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Happy 5th Anniversary REES!

The NYCHA **JOURNAL**

**Roof Replacements Start at Queensbridge Houses**

**ON AUGUST 24**, Mayor Bill de Blasio and General Manager Michael Kelly announced the start of rooftop replacement at Queensbridge Houses in Long Island City, underscoring a core commitment of NextGeneration NYCHA to preserve and maintain NYCHA's precious housing stock.

"Having a roof over your head isn't good enough if it leaks all the time," said Mayor de Blasio. "We're investing \$300 million to replace roofs at NYCHA developments across the City to attack decades of neglect that for too long has been the status quo. NextGeneration NYCHA goes beyond fixing what's broken and lays the groundwork to make NYCHA physically and economically healthy for generations to come."

"Today, we announce the beginning of our comprehensive roof replacement plan, restoring 66 of our worst roofs throughout New York City," said General Manager Michael Kelly. "This not only fulfills an early commitment made to NYCHA residents, it is also one of the most aggressive efforts we've taken to curb the presence of leaks and mold at our buildings. Under the leadership of Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye and Mayor de Blasio, NYCHA is fulfilling the vision of NextGeneration through addressing our infrastructure problems head-on—changing our operating structure, rehabilitating our developments, and sealing our most distressed buildings."

Leaky roofs are the main cause of water and moisture entering a building, and the accumulated moisture

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

# A Tennis League Grows in Brooklyn

**ON SATURDAYS** from May to October, Lafayette Gardens resident Brandon Otero, 16, works with younger children at Marcy Houses on their tennis skills, from practicing footwork to learning how to hit the ball over the net.

"I love tennis," Otero said. He says he never would have picked up a racket to play if not for the Kings County Tennis League (KCTL).

Michael McCasland, a forensic scientist, has been teaching children in Brooklyn that the stereotype about

tennis being for rich people is wrong; tennis is for everyone. He founded the league in 2010 at Marcy Houses.

"I moved to Bed-Stuy in 2008 and I've always felt that it's important to be involved where you live, whether it be

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

# CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH AT NYCHA



**WHEN I VISIT** NYCHA developments across the City, I see that they all share pride in their diversity. NYCHA's residents and staff represent an amazing mosaic of cultures, ethnicities, races, and religions. In fact, when Resident Board Member Victor González moved into his development, Wise Towers, four decades ago, he noticed, "We had neighbors of all ethnicities, which is what made it so wonderful."

September 15 to October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month, an opportunity to recognize the great contributions that the Hispanic people and culture have made to the world. In New York City, Hispanic Americans have long made their mark, from *Loisaida* in Lower Manhattan, to Spanish Harlem at the top of the island, to Corona, Queens, the South Bronx, and beyond.

Nearly half of NYCHA households are of Hispanic heritage. I'm pleased that in this edition of the *Journal* we are showcasing the impressive achievements of Hispanic Americans who are currently making their mark at NYCHA. From 16-year-old Lafayette Gardens resident Brandon Otero who volunteers teaching tennis to kids with the Kings County Tennis League

(page 1) to 70-year-old Angel Morocho of Bronx River Houses who has found fulfillment as a senior companion (page 5). We have inspiring success stories: Harrison Torres, a Johnson Houses resident, is a Supervisor of Caretakers at Patterson Houses who's climbing the ranks, driven by his mantra for success: "Focus" (page 12) and Stephanie Sosa, who grew up in Melrose Houses and now, armed with a Master of Urban Planning from NYU, is helping to create affordable housing in Brooklyn (page 8). You can also meet the 2015 NYCHA-CUNY Scholars, this diverse group of residents who attend CUNY all received \$1,000 to further their educations.

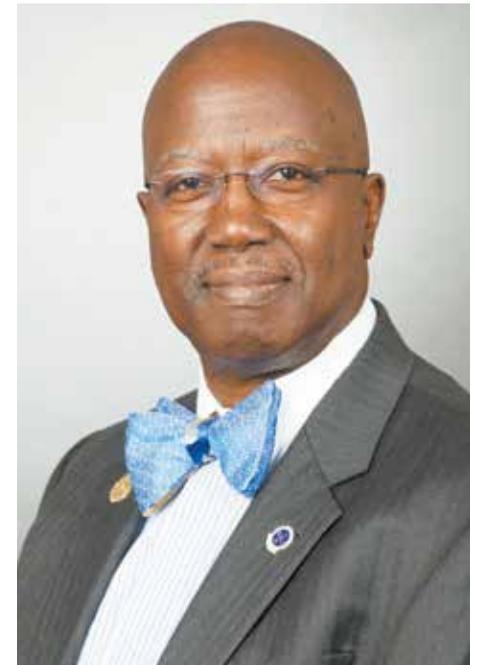
As we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage this month, we're reminded of how much we, and our City, gain from NYCHA's exceptional diversity – it's something to treasure, and it makes us stronger. We can also borrow from this year's theme, "Honoring Our Heritage, Building Our Future" in our NextGeneration NYCHA work to create safe, clean, and connected communities. In this issue, you'll also read about how NYCHA has long played a major role in providing New Yorkers with affordable and diverse housing options in the past through a new exhibit on affordable housing that opened at the Museum of the City of New York (page 10) and how we'll continue these efforts in the future with NextGeneration Neighborhoods (page 4). We're building a better future for public housing in New York, guided by its rich and important heritage. Thank you for the vital role you play in doing that.

**Shola Olatoye**  
Chair and CEO

# Gerald Nelson Joins NYCHA as the Vice President for Public Safety

**GERALD NELSON JOINED** NYCHA as Vice President for Public Safety on August 3, 2015. He is responsible for planning, organizing and directing all of NYCHA's public safety services and activities, ensuring the provision of general law enforcement, criminal investigation, fire suppression and prevention, rescue and emergency medical services, disaster responses, nuisance abatement and code enforcement, and for leading NextGeneration NYCHA efforts to achieve safe communities for our residents and employees. The Offices of Safety and Security and Emergency Preparedness will report to Chief Nelson and be part of NYCHA's newly-formed public safety program.

Chief Nelson recently retired from the New York Police Department after more than 40 years of service. He started his career in the Housing Bureau in 1973 and subsequently served in the Police Academy, Project Stabilization Unit, Internal Affairs Bureau, Recruitment Section, Personnel Services Bureau, Transit Borough Bronx, and Housing Borough Bronx/Queens. His last post was Commanding Officer of Patrol Borough Brooklyn North. He has also commanded the School Safety Division, the Housing Police Department's Personnel Services Bureau, SAT-COM Housing Operations, Housing Borough Bronx/Queens, and Transit Borough Bronx. Chief Nelson has also served as Executive Officer of Detec-



tive Borough Queens and as Adjutant of Patrol Borough Manhattan North.

Chief Nelson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government and Public Administration from John Jay College, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Marist College. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, 172nd Session, at Quantico, Virginia. Currently, he is the Regional Vice President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) for the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut Chapters and is a past president of NOBLE's New York Chapter.

## NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

**N**YCHA'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:

- October 28, 2015
- November 18, 2015
- December 23, 2015

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

## The NYCHA JOURNAL

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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## IT'S HURRICANE SEASON!

New York City is most at risk for hurricanes August through November.

But the best way to be prepared for a weather emergency is to always be prepared, no matter what month it is.



## Be Prepared for Any Disaster

Getting ready for a disaster or emergency can seem like an overwhelming task. But being prepared can make all the difference.

### 1. Stay Informed

Notify NYC is the City's official source for information about emergency events and important City services. Registration is free. Enroll online to start receiving text messages or emails now: <https://a858-nycnotify.nyc.gov/notifynyc/Enrollment>.

