



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**



**5**  
Heating  
Upgrades



**8**  
Free Tax  
Return Help



**11**  
Summer Jobs  
for NYCHA  
Youth

The NYCHA **JOURNAL**



New Acting GM Vito Mustaciuolo toured Howard Houses with City Councilmember Alicka Ampry-Samuel, residents, and NYCHA staff.

**MAYOR APPOINTS NEW GENERAL MANAGER**

ON JANUARY 22, Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed Vito Mustaciuolo as acting General Manager while NYCHA performs a nationwide search for the position. Mustaciuolo was formerly the Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Enforcement and Neighborhood Services at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

“Vito Mustaciuolo has a long and successful history of advocating for tenants,” said NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye. “His more than 30 years of experience at HPD will be invaluable as we implement broader reforms to strengthen public housing. I’m excited about the operational expertise he brings to the role. I would also like to thank Michael Kelly for his years of public service, especially his two stints (CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

**Federal Budget Proposal Neglects Public Housing**

**Statement from NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye on the President’s Budget**

“Public housing is a critical resource which keeps New York City running by providing affordable homes for both the City’s public servants, like our nurses, teachers, and police officers, as well as seniors, veterans and the disabled. No one should be displaced from their community because the federal government has turned its back on them, but that is exactly what the President has proposed.”

**FY19 HUD Budget Request**

	Public Housing Capital Fund	Public Housing Operating Fund	Section 8 Voucher Renewals
<b>HUD Funding</b> (Requested)	\$0 <b>100%</b> (from \$1.922 billion)	\$2.675 billion <b>37% decrease</b> (Based on HUD 2018 Budget of \$4.245 billion)	Estimated 88.6% proration
<b>NYCHA Funding</b> (Estimate)	Loss of \$346 million	Loss of approximately \$330 to \$466 million based on FY19 Budget	Loss of 9,853 vouchers (\$124,380,351/ annual shortfall)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



**THE "BOMB CYCLONE"** cold spell that hit New York City this winter worsened what was already the biggest challenge to NYCHA and public housing across the country—significant delayed maintenance due to insufficient funding. The outages our residents experience are a symptom of the federal government's disinvestment, a problem decades in the making: NYCHA has suffered a \$3 billion loss in federal funding since 2001. (For information on how NYCHA handled heat and hot water emergencies, see page 4).

This is why Mayor Bill de Blasio's recent \$200 million commitment to replace aging boilers and upgrade heating systems at 20 developments with chronic heating outages is so important. At a time when the Authority is faced with \$17 billion in capital needs and continued threats of cuts from the federal government, the Mayor's financial support is critical and invaluable.

This winter is also a period of transition. Michael Kelly, our General Manager (GM) for the past three years, left NYCHA in February for a new opportunity. During his time as GM, the Authority improved customer service, modernized and streamlined business

processes, and began our transformation into a green and sustainable organization. For instance, average repair wait time decreased from 14 days to 5 days; we have delivered on many of our FEMA-funded Sandy projects; and we launched our first digital tool, the MyNYCHA app. NYCHA is grateful for Michael's deep industry knowledge and commitment to improving the lives of the 1 in 14 New Yorkers who call NYCHA home.

We are excited to welcome Vito Mustaciuolo, appointed as NYCHA's new Acting General Manager by Mayor de Blasio, effective February 22. Vito has a long and successful history of advocating for tenants. His more than 30 years of experience at HPD will be vital as we implement broader reforms to strengthen public housing. Together, we'll continue to strengthen public housing and be a better landlord. I remain committed to the fight to improve public housing for you, our residents, and for the next generation of New Yorkers who will call NYCHA home.

In partnership,

**Shola Olatoye**  
Chair and CEO

## NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

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

Copies of the calendar for the upcoming board meeting are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary, 250 Broadway, 12th floor, after 3 p.m. on the Monday before the meeting. Copies of the dispositions of prior meetings are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up from the Office of the Corporate Secretary no earlier than 3 p.m. on the Thursday after the board meeting. Any person requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Office of the Corporate Secretary at **212-306-6088** no later than five business days prior to the meeting. For additional information regarding the calendar of

meetings, dispositions, dates, and times, please call **212-306-6088**.

For those unable to attend the board meetings, please visit <http://on.nyc.gov/boardmeetings> at the time of the meeting to watch live. You may also watch past board meetings by visiting NYCHAnnel, NYCHA's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/c/nycha>.

### Upcoming Meetings:

**March 28, 2018**

**April 25, 2018**

**May 30, 2018**

**June 27, 2018**

**July 25, 2018**

**September 26, 2018**

**October 31, 2018**

**November 28, 2018**

**December 19, 2018**

## The NYCHA JOURNAL

**ESTABLISHED 1970 • CIRCULATION 200,000**

**PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS**

250 Broadway, New York, NY 10007



Visit The NYCHA Journal online: [www.nychajournal.nyc/](http://www.nychajournal.nyc/)

# NYCHA to Build 620 New Homes for Families and Seniors

Partnerships with developers will also raise \$40 million for repairs

**T**HROUGH NYCHA'S 100% Affordable Housing, Next-Gen Neighborhoods, and FHA Vacant Homes programs, the Authority is building new affordable housing for seniors and families in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens, while generating over \$40 million for critical repairs.

