Now that's real progress. If you'd like to read the full report, visit: <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NextGeneration-NYCHA-Quarterly-Report-2015-Q4.pdf>.

This issue of the Journal is full of stories about progress and promise. In January, Mayor Bill de Blasio joined NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly and me at Wyckoff Gardens in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn to discuss the NextGen Neighborhood proposal to build affordable housing and market-rate housing on underused land at Wyckoff with residents. We reassured them that public housing is not going private, their rent will not be raised and funds from NextGen Neighborhoods will help bring much needed repairs their development (page 11).

At Amsterdam Houses, there's a proposal for a redesign of the lobby that would provide a space to host support services for seniors, allowing seniors to remain in their



apartments and get the assistance they need as they age (page 8). We're also doing our part to take care of a special group—this City's veterans. NYCHA played an important role in helping to end chronic homelessness among veterans by housing more than 500 formerly homeless veterans last year (page 12). We're working with our partners to take care of our residents' health, too. Shaquana Boykin, a Whitman Houses resident, works on health initiatives for residents at Farragut, Ingersoll, and Whitman in Brooklyn. Check out her heart healthy tips! (page 12)

When thinking about progress, it's important to recognize those who have paved the way. February is Black History Month and March is Women's History Month—allowing us to celebrate the many ways this country has been moved forward thanks to the contributions of women and African Americans. In recognition of Black History and Women's History months, we feature two inspiring former NYCHA residents: Walthene Primus (Albany Houses), recently appointed to the Mayor's Commission on Gender Equity (page 6) and Dr. Aprille Ericsson (Roosevelt Houses), an aerospace engineer at NASA who works on interesting projects dealing with climate change, space, and more (page 5).

Progress takes time, innovation, and partnership. At NYCHA, we wouldn't be able to move forward without you, our residents. Thank you for your vision and collaboration as we work to build a better NYCHA.

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

Scholarships Available to NYCHA Students

LOOKING FOR MORE money to fund your education? Check out the 2016 CHW Scholarship Fund, which has \$17,000 in scholarships available for New York State students who live in affordable housing, meaning multi-family residential rental housing financed by federal, state, or local subsidies including project-based Section 8 subsidies or portable Section 8 vouchers.

The scholarship, offered by New York law firm Cannon Heyman & Weiss, LLP, is available to full- and part-time students attending approved colleges, junior colleges, technical schools, and other post-

secondary institutions leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate. The scholarship was created in 2013 to help students living in affordable rental housing developments realize the dream of furthering their education. This scholarship is not available to graduate students.

The application includes a 500-word essay on living in affordable housing and your educational goals, as well as two letters of recommendation. The application deadline is May 17, 2016. For an application or more information visit, <http://chwattys.com/2015-scholarship-fund>.

NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

NYCHA'S BOARD MEETINGS, open to the public, take place on Wednesdays at 10 am 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 pm 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 pm 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:

February 24, 2016
March 30, 2016
April 27, 2016

May 25, 2016
June 29, 2016
July 27, 2016
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.

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HOUSING EXPERT DR. ZAIRE Z. DINZEY-FLORES JOINS THE NYCHA BOARD

GROWING UP IN PONCE, PUERTO RICO, Zaire Z. Dinzey-Flores noticed something that piqued her interest: In PR, public housing residents were unfairly blamed “for many of the ills in society, such as high crime, and being unwilling to work,” she said. “That vision of society didn’t sit well with me. Most public housing residents are hard-working individuals who have high aspirations for their families and themselves. We need to work to dispel these myths and stereotypes; people who live in public housing should be respected and acknowledged.”

That was enough to inspire an academic career focused on sociology, social inequality, and urban planning. Dr. Dinzey-Flores is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Latino & Caribbean Studies at Rutgers University, and teaches courses on urbanism and social inequality. She has lectured and written extensively on these topics, and published an award-winning book, *Locked In, Locked Out: Gated Communities in a Puerto Rican City*, that looks at residential neighborhoods and public housing in Puerto Rico.

Mayor Bill de Blasio recently appointed Dr. Dinzey-Flores to the NYCHA Board and NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye believes Dr. Dinzey-Flores’ expertise will be a great help to the



Authority as it moves forward on achieving the goals of its long-term strategic plan, NextGeneration NYCHA. “Her knowledge of public housing and urban planning will support our efforts to create safe, clean, and connected communities for our residents,” Chair Olatoye said.

NYCHA residents will find they have a strong advocate in Dr. Dinzey-Flores. Much of her scholarly work focuses on the influence of design and architecture on the physical environment as it shapes communities and social dynamics; she is especially interested in helping re-envision NYCHA neighborhoods in a way that promotes increased equality and opportunity for residents. Dr. Dinzey-Flores is also interested in engaging the communities surrounding NYCHA in the work to better public housing.

“My husband grew up in Smith Houses [Manhattan] so I’ve had personal contact with NYCHA. I think it’s important that the surrounding communities are held responsible for the well-being of public housing. Public housing is part of the fabric of the city and a stronghold of affordable housing. NYCHA residents can hold those of us who haven’t grown up or don’t currently reside in public housing accountable for solutions as well.”

BronxWorks: Working Hard for the Bronx

ONE OF THE GOALS of NextGeneration NYCHA is making sure our residents are connected with high quality social services. In the Bronx, we have a great partner in BronxWorks, a multi-service organization and settlement house that provides a host of support services for individuals and families.

You may know them best as the agency who manages the three Cornerstone centers at Melrose, St. Mary’s and Betances. Last year Betances had 763 children and 453 adults from NYCHA developments enrolled in programs including afterschool enrichment and summer camp programs; parent education programs, workforce development; teen programs focusing on art, college readiness, academic enrichment, and leadership; and early childhood learning. Additionally 3,588 community members attended special events at the center.

Melrose also features a large children’s program that provided similar services to 728 children last year. The St. Mary’s program is brand-new and served 167 children ages 5 to 21 in 2015.

But that’s not all that BronxWorks offers NYCHA residents in the Bronx. They also provide meals, recreation, health services such as diabetes prevention, and socialization opportunities

to seniors at the E.R. Moore Houses Senior Center in Mott Haven. Seniors who may be navigating housing court can look for assistance for a BronxWorks staffer located right in the Housing Courts specifically for that purpose. BronxWorks also offers specialized legal assistance to help seniors facing eviction proceedings.

Teens can get assistance with SAT prep, writing courses, college applications, financial aid applications, college tours, job applications, resume writing, and vocational training.

Individuals and families can go to any BronxWorks’ office for help registering for food stamps or health insurance enrollment. Social workers are available to arrange mental health services including counseling, testing services for academic support, and they will work with school guidance counselors. BronxWorks also manages a homelessness prevention program called Homebase for people living in Community Districts 1 and 4.

For more information on BronxWorks:
Main Office:
BronxWorks
2070 Grand Concourse
Bronx NY 10457
718.731.3114

FREE 15-week job training program for homeless & low-income women

First Step Program

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GED not required • New class starting soon!

