



# Journal

## The First-Ever 'Sounds Of NYCHA' Holiday Concert



The NYCHA Youth Chorus sang carols and hymns at "The Sounds Of NYCHA" holiday concert on December 12.

By Eileen Elliott

Over 500 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) "kids" from one to 92 filled the Haft Auditorium at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan on the evening of December 12, 2002 for "The Sounds Of NYCHA Holiday Concert." The free, two-hour extravaganza was the first of its kind, featuring the diverse talents of the NYCHA Symphony Orchestra, the NYCHA Youth Chorus and the NYCHA Senior Choir, all in one brightly wrapped holiday package.

A dapper Chairman Tino Hernandez, dressed in black tie, appeared to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday, while a ten-foot balloon Santa and an eight-foot balloon snowman stood as sentinels of good cheer at the sides of the stage. Department of Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh B. Spence offered some brief introductory remarks, calling the special combination of NYCHA talent in a single show, "unprecedented," and making a plug for the new HARMONY program. HARMONY is a collaboration between NYCHA, the Mayor's Office, and the New School for Social Research, that will cultivate the talents of young musicians who live in public housing. (See page 5.)

Community Operations Citywide Programs Director Denise Lara worked together with Symphony Orchestra Executive Director Marshall Sealy and Youth Chorus Director Larry Matthews on the musical arrangement for the program, and Stage Manager Susan Unger kept things moving smoothly along.

The show covered the musical spectrum from standard Christmas carols to spirituals and hymns, to classical, beginning with the soothing strings and dramatic swells of the the Candide Overture, played by

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## File For The Earned Income Tax Credit And Get The Money You're Owed

More than 30,000 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) families could benefit significantly by filing for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) this year. The EITC is a credit for families with more than one child earning less than \$34,178 a year, families with one child earning less than \$30,201 annually, and individuals 24 years of age and older making less than \$11,060 annually.

The amount of credit is determined by the amount of income and family size. The EITC can be worth as much as \$5,278 (combined federal and state), with the average being \$2,107. It can be claimed as a tax credit or as a cash refund.

"If everyone who is eligible filed for the EITC, it would put \$500 million into the pockets of New Yorkers who need it the most," said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at a December 3, 2002 press conference to launch this year's EITC campaign. And New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller called the EITC "one of the most successful anti-poverty initiatives ever devised."

Qualifying New Yorkers can claim the EITC on their Federal Tax Returns and their New York State Tax Returns. To file for the EITC with the state government you must also file with the federal government.

In 1999, 692,344 New Yorkers claimed the EITC on their returns receiving a total of \$1.2 billion. The EITC paid a maximum of \$364 to childless taxpayers in 2001, \$2,428 to taxpayers with one child and \$4,008 to taxpayers with two or more children. It has been estimated that as many as 230,000 New York City residents do not claim the EITC.

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## Money Available For Resident Participation Programs!

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has made over \$7 million available to NYCHA residents for resident participation activities. Household training, new resident orientation, entrepreneurial or job training, workshops and seminars that inform residents about issues and operations, and leadership development programs are examples of the kinds of activities that will be funded. Generally, programs that help to empower residents are eligible.

"We have to create Citywide programs so that everyone can sit at the table and share in the pie," said Citywide COP President Geri Lamb. "This is an excellent opportunity for resident participation. It's also the first time in many many years that money is available for residents to develop programs."

The amount of money available for each Resident Participation Activity Program will reflect the number of authorized dwelling units covered by the program.

### Who Receives The Money?

Funds can be utilized at the citywide, district or local levels — that is by the Citywide Council of Presidents (CCOP), the District Councils or by individual Resident Associations, and are for the benefit of all conventional public housing residents.

To be eligible to receive the money, any Resident Organization must have written bylaws providing for the election and recall of officers. Resident Organization officers must have been chosen through free and fair elections. The governing board of the Resident Organization must have at least five elected members and be within the terms of office as stated by their bylaws, and the Resident Organization must meet on a regular basis. Where there is no Resident Organization, or where the existing Resident Organization doesn't meet the HUD guidelines, the District Councils and NYCHA will work with residents to develop a Resident Association. NYCHA is in the process of reviewing all Resident Organization bylaws and making assessments about eligibility.

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## National Design Award

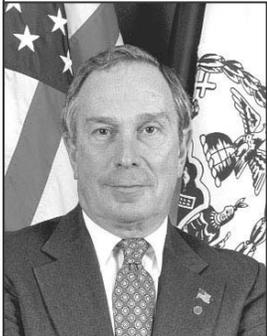


NYCHA won an award from the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. See story on page 2.

# Happy New Year NYCHA!

**Message From The Mayor**

**New York City Is Still America's Safest Big City**



Public safety is City government's most important responsibility. And despite unavoidable budget cuts, during 2002 we've made New York an even safer place, by continuing dramatic reductions in crime, improving protection against fires, and making our streets safer for motorists and pedestrians. These successes contrast with rising crime rates in many other cities. The most recent FBI report on crime nationwide, released last month, ranked New York's serious crime rate 197th of the 216 U.S. cities with a population of at least 100,000. That puts us right between Provo, Utah, and Rancho Cucamonga, California.

As we ended the year, reported crimes in our City were at their lowest point since 1963—back when, as NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly has pointed out, Mickey Mantle played for the Yankees and Hershey bars cost a nickel. Major crimes have declined by nearly 6% this year. Homicides are down by nearly 12% and felony assaults and auto thefts have experienced double-digit drops as well. At the same time, the NYPD has also remained vigilant in protecting against the quality of life infractions that undermine neighborhoods and create an environment in which more serious crimes flourish.