Developers were chosen in January after an extensive community engagement process. NYCHA held 15 resident meetings at the sites, distributed 2,000 notices, and spoke with over 1,200 residents directly. Residents will not be relocated and rents will remain the same. Developers will train and hire NYCHA residents for employment at the sites and work with residents as the projects move forward.

## 100% Affordable

**Sumner Houses, Brooklyn:** A 10-story senior building with 197 affordable apartments and over 20,000 sq. ft. of community space developed by Selfhelp Community Services, RiseBoro Community Partnership, and Urban Builders Collaborative. Apartments will be for extremely low, very low, and low-income individuals earning up to \$40,080.

**Twin Parks West, Bronx:** A 172-unit developed by Settlement Housing Fund and Joy

Construction. Homes will be affordable for low- to moderate-income households earning up to \$68,720 for a family of three. The building will have 11,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 1,000 sq. ft. for social services provided by BronxWorks.

## NextGen Neighborhoods Wyckoff Gardens, Brooklyn:

Two 16-story mixed-income buildings with 500 units, developed by The Arker Companies and Two Trees, with 50 percent market-rate and 50 percent affordable housing for low-income households earning up to \$51,540 for a family of three. Upon closing, NYCHA will receive \$37 million for repairs, \$18.5 million to cover almost

half of Wyckoff's outstanding infrastructure needs. The additional \$18.5 million will be used for repairs at other NYCHA developments. NYCHA residents will have preference for 25 percent of the affordable units through HPD's housing lottery.

For 100% Affordable and Next-Gen Neighborhoods, NYCHA retains ownership of sites.

## FHA Vacant Homes

NYCHA inherited FHA homes in the 1970s and 80s from the City but did not receive operating or capital funds for them. As the homes became vacant, NYCHA partnered with non-profits to repair the homes and sell them to low- and moderate-income families.

Habitat for Humanity NYC will



A rendering of the Sumner Houses Senior Building, which will provide 197 affordable apartments, courtesy of the architect, Studio Libeskind.

purchase 13 vacant single-family homes in Queens, with a plan to demolish the homes and construct 16 new homes, to be sold to low-to-moderate-income households. Restored Homes HDFC will purchase and refurbish eight single-family and eight multifamily homes in Queens and Brooklyn, to be sold to families earning a range of incomes.

## Apply Now for an Affordable Apartment in Harlem Randolph Houses North Is Beautiful and Historic

**APPLICATIONS ARE NOW** being accepted for affordable apartments in a newly renovated building, Randolph Houses North, which was once part of NYCHA's Randolph Houses.

NYCHA, the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the NYC Housing Development Corporation, Trinity Financial, West Harlem Group Assistance, Red Stone Equity Partners, and BNY Mellon partnered to invest \$42 million to rehabilitate and combine 14 historic buildings into one build-

ing. The 14 buildings dated back to the 1890s and were acquired by NYCHA in the 1970s. The new apartments will be ready to move into this July.

NYCHA residents (including former Randolph Houses residents), NYCHA Section 8 voucher holders, and applicants on NYCHA's waitlist will receive preference for 25 percent of the Harlem building's 106 affordable apartments. To apply, visit the NYC Housing Connect lottery system at [www.nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://www.nyc.gov/housingconnect). Eight addi-

tional apartments are reserved for NYCHA Section 8 voucher holders.

The apartments, with a maximum rent of \$1,289 per month, are available to families earning at or below 60 percent of the area median income (that is, household income less than \$57,240 for a family of four).

Amenities include a live-in super, 24-hour monitored security, storage cages and bike storage, outdoor recreational space, and a 3,000-square-foot community space.

# Extreme Cold Weather and Aging Infrastructure Wreak Havoc on NYCHA Heat and Hot Water Service

## New tools and 24/7 specialized heat and hot water technicians activated to address outages

**IT'S BEEN AN** historic cold winter. New York City experienced the longest stretch of below-freezing days in almost 60 years, causing major disruptions in development heating and plumbing infrastructure. No one should have to deal with a lack of heat and hot water, and the Authority regrets that it was not able to provide those two necessities 100 percent of the time to all residents during this period.

Nearly half of NYCHA's boilers are failing or have outdated parts. The Authority has \$17 billion in capital needs, including \$2 billion needed for repairs to our aging heating systems, while we also cope with a \$3 billion loss in federal funding since 2001.



One of NYCHA's aging boilers.

## How Does NYCHA Respond During Severe Winter Weather?

### Under Normal Conditions:

- NYCHA's Emergency Services Division (ESD) responds to heat and hot water outages outside of NYCHA's normal business hours;
- Staff dedicated to monitoring boilers known to have chronic issues;
- Specialized teams, made up of heating staff, plumbers, and electricians, who travel around the city during the week and on weekends to help address heat and hot water outages;
- **24/7** Customer Contact Center available for residents to report heat and hot water outages; and
- Robocalls to inform affected residents about heat and hot water outages and restorations.