**311** is NYC's main source of government information. You can contact **311** in a variety of ways.

- Reach **311** by text at **311-692**.
- Call **311**, or call **212-NEW-YORK (212-639-9675)** from outside New York City.
- Connect with **311** via Video Relay Service (VRS) at **212-NEW-YORK (212-639-9675)**.
- Contact **311** via TTY or Text Telephone at **212-504-4115**.
- **311** is also available online at [www1.nyc.gov/311](http://www1.nyc.gov/311), in over 50 languages. You can get help in over 170 languages by calling **311**.

### 2. Sign up for NYCHA Alerts

With **NYCHA Alerts**, residents can sign up to receive the latest information on building service notifications and make the Authority aware of special assistance that may be needed in the event of an emergency.

### 3. Create a Safety Plan

Create and practice your family's emergency plan. If your family has practiced, they will be more comfortable carrying out the plan when the emergency actually happens. How will you find each other? How will you know

if your children or parents are safe? You may have to evacuate or be confined to your home. What will you do if water, gas, electricity, or phone services are shut off?

### 4. Make an Emergency Contact

List the home, work, and cell phone numbers and email addresses of your family, friends, neighbors, child care providers, physicians, baby sitters, and any other individuals who are important in your daily lives. Also include any important information such as prescription numbers, pharmacy information, and health insurance policy numbers.

### 5. Pack a Go Bag

Make sure each member of the family has a small duffel bag packed with essentials for 2-3 days: a list of important contact numbers, a change of clothing, a gallon of water, non-perishable food items like power bars, flashlight and batteries, medications, cell phone battery and charger, and small first aid kit. Put everything in individual, sealable plastic bags.

### 6. If You Have Pets

Think about where you will go with your pet and how you will get there if you have to leave home during an emergency. Plan to shelter your pet at a kennel or with friends or relatives outside the evacuation area.

### 7. Register with utilities companies

All NYCHA residents can register with utilities companies for updates on power outages.

### HOW TO REGISTER:

#### Con Edison

(serving all of NYC except the Rockaways)

If you live in Con Edison's service area (all of New York City except the Rockaways), register by contacting: **1-800-752-6633**, TTY: **1-800-642-2308** <http://www.coned.com/customercentral/special-services.asp>

#### PSEG Long Island (serving the Rockaways)

If you live in PSEG Long Island's service area in the Rockaways, register by contacting: **1-800-490-0025**, TTY: **1-631-755-6660** <https://www.psegliny.com/page.cfm/Home/CustomService/Special>

#### National Grid NYC (gas)

(serving Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island)

If you live in National Grid's NYC territory (Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island), you may register by contacting: **718-403-4050**, [http://www2.nationalgridus.com/index\\_ny.jsp](http://www2.nationalgridus.com/index_ny.jsp)

#### National Grid Long Island (gas)

(serving the Rockaways)

If you live in National Grid's service area in the Rockaways, you may register by contacting: **1-800-930-5003**, <https://www1.nationalgridus.com/StateLandingNYL-NYL-RES>

## Evacuations Information about evacuations



In a disaster, you may be asked to evacuate your home or workplace. City officials issue evacuation instructions when there is a serious threat to public safety; you and your family should heed those instructions to stay safe. Find out now which evacuation zone your home, office, or frequently visited places are in by using the map here: <http://maps.nyc.gov/hurricane>.

### The Mayor can issue two different kinds of evacuation instructions:

#### • EVACUATION RECOMMENDATION:

The Mayor may recommend that certain residents take steps to evacuate voluntarily. A recommendation might be issued to cover residents of certain zones, communities, or building types. An evacuation recommendation could also be issued for the benefit of people with mobility challenges who need extra time to evacuate.

- **EVACUATION ORDER:** The Mayor may order residents of specific zones or communities to leave their homes for the protection of their health and welfare in the event of an approaching storm.

### Where should I go?

- Stay with family or friends who live outside the impacted evacuation zone.

- If you do not have a safe alternative place to go, head to an evacuation center.
- Shelter sites change based on the emergency, so stay tuned to the local news, access [NYC.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), call **311** (TTY: **212-504-4115**), or contact **311** online for the latest information.
- Pets in carriers are allowed on MTA subways, buses, and trains.
- Pets are allowed at all City evacuation centers. Please bring supplies to care for your pet, including food, leashes, a carrier, and medication. Bring supplies to clean up after your animal. Only legal pets will be allowed.
- You can reach all of the City's evacuation centers using public transportation. Plan your trip with the MTA's online tool: <http://tripplanner.mta.info>.

### What if I live in a high-rise building?

Residents of high-rise apartment buildings may face special risks from severe weather events, even if they live outside the evacuation zone, and should:

- Note the nearest emergency exit.
- Know of at least one alternative exit if your first choice is blocked.
- Know how many doors there are between your room and the emergency exits. Know the count going in both directions down the hall from your door.
- Take cover under a desk or table if

debris is falling.

- Stay away from file cabinets, bookshelves, or other objects that may fall.
- Turn your back to windows and glass.
- Move away from exterior walls.
- Do not use elevators.
- Stay to the right when going down stairwells to allow emergency crews to come up.

### Should I go to the roof and wait to be rescued there?

No. While you may have seen dramatic pictures and videos of helicopter rescues from the roof of a burning building, this is an extraordinarily dangerous procedure for the buildings' occupants, pilots, and firefighters who may be in the building.

### Can I use the elevator?

No. It is never appropriate to use the elevator during a fire or similar building emergency, even in a two-story building.

### What should I do if I'm in a wheelchair or have other disabilities that affect mobility?

If you are unable to evacuate without assistance, notify the fire department by calling **911**, and have a family member or neighbor tell first responders where you are located. Be sure to provide any information that may be relevant to the evacuation process (e.g., wheelchair-bound, lift required, etc.).

## Utility Failures



In the event of utility failures, notify NYCHA's Customer Contact Center (CCC) immediately by calling **718-707-7771**, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### General precautions

- If smoke or a burning odor is present, evacuate the area.
- In case of flooding, disconnect electrical devices if it's safe to do so.

### Signs of a gas leak...

- Smelling a distinctive, strong odor similar to rotten eggs.
- Seeing a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water, blowing dust, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no reason.
- Hearing roaring, hissing, or whistling.

If you suspect a leak, call **911** from a safe area. Do not use spark-producing devices.



# I am NextGeneration NYCHA



"When I was a kid growing up, I used to watch the Housing workers doing their jobs, bagging the garbage and stuff like that, thinking it was easy. But now I realize it's much harder than I thought! There's always something different every day, a new experience to learn from. I'm trying to take it all the way I can go!"

—Harrison Torres, graduate of REES NYCHA Resident Training Academy, Supervisor of Caretakers at Patterson Houses



Started with NYCHA as an AmeriCorps volunteer

**I am NextGeneration NYCHA** In September, NYCHA launched "I am NextGeneration NYCHA," a new campaign featuring residents, employees and supporters of NYCHA who embody the commitment to service that's required to transform our NextGeneration vision of safe, clean and connected communities into a reality. Look for details in the November issue of the NYCHA Journal on how you can submit nominations for "I am NextGeneration NYCHA."