The same is true for the safety of the residents of NYCHA, with major crime down. Our record on fire safety is also impressive. This year, New York is on course to have the fewest deaths due to fire since 1921. Structural fires are down 5%, and non-structural fires are down 16%. In 2002, the Fire Department has shaved three seconds off the average time it takes to respond to fires—precious seconds in the FDNY's courageous battle to save lives and protect property.

Thanks to intersection and traffic management improvements by our Department of Transportation, city streets and roadways have also become safer. There have been roughly 8% fewer traffic fatalities in 2002 as opposed to last year. Better pedestrian safety is a big part of this brighter picture. One dramatic example: During the five years before 2002, an annual average of eight pedestrians died along Queens Boulevard. So far this year, there's been only one such fatality there—one too many, but still, a heartening advance.

Businesses aren't judged by how much money they spend, but by the quality of the services they provide. The same standard should be applied to City government. All the life-saving progress I've just described has been accomplished through efficiency: getting better results with fewer resources. In the area of public safety, we've shown during 2002 that City government can not only do more with less—we can do quite well with less. And that's good news for all New Yorkers.

So let's take pride in our accomplishments, but let's not rest on our laurels. We can continue to make a safer New York even safer. In NYCHA developments in all five boroughs residents make a big difference by participating in Tenant Patrols, Resident Associations and committees dedicated to improving the quality of life. NYCHA residents in partnership with the Police and Fire Departments are an unbeatable team.

I congratulate you and urge you all to keep up the great work!

*Michael R. Bloomberg*

**NYCHA Wins National Design Award**



The futuristic Police Athletic League-Wynn Center near Armstrong Houses in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, typifies the innovative design for which NYCHA received an award from the Smithsonian Institution.

By Allan Leicht

Residents who play basketball, dance, paint pictures, do homework or take part in any of the many activities at community centers, or who lunch at senior centers, or just stroll the grounds can now take pride in the distinction of doing all that in award-winning surroundings. This is because NYCHA has won a Special Commendation for Corporate Achievement National Design Award from the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. The annual National Design Awards honor excellence, innovation, and enhancement of the quality of life. NYCHA was recognized for the quality and durability of its design projects.

"We are very proud of this award," said Chairman Tino Hernandez. "I'm thrilled every time I cut the ribbon at one of our new or renovated facilities, and now to have this national recognition is very gratifying."

National Design Awards are given for a body of work rather than any one specific project. The new PAL-Wynn Community Center and Van Dyke Community Center in Brooklyn, the Melrose and Baychester Community Centers in the Bronx, and Richmond Terrace on Staten Island, along with others, have been cited as outstanding architectural achievements.

NYCHA's Department of Design, working in collaboration with architectural and engineering firms, has transformed dozens of neighborhood facilities that take an entirely new approach. New and redesigned community centers are the most dramatic of these projects. "The idea was to bring the community center out of the basement and into the sunlight," said Design Department Director David J. Burney. "You're building something to be a magnet for youth, not only Housing Authority residents but also youth in the general population. That's the reason to do something that looks different, appealing, open and inviting."

The energy, imagination and overall excellence of these new buildings are clear demonstrations of the success of that objective. Yet as exciting as they look, the real proof comes with the people



The Williamsburg Community Center, Brooklyn

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*Message From The Chairman*

## Meeting The Challenges Of The New Year



As we ring in the new year, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is poised to meet the challenges ahead in creative and exciting new ways. Our mission remains unchanged—to continue to provide quality, affordable housing to low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. First and foremost, this means preserving our existing housing stock—the 181,000 units that are home to more than 400,000 New Yorkers in 345 NYCHA developments all over the City.

You are probably aware that New York City is facing a \$6 billion budget deficit. Although NYCHA is primarily funded by the federal government, we are doing our share to help the Mayor address the City's current fiscal situation through targeted reductions in our City subsidy. We continue to monitor our funding situation in Washington. It should be noted that we are analyzing proposed reductions to our federal subsidy at a time when operating costs continue to rise. In addition, we have lost \$35 million from the federal government in Drug Elimination Program (DEP) funding.

So what does it mean for NYCHA residents? And how can we best work together to continue to accomplish our goals? The short answer is that we must do more with less, with the emphasis on doing more.

NYCHA will continue to rehabilitate and modernize our developments using the resources we have. This work is currently ongoing in NYCHA developments throughout the City, such as Gun Hill Houses in the Bronx and O'Dwyer Gardens in Brooklyn. We will also continue to roll out our Community Center Modernization Program. As of the beginning of this year, 30 centers have been expanded, 11 have been renovated and two completely new centers have been built. Another 21 centers are in the design phase and 26 are under construction. (See page 2.)

Keeping a healthy economic mix in our developments is essential. NYCHA will continue to provide housing for working families while at the same time maintaining our historic commitment to families with special needs. Through our Section 8 Leased Housing Program we provide vouchers for eligible homeless families to find residences in privately-owned apartment buildings. For those families that move into our developments from the shelter system, NYCHA has developed the HARTS Program, which stands for Housing Assistance for Relocation and Transitional Services, to ease the transition.

New York City has a famously low apartment vacancy rate, and the vacancy rate in public housing is even lower, with a turnover rate of only 3.5% for the year 2001. Yet we have residents who remain in oversized apartments they once needed to raise their families. There is also the reverse situation, with families living in apartments that are too small for them because the larger apartments they could transfer into are not available. It is necessary for us to use the space we have more efficiently by matching families to appropriately sized apartments. NYCHA staff is committed to making these adjustments with sensitivity and respect for the residents involved.