FREE Continental Breakfast & Metrocards Provided

For more information, please call (212) 776-2074



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Mr. Met visited children and their families at a special event held at the BronxWorks Classic Community Center. BronxWorks is a NYCHA partner that provides Bronx residents of all ages numerous support services.

Giving Girls a Voice



NYPD HOUSING BUREAU Officer Roxanne George believes that empowering young girls through mentorship helps build confidence, challenges them to discover their potential, and strengthens lives and communities. That's why she created the Girls Talk program this past spring with her partner, Officer Bola Ajasa. Girls Talk gives girls ages 10 to 14 at PS/MS 188 a friendly arena to express themselves freely.

Girls Talk was also created to build a bridge between the police and the community while extending the Officers' efforts beyond truancy, and their focus at the school, which is adjacent to the Lower East Side's Wald and Baruch Houses. MS 188's Principal, Suany Ramos, believed in the program. She chose 20 girls to participate; many had been impacted by domestic violence and were living in transitional housing or shelters.

For five weeks this summer, Officers George and Ajasa were mentors to the girls, taking them somewhere different every day, from Randall's Island to DUMBO. They held bake sales—the idea of one of the girls—and used the proceeds to buy custom Girls Talk t-shirts, their "uniform" on outings across the City. Often times, Officers George and Ajasa bought the girls lunch out of their own pockets.

"The girls have been through a lot," Officer George said. "My partner and I are inspired by their resilience, thoughtfulness, and can-do attitude, which gets them through whatever they confront. They're incredible...the sweetest, most loving bunch of girls."

Now that the school year has resumed, the officers meet with the girls on a weekly basis. In November, they hosted a "Minority Women in the Workplace" brunch that featured inspirational guest speakers. "We really want our young girls to look forward to the future," Officer George said. "We want to expose them to new things so that they're able to have a vision and see that there's more out there for them. We want the girls to see that anything is attainable once they have the right people behind them, pushing them."

"Our students report back so many heartwarming stories of officers bonding with them over bad choices, good meals, embarrassing moments, and successes they've had," Principal Suany Ramos said. "More than anything, Girls Talk gives our students a chance to be around strong, intelligent, and caring women in their neighborhood who are doing great things and who want them to follow in their footsteps." Participants themselves are eager to say that they are learning the true meaning of "girl power."



Girls Talk is a new program started by Police Officers Roxanne George and Bola Ajasa. Through this mentoring program, young girls—many from Wald and Baruch Houses—found strength in their voices.

REES EVENTS



If you are interested in any of these events please call the REES Hotline at 718.289.8100.

Carey Gabay Memorial Scholarship

Carey Gabay, an attorney and public servant, was tragically killed as an innocent victim of gun violence in September 2015 at the age of 43. In his honor, The State University of New York has created the Carey Gabay Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance to five incoming SUNY State-operated campus students who exemplify Carey's commitment to social justice, leadership, and mentoring, as well as his personal story of succeeding academically despite an economically disadvantaged background. The Carey Gabay Scholarship Program will annually award full-ride scholarships to five students to attend a State University of New York State-operated campus

beginning in the 2016-17 school year. These scholarships will cover all costs of attendance, including tuition, room and board, college fees, books and supplies, and transportation and personal expenses. Deadline to apply is March 15, 2016. To apply visit: <http://tinyurl.com/CAREYGABAY>

FREE Job Skills Training with St. Nicks Alliance

Job training classes for ages 21+ and job placement assistance upon completion. Don't miss out; attend the FREE job skills training information session for CDL, Construction, Environmental Response & Remediation Tech.

Tuesday, February 23 at 10:00 a.m.
Carey Gardens Community Center,
23-15 Surf Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11224

Free Financial Counseling for Residents through Opportunity Connect

NYCHA RESIDENTS CAN now request an appointment for a free one-on-one session with a certified financial counselor. Opportunity Connect, available on NYCHA's Self-Service Portal <http://on.nyc.gov/nycha-ss>, where residents, applicants, and Section 8 voucher holders can update and check on the status of their information, and now refer themselves for economic opportunity services. Opportunity Connects is part of the Doorways to Opportunity initiative funded by Citi Community Development. Residents ages 18 and over can log into Opportunity Connect to make a self-referral anytime. After logging in, residents answer a few simple questions about the type of service they are seeking and then will be matched to a service provider based on the resident's location or zone. All providers in the Opportunity Connect system have been screened and are authorized Zone Partners of NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES). Additional

services in the areas of job training, adult education, and business development will be added to Opportunity Connect in the coming year.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dr. Aprille Ericsson: From Roosevelt Houses to Mars

IN 2015, DR. APRILLE ERICSSON was recognized by *Business Insider* as one of the "23 most powerful women engineers in the world." That's just the latest of many awards and accolades she's received as a history-making aerospace engineer. When Dr. Ericsson speaks to an audience, she often tells them she grew up at Roosevelt Houses in Bedford-Stuyvesant, letting them know success like hers could be achievable by anyone.

KNOW YOUR HISTORY

"My mother stressed the importance of us knowing our history; I learned about African American figures in math and science, like Charles Drew, George Washington Carver, and Egyptians," Dr. Ericsson says. "It's important to learn your history, whether you're African American, Hispanic, or Asian American. Knowing my history gave me confidence."

Dr. Ericsson was the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Howard University and the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Engineering from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC). In addition, she received a B.S. in aeronautical/astronautical engineering from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and an M. Eng. from Howard University.

NEVER GIVE UP!

Dr. Ericsson failed Calculus III twice at MIT—but she didn't let that stop her. The third time was the charm when she passed it at City College of NY. "You have to have confidence in yourself. I wanted to do aerospace engineering and calculus was a tool I needed. I wasn't going to give up. Look at what your skills are and what's lacking and get support. Remain determined, work hard to overcome so you can get where you want."

Dr. Ericsson has worked at the NASA GSFC in Maryland for the past 27 years. She's currently the Program Manager for Small Business Innovative Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Research, which funds small businesses to create innovative technology to fulfill NASA needs; they could be used by our communities or industry.



Cooler projects she's worked on at NASA:

- 1: SCIM: a mission proposed to collect dust particles from Mars.
- 2: LOLA (Lunar Orbiter Laser Altimeter), a laser instrument on a spacecraft orbiting the moon and creating 3-D, high resolution maps of the moon to help identify future landing sites and hidden evidence of water.
- 3: Managed a \$500M space instrument that will measure Greenland and Antarctica ice sheets for changes and trends in ice-sheet mass due to climate change.

In addition to her work at NASA, Dr. Ericsson is a teacher, mentor, and mother who lectures about the importance of women in science, technology, engineering, and math careers. She has spoken at the White House, Oprah's Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa, and recently gave a TEDx talk titled, "Let's Go to Mars."

See the talk here:
<https://youtu.be/LQ4jlgzOwHs>.