## 100 DAYS OF NEXTGENERATION NYCHA

### A LOOK AT NEXTGENERATION NYCHA

OUR VISION FOR  
**NEXTGENERATION NYCHA**  
SAFE, CLEAN, AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

#NextGenNYCHA

**FUND GOAL:**  
CHANGE THE WAY NYCHA  
IS FUNDED



**(RE)BUILD GOAL:**  
CHANGE HOW NYCHA  
LOOKS



**OPERATE GOAL:**  
CHANGE THE WAY NYCHA  
OPERATES



**ENGAGE GOAL:**  
CHANGE HOW NYCHA  
ENGAGES WITH RESIDENTS



**S**INCE WE LAUNCHED the NextGeneration NYCHA plan in May, the Housing Authority has been working hard to reach our goals. Here's a look at what we've accomplished in the first 100 days of the plan:

- Began construction of new roofs at Queensbridge to replace roofs at 26 residential buildings, including additionally repairing exterior brickwork, replacing window sills, and removing parapet walls to facilitate new roof railing installation.
- Broke ground on an \$4.4 million exterior lighting project at Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem. The development will receive new, energy efficient LED lighting for the entrances, walkways and parking areas. By the end of next year, NYCHA plans to install \$80 million worth of new lighting at all 15 of NYCHA sites in the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety.
- Launched Fix-It-Forward to modernize and streamline operations for faster repairs.
- Released an RFP to develop affordable housing at the NYCHA developments of Mill Brook, Van Dyke, and Ingersoll Houses.
- Launched a recycling initiative at five NYCHA developments: Sheepshead Bay, Nostrand, Boynton Avenue, Bronx River, and Bronx River Addition Houses. NYCHA plans to be in compliance of the City's recycling laws by the end of 2016.
- Began resident engagement at Ocean Bay/Bayside Apartments for HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.
- Launched MyNYCHA, a new mobile application for residents to make repair requests. With the free app, residents can create, schedule, and manage work tickets via their mobile devices (smartphones or tablets). (see page 7.)
- Launched NextGeneration (NextGen) Neighborhoods (see below), a program intended to build mixed-income housing on underutilized NYCHA land to generate much-needed revenue for capital repairs and to create more affordable housing for our communities.

## NextGen Neighborhoods

**SINCE WE LAUNCHED** our ten-year strategic plan, NextGeneration NYCHA, in May, NYCHA has debuted key pieces of our strategy to address our chronic operating deficit and \$17 billion in unmet capital needs and to become a more efficient and effective landlord. In September we launched NextGeneration (NextGen) Neighborhoods, a program to build 50 percent market-rate and 50 percent affordable housing units on underutilized NYCHA land. This program will generate funds that can be used to reinvest in capital needs across NYCHA's portfolio as well as build more affordable housing.

The first two designated NextGen Neighborhoods are Wyckoff Gardens in the Boerum Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn and Holmes Towers on the Upper East Side. Holmes Towers' includes two 25-story buildings on 2.81 acres of land on the Upper East Side. About 930 residents live in nearly 540 units in the two buildings, which covers about 16.2 percent of the NYCHA-owned land at the development. Completed in 1969, the development has nearly \$47 million in capital repair needs in the next five years. Wyckoff Gardens includes three 21-story buildings on 5.81 acres of land

in the Boerum Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn. About 1,150 residents live in nearly 530 units in the three buildings, which covers about 12.3 percent of the NYCHA-owned land at the development. Completed in 1966, the development has nearly \$45 million in capital repair needs in the next five years.

We are beginning community and resident engagement employing the resident engagement model we launched last fall at Van Dyke, Ingersoll and Mott Haven which resulted in the visioning plans for those three developments that included RFPs for creation of 100 percent affordable housing.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:

- **Input and engagement:** NYCHA is planning comprehensive community and resident engagement. Our Community Development Department will collect feedback from residents while they learn more about the program, its benefits and trade-offs as they help inform the scope of the project. Residents will also provide input on the way revenue from the new mixed-income housing is reinvested in



Wyckoff Gardens

their development's existing buildings through major capital repairs, such as roofs, new kitchens or updated bathrooms.

- **Reinvestment:** Unlike previous plans, NextGen Neighborhoods ensures a direct benefit to residents at the site of new construction. A significant portion of generated revenue, which will be determined through the engagement process, will be reinvested for major repair and improvement projects at Wyckoff and Holmes, while the



Holmes Towers

remainder is funneled to NYCHA for improvements at other developments.

- **Affordable Housing:** NextGen Neighborhoods will ensure half of the new housing units are affordable by capping the income at 60 percent of the AMI or less (about a family of three making \$46,600 a year or less).
- **Jobs:** NYCHA is creating a local resident hiring program to match residents with job and training opportunities associated with the new mix-income housing units.

# Seniors Helping Seniors

**B**RONX RIVER HOUSES resident Angel Morocho, 70, had a long career as a cook and taxi driver. Now in his retirement, he has the most rewarding job of his life, as a senior companion with Henry Street Settlement's Senior Companion Program.

"I like to keep my mind busy and be a very active person," Morocho said. "I like to help people; I like to help my community. So many people, most seniors, they really need some company. I hear many stories about seniors being alone."

Morocho is one of 105 senior companions in the program, which is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Senior companions, who must be at least 55 years old, may qualify for a tax-free stipend if they meet the program's income requirements. While helping fellow seniors live independently in their homes, and accompanying them on light shopping trips and social activities like museum outings and trips to farmers' markets, friendships flourish.

"I take care of them, make sure they take their medications on time; go to doctor appointments, optometry, general doctor, the dentist; go to the pharmacy to get medication with them, sometimes I watch TV and we have conversation. They are both very sweet and very funny," Morocho said.

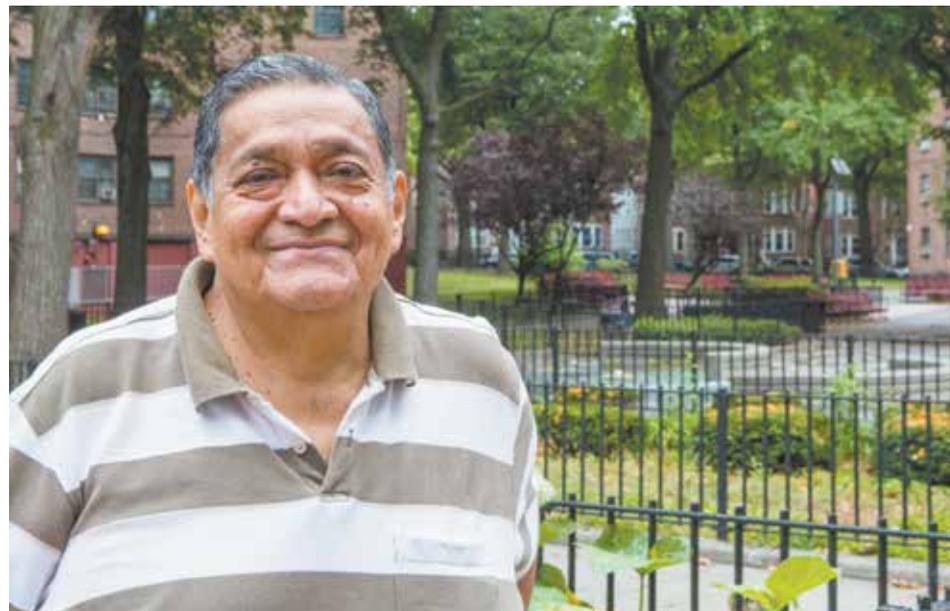
"The Senior Companion Program provides an opportunity for healthy

older adults to make independence a reality for their senior peers," said Program Director Rachel Hughes, LMSW. "Companions get to give back and contribute to their communities while providing a much-needed free service to seniors."

