

Chair Announces New General Manager



Mr. Kelly served as Executive Director of the Philadelphia

On March 25, NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye announced that Michael Kelly is re-joining NYCHA as General Manager, replacing GM Cecil House who has resigned effective April 15. Some NYCHA employees may remember Mr. Kelly, as he served as NYCHA's GM from 2009-2011 before being tapped by the Obama Administration to run the then-troubled Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Housing Authority, where he oversaw a \$400 million budget and signed new collective bargaining agreements with five building trades and administrative unions. Most recently, he served the former Mayor of the District of Columbia, Vincent Gray, as his Director of the District of Columbia's Department of Housing and Community Development. While there, Mr. Kelly managed more than a dozen federal and local programs and invested over \$300 million that created and preserved affordable housing.

"In addition to the role of General Manager, Mr. Kelly will play a crucial role in preserving New York's public housing through NextGeneration NYCHA initiatives," said Chair Olatoye. "I hope you will all help me in welcoming Michael back to NYCHA."

Staff Changes Support New Strategic Direction

On January 23, Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye and General Manager Cecil House announced significant operational and staffing changes that will position the Authority to implement key initiatives, including NextGeneration NYCHA, the agency's ten-year strategic investment plan, and the recently launched Optimal Property Management Operating Model (OPMOM) pilot, which empowers property managers with far greater control over development operations.

These changes, along with other critical activities now underway, will help restore

NYCHA's financial stability and strengthen our quality of services to residents.

However, the Chair and General Manager stated that increased revenue and new funding cannot alone restore NYCHA's financial stability or strengthen service delivery to residents. "These imperatives...are also dependent upon changing how we work and operate, and how we're structured."

The changes involve six newly created positions filled by highly qualified staff; five new appointments or promotions to existing executive positions; and new reporting

lines and expanded missions for three other departments.

These changes include:

- Elimination of the Executive Vice President for Operations position and promotion of Operations' two Vice Presidents, Brian Clarke and Luis Ponce, to Senior Vice President for Operations and Operations Support Services, respectively. The NYCHA operations veterans now report directly to the GM.
- Appointment of Melanie Hart, formerly Director of the Community Legal Resource Network at the CUNY School of Law, as EVP for Community Programs and Development, filling a vacancy in one of NYCHA's largest departments. Melanie brings to this position

extensive experience in non-profit leadership and management; public and private fundraising; program design, development, management and implementation; and legal services.

- Appointment of Joan Lebow, formerly Chief Communications Officer, to the newly created position of Senior Director for Strategic Marketing, supporting the implementation of NextGeneration NYCHA.
- Appointment of Jean Weinberg, formerly Director of Public Affairs at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to Chief Communications Officer. Prior (cont. p. 2)

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Thank you to CCC Call Agents who handled a high volume of calls during the cold weather.

Staff Changes (cont.)

to joining the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, she served as press secretary for the White House Office of Management and Budget.

- Promotion of Michael Johnson, formerly Senior Advisor to the General Manager, to the newly established position of Director of Customer Operations, reporting to the EVP for Administration. Michael now responds to customer inquiries and concerns while sharing information with administering departments to develop permanent solutions.
- Promotion of Sybille Louis, formerly Deputy Director of Research and Management Analysis, to Director of Research and Management Analysis. As Deputy Director, Sybille spearheaded development of the Maintenance and Repair Action Plan and expansion of the Executive Information System dashboard.
- Promotion of Barbara Turkewitz, formerly Deputy Director in the Office of the Vice President for Operations Support Services, to Director of Strategic Priorities. In this role Barbara assists the organization in identifying and addressing opportunities for improvements that will help NYCHA strengthen its delivery of services.
- Promotion of Alana Agosto,

formerly Deputy Director in the Department for Management and Planning, to Senior Advisor to the General Manager. Most recently, Alana served as project manager for OPMOM, where she successfully led the development, implementation and roll out of this significant initiative.