Seniors Talk History

DID YOU KNOW that many of NYCHA's developments are named after major African American figures throughout history?

In fact, Woodson Houses in Brooklyn is named after the man responsible for our nation's yearly commemoration of black history in February. Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), also known as the "Father of Black History Month," was the son of former slaves who became an accomplished author, publisher, and historian. He was one of the first people to study African American history and stress the importance of celebrating the contributions black people have made to America.

Woodson received a B. Litt. degree from Berea College in Kentucky, an M.A. from the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. He was the second African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard, after W.E.B. Du Bois. After his education, he devoted his life to studying African American history. He established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the *Journal of Negro History*, and in 1926 he founded Negro History Week, which evolved into Black History Month as we know it today.

The NYCHA Journal visited Rosetta Gaston Senior Center, located at Woodson Houses and operated by Wayside Out-Reach Development, Inc., to talk to seniors about their Black History Month heroes.

Who is your Black History Month Hero?

Margaret Lopez

Van Dyke Houses
Black History Month Hero: Michelle Obama
She's an outstanding mother and wife. She is a role model for all African American women and I look up to her.



Aida Ramos

Bay View Houses
Black History Month Hero: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
He wanted unity with the people. He didn't care what race you are. He wanted everyone holding hands and believing that we would be brothers and sisters. I always admired him for that. His dream still goes on.



Mary McNeal

Woodson Houses
Black History Month Hero: President Barack Obama
He made history for all of us. In my lifetime I never thought I'd see a black president. I was born in the south where people were segregated so I never thought I'd see this.



Jose Soto

Woodson Houses
Black History Month Hero: President Barack Obama
He is the first Black American that became president of the United States. To me it's great. He's been great. He's been all over the world. I love him like he's my son.



Creola McEachin

Kingsborough Houses
Black History Month Hero: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
I liked King a lot. He did a lot and he brought us a long way.



Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson

What's in a Name?

NYCHA Developments Named after Women

Bethune Gardens:

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875–1955)

An educator who founded the National Council of Negro Women and was vice president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).



CARL VAN VECHTEN

Bracetti Plaza:

Mariana Bracetti (1825–1903)

She was known as "Arms of Gold," and is believed to have crafted the first Puerto Rican flag known as the Boriquas Latin Cross, which today remains as the Puerto Rican symbol of revolution and independence.



Roosevelt Houses:

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962)

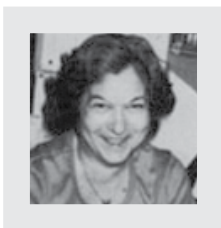
First Lady of the U.S. fought constantly for women's rights and for the betterment of Black people, youth, the poor, and the unemployed. A U.S. Delegate to the United Nations, she was made chairman of the Commission for Human Rights in 1946.



Sondra Thomas Apartments:

Sondra Thomas (1927–1983)

She was involved in labor and education issues and housing for the poor and displaced. She fought to find affordable homes for people displaced by the massive West Side Urban Renewal program. Through her efforts, some 2,000 families found affordable homes in their own neighborhood.



Wald Houses:

Lillian Wald (1867–1940)

A dynamic force for social reform, she created widely accepted models of public health and social service programs. She founded Henry Street Settlement, played a key role in organizing the American Red Cross, and was a leader in the fight to abolish child labor.



Justice Sonia Sotomayor Houses:

Justice Sonia Sotomayor (1954–)

Justice Sotomayor is the 111th Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Court's first Hispanic American Justice. She is an iconic figure in the American legal community with thirty-year career. She lived at the Bronxdale Houses from 1957 until 1970 and it was renamed for her in 2010.



STEVE PETERWAY

Homegrown Hero: Walthene Primus

Fighting for Gender Equality



Walthene Primus was appointed by Mayor de Blasio to the Mayor's Commission on Gender Equity in January 2016.

You grew up at a NYCHA development, didn't you?

My family moved into Albany Houses, when I was three years old; I lived there until I was 28. It was like one big happy family. Parents watched out for all the kids and Artie, our Housing patrolman, knew everyone by name.

What was your NYCHA career like and how did you get interested in the union?

I joined NYCHA in 1977 as a Clerical in Housing Applications. I arrived eager to work and was treated fairly. I remember all the filing being done manually. Later, I worked in Community Operations and the Disbursement Department. I became curious about the union when I asked the shop steward about a deduction for union dues on my first paycheck. I wanted to know where that money was going, so I began attending DC [District Council] Local 957 meetings.

How has your career advanced in the union?

My first position was shop steward for [Housing Authority Clerical Employees] Local 957, which I held for almost 15 years. Then the union asked me to work in headquarters as acting secretary and I was later elected to that

position. Around 1997, I was granted release time from NYCHA to work for the union full time. Later, I was elected Local 957 vice president and eventually I was elected president, serving for four terms. After that, I served on DC 37's Laws and Rules Committee and then the Ethical Practices Committee. Now I'm serving my third term as Chair of the National Women's Advisory Committee of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

How did your interest in gender issues develop?

As National AFSCME Chair, I saw that many women in different jobs and places were not treated as well as we are here. That made me want to advocate for the rights of women workers.

What concerns do you want to pursue on the commission on Gender Equity and how do you think your work will affect women who live and work at NYCHA?

One issue I want to discuss is equal pay for women. A lot of progress has been made but we're not all there yet. Many women work for NYCHA, so many issues that we work on could affect them or their daughters. When I attended my first union meeting in this building, I never thought that one day I'd be sitting behind this desk. I want to work to create that same kind of opportunity for other women.

SHE'S GOT GAME, (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



for the SDA even though she describes Zoé as a girly girl who was not interested in basketball before the academy. "I thought it would be good for her to try something new. She's a natural and took an interest instantly. It's had a great impact on my daughter already. She wants me to go buy her a ball; she wants to practice all the time."

Wise Towers resident Carolyn Clark-Gonzalez is a coach with NYCHA's basketball program and her daughter Tatyana, 13, participated in the SDA.

"We asked the girls what they thought about the SDA after the first session and they said they loved it and were glad to come back every Sunday to participate,"



Over six Sundays, approximately 200 girls from NYCHA developments in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan learned new basketball skills from six experienced coaches.

Clark-Gonzalez said. "It encourages my daughter to want to pursue basketball even more and it's not just about practice, it teaches confidence, too."



The SDA closed with a bang for the girls—they showed off their new skills at a half-time scrimmage during NYCHA's City-wide Basketball League Championships

for boys at the Barclays Center on February 21. In April the girls and their parents will be treated to a special game night when the Nets play the New Orleans Pelicans.

A Romantic Dinner for Two With Love from Food Business Pathways

Strawberry Coconut Chilean Sea Bass with Swiss Chard and Sweet Potato

Serves two.