### Under This Season's Emergency Weather Conditions:

- NYCHA set up a **24/7** Command Center to coordinate quick responses to the outages;
- **Expanded** the number of dedicated boiler watches at 32 developments with chronic heat issues, checking them every 12 to 24 hours;
- **Expanded** the number of specialized teams that traveled around the city during the week and on weekends to address heat and hot water outages—these teams included heating staff, plumbers, and electricians; there were also dedicated teams monitoring, inspecting, and repairing temporary boilers at Sandy recovery sites;
- Created the NYCHA Heat Desk to track and report heating outages;
- **Increased** the number of staff working at the Customer Contact Center to manage the rise in volume of calls from residents;
- Robocalls to inform affected residents about heat and hot water outages and restorations;
- Partnered with City agencies for **extra staffing and resources**; and
- Coordinated with the City and Red Cross to provide warming centers at developments with prolonged outages.

# Mayor Supports NYCHA Heat Upgrades

## City Invests \$200 Million for New Boilers and Heating Systems at 20 Developments

**NEARLY 45,000 NYCHA RESIDENTS** at 20 developments with chronic heat outages will see their aging boilers replaced and heating systems upgraded by 2022. Mayor Bill de Blasio pledged \$200 million for repairs and new equipment, which will also save about \$5 million per year in energy costs. The funding will be used to:

- **Replace Outdated Boilers:** 10 developments with chronic outages will have more than 39 new boilers installed.
- **Modernize Heat and Hot Water Systems:** 12 developments will have hot water separated from heating boilers to reduce the strain on boilers, reducing the probability that residents will lose both heat and hot water at the same time. Separating these systems also allows NYCHA staff to make necessary repairs on boiler systems during spring and summer without jeopardizing resident access to hot water.
- **Install New Heating Controls:** 15 developments will receive new heating controls to regulate boiler temperature. This will help provide more consistent heat to residents, monitor boiler performance, spot potential faults earlier, and reduce the strain on boilers.

This funding is in addition to \$13 million to improve NYCHA's response to heating emergencies this winter.

These developments will receive at least one of the upgrades; developments with an asterisk (\*) will receive new boilers with City funding:

Morris Houses I & II\*  
 Taft Houses\*  
 Cypress Hills Houses\*  
 Farragut Houses\*  
 Sotomayor Houses\*  
 Rangel Houses\*  
 Fiorentino Plaza\*  
 Long Island Baptist Houses\*  
 Robinson Houses\*  
 Astoria Houses  
 Baruch Houses & Baruch  
 Houses Addition  
 McKinley Houses  
 Melrose Houses  
 Pelham Parkway Houses  
 Pomonok Houses



**An example of new boilers and heating systems.**

Rutland Towers  
 Soundview Houses  
 South Beach Houses

# PACT Bringing Major Renovations and Repairs for 1,700 Apartments

**NYCHA HAS CHOSEN** three developers (see list below) to provide \$300 million in repairs and renovations to 1,700 apartments at 17 developments in the Bronx and Brooklyn, improving quality of life for 4,000 residents by replacing elevators, boilers and heating systems, and renovating bathrooms and kitchens. Residents in these developments will see \$316 million invested back into their buildings in approximately two years.

The upgrades are part of NYCHA's Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program, modeled on the federal government's Rental Assistance Demonstration program. Under PACT, NYCHA enters into a long-



**An example of kitchen and bathroom upgrades.**

term lease with developers who will make the repairs. Apartments transfer to NYCHA's project-based Section 8 program, and the buildings are privately managed. NYCHA keeps ownership of the buildings and residents keep their public housing rights.

## **Gilbane Development Company, Dantes Partners, Apex Building Group, & The Kraus Organization**

- 648 units at 15 buildings: Twin Parks West (Sites 1 & 2), Franklin Avenue I Conventional, Franklin Avenue II Conventional, Franklin Avenue III Conventional, Highbridge Rehabs (Anderson Avenue), and Highbridge Rehabs (Nelson Avenue)
- Social services provider: BronxWorks

## **RDC Development & Catholic Charities**

- 343 units at 13 buildings: Betances II, 9A, Betances II, 13, Betances II, 18, Betances III, 9A, Betances III, 13, Betances III, 18, Betances V (partial), and Betances VI (partial)
- Social services provider: Catholic Charities

## **Hunt Development Group, Penrose Properties, & Acacia Network**

- 691 units at 31 buildings: Bushwick II (Groups A & C), Bushwick II CDA (Group E), and Palmetto Gardens
- Social services provider: Acacia Network

# Living History

## NYCHA Celebrates Women's History Month

**N**YCHA'S DEVELOPMENTS HAVE been home to some of the most accomplished individuals of our time. In honor of Women's History Month, *The NYCHA Journal* is pleased to present two New Yorkers and former NYCHA residents who continue a rich history of public service, perseverance in the face of obstacles, and commitment to their dreams.



### Edna Wells Handy, Marcy Houses

Edna Wells Handy, who grew up in Marcy Houses, was appointed NYCHA's Acting Chief Compliance Officer by Mayor Bill de Blasio in December 2017. She oversees NYCHA's regulatory compliance with federal, state, and local obligations, working to improve external reporting and guaranteeing that NYCHA

management and staff receive appropriate compliance training.