- Renaming of the Office of State and City Legislative Affairs as the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, with Brian Honan continuing as director, to better align all intergovernmental and legislative matters on the City, State and Federal levels.
- Sadie Bynum, Director of Emergency Preparedness, now reports to the EVP for Administration. Sadie is responsible for supporting NYCHA operations in disaster response, recovery and mitigation efforts.
- Vice President for Research and Management Anne-Marie Flatley now oversees the Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO) in addition to the Research and Management Analysis Department.
- Appointment of Rasmia Kirmani Frye, formerly Director of the Brownsville Partnership, as Director of Public/Private Partnerships.



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GM Cecil House Departs

Dear NYCHA Colleagues,

I would like to extend my gratitude to Cecil for his two and a half years of service to the residents and employees of the Authority.

From leading the effort to significantly reduce maintenance backlogs to introducing tools to efficiently manage NYCHA properties and improve customer service, he has been a forceful leader.

Cecil has worked tirelessly to position NYCHA to deliver on our vision to create safe, clean and connected communities for our current residents and for the next generation of New Yorkers.

Despite this change, the current organizational structure will remain the same and Cecil will support me and the team to ensure a smooth transition over the course of the next month.

Our residents will continue to rely on us and given the nature of our work, we can expect that the demands will remain great, as always.

As you know, we are on the heels of launching Next-Generation NYCHA, so I trust that you will continue to perform and serve our residents as we begin this exciting chapter.

Please join me in wishing Cecil all the best in his next endeavor. Thank you.

In service,
Shola Olatoye

Welcome Readers

Welcome to *NYCHANow*, our new and improved employee newsletter. We've updated the design and distribution plan: you'll receive *NYCHANow* in your email once a month to start.

Please let us know how you like the newsletter and if you have events, accomplishments, program changes or other news that you want covered.

You can reach us at NYCHANow@nycha.nyc.gov or by mail or phone as indicated on page 2.

In addition, each department has identified someone to keep us informed about newsworthy events, so you can also share story ideas with your point person, whose name we'll be glad to provide.

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

NYCHA Celebrates Black History

On February 19, NYCHA hosted its 48th annual Black History Celebration in the Ceremonial Room at 90 Church Street.

This year's theme – "A Century of Black Life, History and Culture" – was introduced by Community Operations Bronx Borough Director Marlon Forbes, who noted that NYCHA has its own Black history to celebrate, including the appointment of NYCHA's Chair Shola Olatoye, the second African American woman to hold that role.

Before introducing the evening's keynote speaker, David Ushery, Chair and CEO Olatoye remarked that Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" At

NYCHA we are building on the legacies of great Black Americans who've shaped our lives to make life better for the next generation of NYCHA residents."

An Emmy-winning NBC 4 news anchor, Mr. Ushery discussed the contributions of Black Americans and the challenges still to be faced.

"NYCHA is an important part of the fabric of this city and I want to honor you for the work [that] you do on behalf of NYCHA residents. Great Black Americans are a part of NYCHA's history: Frederick Douglass, Ursula Burns, Carmelo Anthony, and even Whoopi Goldberg," Mr. Ushery noted.

The elegant event, attended by over 100 employees, featured a delicious soul food



Keynote Speaker David Ushery at NYCHA's Black History Month Celebration.

buffet and music by the Yaffa All Stars, a jazz trio.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to honor Black Americans and to meet colleagues that I rarely have a chance to see out in the field," said Robin Reed, Property Manager at Segwick Houses.

NYCHA's Haitian American Employee Association, NAACP branch, and Nigerian Employee Organization

staffed tables loaded with information, including a luscious Haitian pumpkin pie recipe.

"This is the kind of event you just can't miss," said Nathaniel Williams Jr., Supervisor of Caretakers at Abraham Lincoln Houses, who celebrated his 36th anniversary with NYCHA on February 20. "This event is important for all of us at NYCHA."

CAA Hosts Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration

On February 26, NYCHA's Chinese American Association (CAA) and their 300-plus guests brought in the Chinese New Year, 4713, with music, dancing, and belly-warming food at the Grand Harmony Restaurant in Chinatown.