Ingredients:

Two 6 oz. cuts of Chilean Bass steak
1 cup of coconut milk
1 cup vegetable broth
2 cups of chopped sweet potato
2 cups of avocado or grape seed oil
2 bunches of freshly washed Swiss chard
8 strawberries sliced in half
4 fresh chives finely diced
1/3 cup of chopped fresh basil

1 tbsp. chives
1/2 tbsp. of Trader Joe's 21 Seasoning Salute
1/2 tbsp. of sea salt
1/4 tbsp. of black pepper
1/2 tsp. raw honey
1/4 tsp. of red chili flakes
3 pinches of nutmeg
Citrus zest

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a 12" pot add 2 cups of avocado oil. Season the chopped sweet potato with citrus zest, raw honey, and sea salt. When the oil is hot enough, add the sweet potatoes and cook until they are golden brown on all sides. Brush both sides of Chilean Sea Bass with avocado oil and season with salt, red chili flakes, chives, and basil. After both sides are seared, place sea bass in a glass pan or 4" baking pan with coconut milk. Bake in oven for 10 minutes. While sea bass is in the oven, in a small sauce pan, add vegetable broth, Swiss chard, 3 pinches of nutmeg, salt, pepper, and 21 seasonings. Let the Swiss chard cook for 7-10 minutes until bright green. When the sea bass is done, sprinkle strawberries on top. When done, plate your meal and enjoy.

VALENTINE'S DAY COMES just once a year, but love is something that should be celebrated every day. Here's a delicious dinner for two from Whitman Houses resident and Food Business Pathways graduate Omena El, owner of Love Bliss Wellness LLC.

To learn more about the services Love Bliss Wellness LLC. provides, visit www.loveblisswellnessllc.com or call 347.927.7886.



Shadows Pet Services: Mobile Grooming Services for Dapper Dogs and Glamour Cats



KEEP AN EYE out for Amanda Santiago's pet grooming business, Shadows Pet Services. You might see it on the Upper East Side of Manhattan one day and Mott Haven, Bronx, the next—because it's mobile. Since 2014, this Mill Brook Houses resident has been keeping her clients' dogs and cats looking dapper with her salon on wheels: a custom van that features a rooftop solar panel.

What makes your business special?

I stand out from other grooming salons because I can come to the customer. Their pet is usually never more than five blocks away from its home. I am faster too, never taking more than an hour or two (depending on the size of the

pet) to finish. Their pet doesn't have to wait in a loud salon with other barking dogs, making them scared—I'm usually providing one-on-one service.

What's the story behind its name, "Shadows Pet Services?"

My dog's name is Shadows (a Cocker Spaniel), and since he was the first dog I ever groomed, I decided to name it after him.

Why did you start it?

I have wanted to own a business for a while. At first I wanted to open a photo studio, because that is what I majored in in college. But when I was going to school, I was working as a dog bather



and realized that a lot of people would ask for me. That motivated me to become a groomer. And I wanted to be my own boss and make my own schedule, so that when my kids are out of school, I am off of work.

How did you start it?

I received an email from NYCHA about

opening your own business. I figured there would be no harm if I went to one of the meetings. NYCHA connected me to a program called Women's Initiative, which taught me how to make a business plan to see if what I wanted to do was even possible. NYCHA also set me up with a coach who helped me make decisions about my business. Soon I was getting help with hiring my first employee. NYCHA connected me to resources that helped my dream become a reality.

What are your plans for your business's future?

I would like to offer other services like dog walking and home daycare and home pet photography, which don't require a storefront location.

Any words of advice to your fellow NYCHApreneurs?

Owning a business is not easy. I had to continue working my previous job while growing this business just to keep food on the table. I worked about seven months without profits until I was finally able to pay myself. I was working a lot and wasn't home with my kids very often in the beginning. Thankfully, now I'm doing much better, and just recently was able to take two weeks off with my kids during their school break.

Designing a Better Lobby for Seniors at Amsterdam Houses

MORE THAN ONE million New Yorkers are over the age of 65; by 2040, the City's 65-plus population will be nearly the size of Philadelphia. NYCHA has drafted plans to redesign the lobby at Amsterdam Houses to make "aging in place" easier for residents. The proposed alterations would provide a special, multipurpose area that can host various support services for seniors.

The proposed project would cost about \$4 million. NYCHA is actively seeking funding partners from the public and private sectors, as well as organizations that would provide programming in the new lobby area, to bring the project to life.

"This redesign will help seniors at Amsterdam Houses feel connected and supported in their day-to-day activities," says Bruce Eisenberg, Deputy Director of the Architectural Unit in NYCHA's Office of Design. "It would set a new benchmark, allowing seniors to live in their

homes as long as physically feasible. But it's not just for seniors—someone moving in to Amsterdam Houses today should be able to age in place there, building and strengthening their community."

The idea developed during focus groups held by NYCHA, the New York Academy of Medicine (which works with aging populations), and the American Institute of Architects' Committee for the Aging. Seniors expressed their needs and NYCHA's design team came up with this plan in response. Many of the seniors who participated have lived at Amsterdam Houses since it opened in the 1940s.

Herbert Oppenheimer, one of the architects who designed the Amsterdam Houses Addition built in the 1970s who also lives next door to the development, suggested that the development be included in this study because there's a "naturally occurring retirement community" there. He reached out to Resident Association President Margarita Curet and found enthusiastic support.



"Everybody likes the idea," said Ms. Curet. "I really love the idea. I think it will be great for the seniors, many of whom are in wheelchairs, to be able to sit there in the lobby and be with their neighbors,

because most of them don't go out and many of them live by themselves."

NYCHA has already met with some potential sponsors of the project and will continue its outreach efforts.

About the NYCHA Digital Vans

OPERATING THROUGHOUT THE boroughs of New York, Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 4 PM, the NYCHA Digital Vans provide NYCHA residents and other members of the community with free internet and a mobile hot spot. Each van has an instructor on site and is equipped with eight laptops, wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) and printers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the NYCHA Digital Vans
e-mail: digitalvan@nycha.nyc.gov

BRONX

MITCHEL HOUSES

Also serving Mott Haven and Mill Brook.
200 Alexander Avenue
at 137th Street

Mondays

02/22/16
03/07/16
03/21/16

CASTLE HILL

625 Castle Hill Avenue

Mondays

02/29/16
03/28/16

MELROSE

Also serving Jackson and Morrisania Air Rights.
Morris Avenue between 153rd and 156th Streets
near Classic Center

Mondays

02/29/16
03/28/16

FOREST

Also serving McKinley.
Between 980 and 1000 Trinity Avenue

Tuesdays

02/23/16
03/08/16
03/22/16

MORRIS

Also serving Butler and Webster.
3673 Third Avenue near boiler room rear entrance

