

NYCHA CHAIR JOHN B. RHEA  
2010 UNION SETTLEMENT SPRING GALA  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2010  
6:30 PM (COCKTAILS); 7:30 PM (DINNER & PROGRAM)  
THE MANHATTAN BALLROOM OF THE GRAND HYATT  
42<sup>ND</sup> STREET AT GRAND CENTRAL

Thank you, Mayor Bloomberg for that very gracious introduction. And most importantly, thank you for giving me the opportunity to work for you in such a noble mission to serve this great City.

I am grateful to Union Settlement for this honor, and I accept it on behalf of the 12,000 men and women who re-dedicate themselves in service to the more than 600,000 people who count on the New York City Housing Authority every day. It's a tall order, but with the support of the Mayor and partners like Union Settlement, I'm confident NYCHA is up to the task.

I am proud to share this evening with my fellow honorees: Dr. Jeremiah Barondess, whose leadership of the New York Academy of Medicine is legendary and whose contribution to the areas of medical education and clinical ethics is respected the world over; and Mark Wagar, a thought leader in the field of health care who has shown a remarkable dedication to the health of traditionally underserved communities. Together, Jeremiah and Mark are helping us tackle one of the most pressing imperatives: ensuring health care equality in our country and right here in New York City.

And ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to share this evening with all of you. Tonight, we have come together because each of us recognizes that the problems we face are too large and too complex for any one person or any one entity to solve alone. Some of those problems will be highlighted this evening and solutions will be highlighted, as well. But it doesn't stop there, as tonight's theme challenges all of us to "Be the solution." Well, the New York City Housing Authority has heard the call and we are joining hands, sharing ideas and working together...as Mahatma Gandhi said, "being the change we wish to see."

Under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, I can proudly say that NYCHA is already forging relationships with our colleagues in government and our non-profit and private sector partners that are so vital to ensuring that public housing is more than just a home—that it is a force for real and lasting good in the lives of families. We are driven to create innovative solutions to the most intractable challenges public housing residents face every day. We also know that no one group has a monopoly on good solutions. And the only criteria we care about is: Will it work? Will it mean more of our children have a good education, especially early education and quality child care? Will it mean more low-income families have access to continuing education and workforce training and, ultimately, stable jobs with livable wages? Will it improve the

quality of life for our seniors? Will it lower costs? Will it improve service? Will it make neighborhoods stronger, safer, and more responsive to the needs of families?

This vision guides the work we do at NYCHA and it informs not only our partnerships with other organizations, but also our efforts to engage and empower our most important partner—NYCHA residents. Over the past 75 years, it is that same vision that has led the Housing Authority to collaborate with Union Settlement to make housing work for NYCHA families.

And although we must continue to seek new innovations and new relationships, we must do that while reinvesting in partnerships that are proven difference-makers in the lives of those we serve. For more than a century, Union Settlement has adapted to the evolving diversity of East Harlem, always guided by their principles of creating opportunity, fostering community and improving families' lives. I am extremely proud of the work we've done together—in Head Start education; at our Day Care centers; through enrichment opportunities for children and teens; as well as mental health services; and program development for seniors. We have accomplished a great deal in 75 years, but we are just getting started!

I believe—and I am sure our partners at Union Settlement would agree—we will be working together for the next 75 years and beyond.

Our mission is too important to do anything less. Providing thousands of New Yorkers with an opportunity to a better education, a better job, and a better, more secure life drives us. It may all begin with a quality home, but it certainly doesn't end there. We must identify areas of common purpose—areas where we can collectively strengthen our efforts to improve the East Harlem community and other similar communities across the City. By working together, not only will we create solutions, but we will also empower families to be the owners of that journey.

Thank you, again, for this honor.