Before rousing performances from the Joyful Dance Ensemble and singer Danny Pao, NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye wished everyone a happy and successful New Year. She said that 4713 "promises to be a year of progress, because its qualities of intelligence, creativity, serenity, and empathy guide us in becoming the best we can be and doing the best we can for others."

Chair Olatoye read a proclamation from Mayor de Blasio extolling the City's diversity and the vitality of the Chinese American population, and which proclaimed February 26, 2015, as "NYCHA Chinese American Association Chinese New Year Day."

General Manager Cecil House remarked that "The New Year is a time for us to reflect and look forward to the year to come. I want to thank all of you for what you have done for

NYCHA residents, the City, and our organization – it's been a very productive year."

This year's honoree, Councilmember Margaret Chin, also thanked NYCHA employees for their hard work and passion.

"We can count on you, and I look forward to continue working with you," she said. Another special guest celebrating the Year of the Goat (or Sheep or Ram) was HUD Deputy Regional Administrator Mirza Orriols.

CAA Founder and Past President Nancy Lam said that the biennial event is "an opportunity to introduce Chinese culture to the NYCHA community through dancing, food, and fellowship."

Remington Lo, the CAA's vice president of programs, enjoys the chance for staff from the developments, borough offices, and central offices to get together. "It's fun to see old friends. People really enjoy themselves."

But it was not only current employees who contributed to the conviviality. Myrtle Whitmore, a retired housing manager and former NYCHA board member, said that being there was "like coming home; it's so festive."



CAA Vice President for Programs Remington Lo welcomed members and guests to the celebration.

Language that Reaches the Heart



Language Bank volunteers honored for their service, with Chair Shola Olatoye (center) and, second from left, Yvette Andino, Deputy Director, Department of Communications.

Two of the most powerful words in any language – thank you – were spoken to 92 Language Bank volunteers honored at the 19th Annual Language Bank Recognition Ceremony held in the Ceremonial Room on February 4.

These volunteers are among 250 NYCHA employees who collectively speak 39 languages, making NYCHA's Language Bank one of the largest in the City. Last year, Language Bank staff and volunteers responded to 8,400 requests for interpretation services.

"Don't underestimate the impact you make," Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye told the volunteers, who may provide their services on short notice, and always in addition to their regular job responsibilities. "By enabling access to the opportunity NYCHA offers, you help people in a very real way."

"The Language Bank ensures that every resident and applicant is provided equal access to NYCHA's services and programs, regardless of the language they speak, read or write," said Deputy Chief Communications Officer Yvette Andino, NYCHA's Language Access Coordinator.

Ahmad Ekhtear, Housing Assistant in the Bronx Appli-

cations and Tenancy Administration Department, wrote a poem for the occasion. "One of the greatest successes our applicants can have is getting their own apartment, and I am glad to sometimes help," said Mr. Ekhtear, who speaks Bengali and Hindi.

Housing Assistant Lioudmila Filina, in the Customer Contact Center, mentioned the assistance she provides in Russian to Section 8 applicants and tenants who have difficulty understanding application forms. "I like to help people who came from the same country as me. Many of the elderly ones did not have a chance to learn English like I did," she said.

"As a Social Worker, I always want to help people, so I use my Spanish on the job to help residents read important mail, like from Medicaid, in addition to translating at Tenant Association meetings through the Language Bank," said Eneida Rios, in Family Services.

"If we don't volunteer, NYCHA would have to hire more language services staff, which is costly," volunteer Moshin Zaman, Property Manager at Taft Houses, who speaks Bengali, pointed out.

The Department of Communications' Language

Teamsters President Recognized Longtime NYCHA Employee

February was a momentous month for Nathaniel Williams Jr. The Supervisor of Housing Caretakers (SOHC) at Lincoln Houses celebrated his 36th anniversary as a NYCHA employee. And the president of the Local 237 Teamsters Union, Gregory Floyd, presented him with the Teamsters' President's Award at the union's annual Black History Celebration. The event celebrated the heritage of African Americans while recognizing the contributions of outstanding union members like Mr. Williams.