Ms. Wells Handy has held many prestigious positions, including Counsel to NYPD Commissioner William Bratton; Director of the New York State Judicial Commission on Minorities; Deputy

Executive Director of the NYC Department of Education, Human Resources Division; and Vice President and General Counsel of the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation.

A seasoned prosecutor, she served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York; District Attorney and Bureau Chief at the Kings County District Attorney's Office; and Deputy Attorney General for Administration for then New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

DANIEL LANGER AND COMIC RELIEF, INC.



### Whoopi Goldberg, Chelsea Houses

Whoopi Goldberg grew up in Chelsea Houses, where she lived for 19 years with her parents, a minister and a nurse, and her brother. One of the few entertainers to receive an Emmy, a Grammy, a Tony and an Oscar, she was the second black woman ever to receive an Academy Award. Her movies include "The Color

Purple," "Ghost," "Lion King," and "For Colored Girls." She's also written seven children's books and four books for adults.

## NYCHA's Resident Leadership Academy: Training the Next Generation of Public Housing Advocates

**TWENTY NYCHA RESIDENTS** were chosen to be the first participants in the Authority's new Resident Leadership Academy (RLA), which will provide them with the training and tools needed to strengthen their skills so that they can be effective changemakers at their developments and in their communities.

The students, who come from all five boroughs, will take four courses on public housing, community organizing, non-profit leadership, and public policy over two years, earning up to 16 college credits. The courses are taught by scholars and experts in their fields at the Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies under CUNY's School of Professional Studies.

The RLA is funded by the City of New York and the Fund for Public Housing. The first course began on January 22 and ends on May 24; stay tuned for updates on participant experiences in the RLA.



# Clean, Green Comfort

**\$103 million in sustainability improvements reduce costs and improve quality of life**

**OVER 65,000 RESIDENTS** can look forward to upgrades to the lighting, heating, building ventilation and water conservation systems at their developments. In March 2018, NYCHA will begin construction on two new Energy Performance Contracts (EPC) at 41 developments worth \$103 million. The upgrades will save NYCHA \$8.6 million a year and reduce energy use at these developments by about 15 percent.

EPCs are a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) tool that uses cost savings from reduced energy consumption to repay the cost of installing energy conservation measures. The goal of NYCHA's EPC projects is to modernize the Authority's old heating systems so that residents have more consistent and comfortable heat. Bank of America provided the financing on both EPCs; Constellation New Energy will make the improvements.

"Energy Performance Contracts help NYCHA address critical needs, like replacing inefficient and aging boilers. EPCs will improve the quality of life for our residents and reduce energy costs," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "Programs like this support our work to transform NYCHA developments into sustainable communities."

The BQDM EPC is a \$68.7 million project that will upgrade building automation heating controls, exterior and interior LED lighting, and water conservation for 16,844 units at 23 developments in Brooklyn.

The Sandy-A EPC will provide \$43 million in upgrades to heating controls, exterior and interior LED lighting, water conservation, and ventilation for 11,381 units at 18 developments across Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan. The EPC enables NYCHA to provide more comprehensive investments in heating infrastructure upgrades at these Sandy-damaged developments that exceed the planned



**New energy-efficient lighting.**



FEMA-funded improvements.

The EPC program is part of the NextGeneration NYCHA Sustainability Agenda commitment to reduce energy consumption by

20 percent by 2026 and the Mayor's commitment to achieve an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

## **SANDY-A EPC**

**developments:** Campos Plaza II, East River, Gowanus, Astoria, Smith, Rangel, Redfern, Gravesend, Coney Island, Haber, La Guardia & La Guardia Addition, Carleton Manor, Carey Gardens, Coney Island I (Sites 1B, 4 & 5), Two Bridges URA (Site 7), and Lower East Side Rehab (Group 5).

## **BQDM developments:**

Williamsburg, Kingsborough & Kingsborough Extension, Brownsville, Van Dyke I & II, Cooper Park, Cypress Hills, Howard, Sumner, Pink, Tilden, Roosevelt I & II, 303 Vernon Avenue, Hughes Apartments, Low Houses, Glenmore Plaza, Woodson, Fiorentino Plaza, Unity Plaza (Sites 4-27, 17, 24, 25A), and Long Island Baptist Houses.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) FEDERAL BUDGET PROPOSAL NEGLECTS PUBLIC HOUSING

**WITH OVER \$17 BILLION IN CAPITAL NEED**, NYCHA is already facing a daunting struggle to maintain its buildings. The proposed elimination of the Capital Fund and 37 percent reduction in the Operating Fund is deeply disappointing and would mean the dismantling of public housing and taking people's homes away from them.

For decades, the federal government alongside housing experts and advocates all agreed that paying more than 30 percent of a family's income to rent was a burden. The

President is walking away from that commitment and has shown once again that he is out of touch with most Americans' experience. This proposal could lead to significant increases in rents per month when many are already struggling to make ends meet.

Last year, we worked with the city's Congressional Delegation, residents and advocates to defeat these blatant attacks on the 1 in 14 New Yorkers who call NYCHA home and we will fight vigorously again this year to ensure safe and affordable housing for everyone.