Each senior companion visits two to four seniors, spending between 15 and 40 hours a week with them. Morocho is a companion to two gentlemen, ages 76 and 77, who live a couple of blocks away from him at Bronx River Houses. He sees both clients four hours a day, Monday through Friday, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Together they participate in the activities and meals provided by the Bronx River Senior Center. On a typical day, Morocho will have breakfast with his morning client at the Senior Center and then have lunch and play dominos with his afternoon client.

During monthly training sessions, companions get informed about topics like health issues, including diabetes, asthma, and Alzheimer's; services such as Access-A-Ride, Medicare, Medicaid, and end-of-life documents preparation; and mental health, including depression and anxiety. Morocho shares what he learns with his clients as well as with friends and other seniors in the community.

Twice a year, Henry Street Settlement throws a party to recognize the companions' commitment and community service and many of the senior companions have formed friendships with other



**Bronx River Houses resident Angel Morocho, 70, says that he loves spending his time helping fellow seniors and his community.**

companions in the program. "I'm feeling like people really appreciate what I do. I have so many friends from volunteering, I meet so many different types of people," Morocho said.

Senior companions assist seniors throughout all five boroughs. Half of the senior companions live in NYCHA developments, as do many of the seniors they serve. NYCHA staff members supervise companions at six NYCHA sites: Van Dyke Houses, Reverend Randolph Brown Houses, Red Hook East, UPACA 6, Cassidy-Lafayette Houses, and Ravenswood Houses. Program Director Hughes said that Henry Street Settlement wants to expand the program to other NYCHA

developments in the future.

"The Henry Street Settlement Senior Companion Program is a win-win program: it helps our seniors by providing friendly visits as a means of breaking social isolation, and it helps the senior companions by giving them a way to give back to their community through a senior helping senior peer support model," said Nora Reissig, Director of NYCHA's Family Services Department.

For more information about the Senior Companion Program and to see if you are eligible to volunteer, call the program at **212.477.0455** or visit [www.henrystreet.org/programs/senior-services/senior-companion-program.html](http://www.henrystreet.org/programs/senior-services/senior-companion-program.html).

## In case of an emergency, you can count on us.

If you use life support equipment or you know someone who does, it's important to let us know. Con Edison keeps a record of these individuals in order to contact them in the event of an emergency to make sure they are safe. Please complete and mail this form to us or call 1-800-752-6633.

To keep our records current, each year we send a letter asking you to recertify the equipment that you use.



conEdison

EVERYTHING  
MATTERS

### Life-Support Equipment/Medical Emergency Survey

**Client Information:** (please print clearly in capital letters)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternate contact in case of emergency \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of development \_\_\_\_\_  
 NYCHA office phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Doctor or Hospital:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Equipment Information:

- Tank-type respirator (iron lung)
  - Cuirass-type (chest) respirator
  - Rocking bed respirator
  - Electrically operated respirator (used more than 12 hours a day)
  - Apnea monitor (infant monitor)
  - Hemodialysis equipment (kidney machine)
  - Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Frequency of use: Times per week \_\_\_\_\_ Hours per day \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is equipment used during sleeping hours?  Yes  No  
 If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this survey to:

Con Edison Life-Support Equipment/Medical Emergency  
 30 Flatbush Avenue, Room 515  
 Brooklyn, NY 11217

conEdison | EVERYTHING MATTERS

# Books Are the Best (Especially When They're Free)

**PRAH WINFREY ONCE** said, "Books were my pass to personal freedom. I learned to read at age three, and soon discovered there was a whole world to conquer that went beyond our farm in Mississippi."

That thinking was at the heart of a book drive organized by the Queens Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. They gave away more than 450 books of all kinds to youth at Bland Houses, Latimer Gardens, and Pomonok Houses at the developments' Family Day celebrations this summer. The donated books were collected at the Latimer Gardens Cornerstone Community Center over the course of a few weeks. Some were even contributed through an Amazon.com Wish List.

Chapter President Moira Jack said that her organization started the book drive because "We want to encourage kids to enjoy reading. Reading for knowledge or enjoyment is becoming

a lost art, with text messaging and such. If our kids are going to compete economically and financially, they need to have strong reading and writing skills. Reading helps you develop your vocabulary. It's a moment to relax; it teaches patience, because it's something that you slow down to do and take in. And it's a special time – when you read with your kids, you strengthen relationships within your family."

The Resident Association President of Latimer Gardens, Karen Anglero, said the book drive was very successful and a great idea "because it gets kids back to the basics. Books are a gateway to things that they can explore beyond the screen of a tablet or phone. A lot of kids came out, which is very important since they're the future generation. And they were very happy to go home with the books. Congresswoman Grace Meng was there too, and she socialized with the kids. We want to do a book drive every year!"

PHOTO CREDITS: DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY QUEENS ALUMNAE CHAPTER



## NYPD SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

### HELP YOUR COMMUNITY WHILE EARNING GOOD PAY AND BENEFITS!

School Crossing Guards help children safely cross busy intersections on their way to and from school. School Crossing Guards control traffic flow around schools in the morning, at lunch time and at the end of the school day.

Take advantage of these excellent Civilian **PART TIME JOBS** with the NYPD!

- GOOD PAY - \$11.50/HOUR TO START/\$13.49/HOUR AFTER 3 YEARS
- HEALTH BENEFITS-HEALTH INSURANCE WITH 20+ HOURS WORKED PER WEEK
- WORK CLOSE TO HOME
- SUMMER WORK ALSO AVAILABLE

There are no formal education or experience requirements for this job, but all candidates must be able to understand and be understood in English.

Prospective candidates must pass a qualifying medical examination, which includes drug screening and a character/background investigation, prior to appointment. You must also complete six (6) days of training at the Police Academy once appointed.

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

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

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



The New York City Police Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer



## PINK HOUSES RESIDENTS PLANT A FARM

**IN AUGUST**, residents helped plant the first crops for a fall harvest at Pink Houses' new farm. Comprised of more than 35 beds, the farm was built under the guidance of East New York Farms by members of the Pink Houses Resident Green Committee and Tenants Association and NYCHA staff. Funding support was provided by the Italian-American Civil Rights League, the Fort Greene Council, United Neighborhood Houses and its member agencies, United Way of NYC, the Tisch Illumination Fund, Green City Force, and the Lawyers Alliance for New York. Master gardener Caroline Thunder, long a fixture at NYCHA gardening and greening

events, explained that the impetus to build the farm was the need to provide fresh produce for residents of Pink Houses and Boulevard Houses, especially seniors and children. These developments are located in a fresh food "desert" where there are few places to buy fresh vegetables and fruit. Fortunately for these lucky NYCHA residents, the first 35 beds do not even fill the space Pink Houses has available for garden vegetable beds. Ms. Thunder reports that the Pink Houses Resident Green Committee has plans to start a CSA (community supported agriculture) to provide local residents with discounted fresh local produce next year.



## Paint Smudges and Smiles at Van Dyke Houses

Van Dyke Houses residents had a concern and the community did more than listen – they put on some old clothes and picked up paint brushes. It was a beautiful day in Brownsville, Brooklyn, as more than 230 residents, NYCHA staff, and community partners of all ages spent a few hours on August 6 sprucing up Van Dyke's fences with a fresh coat of paint.

According to NYCHA Project Manager Helga Nyanffor, residents raised the need to repaint the fences at Van Dyke's NextGeneration NYCHA committee meetings. These collaborative committees were created to implement the ideas that arose from last year's NextGen "visioning" workshops, which focused on increasing opportunities and the quality of life in the community. Local partner Healthfirst, a non-profit provider of free and low-cost health insurance, wanted to assist with this request, and NYCHA's Resident Engagement Lead for Van Dyke's NextGen work, Jacqueline Howard, helped bring all the players together.