It's clear that Mr. Williams is a committed champion of social causes – he's a union representative for SOHCs and a lifetime member of the NAACP (as well as a former treasurer of NYCHA's chapter). Just as clear is his dedication to the residents he serves. "When I first started working at Abraham Lincoln Houses, residents used to call it 'Stinkin' Lincoln.' But now it's a lot better than it was. I gave staff directions and hands-on training and showed them what they needed to improve, and it was improved. I took caretakers on building inspections with me so they'd know what to look for and what to do when their time comes to be a supervisor and to train someone else."



SOHC Nathaniel Williams (center) with Donald Arnold, Local 237 citywide division director, and Remilda Ferguson, Local 237 housing division director.

Mr. Williams, who grew up in St. Nicholas Houses, started his NYCHA career as a caretaker at Dyckman Houses. He believes that helping his coworkers is one of the best parts of his job. "I tell my colleagues that they can call me for any information they need to know, and I'll direct them to where they can get it. We're working to make everything better in Housing. My experience – over 20 years as a supervisor – helps with that."

Services Unit (LSU), which oversees the Language Bank, has six professional interpreters, who also were thanked for their service. Spanish interpreter Estefania Vaz Ferreira reported that, "It's satisfying when you manage to build an understanding between peo-

ple and when you see good come from that, it makes the day worthwhile."

To request language services assistance or inquire about becoming a volunteer, call the LSU hotline at 212-306-4443.

Coffee with the Chair

On the first Friday of every month, small groups of employees may be seen waiting outside the Executive Board Room before 8:30 a.m. They may be dressed in suits or jeans, dresses or NYCHA blues. They may work in housing developments or satellite, central, or borough offices. What they have in common is an invitation from Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye to attend a “Coffee with the Chair” meeting.

“The Chair really made me feel welcome,” said Christian Grullon, Assistant Resident Buildings Superintendent at Parkside Houses, part of a group of employees with five to nine years of service. “She came to listen to our needs,

not just at our development but at all of NYCHA.”

“It was good to see a broad range of departments and different perspectives,” said Riva Levine, Social Work Supervisor in Family Services, with employees that had 24 to 30 years of service. “From managers to caretakers, everyone was valued.”

Chair Olatoye’s private meetings with employees began in June 2014 with a small group that had more than 40 years of experience. Since then, the off-the-record monthly meetings over coffee and breakfast pastries have continued with groups of 20 employees randomly selected from all employees in their seniority group. Not all seniority



During her first year at NYCHA, Chair Shola Olatoye made more than 100 visits with employees at developments and NYCHA offices.

groups have been called yet, which is why the meetings are continuing this year. Eventually, every employee will receive an invitation to participate and the opportunity to be selected.

“I can’t overstate how valuable these meetings are for me as a chance to hear direct-

ly from employees about their work experiences and ideas for how we can improve,” Chair Olatoye said. “Our discussions are candid and everyone knows that anything said is private. I am grateful for the information that has been shared, which can be a reality check for me.”

SAY HELLO: Get to Know NYCHA Leadership



David Pristin

Appointed Chief of Staff
June 2014

Q: What are your job responsibilities?

A: In addition to managing the day-to-day operations of the Chair’s office, I support the planning and implementation of policies and directives; communicate with

NYCHA departments on agency initiatives; and serve as a liaison to the Authority’s many external partners.

Q: You worked in several key positions for the City Council and before that in political organizing for campaigns. What sparked your strong interest in government?

A: My father’s parents were Holocaust survivors and my mother’s parents, who are Chinese, escaped China to Trinidad and Tobago as the Japanese invaded during WWII. The persecution and challenges my grandparents faced and overcame instilled a strong sense of social justice in my upbringing and led me to pursue public service.

Q: What are some of your impressions of NYCHA staff?

A: I am impressed by our staff and their commitment to NYCHA’s social mission. What people do here, individually and collectively, is not appreciated enough by some city officials and most New Yorkers. NYCHA faces some huge challenges, but at the same time we have a tremendous amount of talent.