# There's No Time Like Tax Time to Save Money

Virtual VITA tax services are fast and easy.



**M**ANY TAX SITES promise fast filing and instant refunds. Yet users often find that they are paying more than they thought for service and getting less in

return. To ensure that you get the most from tax credits and refunds, NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) is once again offering the "Virtual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)" program to all NYCHA residents and Section 8 voucher holders.

Working with the Food Bank for New York City, the Fund for Public Housing, and Citi Community Development, the Authority is providing 30 locations across the five boroughs where

NYCHA residents can file state and federal taxes for free and with little wait time.

Virtual VITA helps to increase every user's access to low cost, high-tech financial solutions in low-income communities. Tax filers complete an intake form at a tax preparation site and submit their tax documents electronically and securely to a qualified Food Bank tax preparer. The process takes no more than 30 minutes, allowing the tax filer to leave the site and come back once the tax return is complete and ready to be

submitted to the IRS.

Last year, more than 1,720 tax returns were completed at 19 Virtual VITA locations citywide. In addition to filing taxes, NYCHA residents also learned about income-boosting tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) which, on average, returns \$2,500 annually to the pockets of eligible New Yorkers who earn less than \$54,000 a year.

For a listing of NYCHA sites offering free tax preparation, visit [www.opportunitynycha.org/taxprep](http://www.opportunitynycha.org/taxprep).

## Ms. Elsie Turns 106



**SOME PEOPLE SAY** the secret to a long life is an apple a day, but if you talk to 106-year-old

Ms. Elsie Mayer, she might tell you her secret is daily ice cream and cake. Ms. Mayer was born in Poland and moved to the United States with her family when she was 10. A resident of Independence Towers for 39 years, she has lived through two World Wars and 18 U.S. presidents. Millennium Development, which operates the Independence Towers Neighborhood Center, threw Ms. Mayer a big 106th birthday bash on December 20, 2017. In attendance were her son Stuart, daughter-in-law, home attendant Natie, and representatives from Council Member Stephen Levin's office, the NYC Department for the Aging, and PSA 3.



## Celebrating Three Kings' Day at the New Red Hook Senior Center

**ON JANUARY 9**, there was a lot to celebrate at the Red Hook Senior Center: Three Kings Day and the center's first special event.

Three Kings Day is a Christian holiday commemorating the Three Wise Men bringing gifts to baby Jesus, and is celebrated by Hispanic people around the world. The Spanish Speaking Elderly Council-RAICES, which operates the center, invited seniors to share memories of how they celebrated the holiday as children, and to create new memories at the festivities.

The day's events included a waltz performance by seniors from the RAICES Times Plaza Neighborhood Senior Center, music, dancing, giveaways, and a play featuring the Three Wise Men. City Councilmember Carlos Menchaca and his mother attended the event, along with representatives from State Assembly Member Felix Ortiz's office, and NYCHA staff.

The Red Hook Senior Center opened for programming in January; the original center had been destroyed by Superstorm Sandy.



## We're here in your neighborhood.

Our exceptional public schools allow your child to thrive through discovery-based learning rooted in critical thinking, emotional development, and creative expression.

Start stronger. Go further.

Apply now at [SuccessAcademies.org](https://www.SuccessAcademies.org)

S U C C E S S  
A C A D E M Y  
C H A R T E R  
S C H O O L S

# Remembering a Rising Youth Leader

Katherine Perez, May 29, 2000-December 24, 2017

**K**ATHERINE PEREZ, 17, was a shining example of a young person making positive change in her community. Ms. Perez lived at Betances Houses and as a member of the South Bronx Youth Leadership Council (SBYLC), was instrumental in planning programs that promoted community unity. She passed away on December 24, 2017, leaving behind a host of family, friends, and neighbors who will forever remember her commitment to community, her compassion, and her smile.

Ms. Perez was a dedicated member of the SBYLC, one of NYCHA's 15 YLCs, which provide NYCHA residents

ages 14 to 21 with training and mentoring. In turn, the members develop and create solutions to important issues in their neighborhoods. Ms. Perez played a major role in events including the April 2016 Green Day, held at multiple NYCHA Bronx developments; an anti-violence art campaign; an intergenerational Christmas tree planting in November 2017; and a tree lighting ceremony in December 2017.

She joined the SBYLC because she "wanted to see change in the community, especially with teens. Teens should be doing something good, helping out those who need it most, especially the elderly," Ms. Perez said in the May

2017 issue of *The NYCHA Journal*.

David Soto, a Community Coordinator at NYCHA and advisor to the SBYLC, remembers Ms. Perez as being "very humble, kind, and supportive of the Youth Council. She wanted to make her neighborhood a safer place. She especially loved spending time with seniors, talking to them and supporting them however she could."

Ms. Perez is the youngest daughter of Nytza and the late Ramón Perez, sister of Christine and Amanda. She was a senior at MS/HS 223 The Laboratory School of Finance and Technology and wanted to attend Cornell University.



**Katherine Perez cared about her development and her community; she picked up a rake and helped clean her development at one of the SBYLC events she helped plan, 2016 Green Day.**

The Betances Community Center held a memorial for Ms. Perez on January 24.