When asked about his organization's involvement in the Beautification Paint Party, Healthfirst's Vice President of Community Engagement, George Hulse, said: "Healthfirst cares about the health and well-being of our members, many of whom are NYCHA residents. We know that housing affects our health and how we feel, which is why we felt it was important to team up with NYCHA, the Van Dyke Resident Association, and members of the community to bring a fresh look to the Van Dyke Houses."

Van Dyke's Resident Association President, Lisa Kenner, who was born and raised there, said: "I was so pleased that so many people came out. We thought we'd have only about one hundred. When you have so much violence going on, you need to bring people together, showing the kids there's no reason to have violence, that we have to work together to uplift our neighborhood. These kinds of things bring faith and hope and love back to the families of the community. I just hope that more people start stepping up and volunteering."

In addition to NYCHA residents and staff and Healthfirst, participants and supporters included the NYPD's Police Service Area 2, Brownsville Jobs-Plus, Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center, Medgar Evers College, the NYC Summer Youth Employment Program, Afropunk, the Brownsville Community Justice Center, Brownsville Heritage House, CAMBA, McKinney Rogers, Green City Force, and Home Depot. Assemblywoman Latrice Walker, representatives for Congresswoman Yvette Clarke and City Councilmember Darlene Mealy, and youth from the Seth Low and Langston Hughes Community Centers also rolled up their sleeves and pitched in.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) playing a sport and engaging neighbors or volunteering in the community. I wanted to be a part of the neighborhood and when I saw the underused court at Marcy I saw an opportunity to give back in a unique and meaningful way by teaching the sport of tennis and imparting the life skills that it offers. Tennis is such a unique sport, it's perfect for mentoring, and it was too good a thing to not utilize it," McCasland said.

Otero and his sister Brenda, 12, were two of KCTL's first students five years ago. After the success of the Marcy club, McCasland founded four other clubs, Tompkins Tennis Club (serving Tompkins Houses); Lafayette Tennis Club (serving Lafayette Gardens); Sumner Tennis Club (serving Sumner Houses); and the newest club, founded in May 2015, the Jackie Robinson Tennis Club (serving Brevoort Houses). NYCHA residents are given first priority to join the clubs—about 90 percent of children in the program live in public housing—though KCTL doesn't turn down any neighborhood kid who wants to come and join.

The league offers free tennis lessons to kids aged five to 15. Every Saturday during the league's season, children pair up with volunteers at their tennis clubs to learn and play tennis. KCTL currently serves about 150 kids and the ratio of volunteers to kids is 2-to-1. At each session there is also an off-court mentoring time, where children spend 30 minutes discussing various topics, such as healthy eating, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence.

KCTL is a volunteer-driven organization, with about 100 volunteers who are full-time professionals, such as lawyers, consultants, and marketing experts. All volunteers are background checked and receive extensive training. Tennis experience isn't necessary to be a volunteer; McCasland looks for people who can serve as strong role models and pairs volunteers without tennis experience with those who have played the sport.

One lesson KCTL teaches is commitment. For instance, the league provides participants with incentives for attendance, if children attend three classes in a row they get to borrow a tennis racket and balls to practice on off days and if children come to five classes they receive the t-shirt for their tennis club.

KCTL is a small organization, with two

paid staff at each of the five sites, a site director and site coordinator, and they recently hired a director of programming who will be responsible for recruiting volunteers and managing staff. KCTL receives funding from the United States Tennis Association's (USTA) Eastern Section and Metro Board. McCasland originally received a \$25,000 grant to start the league and also receives equipment donations from the USTA. KCTL has also received grants from various foundations, for instance the league received funds to help them resurface the tennis courts at Marcy, and also relies on individual donors to help run the program.

In recent years KCTL has been supported through funding from City Council Members Robert Cornegy Jr. and Laurie Cumbo. Council Member Cornegy has been a mentor and supporter of KCTL since 2010.

"Recently, a reporter asked how my days as a college and professional basketball player affect my work in the City Council," CM Robert E. Cornegy Jr. (D-36) said. "Once I began drawing connections, I could not stop! Athletics gave me a way to bond with others, learn to persevere, shaped the way I view my community and allowed me to see the world. I know that Kings County Tennis League is having the same effect on the children it serves. They are learning to work hard to improve themselves, to pursue excellence and good health and to believe in their own unlimited potential. This foundation is so valuable, that it's actually priceless. Michael McCasland fought hard to bring this resource to the NYCHA communities on the north side of my district and supporting his good work is truly a privilege."

What's next for KCTL? McCasland wants to add more field trips and grow the league in other Brooklyn neighborhoods, such as Crown Heights and East New York. He would also love to find an indoor location so that they can run the league year-round.

"I want to try to make this easy and not bus the kids out of their communities. We want them to be proud of where they live, that's why we bring tennis to their communities," McCasland says.

Have a budding tennis pro you'd like to get involved with KCTL? Visit [www.kingscountytennisleague.org](http://www.kingscountytennisleague.org) for more information.

## MyNYCHA App Puts You in Control

**R**ESIDENTS CAN NOW take the apartment repair process into their own hands – by completing their own work orders on a smartphone or tablet using the MyNYCHA app. Roll out of the customer service enhancement was completed on September 10, and the verdict is in.

"It's great that I can feel like I have NYCHA right in the palm of my hands," wrote one excited resident in the app's feedback section. "It's fast, simple, and very efficient."

"I love this app!! It's very convenient [to] schedule a service appointment," wrote another.

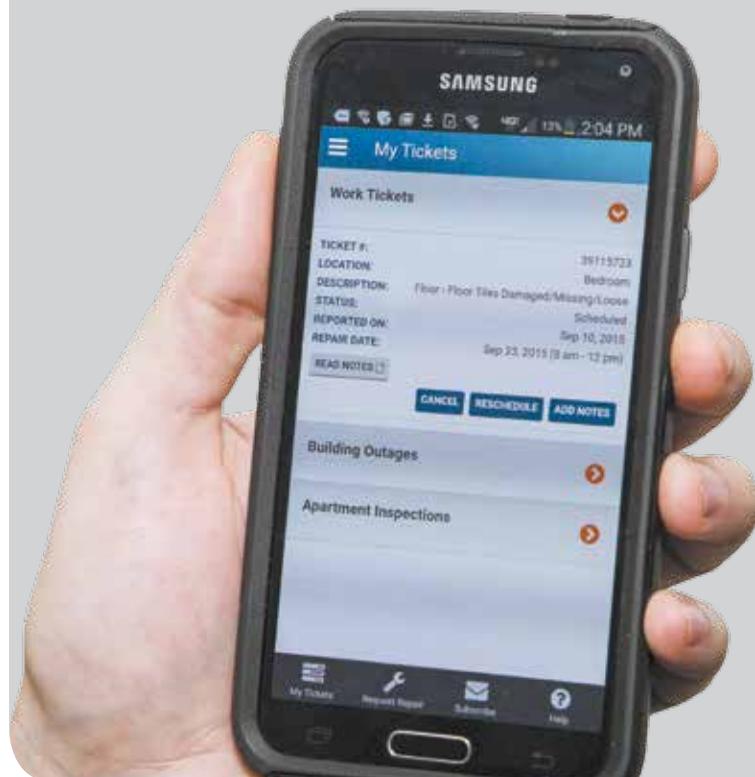
The handy app enables residents to easily create, schedule, track and update maintenance service requests. Previously, these requests could be scheduled only through the Centralized Call Center. "Now, I don't have to [always] pick up my phone and wait for someone to put in a ticket for me," another resident wrote.