In December the Mayor announced an ambitious housing plan to create 65,000 units of affordable housing. NYCHA will work collaboratively with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to review underutilized NYCHA properties so that we can add more available units to the rent rolls. In addition, NYCHA will continue to help residents realize their dreams through our many educational and job training programs, so that those who haven't already may achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Here at the Housing Authority, our expertise is providing quality housing and improving and preserving it into the next century. Your cooperation and input is essential to our ability to fulfill our mission. I look forward to working with you in the year 2003

Tino Hernandez

## What You Need To Know About LMDC Grants

NYCHA residents should be aware that any money they have received through a Lower Manhattan Development Corporation Grant will not be counted as income on their annual review forms. And there's more good news. The Internal Revenue Service is excluding money received from the September 11 Grant and the Family Grant from the recipient's federal gross income.

However, any Two Year Commitment Grant income above the minimum amount for this type of grant will be included in your federal gross income. The federal gross income amount is also used as the state/city gross income for state income tax purposes.

Journal readers may recall an article that appeared in our September 2002 issue announcing the availability of grant money to residents of lower Manhattan through the LMDC's Residential Grant Program. The program was created after the September 11, 2001 tragedy to retain and attract new residents to lower Manhattan.

If you haven't already applied for a grant and you live in Smith, Baruch, LaGuardia, LaGuardia Addition, Two Bridges, Gompers, Seward Park Extension, Rutgers, Vladeck I and Vladeck II Houses, you may be eligible to receive one, provided that you live in Zone 2 or Zone 3. (See page 5 for description of zones.) For more on this, see IRS Notice 2002-76, or contact your local IRS office, NYS Department of Taxation, or visit the LMDC web site listed at the end of this article

### The Grants

There are three types of grants available. **September 11, 2001 Residential Grants:** This is a \$1,000 one-time grant per household for on-going residents of Zone 1, Zone 2, or Zone 3, who lived in lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001. **Family Grants:** This is a one-time family grant for households with children under age 18 that make at least a one-year commitment to living in lower Manhattan. Zone 1 is eligible for a \$1,500 grant; Zone 2 is eligible for a \$750 grant; and Zone 3 is eligible for a \$750 grant. **Two-Year Commitment Based Grants:** Renters with at least two-year leases commencing on or before May 31, 2002 may be eligible for this grant, which provides up to 30% of monthly rent up to \$6,000 over two years for Zone 2 residents. Since NYCHA doesn't issue two-year leases, the LMDC is accepting alternative

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## Deborah's Diary

By Deborah Williams

**Dream Team**—They're called the "Dream Team" but these girls do more than just dream—they perform! Under the leadership of Crystal Fleet these 10 young ladies between the ages of 10 and 14 from Morrisania Air Rights Houses in the Bronx, have performed in four talent shows and have won several trophies. After a spectacular initial performance at the Apollo Theatre they are expected to return for the Apollo's Amateur Night on January 29, 2003. There's more to the Dream Team—Ashley Monroe, Carla Fleet, Chana Fleet, Jackie Rush, Jullisa Jorge, Lashay Fuller, Monique Cunningham, Rasheena Heard, Riscilla Seabrooks, and Whitney Yancey—than just dance. In order to join the team they must first write an essay explaining what they can bring to it, and to stay on the team they must keep up their grades. Dues are collected at each rehearsal so they can go on Saturday trips because according to Ms. Constance Fleet, mother of Crystal Fleet, "hard working girls need to have fun too." *Well, girls I agree. Congratulations on your achievements and I look forward to your television debut. Crystal, I would also like to extend my congratulations to you for your dedication to these young ladies. Kudos to you—you are the crème de la crème of your community!*

**Appreciation and Thanks**—Her name is Rosezena Moore and she lives in O'Dwyer Gardens in Brooklyn. On April 22, 2002, Ms. Moore, who is wheelchair-bound, had a freak accident in her apartment. In a letter to the *Journal*, Ms. Moore wrote, "I fell on the floor between the refrigerator and the washing machine and I couldn't move. I cried out for help, 'Somebody please help Ms. Moore, I have fallen.' I feared no one would hear my cries since I live alone. But Heriberto Martinez, the man who cleans the building heard me crying. He went out and got help for me. The apartment door was locked so he went to the office to get the key. He returned with NYCHA employees Abraham Cohen, Sammy Rivera and Tony Maniero, and a policeman. These five heroes came and rescued me. I had been lying on the floor for two hours. The policeman called the ambulance and they took me to Coney Island Hospital. I was admitted and stayed in the hospital for five days. We do have heroes in our community! Thanks to these heroes. If it wasn't for them I might not be living today." *I know I speak for everyone at NYCHA when I say we applaud and commend the staff of O'Dwyer Gardens and the police officer for the doing such a fine job in getting the much needed medical attention for Ms. Moore. Ms. Moore would also like to thank Housing Manager Melethil Alexander and Housing Assistant Shelia Gatton for their work at O'Dwyer Gardens. "When you go to them with a problem they help you. They are two very nice, kind and caring persons."*



**University of Connecticut to get Former NYCHA Resident**—A lot of colleges would be happy to receive an acceptance acknowledgment from Kiana Robinson who grew up in Castle Hill Houses in the Bronx. Because she averaged 28 points, 10 rebounds and 5 assists per game last season, college recruiters from colleges such as Kansas State, Purdue and the University of Connecticut (UConn) were eager to enroll her. But it was UConn that wooed and convinced this rising basketball star to join their team. "UConn is not only the best basketball program in the country but academically, it has everything we are looking for," said Kiana's father, Stanley Robinson. Kiana has mastered the game and was named the Times Hillsborough County Player of the Year, the county's leading scorer, and was invited to participate in the USA Basketball Youth Development Festival, an Olympic-oriented training camp with the nation's top 48 high school seniors. According to an article in the *St. Petersburg Times*, "Kiana was the only prep athlete invited to participate in an August 18 all-star game at the Shaquille O'Neal Celebrity Basketball Weekend." While Kiana loves the sport it is second on her list of priorities. She plans to work very hard at maintaining a 3.0 average because her family will accept nothing less. *Kiana I wish you the very best with your studies and girl, from what I heard and read about you, YOU GOT GAME! So study hard and practice and good things will follow.*