Tuesdays

03/01/16
03/29/16

PATTERSON

On 143rd Street between 3rd Avenue and Morris Avenue

Wednesdays

02/24/16
03/09/16
03/23/16

EDENWALD

In front of Management Office
1145 East 229th Street

Thursdays

03/03/16
03/31/16

BROOKLYN

STUYVESANT GARDENS SENIOR CENTER

150 Malcolm X Boulevard
between Gates Avenue
and Monroe Street

Mondays

02/22/16
03/07/16
03/21/16

OCEAN HILL

Parking Lot at Building #1,
24 Mother Gaston Boulevard

Tuesdays

02/23/16
03/08/16
03/22/15

KINGSBOROUGH

Kingsborough 3rd Walk, between 1880 Pacific Street and Bergen Street

Tuesdays

03/01/16
03/29/16

WARREN STREET HOUSES

572 Warren Street,
between 3rd and 4th Avenues

Wednesdays

03/02/16
03/30/16

MARCY

Park Avenue between
Marcy and Nostrand Avenues

Thursdays

03/03/16
03/31/16

TOMPKINS

Myrtle Avenue between Throop and Tompkins Avenues (close to Throop Avenue)

Fridays

02/26/16
03/11/16
03/25/16

BUSHWICK

372 Bushwick Avenue, in front of baseball field

Fridays

03/04/16

MANHATTAN

EAST RIVER

Also serving Wilson and Metro-North.
425 East 105th Street

Wednesdays

03/02/16
03/30/16

JEFFERSON

300 East 115th Street
Van location TBD and publicized at a later date

Monday

03/14/16 – Annual Recertification Deployment Event

Tuesday

03/15/16 – Annual Recertification Deployment Event

Wednesday

03/16/16 – Annual Recertification Deployment Event

Thursday

03/17/16 – Annual Recertification Deployment Event

Friday

03/18/16 – Annual Recertification Deployment Event

LEXINGTON/ WASHINGTON

Near 1773 3rd Avenue or Ground Shop on 3rd Avenue between 98th-99th Streets

Thursdays

02/25/16
03/10/16
03/24/16



(NEW CCTV CAMERAS INSTALLED AT 31 DEVELOPMENTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

“Effective public safety requires the collaborative efforts of police, housing management and staff, and the residents themselves. NYCHA’s CCTV is a vital public safety and accountability tool that can assist our efforts to improve the quality of life at NYCHA developments,” said NYCHA Vice President for Public Safety Gerald Nelson. Chief Nelson acted as emcee at the event, and was joined by resident board members Victor Gonzalez and Willie Mae Lewis.

These comprehensive security upgrades were made thanks to an investment of over \$18M in funding—approximately \$16.62 million from the city and \$1.45 million from the state and will strengthen security throughout NYCHA developments, moving the Authority closer to the NextGeneration NYCHA goal of safe, clean, and connected communities.



SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR CANCELLATION.

Another Round of Applause!

This Year's Lee Strasberg Scholarship Winners Continue NYCHA's Tradition of Excellence

IT WASN'T EASY but judges singled out four NYCHA residents to receive acting scholarships at the culmination of the 2016 Annual NYCHA Lee Strasberg Scholarship Competition on January 12. Julia Petty and David Ventura were selected winners in the adult category, and Tavion Hamilton and Aaliyah Ramdeo won in the youth category.

They will each have the incredible opportunity to participate in the Lee Strasberg Theater Institute's renowned 12-week acting program. The Institute, which has taught stage and film actors since 1970, has offered these scholarships to NYCHA residents since 1983. You may recognize some of the Institute's former students: Robert DeNiro, John Leguizamo, Al Pacino, Sidney Poitier, Jesse L. Martin, James Baldwin, and Scarlett Johansson.

Julia Petty, 25 Queensbridge Houses

Petty performed "Blood Bath," a scene from *American Horror Story* that featured Angela Bassett giving a eulogy.

Favorite actors: Angela Bassett and Denzel Washington

Favorite TV Show:

American Horror Story

Favorite Movie: *Dance Hall Queen*
Remake she'd love to star in: *Tales from the Hood*—a horror story that deals with the realities of living in an impoverished environment.

On winning: "I feel ecstatic. When my husband and I decided to start a family I feel like I put my dreams on hold to take care of my children. I feel like I'm getting my groove back. I want to learn as much as possible and refine my craft in every aspect."

David Ventura, 25 Douglass Houses

Ventura, also one of NYCHA's 2015 CUNY Scholars, performed "Myth & Legend" by D.M. Larson

Favorite actors: Bradley Cooper, Jack Falahee, Meryl Streep, and Kristin Wiig.

Favorite TV show:

The Office (US Version)

Favorite movie: *The Lion King*.

Remake he'd love to star in:

How to Get Away with Murder

On winning: "I want to take every piece of information from the Institute—from what monologues to choose to learning how to write your own script. Anything and everything is what I want from this amazing opportunity."

Aaliyah Ramdeo, 11 Astoria Houses

Ramdeo, also a member of the NYCHA Youth Chorus, sang "The Fight Song" by Rachel Platten and performed a monologue titled, "The Vegetarian."

Favorite actor: Demi Lovato

Favorite movie: *The Wiz*

On winning: Ramdeo's mom Kumari Francis said: "Aaliyah's been working on this and trying out since she was eight-years-old. This is an opportunity to see what happens and get professional training in what she's already been doing, singing and acting. She's very excited; she can't believe that she actually won."

“ Growing up, my mother, who was an amazing woman, took my brother and me to the movies every Saturday because she saw it as an escape from difficult times, I love being able to be a different character and experience someone else's life; see the world through someone else's eyes; even if it is just for a few minutes.

”

David Ventura

Tavion Hamilton, 11 Williamsburg Houses

Tavion's monologue, "Johnny Boy," depicts a boy who gets mad at his mother for asking him to do everything.

Favorite actor: Martin Lawrence

Favorite TV show: *Henry Danger*
Remake he'd love to star in: *Sam and Cat*

On winning: "It feels really good and I am excited. I hope to learn everything, like how to be a great actor."



Mayor Bill de Blasio visited Wyckoff Gardens on January 11 to residents to talk about the NextGen Neighborhoods program and listen to their comments and concerns.

MAYOR MEETS WITH WYCKOFF GARDENS RESIDENTS

ON JANUARY 11, Mayor Bill de Blasio, NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye and NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly met with 120 residents of Wyckoff Gardens to discuss the NextGen Neighborhood proposal to build affordable housing and market-rate housing on underutilized land on the Wyckoff development.

Before welcoming the Mayor, Chair Olatoye introduced Shelisa Reid, the new Property Manager at Wyckoff Gardens, and welcomed the new Resident Association President, Valerie Bell. She also thanked outgoing Resident Association President Charlene Nimmons for her service.

After the Mayor made some introductory remarks, he and the Chair took questions from residents for nearly two hours, not only about the NextGen Neighborhoods proposal, but also about repairs at the development, funding issues, and other concerns that residents raised. NYPD Housing Chief James Secreto and officers from the

local precinct were in attendance to field questions regarding law enforcement. Borough President Eric Adams and Stephen Levin, the City Council Member representing Wyckoff Gardens, also attended and answered some questions from residents as well.