## Actors, Take Your Marks! Meet the Winners of the Lee Strasberg NYCHA Acting Competition

**ON JANUARY 23**, they walked through the red doors of the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in Union Square for the chance to be trained by one of the best acting schools. And a few hours later, three NYCHA residents walked out of those red doors with full scholarships to two sessions of the Institute's prestigious 12-week "method acting" program.

The winners of this year's Lee Strasberg NYCHA Scholarship Competition are Elijah Morgan, 8, from La Guardia Houses (Youth), Maya Holtman, 15, from Straus Houses (Teen), and John Harper from Astoria Houses (Adult).

"It actually feels really good!" said Elijah Morgan, who performed a monologue called "Sharing."

Mr. Morgan was one of 18 residents who interviewed and auditioned for judges from the Institute. Anna Strasberg, Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Institute and widow of Lee Strasberg, told the audience she looked forward to this event every year, adding, "you are all welcome here. Lee used to say, 'Keep those doors open to talent!'"

Ms. Holtman, winner in the teen category, performed a monologue



**Elijah Morgan**

**Maya Holtman**

**John Harper**

from the classic play "The Seagull" by Anton Chekhov. Being an actress has always been her dream. Of winning she said, "I'm humbled and extremely thankful for such an opportunity. I hope I do this justice and make the most out of this opportunity."

John Harper, winner in the adult category, showed off his musical abilities, too. He sang "Skid Row (Downtown)" from the musical *Little Shop of Horrors* along with performing a monologue called "Patience."

Mr. Harper said "It was a euphoric feeling and it encourages me to keep pushing forward. I do music and now with acting, this will make me a greater artist overall."

The Lee Strasberg Institute has partnered with NYCHA on resident scholarships since 1983. The competition is open to NYCHA and Section 8 residents at least 6 years old.

# Get Paid While You Learn

**LOOKING FOR A SUMMER JOB?** There are two exciting ways for young NYCHA residents to earn money while gaining important career skills through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

## NYCHA SYEP for 14- and 15-year-olds

Apply for NYCHA's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), a lottery-based program that provides minimum wage (\$13/hr.) summer work assignments to residents ages 14 and 15. Work at NYCHA or NYCHA-partner locations doing clerical, customer service, janitorial, service learning support tasks, and more. In addition to a 15-hour work week, you'll participate in five hours of career exploration and development workshops each week. You'll get paid while you learn!

Apply online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/index.page> and **select NYCHA as your worksite provider.**

## SYEP reserved spots for residents 14 to 24 who live at MAP developments

As part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), 14- to 24-year-old residents from 15 developments are **reserved** summer work assignments through SYEP. If you live at Boulevard, Brownsville, Butler, Bushwick, Castle Hill, Ingersoll, Patterson, Polo Grounds Towers, Queensbridge, Red Hook, Saint Nicholas, Stapleton, Tompkins, Van Dyke, or Wagner, apply today! Apply online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/index.page>.

## The SYEP application is available through March 16, 2018.

For more information about SYEP, call DYCD Youth Connect at **1-800-246-4646**.

Note: NYCHA residents 16- to 24-years-old who do not live at MAP developments may also apply for the Department of Youth & Community Development's SYEP program through the link above and select a different provider.

# It Takes a Village to Save the Neighborhood

## NYCHA Supports Resident- and Community-Led Sustainability Initiatives

**THE IDEAS MARKETPLACE** is an online platform that connects resident- and community-led sustainability programs and projects to donations, to volunteers, and to each other. It was launched in the fall of 2017 by the Fund for Public Housing (Fund) in partnership with NYCHA's Office of Sustainability Programs and ioby "in our back yards," a non-profit crowd-resourcing web platform.

The platform is designed to share ideas and generate funding for projects that reduce waste, increase recycling and composting, green NYCHA communities, or educate residents about climate change and ways to minimize negative impacts on the planet.

The first initiative to be funded was "Ocean Bay Community Gardens," two community gardens in the Ocean Bay NYCHA develop-

ment in Far Rockaway, Queens, a neighborhood that experienced widespread damage from Superstorm Sandy in 2012. The Rockaway Youth Task Force and RDC Development raised more than \$28,000 for this project on Ideas Marketplace, and the ribbon cutting for the gardens occurred in October 2017, on the fifth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy in New York.

"Watershed Red Hook," a large-scale public art project that has moved around the world, was displayed in front of the Red Hook Public Library for four days in late October 2017 to commemorate the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy. Its projection of colored fish generated a community-wide conversation and a roundtable discussion with Red Hook local community and



**Members of the Rockaway Youth Task Force and RDC Development raised money to build two community gardens at Ocean Bay in Far Rockaway, Queens.**

political leaders on sustainable waterfront development and how to protect the neighborhood from future destructive events.

This year, the Fund and NYCHA's Office of Sustainability will host a series of public forums to showcase examples of projects completed by residents and community-based organizations in NYCHA and surrounding communities. The goal is to connect residents who are interested in

working on sustainability projects with community-based organizations. The first forum will be held on March 22, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Brooklyn Borough Hall.

If you have project ideas you'd like to discuss before the forum, contact NYCHA Sustainability Program Associate Lisa Maller at **212-306-4127**.

