

NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN B. RHEA
ST. NICHOLAS CHARTER SCHOOL GROUNDBREAKING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2011 – 10:00 AM
ST. NICHOLAS HOUSES, REAR OF 250 WEST 131ST STREET, NEW YORK, NY

Good morning...and thank you, Mayor Bloomberg, for that generous introduction and for your leadership in supporting New York City's most precious resource: our youth.

To the families of Saint Nicholas Houses who are with us this morning, to our colleagues, and to our many partners—in the Bloomberg Administration, at the Harlem Children's Zone, at Goldman Sachs Gives and at Google—who believe as we do that public housing is vital to New York, and that supporting the families of public housing is central to ensuring New York City's prosperity—thank you. Thank you for walking with us on the journey to transform our communities. Thank you for your insight, your creativity and your commitment to fostering opportunity for our residents and for their families. And thank you for supporting NYCHA's vision for the future of public housing neighborhoods—a vision that begins with the families we

serve, that honors our children's dreams, and recognizes that only through partnership can we create the neighborhoods our children so richly deserve.

I want to thank HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan for his unwavering dedication to affordable housing and for the Obama Administration's commitment to creating the Promise and Choice Neighborhoods of tomorrow that will ensure America remains the land where dreams are realized. Secretary Donovan has already proven himself to be a truly transformational leader at HUD. He has helped to renew the nation's commitment to public housing communities and carried that innovative New Yorker spirit with him to Washington. We are grateful to the Secretary, Regional Director Adolfo Carrión, Jr. and the entire HUD team for their support.

I want to thank our friends at Harlem Children's Zone—Geoffrey Canada, Ken Langone and Stan Druckenmiller—and Gary Cohn and our partners at Goldman Sachs and Civic Builders for helping

us to realize this dream. Your energy and your resolve are inspiring and invaluable. We wouldn't be here without you! Thank you, also, to Chancellor Cathleen Black and the Department of Education. DOE, together with the unwavering support of Deputy Mayor Walcott, have been true partners from this project's inception. We are truly grateful for the tremendous talent focused on improving education for our youth in New York City.

Through many conversations, meetings and what can best be called "heart-to-hearts," NYCHA, Harlem Children's Zone and the residents of Saint Nicholas Houses walked the journey on developing this new school and community center together. I want to thank the Resident Association leaders of Saint Nicholas, including President Willie Mae Lewis for being with us every step of the way. And I encourage every resident of Saint Nicholas to stay engaged as we move forward. We may be building a new school and community center, but we are focused on you and your families.

I am pleased to announce that on this coming Monday NYCHA will open the new Family Investment Center here at Saint Nicholas Houses. As part of our overall commitment to invest in our residents, this new center will support three core services: economic empowerment and asset building through training and employment services and financial literacy workshops; a renewed focus on the role of residents in environmental sustainability; and ensuring that our families have access to quality social services. We hope this center will serve as a model for future initiatives throughout NYCHA neighborhoods, and we look forward to better serving Saint Nicholas' residents when the center opens next week.

Finally, to our partners at the NYC Department of Transportation, the Department of City Planning, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the NYC Fire Department—thank you for your help in making this dream a reality.

Today, together, we are embracing our children, their parents and grandparents. We are saying, together we will. Together we will invest in our future today. Together we will foster the chance for our children that their parents may not have had. And together we will write the future of our neighborhoods—a future that is opportunity rich, healthy and more secure.

On behalf of the families of Saint Nicholas and every NYCHA family—thank you.