Among the important points the Mayor and the Chair emphasized are that the NextGen Neighborhood program will not privatize any public housing, nor will it deprive any current resident of his or her housing, or raise anyone's rent. This program is an effort to find funding to help repair the existing housing at NextGen Neighborhood developments.

As the Mayor noted at the conclusion of the meeting, NYCHA will continue to meet and discuss these projects with all of the residents at NextGen Neighborhood developments. Open, honest, on-going communication is critical to the success of all NextGeneration NYCHA programs, including NextGen Neighborhoods.



From left to right: NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Chair Shola Olatoye listen to resident questions.

Think Local (OPMOM)



Katie Harris, Wagner Houses Resident Association President (back row, second from right), with NYCHA property management staff at Wagner Houses.

“OPMOM has really made a difference here. We have so much involvement from residents and we have a beautiful development now.”

Katie Harris,
Wagner Houses Resident
Association President

ment staff work with resident leaders to select the things residents want and need, and how the new model has opened the door for residents to suggest improvements that will boost everyone's quality of life. “We don't need to wait for things like new refrigerators; we can order them ourselves. This works well because it enables us to help ourselves,” she said. “I love the open communication.”

Wagner's Property Maintenance Supervisor, John Rolon, agrees: “With OPMOM, the Housing Authority is definitely moving in the right direction to provide better service for residents.”

BECOMING A MORE efficient and effective landlord means providing better customer service and property management to residents. NYCHA's new model, OPMOM, empowers managers at 18 developments citywide to build their own budgets, hire their own staff, and purchase materials from the central office. The Authority is developing benchmarks to gauge the success of this model as it evolves.

Last fall the initial achievements of this streamlined management structure were on display, literally, at Wagner Houses. A plot of grass where weeds once flourished outside the development's management office had been transformed into a garden of perfectly trimmed shrubs and multicolored perennials atop a bed of dark brown mulch. An attractive way to greet residents, visitors, and staff alike, this landscaping was designed and planted with input from the development's resident leadership. They let management know that Wagner Houses residents wanted the building entrance to look like a place they would be proud to call home.

Resident input into budgeting is built into the new management model. Katie Harris, Wagner Houses Resident Association President, described how develop-

PRE-K FOR ALL

All New York City families with children born in 2012 are eligible to apply for free, full-day, high quality pre-k at district schools, Pre-K Centers, and full-day NYC Early Education Centers.

Applications are being accepted **now** at www.nyc.gov/prek or by **phone** at 718-935-2067, or **in person** at a Family Welcome Center. Assistance is also available by calling 311 or by **texting** the word “prek” to 877-877.

#OpportunityStartsNow

Apply Today!

Love Your Heart!

WHITMAN HOUSES RESIDENT Shaquana Boykin, 25, has made the health of her community her mission. It all began when she was diagnosed with diabetes at age 16. Thanks to a two-year program she participated in at SUNY Downstate, she learned how to take care of her body through exercise and healthy eating. Now Shaquana is completely healthy and sharing her wisdom with fellow residents and Fort Greene community members as often as possible.

In July, after a stint as a volunteer, Shaquana joined the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership (MARP)—a NYCHA community partner—as Program Manager of the Healthy Communities Initiative. She manages a variety of programs to get residents of Farragut, Ingersoll, and Whitman healthier, including a mobile pantry that provides residents with free produce from City Harvest once a month, two weekly Shape Up New York free fitness classes at Farragut, support for gardeners at the three developments, grocery shopping tours for residents to teach them how to shop healthy, and promoting the use of Citi Bike to residents.

Shaquana's Heart Healthy Tips:

Get a check-up!

Some conditions have no symptoms. "You can't tell when you have certain conditions like high blood pressure. When I was diagnosed with diabetes I had no symptoms. You won't know you're at risk until you go see your doctor."

Eat Heart Healthy!

Limit salt intake and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.

"When I go on shopping tours with residents I always teach them about their sodium, or salt, intake. People don't realize how much salt is in their food and how important it is to heart health. I make sure to teach them to shop around the edges of the supermarket where all the fruits and vegetables are."

Move your body!

Exercise for 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

"I try to lead by example; I ride a Citi Bike to commute to the community center, and back home, and to go grocery shopping. Residents see me riding around and ask me about the bikes. I tell them about our resident discount. And bringing Shape Up classes to Farragut was important because there was no programming for wellness or fitness there. When I was in the SUNY Downstate program for my diabetes, I learned the importance of exercise to my health and I try to maintain that lifestyle."

To find a Shape Up NYC class near you call 311 or visit nyc.gov/shapeup.

To find out more about Citi Bike's discounted membership for NYCHA residents visit citibikenyc.com.

To learn more about Myrtle Avenue's Healthy Communities visit myrtleavenue.org or call **718.230.1689** Ext: 5#.



“
I always start with one person: I know I can change at least one person's eating habits.
”



Housing Our Nation's Heroes

RECENTLY, THE FEDERAL

government declared that New York City has ended chronic homelessness among veterans. NYCHA played an important part in this victory: Through subsidized rental vouchers (Section 8), it provided homes to more than 500 formerly homeless veterans in 2015, bringing the total number served in the last few years to 2,600. Angel Figueroa, who moved into his new home in January 2015, is one of them.

WHAT'S YOUR APARTMENT LIKE?

It's great; it's a studio. It beats being in a shelter. It was a good feeling moving in. I was waiting for an apartment since July 1, 2014. I had to wait for a place with reasonable accommodations for disabilities. This apartment is easy for me to move around in; I'm already adjusted to it. The staff here are awesome. They go the extra mile to make sure I'm ok. That's comforting. Before here, I was living at a shelter for homeless

people with disabilities in Manhattan. I was there since December 17, 2014, so about 15 months.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR MILITARY SERVICE?

I'm an Army veteran. I'm legally blind, because of a hand grenade blast that I experienced during a skirmish with North Korea in 1978. My company happened to be at the DMZ [demilitarized zone between North and South Korea] when one of our choppers went down. We went in there to get our guys.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?

I have an associate degree in culinary management. Because of my disability, I've gotten as far as learning braille. I would like to be certified in braille so I can hopefully obtain employment and teach the blind to read and write braille. That's one of my goals. I'm very independent. I love to exercise. And I like to be on a positive level. I don't like negativity; that's a thing from the past.

Angel Figueroa, formerly a homeless veteran, stands in the kitchen of his new Brooklyn studio—living in this new home will allow Figueroa to pursue some of his dreams.



New Mobile Options for Paying Your Rent

NOW YOU CAN view your rent bill and pay your rent using your smart phone or tablet. Paying your rent electronically is the safest and most reliable method of ensuring that your payment is received.

Here's how to do it:

1. Access your mobile browser
(e.g., Google Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer)
2. Type <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/pay-rent.page> into your browser
3. Scroll down to "Online Rent Payment" and select "Make a one-time payment" to pay your current rent
OR
4. To have the convenience of mobile access every month, select "Sign-up for e-Bill" and automatically receive your rent bill for payment electronically each month

Flexibility and benefits:

- Enroll in e-Bill
- Make a one-time payment
- Set recurring payments
- View your monthly statement
- View your payment history
- Receive payment and billing notifications

Visit www.nyc.gov/nycha to learn more about Mobile Pay, other NYCHA payment options, and the convenience of online paperless rent statements.