Residents can also sign up on MyNYCHA for email notifications about elevator, gas, heat, and hot water outages in their developments and can view scheduled dates for apartment inspections.

To complete a work order, residents simply identify the room and then indicate the repair task from a menu of choices. Previously, residents could monitor work orders online but could not complete or schedule them. A web version of the MyNYCHA app will be developed to provide these functions.

Residents are being notified about MyNYCHA through flyers, social media, the NYCHA website and emails. But you can also help spread the word that communicating with NYCHA about needed repairs is easier than ever.

The MyNYCHA app can be downloaded for free from a smartphone or tablet through either Apple's App Store or Android's Google Play Store.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

contributes to mold, leaks and physical damage to the building structure. These vital repairs will decrease the number of leaks in the most affected NYCHA buildings, and move the Authority towards completing the critical infrastructure repairs committed to residents. The City has invested \$300 million over the next three years to fund roof replacements, and NYCHA is pairing an additional \$80 million in federal public housing capital funds this year to supplement this investment.

NYCHA will replace roofs on 26 residential buildings at Queensbridge, including additionally repairing exterior brickwork, replacing window sills, and removing parapet walls to facilitate new roof railing installation. The work, which represents an \$87 million investment, includes \$60 million in funding from the City and \$27 million in federal funding. Construction is expected to be completed by July 2017.

### QUEENSBRIDGE HOUSES ROOF REPLACEMENTS WILL:

- Preserve physical structures by safeguarding them from incoming moisture, saving money on repairing moisture damage
- Eliminate core symptoms of mold in NYCHA buildings, protecting residents and improving their quality of life
- Reduce operating expenses by making buildings more efficient



# I Have A Dream Success Story: Stephanie Sosa

**A**S A THIRD grader living in the Bronx's Melrose Houses, Stephanie Sosa became a "Dreamer." That is, she participated, along with 39 other children, in an innovative program from the "I Have A Dream" Foundation that helps low-income youth reach their full potential as they journey from elementary school through college. Sosa is one of many Dreamer success stories: She now has two post-secondary degrees and is working to provide affordable housing for low-income families.

Since "I Have A Dream" Foundation – New York was founded in Harlem in 1981 by businessman Eugene Lang, its affiliates have spread all over the nation and to New Zealand, serving more than 16,000 Dreamers. Sosa and her cohorts received comprehensive mentoring, academic support, life skills education, mental health services, health and wellness programming, arts programming, and more.

"I wouldn't be who I am today if not for 'I Have a Dream,'" Sosa said. "I wouldn't be as confident and as savvy

as I am now. I'm a better, stronger me because of IHAD. We all became better versions of ourselves."

Sosa attended Siena College on a full scholarship, receiving a bachelor's degree in social work in 2012. She graduated from New York University's Robert Wagner School of Public Service in 2014 with a Master of Urban Planning; her specialization was housing policy and economic development.

Sosa now works as a project manager at Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council in Brooklyn, where she focuses on all aspects of developing and leasing affordable housing in the neighborhoods of Bushwick, East New York, and Bedford-Stuyvesant.

"School allowed me to come back to New York City and provide low-income housing opportunities for my community, for people of color," Sosa said. "I hope to see more kids do this in the future, to have more kids dream of doing something for their communities, to keep the wealth in their communities."

Growing up in Melrose Houses inspired her to pursue urban planning as a

career. "Housing opportunities for low-income people are really important. I grew up really valuing that because I'd see friends from school on the verge of becoming homeless, but I knew we were okay because our home was based on my family's income. I value the importance of affordable housing."

Though she recently moved to Bushwick, Sosa still visits her mother and grandmother regularly in Melrose. She has advice for kids living in public housing: "Stay in school and tough it out. If you see yourself being a doctor, a nurse, going into real estate, anything – a degree will get you there. If you aren't comfortable with your living situation, school can give you the opportunity to do better for yourself and your family. Growing up poor can be temporary, but school is a right, it's something we all have access to. Focus on what you're passionate about and don't listen to the pressure of your surroundings. School can get you out of poverty."

For more information about "I Have A Dream" Foundation New York, visit [www.ihaveadreamny.org](http://www.ihaveadreamny.org).



Stephanie Sosa at New York University's May 2014 commencement ceremony. Sosa received a master's degree in urban planning from NYU's Robert Wagner School of Public Service.

## From Woodside, Queens, to a Mediterranean Adventure

**T**HIS PAST JULY, Woodside Houses resident Jahlil Lee, 17, took an amazing 19-day educational trip to Italy, France, and Spain as a member of People to People's Student Ambassador Program.

Founded in 1956 by President Dwight Eisenhower, People to People helps young people gain hands-on learning experiences and appreciation of other cultures through travel. Participants visit a foreign country's iconic sites, engage in community service, spend a few days living with local families, and complete assignments to earn high school and college credit.

"At first I was paranoid and nervous about the trip," Lee said, "but as I started fundraising and hearing other people talk about trips they've taken, I started getting really excited about it."

Lee, a student in John Bowne High School's science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) program, traveled with 50 other New York City-area high school students on the Mediterranean Traditions tour. He spent 11 days in Italy, where he toured the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa; visited Vatican City; and spent a day playing music for children with developmental disabilities in the Montecatini district. Lee also spent three days in the home of the Nicolo family, who showed him what life is like in a small Italian town. Though he doesn't speak much Italian, his high school Spanish classes came in handy during the homestay.

In France, Lee toured Cannes, Avignon, and Carcassonne, and visited



the Arago Cave in Tautavel, one of the world's largest prehistoric sites, where 450,000-year-old fossils were discovered. The group spent four days in Spain, traveling to Barcelona, Zaragoza, and Madrid and sampling Lee's new favorite food, paella.

"The most amazing things about the trip were spending the day in Assisi (we climbed up a tower and rappelled down). Everyone was working together, doing community service with the kids in Montecatini. And my homestay family was so nice and took really good care of me."

It took a lot of hard work and community support to fund the trip. Lee's parents Stephanie and Roger held numerous fundraisers and created a Go Fund Me page, Lee sold cookies and chocolates, and the family attend-



ed tenant association and community board meetings. His parents said two major supporters were Deborah Tharrington, Director of Constituent Services in New York City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer's office, and Annie Cotton Morris, Resident Association President for Woodside Houses. Lee's trip was also publicized in the *Woodside Herald*, *Queens Gazette*, and *Queens Chronicle*. With the help of their community, the Lee family was able to raise the full \$6,500 needed for the trip.

"We, Jahlil's parents, were very proud of him getting invited, interviewed, and accepted as a student ambassador for People to People. He deserved this opportunity. We worked very hard, or it would have been impossible for him to go."



At John F. Kennedy International Airport, Jahlil Lee poses for one more picture with his parents, Roger and Stephanie, before departing for his Mediterranean adventure tour.



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# Did You Know There Are 8 Ways You Can Pay Your Rent?

**1 E-payment on NYCHA website**

- Available 24/7
- Use an e-check (automatic transfer between accounts), or debit card
- 30-cent fee for e-checks; free if you sign-up for e-billing
- Using a debit card may incur convenience fee
- Can arrange automatic weekly, biweekly or monthly payments



**2 Your Bank's Website**

- Use your bank's online system or online bill payer.
- Make monthly or recurring payments directly from your bank account (usually free).