## The NYCHA "Not Wanted" List

In this issue we continue our editorial policy of publishing the names of individuals who have been permanently excluded from our public housing developments. Listing the proscribed persons is part of the effort to keep residents informed of NYCHA's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers in public housing and to allow the peaceful and safe use of our facilities. Here follows a list of the people excluded after hearings were held on June 27 and July 1 and 5, 2001. **REMEMBER, IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR THE POLICE! THIS LIST IS PROVIDED TO ALL POLICE SERVICE AREAS.**

### Prohibited as of June 27, 2001

Divine Pringle	Case 2324/01 formerly associated with the first floor of 370 Lexington Avenue, Armstrong Houses, Brooklyn.
Pierre Maycock	Case 2329/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 1539 Lexington Avenue, Washington/Lexington Houses, Manhattan.
Rahiem Fennell Raheim Fennell	Case 2362/01 formerly associated with the tenth floor of 3125 Park Avenue, Morrisania Air Rights Houses, the Bronx.
Michael Bumpars	Case 2365/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 1458 Webster Avenue, Butler Houses, the Bronx.
Carlton Kirk	Case 2341/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 155-177 Alexander Avenue, Mitchel Houses, the Bronx.
Jason Hernandez Jason Lopez	Case 2389/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 1491 Montgomery Avenue, University Avenue Consolidation, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of July 5, 2001

Frankie Harrison	Case 2508/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 1871 Fulton Street, Brevoort Houses, Brooklyn.
Mark Rodriguez	Case 2487/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 545 East 146th Street, Betances Houses, the Bronx.
Thaddeus Corley	Case 2498/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 15-30 Hassock Street, Redfern Houses, Far Rockaway, Queens.
Valerie Powell	Case 2503/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 30 Manhattan Avenue, Borinquen Plaza Houses, Brooklyn.
Marcus Wheeler	Case 3689/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 1370 Fifth Avenue, King Tower Houses, Manhattan.
Richard Lluveres	Case 2473/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 1591/01 Park Avenue, Johnson Houses, Manhattan.
Enrique Calderon	Case 2480/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 2123 Madison Avenue, Lincoln Houses, Manhattan.
Kaseam Stanley	Case 2483/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 556 Mother Gaston Blvd., Brownsville Houses, Brooklyn.
Dorran Mitchell	Case 2484/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 81 Wayne Court, Brighton Houses, Staten Island.
Carlos Senquiz	Case 2497/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 133-50 Roosevelt Avenue, Bland Houses, Flushing.
Keith Ashley	Case 2505/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 14-64 Beach Channel Drive, Redfern Houses, Far Rockaway, Queens.

### Prohibited as of July 11, 2001

Jose Jurado	Case 2566/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 346 East 156th Street, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.
Pedro Navarro Arthur Hardy	Case 2570/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 3045 Avenue X, Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses, Brooklyn

## Making NYCHA Apartments Accessible

When the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) signed the Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA) with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) back in 1996, it agreed to convert and make fully accessible to people with mobility impairments and other physical disabilities 5% of its total housing stock — that's 9,100 apartments — at the rate of 600 a year. No one could have imagined back then that the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001 might impede that goal. However in light of those events, which have temporarily cost NYCHA the use of its 90 Church Street office building where the "504 Unit" was located, HUD has lessened the requirement to 400 conversions a year. Even so, NYCHA is still ahead of schedule, having successfully completed a total of 6,712 conversions as of December 2002.

A total of 6,175 of these converted apartments have already been rented by persons with mobility impairments, with 862 of those rentals taking place last year. The renters include 584 new residents and 278 transfers.

The VCA governs NYCHA's compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and related federal law which states that "no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Full accessibility means that a person with a mobility impairment or other physical disability can reach his or her apartment from the street without any obstacles. This often requires the renovation of building entrances and elevators.

As of the close of 2002, a total of 1,589 ramps to building entrances have been constructed and 1,697 elevators have been modi-



fied. The current total number of fully accessible apartments is 792. Of these, 183 became fully accessible last year.

### Reasonable Accommodations

Another aspect of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement is that "reasonable accommodations" must be made for individuals with mobility impairments and other physical disabilities. These are structural or partial modifications to apartments, as well as changes in policies, prac-

tices or procedures, so that all residents, regardless of any physical disabilities have the same opportunities to benefit from housing programs.

Such structural changes could include widened doorways, lowered kitchen cabinets and counters, the installation of bathroom grab bars, roll-in showers, and enhanced audio/visual alarms. As of the end of 2002, a total of 7,981 such modifications have been made.

### Community Centers

To make sure that residents with mobility impairments and other physical disabilities can benefit equally from programs held in NYCHA educational facilities and community, senior and day care centers, NYCHA's Community Center Program includes the renovation and modification of existing community facilities and the construction of entirely new fully accessible facilities.

To date, two brand new community centers have been built, 30

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## B'KLYN EAST COP INSTALLATION



The Brooklyn East Council of Presidents (COP) hosted a Candlelight Installation Recognition and Holiday Celebration at the Seth Low Houses Community Center in Brooklyn on December 17, 2002. The theme for the evening was "Building Stronger Communities in 2003 and Beyond." Reginald H. Bowman, Resident Association President of Seth Low Houses will continue as President of the Executive Board for Brooklyn East. **Mr. Bowman (right) is pictured here with NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez and Van Dyke I Resident Association President Lisa Kenner.** Ronald M. Ward of Howard Houses was re-elected Vice-President; John Prince of Rutland Towers was re-elected Treasurer; Hyacinth Forrester of William M. Reid Houses is the new Financial Secretary; Desiree Green of Crown Heights Rehabs is the new Recording Secretary; Clarissa Moore of Louis H. Pink Houses is the new Corresponding Secretary and Milton Bolton of Prospect Plaza is the new Sergeant at Arms. Highlights of the evening included the traditional Candlelighting Ceremony which symbolizes the passing of responsibilities from the old board to the new, and a surprise performance by Tina Turner (or someone who looked and sounded just like her). Elections are held every three years.