GO MOBILE NOW!



**An education they deserve
and a future they choose.**

ascend CHARTER SCHOOLS

Apply at AscendCharterSchools.org
Brownsville, Bushwick, Canarsie, and East Flatbush



NYPD 911 OPERATOR EXAM

Police Communications Technicians (911 Operators/Radio Dispatchers) are assigned to the Department's Communications Section as 911 emergency call takers. They serve as a radio dispatcher of police resources and perform all other clerical and administrative duties related to the provision of emergency service.

Some of the benefits that highlight the position of Police Communication Technician include:

- Starting Salary is \$35,545 and can increase to \$48,127
- Health benefits for you and your family
- Paid vacation and overtime

**Filing for the PCT Exam is open from
February 26, 2016 through April 30, 2016**

There is a \$54 fee payable by money order, credit card, debit card or bank card (cash or personal checks cannot be accepted)



For more information please visit:

NYPDCivilianJobs.com

Or call: 212-RECRUIT

NYPD is an Equal Opportunity Employer



BEATING BACK THE BLIZZARD

WINTER STORM JONAS was the first blizzard of the season and one of the largest in New York City history. More than 3,300 NYCHA staff worked at the height of the storm on Saturday, January 23 to make sure services for residents were operating as smoothly and efficiently as possible. On Saturday night, two hundred employees slept overnight in their offices to ensure continuity of services. NYCHA hired 176 residents as temporary snow removal workers to assist staff to ensure residents would be able to navigate through their developments to the streets and subways on Monday morning. This was the first snow event that used NYCHA's new Snow Preparation & Removal Procedure, which includes a strong emphasis on safety.



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



**Uncommon
Schools** | Change History.

ENROLL YOUR CHILD TODAY!

**100% OF UNCOMMON NYC HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES WERE ACCEPTED TO A 4 YEAR COLLEGE.**

**APPLY ONLINE AT UncommonSchools.org/enrollNYC
CALL WITH QUESTIONS: 718-363-5024**

Applications are due by Friday, April 1, 2016 at 5 p.m.



Free Tax Prep Services for NYCHA Residents

Food Bank for New York City has partnered with NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) to offer FREE tax prep services to NYCHA public housing residents and NYCHA Section 8 voucher holders through the Virtual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

What is Virtual Tax Preparation? – At select NYCHA and Jobs-Plus locations, an intake coordinator scans your tax documents, returns them immediately and your tax return is completed remotely by a Food Bank tax preparer. Virtual VITA is extremely fast and saves you time. Available to anyone earning \$53,000 per year or less. Free tax preparation and e-file services are available at select NYCHA Community Centers now until April 13, 2016.

VITA Locations

Bronx

Northeast Bronx – Edenwald Community Center

Sponsor: Mosholu Montefiore Community Center
Where: 1150 East 229th St. (bet. Laconia Ave. & Schieffelin Ave.) Bronx, NY 10466
When: Tuesdays and Fridays (6pm – 9:30pm), Saturdays (11am – 2pm)
Directions: 5 train to Baychester Avenue
Phone: 718.652.0246

South Bronx – St. Mary's Park Community Center

Sponsor: BronxWorks
Where: 595 Trinity Avenue (bet. Pontiac Pl & E.149th St.) Bronx, NY 10455
When: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (10am – 1:30pm), Wednesdays (6pm – 9:30pm), Saturdays (10am – 1pm)
Directions: 2 or 5 train to Jackson Ave.
Phone: 718.655.7610

South Bronx – BronxWorks

Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Betances, East 152nd St.-Cortlandt, and Moore Houses.
Where: 391 East 149th St., Suite 520 (near 3rd Ave.) Bronx, NY 10455
When: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (9am – 7pm), Fridays (9am – 5pm), Saturdays (9am – 2pm)
Directions: 2 or 5 train to 3rd Ave.-149th St.
Phone: 718.993.8880

Soundview – Goodwill Industries of Greater NY

Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Clason Point, Monroe, and Sack Wern Houses.
Where: 1620 Bruckner Blvd. (at Morrison Ave.) Bronx, NY 10473
When: Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays (9am – 4pm), Wednesdays and Thursdays (8am – 6pm), Saturdays (10am – 4pm)
Directions: 6 train to Morrison-Sound View Ave.
Phone: 347.291.8050

Brooklyn

Bedford-Stuyvesant – Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Armstrong I & II, Marcy, and Lafayette Houses.
Where: 630 Flushing Ave (Enter on Tompkins Ave) Brooklyn, NY 11206
When: Mondays and Tuesdays (10am – 7pm), Thursdays and Fridays (10am – 4:30pm), Last Saturday of the month (11am – 3pm)
Directions: G train to Flushing Ave.
Phone: 917.267.5590

Brownsville – DB Grant & Associates

Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Van Dyke I & Brownsville Houses.
Where: 330 Powell St. (bet. Blake Ave. & Dumont Ave.) Brooklyn, NY 11212
When: Mondays and Wednesdays (10am – 12 noon)
Directions: 3 train to Junius St. or L train to Sutter Ave. or Livonia Ave.
Phone: 347.599.9653

Bushwick – Bushwick/Hylan Community Center

Sponsor: DYCD/Grand Street Settlement, Inc.
Where: 50 Humboldt St. (bet. Varet St. & Debevoise St.) Brooklyn, NY 11206
When: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (11am – 1pm), Wednesdays and Fridays (6pm – 8pm)
Directions: J, Z or M train to Flushing Ave.
Phone: 718.453.8116

Coney Island – O'Dwyer Community Center

Sponsor: HeartShare St. Vincent's Services HSVS
Where: 2945 West 33rd St. (bet. Mermaid Ave. & Surf Ave.) Brooklyn, NY 11224
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays (6pm – 9:30pm), Saturdays (1pm – 5pm)
Directions: D, F, N or Q train to Coney Island-Stillwell Ave.
Phone: 718.946.0519

East New York – Penn-Wortman Community Center

Sponsor: CAMBA
Where: 895 Pennsylvania Ave. (bet. Wortman Ave. & Stanley Ave.) Brooklyn, NY 11207
When: Mondays and Wednesdays (6:30pm – 9:30pm), Saturdays (2pm – 5pm)
Directions: 3 train to Pennsylvania Ave. and B20 bus to Wortman Ave. & Pennsylvania Ave.
Phone: 718.649.1371

Manhattan

East Harlem – Jefferson Houses

Organization: Hostos Community College
Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Jefferson Houses.
Where: 335 East 111th St (bet. 1st & 2nd Ave.) New York, NY 10029
When: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (8am – 6pm), Fridays (9am – 2:30pm)
Directions: 6 train to 110th St.
Phone: 917.492.0274