Q: How was your work in the City Council different from working at NYCHA?

A: Working as policy director at the City Council, I took more of a bird’s-eye view of how the city and its agencies operated. I now have to take a much closer look at policies

and procedures and think about how they will be operationalized. The challenge here is to foresee the real implications and practical effects of implementing a new policy.

Q: What part of your City Council experience is most helpful here?

A: Similar to my work at the City Council, I am working here to bring stakeholders with diverse concerns together to build momentum around new policies and priorities. I am also working, as I did at the Council, to gain government support for different initiatives and goals. A lot of this now pertains to NextGeneration NYCHA, where we are building a sense of common cause among internal and external stakeholders.

Best Wishes 2014 Retirees -- Thank you for your service

Kamal Ahmed
 Ellison A. Alexander
 Julie Alexander
 Hallima Ali
 Heriberto Almodovar
 Roosevelt Anderson
 Edwin Andujar
 Margaret Andujar-Negron
 Peter Apice
 Martha Arizaga
 Andrew Armstrong
 Dilipkumar I. Atodaria
 Fung Che Au-Haiman
 Josephine Aviles
 Thomas Aviles
 Milena Azize
 Guy Baffi
 Joseph Baptiste
 Glenston C. Barrow
 Salvatore Battaglia
 Diane T. Baum
 Felix Benitez
 Joseph Benjamin
 Barry Benter
 Minerva Berson
 Dolores Blackwell
 Jeanette Bowie
 Sean Brady
 Kenneth Braney
 Doretha Brathwaite
 Cynthia Brown
 Jane B. Bura-Drago
 Paul Burek
 Noresta D. Burton
 Anthony Buscemi
 Francesco Buscemi
 Ruben Cabrera
 Thomas M. Calabro
 Michael Calderon
 Esther M. Calvin
 Dawn T. Camara
 Frank Caputo
 Antonia Caraballo
 Debra K. Carcana
 Michael Carey
 Joseph O. Carrington
 Juan Cerda
 Kallara Chacko
 Himendu Chaudhuri
 Keshmira Chavda
 Dean Coleman
 Parker Coleman
 Darrick Cooper
 Richard Costello
 Jimmy Costoso
 Debra D. Crenshaw
 Carol Cross
 Cesar Cruz
 Eramis Cruz

Pedro J. Cruz
 Luis A. Cuadrado
 Mary L. Cunningham
 Andrew B. D'Arienzo
 Clarice Daly
 James E. Darden
 Aleen Davis
 Audrey Davis
 Augustus Davis
 Valentin Dealba
 Garry Debarros
 William Degrigio
 Linda DeJesus
 Migdalia DeLeon
 Nelson Delgado
 Quintin Delgado
 Roberto Delgado
 Bernardino Diaz
 Ralph Diaz
 Raynald Diaz
 Rolando Diaz
 Joseph Digregorio
 Milagros Dilan
 John Dilworth
 Harold Dixson
 Lanceford Downer
 Tadeusz Dudzinski
 Jose Duncan
 William Duodu
 Steve Dyer
 Rudy Eckhoff
 Mostafa Elazabawy
 Suzie Elliott
 Guillermo D. Estevez
 Richard S. Evans
 Raul Figueroa
 David Filkins
 John Fleming
 Daniel Fliegler
 Seth Florence
 Anna Fortgang
 Denise L. Fowler
 Ferne Francis
 Keith Frith
 Bruno Frustaci
 Johnny Gadson
 Raymond A. Gamble
 Domingo Gamez
 Ruby L. Gantt
 Gregory J. Garafola
 Alfred Garcia
 Lourdes Garcia
 Rose M. Gary-Colvin
 Louann Gentile
 Amerino Giglio
 Wanda S. Gilliam
 James Gilmore
 Joseph Godfrey
 Josephine Goff