## Ask Mr. Maintenance...

Dear Mr. Maintenance,

*I would like to put up a few little shelves to display my teddy bears. I assume I am not allowed to put nails in the walls. Is there something I can buy to hold up the shelves without putting nails in the walls?*

- I. K.  
West Brighton Houses

Dear I.K.,

According to the NYCHA Resident Lease Agreement, residents are allowed to decorate their apartments as long as they do not damage the walls. There are two types of walls that are generally found in NYCHA apartments, plaster and sheet rock. Apartments in older developments tend to have plaster walls and apartments in newer developments and rehabs usually have sheet rock. To identify which type of wall you have, tap it lightly with a hammer. Plaster walls will produce a solid sound and sheet rock walls will produce a hollow sound.

The type of wall in your apartment and the weight of the items you want to place on the shelves will determine the kinds of shelving, brackets and fasteners to buy, and how far apart to install the shelf supports. Nails should not be used to attach shelves to walls because they can easily pull away from the wall when something heavy is placed on the shelf.

The first step is to measure where the wall anchors should go. For longer shelves, they should be every 24 inches, for shorter shelves, every six inches or so. If you have plaster walls, mark the location for the wall anchors making sure they are level. Next, using a masonry bit, drill the holes the same diameter as the anchors, insert the anchors into the holes, attach the brackets and lay down the shelves.

If you have sheet rock walls, you will need to find the studs behind the sheet rock, in order to attach the shelves, to give the shelves the support they need. To find the studs, use a magnetic studfinder. It locates the nails driven into the studs. You can also study the baseboard for nails or tap the wall with a hammer — the sound will be more solid when you hit the stud. Studs are generally placed 16 inches apart. When you find the studs, mark the location for the shelf supports, making sure they are level. Next drill the screws for the supports into the studs, attach the brackets and lay down the shelves.

Please keep in mind, a vacating resident must restore the walls of his or her apartment to the condition they were in when the resident moved in. This means that any nails, screws, or adhesives that were used in the process of decorating an apartment must be removed before the resident leaves, and the holes should be filled in with spackle, which works with plaster or sheet rock.

Good Luck!

**Do you have a maintenance question? Please send it to: Mr. Maintenance, c/o New York City Housing Authority Journal, New York City Housing Authority, 250 Broadway, 12th Floor, New York, New York 10007.**

**Editor's Note:** In response to earlier Mr. Maintenance articles, we have received a number of letters from residents about outstanding repairs in their apartments. *Please keep in mind that Mr. Maintenance is here to provide answers to general maintenance issues and procedures in your developments, not to address individual residents' specific problems obtaining repairs or services.* If you are having difficulty obtaining a needed repair or service, please contact your development's Management Office first. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at the development, you should then contact your Borough Management Office. Thank you.

## HARMONY For NYCHA Youth

The Mayor's Office and the New School for Social Research are collaborating with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) on an exciting new pilot program called HARMONY.

HARMONY, or Housing Authority Resident Musicians of New York, is a music program for public school students in grades 5-8 who are NYCHA residents. The program will provide young people with beginner's instrumental music instruction in one of seven instruments: flute, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, guitar or drums.

The program will begin with a one-hour practice session on Saturday mornings at the New School, followed by group lessons. Distinguished guests will then perform and/or speak about their musical backgrounds and careers to the students and their parents and mentors, who are provided through the program. There will also be periodic social gatherings and outings to cultural events in the city.

The program is open to NYCHA residents in grades 5-8. Prior or music study is not required and instruments, music and instruction will be provided free of charge. Thirty to 40 NYCHA children are expected to participate in the program, which will begin early this year.

## LMDC Grants

(Continued from page 3)

documentation from NYCHA residents for this grant.

### The Zones

There are three eligible zones. Zone 1 is the area south of Chambers Street and west of Nassau and Broad Streets, including all buildings which face on these streets and the entirety of Battery Park City. Zone 2 is the area outside Zone 1, south of Canal Street and southwest of Rutgers Street, including all buildings which face those streets. Zone 3 is the area north of Canal Street and Rutgers Street, south of Delancey or Kenmare Streets, and east of Lafayette Street in Manhattan, including all buildings which face those streets with the exception of Canal Street and Rutgers Street.

Applications will be accepted through May 31, 2003. For specifics on the program, and to find out how you can apply, please visit the LMDC's web site, [www.RenewNYC.com](http://www.RenewNYC.com).

## EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

(Continued from page 1)

### Who Qualifies?

To qualify for the EITC you must file a tax return, even if you don't owe any tax or didn't earn enough money to require filing a return. To claim the EITC on your 2002 tax return you must have earned income from employment or from self-employment; your filing status cannot be married, filing separately; you cannot be a qualifying child of another person; and you must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year, or nonresident alien married to a U.S. citizen or resident alien filing a joint return.

### Who Is A Qualifying Child?

A qualifying child is a son, daughter, brother, sister, niece, nephew, grandchild, stepchild, adopted child or foster child who as of December 31, 2002 was under age 19 or under age 24 and a full-time student, or any age if permanently and totally disabled. In addition, the child must have lived with you in the United States for more than half of the year (or, if a foster child, for the whole year).