Have an awesome idea of your own? Start a project here: <https://www.ioby.org/nycha>.

# A Reminder About NYCHA's Pet Policy

**A HOUSEHOLD MAY OWN** either one dog or one cat. There is a size limit for dogs. Dogs that are expected to weigh more than 25 pounds when full grown, based on a veterinarian's estimate, are not permitted. Specifically prohibited dogs (full breed or mixed) include Doberman Pinchers, Pit Bulls, and Rottweilers. However, exceptions will be made for service and assistance animals.

Dogs and cats must be

registered with NYCHA. Proof of vaccination and proof that the cat or dog has been spayed or neutered must be provided.

Dogs must always be kept on a leash, six feet long or less, while in a public area, such as lobbies, elevators, and development grounds. Animals that are vicious or threatening are forbidden. Residents can call 311 to report vicious or threatening dogs within their development.

Pets cannot create a nuisance, create unsafe or unsanitary con-



ditions, cause harm or threaten other people, or damage any property. Pet owners must clean up after their pets and dispose of pet waste with household

trash. It is important not to flush pet waste down the toilet.

In addition, pets are not allowed to enter a "pet-free zone." Signs in the development indicate where the "pet-free zones" are. These areas include Property Management Offices, playgrounds, community centers, laundry rooms, basement areas, and picnic areas.

Reasonable quantities of other pets such as small caged birds (parakeets, canaries), fish, and small caged animals (hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs), maintained in accordance with the New York City Health Code, are permitted. NYCHA does not require registration of these pets.

## (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) MAYOR APPOINTS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

at NYCHA. I and the executive team are grateful for Michael's deep industry knowledge and connections and his commitment to improving the lives of the 1 in 14 New Yorkers who call NYCHA home."

Michael Kelly stepped down from his role as General Manager, effective February 22. Since Mr. Kelly's appointment as GM in 2015, NYCHA reduced average repair wait times from 14 to 5 days, began a massive resiliency program to modernize buildings, and launched NextGen Operations to improve customer service, resident engagement, and resident quality of life.

As NYCHA's principal administrator, the General Manager oversees the maintenance of all developments. Mr. Mustaciuolo

brings decades of experience securing repairs for tenants and holding landlords accountable. At his most recent position at HPD as Deputy Commissioner, he oversaw a staff responsible for ensuring owner compliance with the New York City Housing Maintenance Code and the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law throughout the city to promote quality housing for New Yorkers. Mr. Mustaciuolo launched and managed the City's Alternative Enforcement and Emergency Repair programs, initiatives that have rehabilitated hundreds of apartment buildings and protected affordable homes for tens of thousands of New Yorkers. He also played a critical role in drafting and implementing the 2004 Local Law 1, the City's chief ordinance for lead testing and reme-

diation. He had been with HPD since 1989.

"This Administration has made an unprecedented commitment to strengthening public housing, and we are bringing in one of the City's best to further our progress. Vito Mustaciuolo has a proven track record of fighting for tenants across the five boroughs, and I know he will hit the ground running at NYCHA," said Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Mr. Mustaciuolo looks forward to working with the entire NYCHA team and is humbled by both the Mayor's and Chair's confidence and support. He says his top priorities are "...advancing the level of service to NYCHA tenants, increased portfolio wide capital improvements, and timely restoration of essential services. There is nothing more important



**Acting GM Vito Mustaciuolo toured numerous NYCHA developments with Chair Shola Olatoye and City Council Members, meeting with NYCHA staff and residents to learn about each development's needs. Here, he visited Patterson Houses with staff and City Councilmember Diana Ayala.**

than improving the quality of life of the thousands of families and individuals that call NYCHA 'home'."

# Dinner for Two from Food Business Pathways

**YOU DON'T NEED A HOLIDAY TO CELEBRATE YOUR LOVE!** Treat yourself to a date night at home by cooking a romantic dinner for two together. Here's a delicious meal from Jackie Fuller, a Bayview Houses resident and 2017 Food Business Pathways graduate, owner of Ms. Jackie's, a soul food and multicultural catering business. To learn more about Ms. Jackie's, visit [www.MsJackies.com](http://www.MsJackies.com) or call **347-470-5039** or **347-805-2802**.



## Salmon Wellington

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 5 ounces spinach
- 5 ounces of kale
- 2 teaspoons of salt (for spinach)
- 1 teaspoon of pepper (for spinach)
- 6 ounces cream cheese
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
- 2 tablespoons dill, chopped
- 2 sheets puff pastry, softened to room temperature
- 2 salmon filets
- 1 teaspoon of salt (for salmon)
- 1 teaspoon of pepper (for salmon)
- 1 teaspoon of garlic (for salmon)
- One egg white, beaten

### PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400°F.

In a pan over medium heat, melt butter. Add the garlic and onions, cook until half way done. Add spinach and kale, salt, and pepper, cooking until both are wilted. Add the cream cheese, Parmesan cheese, dill, and garlic to spinach and kale, stirring until mixture is thoroughly mixed. Remove from heat and set aside.