Belinda Gonzalez
 Samuel Gonzalez
 Wilfredo Gonzalez
 Lloyd Graham
 Lawrence Grater
 Sharmin Gray
 Paramjit Grewal
 Pierre Guerrier
 Clarence Guess
 Salwa Hanna
 Patricia Harden
 Carolyn Hardy
 Tyree Haslip
 Lambert Hawthorne
 Furness E. Haynes
 Howard Hemmings
 Dwight Henry
 Harriet Heyward
 Lynnette Hill
 John S. Hnath

Giovanni La Mendola
 Rafael Laboy
 Tarsem Lal
 Suntai Lam
 Yuen Lam
 Darryl Lambe
 Saverio Lamendola
 Carmen Lanausse
 Marleene Larrier
 Elliot Lauterstein
 Patricia Lawler
 Maria Lebron
 Deborah Lee-Whiteside
 Ellen Levine
 Raymond N. Ligorano
 Naum Lipnitskiy
 Alex Litvak
 Antonio Llenas
 Kenth Lloyd
 Nadine M. Lloyd

Irma M. Medina
 Victor Medina
 Carmen Mejias
 Ronald Melio
 Augustin Merced
 Claude Miller
 Ahmed Mohamed
 Augusto Montan
 Patricia Moore
 Wilma Moore
 Alfredo Mora
 Angel Morales
 Miguel Lee-Whiteside
 Evelyn Moye
 Sabreen Muhammad
 Patricia Munnlyn
 Arthur Myrick
 Harold Nedd
 Antonio Negron
 Dennis J. Ng
 William Nogue
 Thomas Norris
 Veronica Obmaces
 Israel Olivera
 Philip Oommen
 Luis Ortiz
 Juan Otero
 Joseph Pando
 Ronald Parker
 Pablo Parrilla
 Ozzie Patterson
 Nisa Penn
 Frank Perez
 Joel V. Perosi
 Stanley Pessah
 Robert Pettit
 Walter E. Pfeiffer
 Alex Philip
 Edgar Pineda
 Victor Pizarro
 Daniel Pratt
 Christopher Quinones
 David Rabin
 Laiton Ramirez
 Miriam S. Ramos
 Cynthia Ramsey
 Pearce Ramsey
 Richard Ramsey
 Christopher D. Rangel
 Steven J. Rappaport
 Jamal Rashid
 Svetlana Raytburg
 Alan P. Reale
 Mariano M. Reyes
 Donna Richardson
 Clover Ricketts
 Carmen Rios
 Arthur L. Robinson
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Lai Mei Ho
 Elaine Hooks
 Pablo Huertas
 Lawrence M. Iannozzo
 Luis Irizarry
 Maurice Isaacs
 Marilyn Jack
 Geraldine Jackson
 Jesus Jaramillo
 Carmen Jimenez
 Keith L. Johnson
 Deborah F. Johnson-Smoot
 Avery Jones
 Eugene Jones
 William Jones
 James Judge
 David Jung
 Michael Kadlec
 Varghese Karavally
 Hugh Kelleher
 Kay Kerrodar
 Darren Ketrles
 Robert Klatch
 Paul Klein
 Barrington C. Knibbs
 Peter J. Koch
 Rhonda Kogen
 Thomas Kurian

Giulio Lomanto
 Debra A. Lomax
 Margarita Lopez
 Rafael Lopez
 Steven Love
 Thomas Luckner
 Martha Lugo
 John Malave
 Jose Malave
 Maria Malave
 Manolda Maloney
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 Helen Mason
 Carmen A. Matias
 Carolyn H. Maynor
 Orlando Mazzone
 Bruce McCray
 Dolores McDaniel
 Diane McDuffie
 James D. McLeod
 Patricia McMillan
 Douglas McNevin
 Marshall E. McRae
 Carlos M. Medina

Women's History Month Celebration



Members of NYCHA's Committee on Women's Concerns, which co-hosted the event, with EVP Melanie Hart and Chair Shola Olatoye. From left: Melanie Hart, Cora Casey, Roselaine Lamarre, Zahra Molaahmad, Chair Shola Olatoye, Terri McCullough, Juliee Troutman, Joanne Chapusette, and Cassandra Deas.