**3 By Phone**

- Call NYCHA Phone Payment at 1-866-315-6355
- Monthly payments using e-check or debit card
- Available 24/7
- 30-cent fee for e-check; using a debit card may incur a convenience fee



**4 An Authorized Bank or Credit Union**

- Your Property Management Office has a list of banks and credit unions that will take cash rent payments.
- You can also find the list on [nyc.gov/nycha](http://nyc.gov/nycha)



**5 The Mail**

- Mail check or money order using the pre-addressed envelope, and be sure to include your remittance slip.
- Don't forget to write your nine-digit NYCHA account number on the check or money order.



**6 Payroll Deduction**

- Are you a NYCHA resident and a City employee? You may be eligible to have your rent deducted from your paycheck twice a month.
- Apply at your property management office.



**7 Human Resources Administration**

- If you receive public assistance, New York City Human Resources Administration may pay your rent.
- Review your monthly rent billing statement to be sure NYCHA received your rent and no other charges are due.



**8 Authorized Third Party Payors**

- If you are a senior or disabled, an authorized third party can pay your rent for you.
- Please contact your property management office for more information.



## New Exhibit on Affordable Housing in New York City Opens at the Museum of the City of New York

**IN SEPTEMBER,** THE Museum of the City of New York opened *Affordable New York: A Housing Legacy*, the first ever exhibit to explore the past, present, and future of subsidized housing in New York City.

New York City is one of the most expensive cities in the nation, and today – as throughout the City's history – commercial pressures combined with the dynamics of development mean that working people and their families often struggle to find decent and affordable places to live. As a result of efforts that date to the nineteenth century and continue today, millions of New York residents, close to a quarter of the city's population, have access to a housing supply covered by some form of market protection.

"New York's portfolio of affordable



housing is larger and more varied than many people realize, including redbrick developments, individual apartment buildings, row houses, and even detached single-family houses," said Thomas Mellins, the architectural historian and author who curated the exhibit. "In addition, as other American cities lessen their efforts, New York strives to maintain its historic commitment to providing housing for all."

New York has a long history of working to make quality housing accessible to all, a history that is largely unknown to most New Yorkers today. In 1857, New York enacted the nation's first tenement house laws, and it built the nation's first public housing in 1935. Visitors to the exhibit will learn how New York has consistently played a key role in establishing and developing the nation's housing policies. They will also learn about NYCHA – the City's largest landlord – which currently owns and operates 328 developments, with 2,553 buildings containing over 177,000 units.

The exhibition will display vintage and contemporary photographs, as well as architectural drawings and models, memorabilia, and video. The exhibit is divided into four

chronological sections:

- Origins: Private: 1867 to 1933
- The Era of Building Big: 1934 to 1973
- Housing the Middle Class: 1942 to 1973
- After Towers-in-the-Park: 1973 to the Present

*Affordable Housing* is sponsored by the Ford Foundation and co-presented by the Citizens Housing & Planning Council and the New York State

Association for Affordable Housing.

The exhibition is on view through February 7, 2016. The Museum of the City of New York is located at 1220 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street and is open seven days a week. Admission is \$14 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, and free for those under 20.

PHOTOS: © KEVIN CHU + JESSICA PAUL COURTESY MURPHY BURNHAM & BUTTRICK ARCHITECTS, © DAVID SUNDBERG/ESTO, ANDREW MOORE COURTESY MCNY



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# Congratulations REES 2010–2015: Celebrating 5 Years of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability

## REES BY THE NUMBERS:

Average construction wage for a Section 3 employee in 2015: \$30.68/hour.

Over \$30M, including \$1.4 from Citi for Doorways to Opportunity, was provided to NYCHA to support REES programs.

1,178 NYCHA residents filed taxes using VITA services in 2015 and received \$1,659,823 in refunds.

1,188 NYCHA residents have completed the NRTA program.

4,909 NYCHA residents were placed in jobs by REES Zone partners between 2010 – July 2015.

5,872 NYCHA residents whose income increased kept their rent the same by obtaining the Earned Income Disallowance using REES online guidelines.

REES entrepreneurship programs served 428 entrepreneurs from 2013 through July 2015.



## On the Path to Homeownership

*Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America Presents First in Series of Homebuyer Education Workshops for NYCHA Residents*

**“YES I CAN,”** workshop leader Benjamin Codjoe, Regional Supervisor of the Northeast Region for the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA), asked attendees to say.

“Yes I can,” was the resounding response from the crowded room of almost 100 NYCHA residents, Section 8 tenants, and employees – an affirmation that attendees could become homeowners in the near future.

This inspiring moment was part of an August 13 mortgage and homebuyer workshop that NACA presented in partnership with NYCHA’s Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES). NACA’s was the inaugural session in REES’ First-Time Homebuyers series of workshops hosted with local partners that offer free and low-cost HUD-certified homebuyer education, homeownership counseling, and foreclosure prevention services.

The workshops teach residents how to qualify for a mortgage; how to work with a realtor, lawyer, and home inspector; and how to budget and manage expenses in preparation to buy a home.

NACA is a non-profit homeownership member organization founded in 1988 by Bruce Marks. Its 40 offices nationwide advocate for the community, taking on issues like predatory lending by banks. NACA primarily works with people with low to moderate incomes and with buyers who do not have perfect credit history.

“NACA offers comprehensive counseling to all members until they are qualified to purchase a home, and we will not give up on any member until they are qualified through our program. We also offer the best interest rate in America that is fixed for the life of the loan, and make sure through the one-on-one counseling session we qualify the members for a payment they can

afford,” said Hervey Emmanuel, a mortgage counselor at NACA who was also at the workshop.

NACA membership is \$20 per household, per year. Members are required to do five activities with NACA a year, including neighborhood outreach, attending rallies and demonstrations, or distributing information about NACA.

Through NACA, members may purchase one- to four-family homes, co-ops, and condominiums, though there is a purchase price maximum: \$362,000 for a single-family home, \$464,000 for a two-family home, \$561,000 for a three-family home, and \$697,000 for a four-family home. There is no down payment, no closing costs, no application fees, and the interest rate on the mortgage is below market rate: 2.5 percent for a 15-year mortgage and 3.25 percent for a 30-year mortgage. Members must live in a home purchased with NACA for the duration of the mortgage.

Codjoe gave attendees a lot of information to take home, including NACA’s 80-page Home Buyer’s Workbook. He had many tips for residents, such as paying rent by check or money order instead of cash so there’s a paper trail history of on-time payments (see page 10 for eight ways to pay your rent).

Emmanuel has qualified many former NYCHA residents for homes through NACA and believes that “NYCHA residents should become NACA members so that they are a part of a community advocacy organization that will help uplift their community they now live in by stabilizing the neighborhood through homeownership.” He also said that the feedback he received from residents was great; many “never thought they would have an opportunity or chance to own a home, but with the help of NACA we are making that possibility a reality.”

To learn more about NACA, visit [www.naca.com](http://www.naca.com).

## Upcoming First-Time Homebuyers Workshops

By Appointment Only.  
University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP)  
Free One-on-One Homebuyer Counseling with a HUD Certified Counselor at Northwest Bronx Resource Center at Bainbridge and East 196th Street  
By appointment only:

**718-933-2539**

\*Open to NYCHA residents in the Bronx\*

**Wednesday, October 28 – 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. FREE**

How to Improve Your Credit Score – Mortgage Readiness Clinic  
Van Dyke Community Center  
392 Blake Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212

\*Open to NYCHA residents in Central Brooklyn\*

**Saturday, November 7 – 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. FREE**

First Time Homebuyer Workshop – Neighborhood Housing Services of Staten Island

Stapleton Community Center  
230 Broad Street,  
Staten Island, NY 10304

\*Open to NYCHA residents citywide\*

**Saturday, November 7 and Saturday, November 14 – 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**\$50 course fee**

First Time Home Buying Series – Bridge Street Development Corporation  
Stone Avenue Library  
581 Mother Gaston Boulevard,  
Brooklyn, NY 11212

\*Open to NYCHA residents and the general public in Central Brooklyn\*

## Coached to Business Success



**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP** with International Coach Federation, REES connected Ravenswood Houses resident Joshua Brown with certified business coach Gala Mars. They worked together 10 hours (that’s \$2,140 of business advice!) to build his videography and video editing company, Blackseedz Entertainment. Gala helped Joshua create a vision plan for his business, learn about developing contracts to use with his clients, redesign his website, and gain the tools he needs to take his business to the next level.