### Which Tax Forms Can Be Used?

Qualified residents who are raising children must file a 1040 or 1040A tax form and must fill out and attach a Schedule EIC. Qualified residents who were not raising children can file any tax form—including the 1040EZ, however, they must write EIC on the proper line of the tax form to claim the credit. Qualified residents who are married must file a joint return. If you were eligible for the EITC in past years but did not claim it, you can re-file your 2001 and 2000 tax returns with the appropriate documentation to receive the benefit.

### Free Assistance

If you need assistance completing your income tax forms, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites will be open from February 1 through April 15. Services are free. To find the location nearest to you, or for free federal income tax information, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at (800) 829-1040. For a copy of the free IRS Publication 596, Earned Income Tax Credit, call 1-800-829-3676 or log onto [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

To get information about New York State and local income taxes, contact the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at (800) CALL-TAX or (800) 225-5829.

To find out more about the EITC you can also call the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs automated hotline at (212) 487-4444 or log onto [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).

### How Will the EITC Affect Other Benefits You Receive?

NYCHA residents should keep in mind, that by law, the EITC does not count as income in determining your rent. It will not affect other government benefits such as public assistance, nor is it counted as income in calculating entitlement to Medicaid, Food Stamps, and SSI. However, the payment must be spent by the end of the month following the month it is received in order to retain eligibility for these government benefits.

And don't forget, the tax filing deadline is April 15!

## SPEAK OUT AGAINST FRAUD AND CORRUPTION!

**If you or anyone in your family is aware of any fraud or corruption committed against the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") by any NYCHA employee, contractor, vendor, or resident, we urge you to call the NYCHA Inspector General ("IG") at 212-306-3355 or the Department of Investigation ("DOI") at 212-3-NYC-DOI or 212-825-5959. The IG and DOI rely on NYCHA employees, residents and people who do business with NYCHA, and the public and large to report fraudulent and corrupt activity they see or hear.**

## Resident Participation Funds

(Continued from page 1)

### What Is The Process?

Over the past few months, the CCOP has been working with NYCHA to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the CCOP and NYCHA, which is required by HUD. The MOA was recently signed by the parties and provides a framework for formulating, reviewing, and approving proposals.

The procedure process should be finalized over the next couple of months. Proposals must be made in writing and must identify all persons or entities who will provide such activities and the residents and Resident Organizations who will benefit. They must describe in detail the activities to be funded and the goals to be achieved, set forth a schedule for the provision of the activities, and state the estimated complete cost of the provision of these activities.

### Where To Submit Proposals

Individual Resident Associations will submit their proposals to the District Council for review and initial approval. Proposals prepared or initially approved by District Councils will be submit-

ted to the CCOP for further review and approvals. All proposals prepared or approved by the CCOP will be submitted to the Authority for concurrence, final review and approval.

### Monitoring And Responsibility

No funds will go directly to any Resident Organization. All payments for approved programs will be issued by NYCHA directly to the vendor or organization providing the services/program.

In accordance with the MOA, the Resident Organization that develops any program using these funds will be held accountable for monitoring the program's performance. It will report to NYCHA on the use of funds and allow NYCHA to audit all records related to the program.

District Chairs (COP Presidents) will provide information on this program to each Resident Association President. The Housing Authority strongly encourages all residents to attend Resident Association meetings, so that they may provide information to their District and Citywide Councils on the types of programs that will be most beneficial.

**24-HOUR DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
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## Concert

(Continued from page 1)



NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez appeared at the start of the show to wish everyone on the stage and in the audience a safe and happy holiday.

the Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Marlon Daniel. "Oh, look!" one audience member exclaimed, turning, as the music began to fade.

The Youth Chorus caught her by surprise, as members made their way single file from the back of the auditorium to the stage. Each wore a green choir gown with a red collar and held a single (battery-powered) candle. The audience grew still as they sang the solemn "Carol of the Bells," a capella (without instrumental music), led by Mr. Matthews. Next it was time for a little more rhythm with the electric keyboard, bass and drums of consultants Charles Carrington, Don Martin, and Glen Changl Everett, respectively, playing "A Child Is Born" as accompaniment to the clear young voices.

The members of the Senior Choir began their performance with, "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," then changed tempo quickly a rockin' "No-No-No-el," led by Choir Director Carrie Payne.

"I've already laughed and cried," said Department of Public

## BRINGING TOYS TO GIRLS AND BOYS AT FARRAGUT



Young NYCHA residents join Executive Staff at the Annual Toy Distribution, held at Farragut Houses.

By Deborah Williams

This year's New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Annual Toy Distribution was held at the Farragut Houses Community Center in Brooklyn on Tuesday, December 17, 2002. And while the weather outside was frightful, the atmosphere inside was indeed delightful. Approximately 500 children from NYCHA community centers in all five boroughs attended the event, all wearing red and white Santa hats, and all filled with eager anticipation.

The walls of the Community Center were lined with creative holiday artwork made by the children — there was even a St. Nick made entirely of balloons. The children were all nestled along the bleachers and gymnasium floor as they were entertained by the sounds of the NYCHA Senior Choir, Santa's Elves Steppers, the comical routine of Mr. and Mrs. Claus performed by Kier Nelson and Jacqueline

Howard of Community Operations, Citywide Programs, and a poetry reading by 14-year-old Cynthia Leguere.

The gifts were generously donated by The Greater New York LECETT/T.R.A.D.E.S. (Laborers Employees Cooperation and Education Trust/Trades Unions and Residents for Apprenticeship Development and Economic Success), North American Bear Company, and CostCo.

Smiling faces of happy children were seen everywhere as they received dolls, stuffed animals, games, portable music systems and more. And as the spirit of Christmas filled the air you could catch a glimpse of the NYCHA's Executive Staff members, including the Chairman, clapping and singing along. Chairman Hernandez said it best when he said, "this is indeed a Winter Wonderland."