On Tuesday, March 24, about one hundred NYCHA employees celebrated Women's History Month. The event featured a keynote address by Terri McCullough, Director of No Ceilings: The Full Participation Project, a Clinton Foundation initiative.

The evening was emceed by Community Programs and Development EVP Melanie Hart. NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye introduced Terri McCullough with a quote from Hillary Clinton: "Equality for women remains the great unfinished business of the 21st century." No Ceilings aims to chart the path

forward for full participation in political, civil, economic and cultural life for women and girls in the 21st century.

Guests also enjoyed a delicious dinner buffet and some classic jazz standards performed by Samantha Echo. The event was attended by NYCHA Board Members Beatrice Byrd and Victor Gonzalez in addition to several senior staff members and female employees from all five boroughs.

Sheela Sreekumar, a Family Services Community Associate, reported that this is her favorite NYCHA event of the year: "I love coming to see

Kilsys Payamps-Roure Honored

Kilsys Payamps-Roure, Special Assistant to NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye, was honored by the New York City Council during its celebration of Dominican Republic Independence Day on February 23. About 200 people joined in the festivities at the City Council, which featured performances by Shacara McLaurin, who sang the National Anthem, the P.S. 257 Chorus, and children's dance troupe La Raza.



Kilsys Payamps-Roure with her family and City Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez.

The City Council's Proclamation presented to Kilsys reads: "The Council of the City of New York gratefully honors Kilsys Payamps-Roure for her outstanding service and contributions to our community."

Kilsys was recognized for her commitment to Community League of the Heights, a community-based organization that provides Washington Heights residents with services related to decent affordable housing, education, health, youth services and neighborhood improvement.

the speakers and I enjoy seeing my colleagues from other boroughs."

Rico Velez, Revenue Director, remarked that "The good thing about Women's History Month is that we recognize

the women of NYCHA with the respect they deserve. It's the women in NYCHA who really reinforce the importance of our mission -- they should be recognized like this every day!"

Retirees (cont.)

Edwin Robles	Michael Salter	Larry Smalls	Joseph A. Valente	Edward White
Nelson Robles	Chandrica Samaroo	Elmer Smith	David Vallejo	Grace White
Angel Rodriguez	Sadie Sanders	Kevin Smith	Diane Vanterpool	Gladys Whitney-Sands
Angelo Rodriguez	Walter Santiago	Reginald Smith	Mikhail Vaynblat	Doris Williams
Nestor J. Rodriguez	Asok Sarkar	Dennis Souky	Victor Vaysman	Eugene Williams
Rosemary Rodriguez	Musibau Sarumi	Florian Stanescu	Ines Velez	Karen Williams
Joseph G. Roeder	Maureen E. Scanlon	James Stout	Maria E. Velez	Margaret Williams
Felipe Roquez	James J. Schieren	Janet D. Subrizi	Steven Vetrano	Robert J. Williams
Jaime E. Rosado	David Schwartz	Kieran Sweeney	Zoraida Vidal Moreno	Carl Williamson
Daniel V. Rosario	Moshe Schwartz	Louis Sykes	Manuel S. Villarosa	Sheilah L. Wilson
Milagros Rosario-Otero	Chryell J. Scott	Cheryl E. Symes-Hudson	Michael Vinci	Rami Wolkowitz
Jerrold Rosenstein	Thomas Sellers	Ramesh D. Telwala	Giovanni D. Vitulli	Lydia Woodson
Gail Rountree	William J. Sepiol	Ernestine Thomas	Donnovan Walker	Eugene Wray
Verna Ruffin	Lydie Seraphin	Michael Thompson	Franklyn Walker	Eugene Wright
Nelson Ruiz	Carol Sheehan	Robert Thompson	Mary Walker	Kevin J. Wyatt
Jose Russo	Howard Shustak	Ana Torres	Thomas Walsh	Valerie Young
Denis Ryan	Thomas J. Signorelli	Saul Torres	Linda Weeks-Darby	Vitaly Zach
William Sagona	Valda Simon	Issouf Traore	George Weiss	Thomas Zacharia
Anjali Sahni	Myrna Slate	Michele B. Trimmingham	Peter D. Wellington	Grady E. Zellars
John Saieva	Cynthia Smalls	Evelyn Trinidad	Daphne West	Arthur Ziccardi