Unfold a sheet of puff pastry. Place the salmon in the middle of the pastry and season both sides with salt and pepper and garlic (you can omit the garlic if you want). Spoon some of the spinach/kale mixture on top of the salmon. Fold the edges of the puff pastry over the salmon and spinach, starting with the longer sides and then the shorter ends. Trim any excess pastry from the ends, and then fold the ends on top. Flip the puff pastry-wrapped salmon over and transfer for a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Brush pastry puff with egg wash. Score the top of the pastry with a knife, cutting shallow diagonal lines to create a cross-hatch pattern. Brush the top with the egg wash again. Bake for 20–25 minutes, until pastry is golden brown.

Slice, then serve!

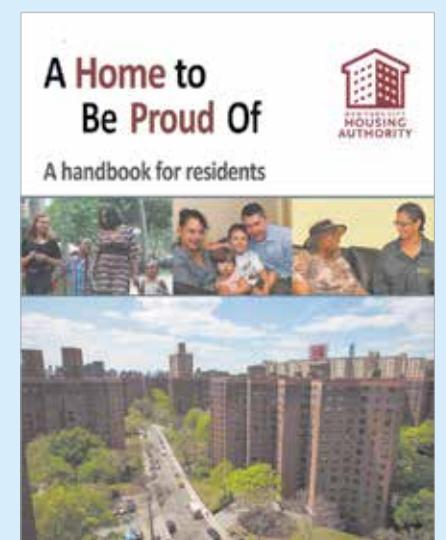


## "A Home to Be Proud Of" Updated Handbook for Residents Now Online

**HAVE YOU EVER** wondered what you're supposed to do if you get locked out of your apartment? Do you know how to join your development's resident association? Curious about NYCHA's pet policy or how to properly dispose of garbage, including recy-

clables? Get information on these topics and many more in NYCHA's handbook for residents, *A Home to Be Proud Of*, which was recently updated with the latest policies and procedures. Beyond the helpful information it provides—from rent payment to repair

requests—are guidelines and resources which empower residents to help create safe, clean, and connected communities at NYCHA. Visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/nycha-tenant-handbook-2017.pdf> to read it today!



# HelpMeQuit

## Break your smoking habit with assistance from this new app

**F**ROM THE NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene comes a new tool in the battle to quit smoking: The NYC HelpMeQuit app.

Developed with input from smokers trying to quit, HelpMeQuit includes tips to stop cravings; social support from other people using the app and Facebook friends; connection to existing smoking cessation resources (such as the New York State Smokers Quitline and a map of nearby clinics); and in-app games to distract from smoking.

HelpMeQuit also helps users track the amount of money they save by not buying cigarettes; the number of cigarettes they have not smoked; the milestones they've reached; and the time—down to the hour—since they quit smoking. The app is available for download on the Apple or Google Play stores.



### Features of NYC HelpMeQuit:

- **My Profile** tracks money saved by not smoking and awards badges that highlight health gains achieved through quitting, like improved blood pressure and lung function.
  - **I'm Craving Now** offers real solutions for triggers and cravings, such as "Call a friend and chat for a few minutes" and "Close your eyes and take 10 slow, deep breaths."
  - **My Quit Buddies** connects to other people trying to quit through the HelpMeQuit app.
  - **Why I Quit** gives users a space to list their reasons for quitting and upload photos and videos to motivate them.
  - **Distract Me** offers four games to play instead of smoking: Bubble Pop, Hi-Lo, Hit & Miss, and Alien Invasion.
- In New York City, 867,000 adults and 15,000 adolescents use tobacco products. Tobacco use is a leading contributor to premature, preventable death in New York City, killing about 12,000 people annually, and impacts the quality of life for thousands more. Tobacco use can cause vascular disease, stroke, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and more than 10 types of cancer.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all of the country's public housing authorities to go smoke-free by July 30, 2018. This means no smoking inside apartments, indoor common areas, or within 25 feet of buildings.

### Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking

- **In 20 minutes:** heart rate and blood pressure decrease.
- **In two weeks to three months:** lung function improves and heart attack risk begins to drop.
- **In one year:** the risk of heart disease is cut in half.
- **In 10 years:** the risk of dying from lung cancer will be half that of a smoker.
- **In 15 years:** risk of heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker.

### For more information on how to quit:

- Call 311 to find a local quit smoking program.
- Contact the New York State Smokers' Quitline ([nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com) or 1-866-NY-QUITS).
- Join us on Facebook by visiting [Facebook.com/NYCQuits](https://www.facebook.com/NYCQuits).
- Visit [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) and search for "NYC Quits."

## Smoke-Free Community Conversations Across the City

Residents of South Jamaica Houses recently participated in a Smoke-Free NYCHA Community Conversation to learn more about the new HUD no smoking policy, upcoming lease changes, and resources to help smokers quit.



Smoke-Free NYCHA is a program to create healthier homes for residents and healthier work environments for employees by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. The initiative also provides supports to residents and employees who want to quit smoking. NYCHA is holding smoke-free community events at developments across the city. Questions? Ideas? Contact NYCHA Health Initiatives at [smoke-free@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:smoke-free@nycha.nyc.gov) or via telephone at 212-306-8282. To learn more about NYCHA going smoke free, visit: [www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/smoke-free.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/smoke-free.page).