Lower East Side – Boys and Girls Republic

Sponsor: Henry Street Settlement
Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Wald and Riis II Houses.
Where: 24 Avenue D (at 3rd St.) New York, NY 10009
When: Call to make an appointment.
Directions: 4, 5, 6, L, N, Q, R to 14th St. and M14D bus to E. 3rd St. & Ave. D.
Phone: 212.254.4333

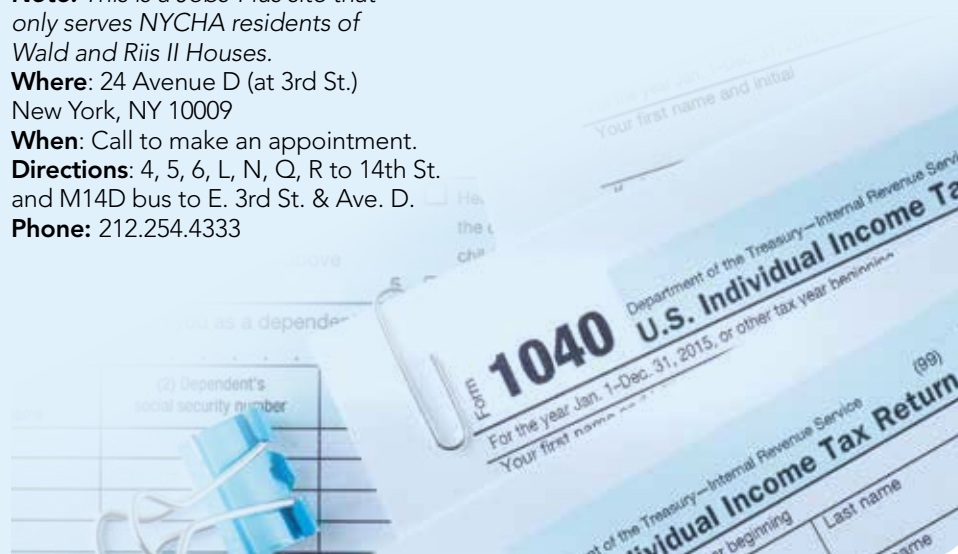
Queens

Far Rockaway – CAMBA/Arverne View Recovery Program

Where: 57-11 Shore Front Parkway (at Beach 56th Pl) Arverne, NY 11692
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays (10am – 2pm), Wednesdays (3pm – 7pm)
Directions: A train to Beach 60th St.
Phone: 718.675.3347 Ext. 48006

St. George – ResCare Workforce Services

Note: This is a Jobs-Plus site that only serves NYCHA residents of Mariner's Harbor, Richmond Terrace, South Beach, Stapleton, Todt Hill, and West Brighton I Houses.
Where: 30 Bay St. 4th Floor (off Central Ave.)
When: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays (9am – 4pm), Thursdays (11am – 7pm), Saturdays (By appointment only)
Directions: Staten Island Ferry or any Staten Island bus to St. George Terminal
Phone: 917.338.5204
Visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/consumers/file-your-taxes.page> for additional free tax prep locations citywide.



LET’S GET THE FACTS STRAIGHT: Top Myths about NextGen Neighborhoods

1. Eviction Myth: This plan will evict residents and force NYCHA families to move or be displaced.
FACT: NextGen Neighborhoods will keep NYCHA residents in their homes and preserve public housing while improving quality of life for residents through major repairs of their developments. NextGen Neighborhoods **will not** and cannot raise NYCHA rents; residents **will not** have to move; and it **will not** lead to the demolition of public housing.

2. Affordability Myth: NYCHA residents can’t afford to live in the new affordable apartments; NYCHA is building luxury apartments.
FACT: NextGen Neighborhoods will create much-needed affordable housing options for low-income/working New Yorkers in neighborhoods where there is a severe shortage. The new affordable housing units created will serve families who earn no more than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI)—which, in 2015, was about \$46,600 for a family of three. **There are many NYCHA families and other New Yorkers that meet this income eligibility.**

3. Engagement Myth: Resident engagement isn’t real; resident input doesn’t matter.
FACT: NYCHA has approached resident engagement on NextGen Neighborhoods in two steps:
1) Informational meetings—intended to give residents the facts about the project, clear up any misinformation, explain the goals, and help residents understand why NYCHA has to do this and what it means for their community.
2) Engagement meetings—a chance for residents to give feedback on their priorities and community vision; to inform the character of the residential/commercial mix at sites, the look and feel (design and landscape), and identify the most important upgrades for their buildings.

4. Funding Myth: NYCHA has money; the Authority could find money if it really wanted to; residents pay rent which should pay for repairs.
FACT: NYCHA is broke and **cannot wait on a government bailout that may never come for major repairs.** After decades of not receiving enough federal and state funding, NYCHA has about \$17 billion in major repair and construction needs across the City. On average, the rent paid by residents plus the government subsidies NYCHA receives from HUD does not fully cover the operations costs of NYCHA apartments and does not cover NYCHA’s major upgrades, rehabilitation, and construction needs.

5. Revenue Myth: Money made from new construction won’t really go back to affected developments the way residents want it to.
FACT: In rolling out this program, NYCHA has promised: current **resident parking** will be addressed as part of the new construction, affected

playgrounds will be moved and improved, and improvements to existing NYCHA buildings will **happen at the same time** as the new construction. **Residents will have a voice in determining how revenue is spent. Additionally, a Stakeholder Committee, which will include resident and community representation, will hold NYCHA accountable to spending those revenue dollars accordingly.**

6. Management Myth: NYCHA can’t take care of the buildings it already has; the Authority shouldn’t build more until it takes care of its existing buildings.
FACT: The program will help NYCHA take better care of its buildings using revenue generated from the market-rate apartments in the newly constructed buildings. NYCHA will continue to operate its public housing buildings, while the construction, management, and operations of the new buildings will be handled by the developer.

7. Negative Myth: There are no benefits for residents in this program—only negative impacts.
FACT: Really tough problems are rarely solved with popular solutions. NextGen Neighborhoods is a balanced solution (among many) to save the home of NYCHA residents; it’s not a penalty. This program will **help preserve public housing**, give residents input in guiding NYCHA dollars and work to improve the quality of life in their buildings, provide much-needed affordable housing options, and create job opportunities.

8. Selling Myth: NYCHA is selling its property; this program is privatizing public housing.
FACT: NextGen Neighborhoods is not selling NYCHA property or privatizing public housing. NYCHA will keep the rights to the land where there is new construction through a long-term lease agreement and will continue to operate public housing at the developments.

Why NextGen Neighborhoods at Wyckoff?

Preserve public housing	Make repairs
Market Rate Ability	Funding for Wyckoff & NYCHA
Available Space	Improve quality of life

This plan will:

- **NOT** raise NYCHA residents’ rent
- **NOT** move NYCHA families
- **NOT** privatize your buildings
- **NOT** demolish public housing