The NYCHA Senior Choir, directed by Carrie Payne.

and Community Relations Deputy Director Millie Molina, wiping her eyes as the lights came on for the intermission. "My mother and daughter have too."

The Senior Choir really showed their stuff when they sang the spirituals "Elijah Rock," and "He Reigns" in the second half of the show. Other selections for the evening included "In The Giving We Receive," and "Feliz Navi-

dad," by the Youth Chorus. The Symphony Orchestra played "Novellette No. 4" by the German Composer Robert Schumann in celebration of Kwanzaa, and the Symphony Orchestra's Brass Quintet performed a brief interlude before everyone joined together for the grand finale.

The voices of NYCHA residents young and not-so-young filled the auditorium as the Youth

Chorus and the Senior Choir concluded the show with Handel's "Angels We Have Heard On High" and its powerful "Gloria" chorus.

"On behalf of Community Operations, thank you for your continued support," shouted Mr. Matthews over the enthusiastic applause. "And we wish you all a very healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!"

## HOPE VI HOME OWNERSHIP FAIR

NYCHA's Department of Housing Finance and Development hosted a Prospect Plaza HOPE VI Home Ownership Fair on October 26, 2002, at the Van Dyke Community Center in Brooklyn. The purpose of the fair was to highlight the Prospect Plaza HOPE VI Home Ownership Program and to provide workshops and home ownership information to interested NYCHA residents. NYCHA is cultivating home owners for HOPE VI townhouses. Along with over 700 public housing residents, representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), lending institutions, non-for-profit organizations, and the Brooklyn Borough President attended in support of this event. The overall goal of the HOPE VI Revitalization Program is to physically, socially and economically integrate public housing residents with the surrounding community by improving the physical environment and providing a full array of community and supportive services. Settlement Housing Fund, Inc., which is developing the Prospect Plaza Townhouses conducted workshops and distributed information during the day. The fair was co-sponsored by FannieMae's New York Partnership Office. To learn more about Home Ownership, call (212) 306-8181.



## MAKING NYCHA ACCESSIBLE

(Continued from page 4)

have been expanded and 11 have been renovated through this program, which began in 1994. Over the next several months, there will be a number of ribbon-cutting ceremonies to commemorate recently completed centers. These will include centers at Baychester, Castle Hill and Bronx River Houses in the Bronx, and at Sumner and Williamsburg Houses in Brooklyn.

Another 21 community centers are currently in the design phase and 26 are under construction. (See, "NYCHA Wins National Design Award," page 2.)

### To Find Out More

If you or anyone in your family would like to request an accommodation to your apartment, such as those mentioned, you can

make the request by completing the form in your annual review package or by speaking with a housing assistant. If for some reason, the modification you are requesting cannot be completed, your management office will work with you to find a solution.

If you have a mobility impairment and would like to transfer to a

fully converted apartment, call or visit your Management Office and fill out a Request for Transfer form.

For more information, please contact your housing assistant or Management Office, or call the Department of Equal Opportunity at (212) 306-4652 or TDD (212) 306-4445.

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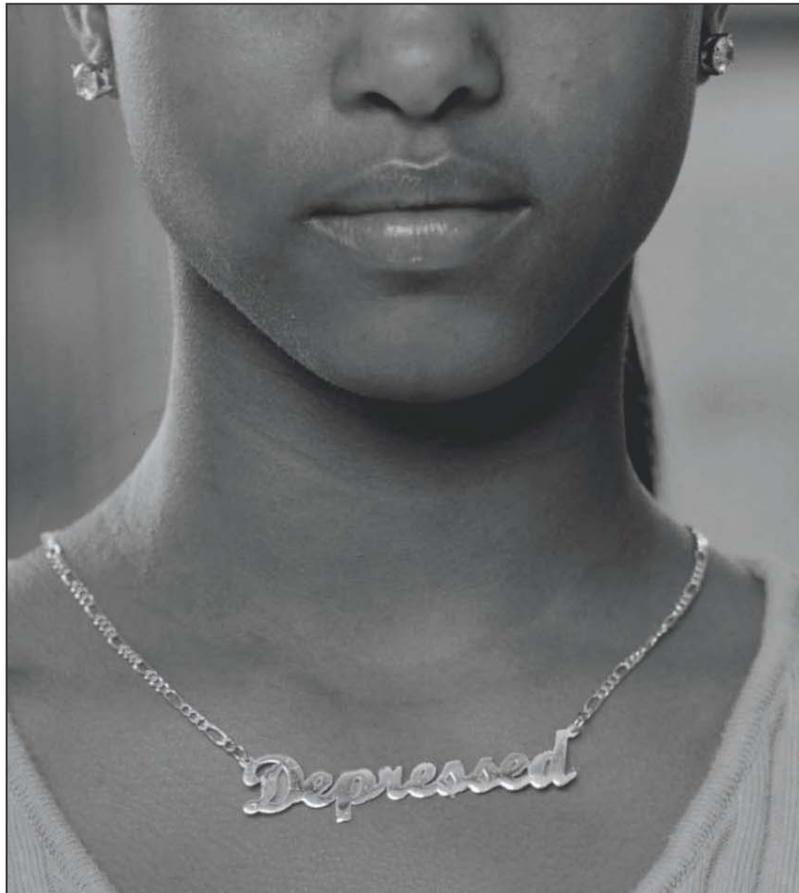
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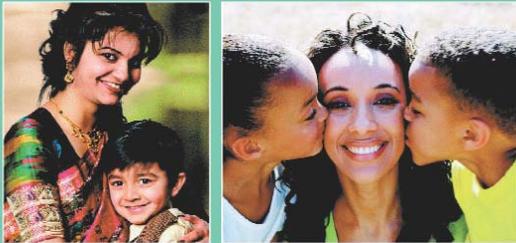
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**Design Award**

(Cont'd. from page 2)

who use the centers. For example, when the Van Dyke Community Center was under construction there was great curiosity in the neighborhood, especially among the young people.