Free Tax Preparation Services

If you earned money in 2014, you could get a refund of up to \$10,000 for you and your family, just by qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Care Tax Credit. One out of five, or about 250,000, New Yorkers who qualify for the EITC don't claim it, leaving thousands of dollars on the table. Many New Yorkers use these tax refunds each year to save for an emergency or pay off debt.

And, the City of New York offers free and confidential tax preparation so you don't have to spend extra money. To file safely and for free, visit one of the more than 200 tax preparation sites around the city (visit www.opportunitynycha.org for eligibility criteria and hours of operation) or file online.

NYCHA, in collaboration with the Food Bank for NYC, is offering free tax preparation services at select NYCHA Community Centers, including:



1. NYCHA Ingersoll Community Center
2. NYCHA Bushwick/Hylan Community Center
3. NYCHA Penn-Wortman Community Center
4. NYCHA O'Dwyer Community Center
5. NYCHA Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) – 2 sites
6. Jobs Plus Henry Street Settlement
7. Jobs Plus FEGS
8. Jobs Plus BronxWorks
9. Jobs Plus Goodwill
10. Jobs Plus Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
11. Jobs Plus DB Grant Associates
12. Jobs Plus Hostos Community College
13. Jobs Plus ResCare Workforce Services

To learn more, visit the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs website at www.nyc.gov/taxprep.

HR News to Use

Update Your Beneficiaries

Every employee should complete a Designation of Beneficiaries form to ensure that any monies due upon the employee's death are given to only the individuals they have selected.

Updating beneficiaries for your pension does not change the beneficiaries for other payments to which survivors may be entitled.

- The NYCERS change of (pension) beneficiary form can be downloaded from the NYCERS website at www.nyc.gov, or requested by calling NYCHA's Ask HR at 212-306-8000 or NYCERS at 347-643-3000.

- Beneficiaries for other job-related entitlements, such as

unpaid salary, accrued annual leave, retirement bonus, expense reimbursement and retroactive monies owed, can be updated by completing a Designation of Beneficiaries form (#015168), available from the Forms and Reference Library on NYCHA Connect, or Ask HR.

- For information about updating beneficiaries for life insurance, death benefits, annuities or disability payments through a union welfare fund, call your union office or ask your shop steward. Employees covered by the Management Benefits Fund may contact the Employee Benefits Division at 212-306-4070 or the Management Benefits Fund at 212-306-7290.

- Finally, employees who participate in the Deferred Compensation Plan administered by the NYC Office of Labor Relations must contact 212-306-7760.

PROVERB CONTEST: IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS

PRO•VERB: a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.

NYCHANow is continuing the "Wit and Wisdom in the Workplace" proverb contest!

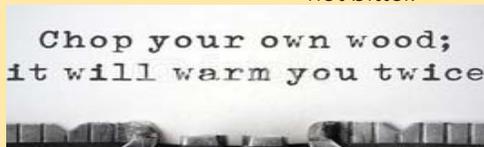
Here's a chance to share sayings, axioms or mottoes from your childhood or cultural background that many of us may not have heard.

Originality counts; less familiar or original proverbs will be rated higher by our judges. Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today! Your contributions can help us all do a great job.

Here are some winners of previous proverb contests:

- "You must stick to your convictions but be ready to abandon your assumptions."

- "The difficulties of life are intended to make us better, not bitter."



- "Anger is one letter short of danger."
- "We see things not as they are but as we are."

When submitting your proverbs, include your name, job title, and work phone number.

You can submit up to five proverbs by email to NYCHANow@nycha.nyc.gov or by mail to our address on page 2. Winning proverbs will be printed with a photo of the submitters in our next issue.

The deadline is April 24, 2015.