### NYCHApreneur Joshua

**Brown:** I already had the technical skills but now I’m more business savvy. I learned how to strategize better, how to not treat my clients like they’re my friends. Some people will try to talk you down in cost and Gala taught me to know my worth and not to give in, because if I lowered my costs for everyone it would start to devalue. She helped me have a lot more confidence in the business aspect and I know I can reach my full potential.

**Coach Gala Mars:** It’s important as a coach to try not to impose my agenda on my client. I asked questions that helped bring a completely new awareness to him. We talked about his ultimate goals, we talked about where he wants to see his business in a year and then we got technical and talked strategy and action steps, what he needs to put in place for his business to function well. Seeing the real product of his hard work – I think I was just as happy as he was. This is why I told Joshua that if he needs me for a half of year, I can offer him all my help. It motivates me as well.

# Meet the 2015 NYCHA-CUNY Scholars!

**INTRODUCING THE 15** recipients of the 2015 NYCHA-CUNY Resident Scholarship, a program that offers NYCHA residents who are full-time students at the City University of New York \$1,000 each to use for tuition, books, or other education-related expenses. These funds help ease the financial burden of higher education and allow scholars to further their educations and make a difference for themselves, their families, and their communities.

## Grace Theresa Agalo-os

Senior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
Major: Political Science  
Todt Hill Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My mother because she raised me to be as tough as I am today.

**Surprising Fact:** I do capoeira, a Brazilian mixed martial art form.

## Carla Hernandez

Junior at Brooklyn College  
Major: Sociology  
Fulton Houses

**Greatest inspiration:** My mother is very hard-working; she's someone I can always look up to.

**Surprising Fact:** I have been dog walking for a few years now.

## Joseph Kemp

Junior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
Major: Philosophy  
Queensbridge Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

Anyone who has made something from the ground up.

**Surprising fact:** I don't conform to the norms of masculinity.

## Evette Khalil

Senior at College of Staten Island  
Major: Computer Science and Mathematics  
Mariner's Harbor Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My parents always encourage me.

## Ayesha Khan

Junior at City College of New York  
Major: Biology  
Mariner's Harbor Houses

**Greatest inspiration:** I want to make my parents proud.

**Surprising fact:** I'm married and I like bicycling and badminton.

## Rose Middleton

Junior at Queens College  
Astoria Houses

**Greatest inspiration:** I'm inspired by my father, and my children.

## Shirley Orellana

Senior at Hunter College  
Major: Psychology  
Betances Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

I'm really proud of my parents and want to be like them.

**Surprising fact:** people think I'm really quiet but when they get to know me I'm fun.

## Marilyn Owusu-Sekyere

Junior at College of Staten Island  
Major: Psychology and English Writing  
Richmond Terrace Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My mom and a woman named Maria who runs an orphanage.

**Surprising fact:** I'm raising funds for an orphanage in DR.

## Alismari Read

Senior at City College of New York  
Major: Chemical Engineering  
Polo Grounds Towers



### Greatest inspiration:

My mother encourages me to follow my dreams.

**Surprising fact:** I am very shy, but also easygoing.

## Tatiana Sangare

Junior at Brooklyn College  
Major: Public Accounting and Political Science  
Park Rock Rehab Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My parents taught me hard work, determination, and tenacity.

**Surprising fact:** I laugh at almost anything.

## Maria Santana

Hunter College  
Major: History and Human Rights  
Bronxchester Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

I admire my mom very much.

**Surprising fact:** I have a crazy sense of humor.

## Nusrat Sultana

Junior at Hunter College  
Major: English/Creative Writing  
Mitchel Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My family always has my back.

**Surprising fact:** I can dance really well.

## Stella Tse

Junior at Hunter College  
Major: Adolescent Mathematics Education  
Vladeck Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My boss motivates me.

**Surprising fact:** Last semester, I had three jobs, 2 volunteer jobs and went to school full-time.

## David Ventura

Senior at Lehman College  
Major: Dietetics, Food & Nutrition  
Douglass Houses



### Greatest inspiration:

My mother and the actor James Franco.

**Surprising fact:** I know the entire script word for word to "Baby Mama."

## Nancy Villavicencio

Junior at Baruch College  
Major: Accounting  
Strauss/344 East 28th Street



### Greatest inspiration:

My mother always tells me how proud she is of me.

**Surprising fact:** When I start a new job I always exceed expectations.

Hear more from the 2015 NYCHA-CUNY Scholars at <http://on.nyc.gov/nycha-cuny-2015-vids>.



## With a Focus on Success, Harrison Torres Climbs the Ranks

**H**ARRISON TORRES' mantra for success is "Focus." The Supervisor of Caretakers at the Bronx's Patterson Houses elaborates: "Focus on what you want and go after it and always believe in God that it can happen." He'd just given out assignments for the rest of the day to his staff at the daily afternoon muster, and took a moment to share his NYCHA success story with the *Journal*.

"I was working construction as part of the Section 3 [resident hiring] program at Johnson Houses, where I live. They would give me two, three days a week. One day I went to my career specialist at REES and said, 'I need a whole week.' She told me about the new program for Caretaker (J) [Janitorial]. 'You'd be in the first program if you pass the math and reading and drug tests,' she said. 'If you're interested, I could put you on right now.' And I said, 'Yes, let's do it.'"

So I was in the NYCHA Resident Training Academy led by BWI [Brooklyn Workforce Innovations], which prepared me really well for what I'm doing. It taught me what to expect at work, what to look forward to, and I got actual training at Ingersoll Houses the last eight days of the program. This was 2010. I went to East River Houses, where I was a Caretaker for three and a half years.

This was a real journey for me, because I was in the streets for years and this was my first job. I was very overwhelmed at first. I was the only

Caretaker in a 20-story building (Wilson Houses, which was consolidated with East River Houses). At the end of the day, I felt really tired. When I wanted to quit, my co-workers would pull me to the side and say, 'Give it time, you're a good guy and it's only going to get better.' Well, every day did get better and better and I got acclimated physically and mentally to the job.

Then the Supervisor of Caretakers civil service exam came up. I studied every single day because I wanted to move up. My supervisor encouraged me. I asked him so many questions; he saw that I really wanted this. I was so thirsty for the results after I took the test, but I had to wait 10 months. I knew I passed, but I wanted to know my number. When I found out I was 41, I couldn't believe it, so I put my girlfriend on the phone to confirm. I was so happy. I went for training, then got my placement at Patterson Houses, where I've been Supervisor of Caretakers for about a year.

When I was a kid growing up, I used to watch the Housing workers doing their jobs, bagging the garbage and stuff like that, thinking it was easy. But now I realize it's not an easy job, and much harder than I thought! It's actually not a job—it's an adventure. There's always something different every day, a new experience to learn from.

My next step is to take the Assistant Superintendent exam (the filing date is in February). I'm trying to take it all the way I can go!"