"The other building was small and we played basketball in the back of the building," said 19-year-old Van Dyke resident Anthony Fabers, "but when this opened everybody went crazy, it was so wonderful." Mr. Fabers was happy to give a tour, circling the terraces of the central common space. "There's a music studio, game room, the art studio, a photo lab." These are all visible behind the glass walls surrounding the common area. "Karate class, weight room," Mr. Fabers continued, and then went through the big doors into the "basketball gym." "I come around to play basketball, to play with the little kids, talk to them, be with them," he said.

Design Department Deputy Director Eftihia Tsitiridis explained that particular attention was paid to making the centers stand out in their neighborhoods while at the same time becoming a part of those neighborhoods. "That's the reason we use a lot of glass. The outside and the inside become one, in a way," she said.

Ms. Tsitiridis also emphasized the important role resident associations play in the design process. "Our NYCHA public housing community's input has contributed to the development of buildings which have become beacons of pride and magnets for young and old alike."

Another benefit of visibility in and out is the enhancement of safety in the area. Mr. Burney added, "When a building is distinctive it arouses interest, newcomers want to know what it is. 'Oh, that's our community center,' someone might say, and before you know it, you've got another kid going to it."

The Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award is a high honor indeed, but not the only recognition NYCHA's community centers have attracted recently. Last November, *The New York Times* applauded the new buildings, calling them nothing less than "a small architectural revolution."

The Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Awards are made in the fall. NYCHA received its award in October 2002.

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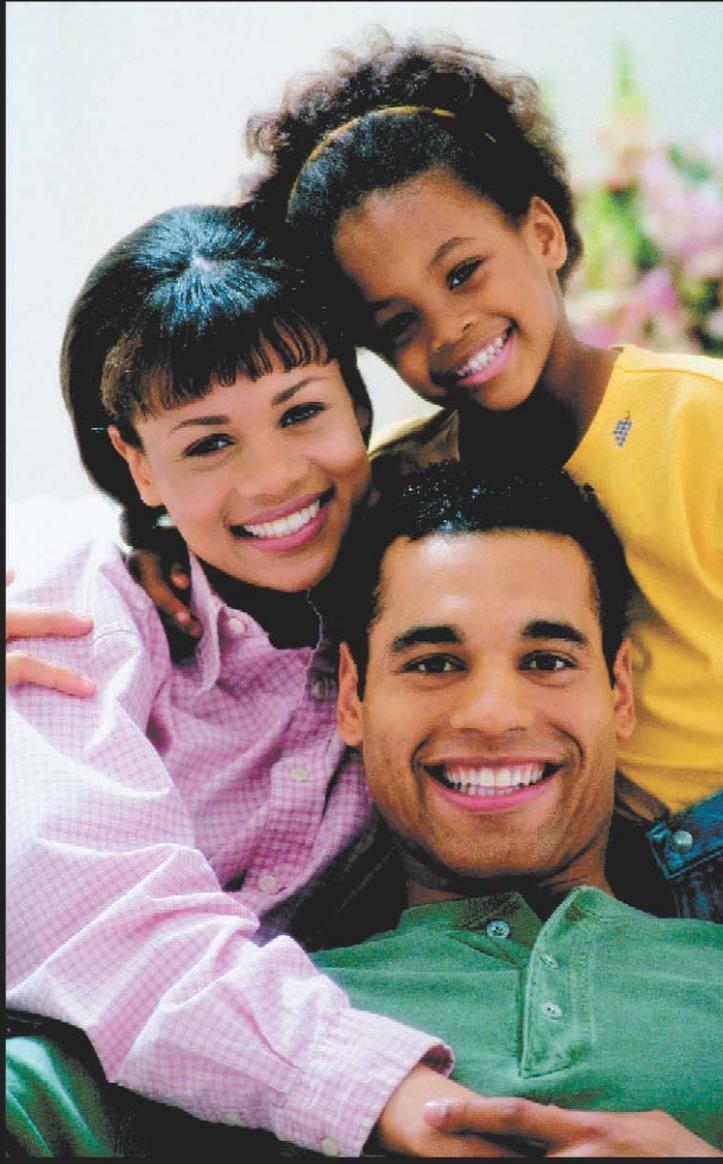
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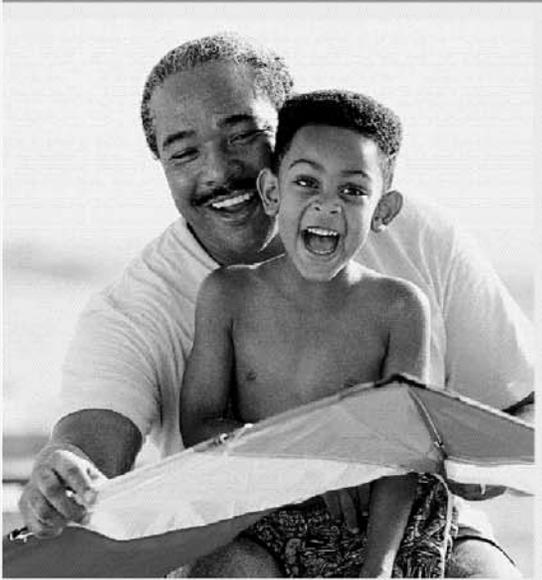


**FAMILY HEALTH PLUS**, no-cost health insurance for uninsured adults ages 19-64 with limited income.

To learn more about **Child Health Plus**, call **1-800-698-4KIDS** (1-800-698-4543).

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