



Journal

NYCHA'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Nearly 800 friends of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) gathered at the recently renovated Brooklyn Museum to celebrate NYCHA's 70th Anniversary on December 1st. And because the great and ambitious program of public housing began here in New York City on the steps of City Hall with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1934, they also came to celebrate the birth of public housing in the United States.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg joined U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistant Secretary Michael Liu, LaGuardia College President Gail O. Mellow and NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez for brief remarks at the start of the evening, with radio personality Bob Lee serving as Master of Ceremonies.

The Chairman said he was proud to be leading the premier housing authority in the country, and reaffirmed his administra-

tion's commitment to preserve NYCHA's 345 public housing developments. In introducing Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Chairman thanked him for making affordable housing a priority of his administration.

The Mayor began by pointing out some of the famous people who grew up in NYCHA developments, including the founder of Starbuck's Howard Schultz, rapper Jay-Z, and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

The Mayor acknowledged the *(Continued on page 5)*

South Beach Community Center Ribbon Cutting In Staten Island \$2.7 Million Federal Grant Makes Renovation Possible



It's Up To You, New York: NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez (Center) surrounded by the Broadway Kids, who provided the highlight of the ribbon-cutting ceremony with their performance of "New York, New York." Also shown in this photo, to Mr. Hernandez's left are South Beach Resident Association President Scherisce Lewis and Community Center Director Kathleen Pesantes.

By Deborah Williams

On November 19, 2004 the South Beach Community Center celebrated its official opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Chairman Tino Hernandez, Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Board Member JoAnna Aniello, Department of Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh Spence, Staten Island Community Operations Director Carl Billington and Center Director Kathleen Pesantes joined Assemblyman Matthew Mirones and a representative from City Councilman James Oddo's office, Steven Matteo, along with other officials and residents to commemorate the event.

As Chairman Tino Hernandez remarked, it was more than the \$2.7 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that made the renovation and expansion of what is now an 8,585 square-foot center possible. "It took resident leaders and NYCHA staff to bring this to fruition."

Construction, which initially began only as the rehabilitation of the old center and grew to include the expansion of the multi-purpose room, began in June 2001. The completed Center, now twice its original size, opened unofficially in April 2004.

The rehabilitation and expansion presented a challenge to

NYCHA's Department of Capital Projects and Development's Office of Design because the Community Center is housed in the basement level of 155 Norway Avenue. Ceilings were low, and there was piping that could not be removed.

According to Associate Project Manager Jeffrey Ornstein, "the

intent was to design a center that is very 21st Century with a futuristic look, yet very durable."

NYCHA's Office of Design accomplished that goal in conjunction with the consulting firm Ahuja Priya Architects. The South Beach Community Center's sloping multi-purpose room measures

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Generations of Excellence: Housing Bureau Police Chief Joanne Jaffe, Chairman Tino Hernandez and Mayor Michael Bloomberg at NYCHA's 70th Anniversary reception held at the Brooklyn Museum.

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Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Jan. 17

Message From The Mayor

HISTORIC CRIME REDUCTION IN 2004



It was my pleasure to join Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt at the 77th Precinct in Crown Heights, Brooklyn last month to announce that New York City's crime rate reached new historic lows in 2004 and that based on the FBI Uniform Crime Index Report, New York City remains the safest large city in America.

With reductions in every borough, New York City experienced

another dramatic decrease in 2004 in overall crime Citywide of almost 5% from last year, 9% from two years ago, and 15% from three years ago. And when crime is down in New York City crime is also down in public housing. As of the end of November 2004, crime had dropped a full 6% in New York City Housing Authority developments Citywide, 9.4% over the last two years and 14.1% over the last three years.

The remarkable drop in crime shows that our strategy of focusing on problem people and problem places is working. This achievement is even more noteworthy given that we have 3,000 fewer officers on the street today than we did in January 2002, and that in that time the NYPD has also taken on the additional responsibilities related to counter-terrorism. Our quality of life is strong, our schools are improving, and businesses are growing every day – thanks, in large part, to our efforts to reduce crime.

According to FBI crime figures released last month, for the first six months of 2004, New York City remained the safest big City in the United States. Of the 25 largest cities reporting to the FBI, New York City had the lowest crime rate during the first six months of 2004. Of the 217 cities reporting with populations greater than 100,000, New York City was ranked 203rd, between Alexandria, Virginia and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Throughout 2004, the NYPD, working with other criminal justice agencies, employed many of the successful crime-fighting strategies that have helped bring crime down over the last three years, and also created new, targeted initiatives. These initiatives include Operation Impact and Operation Safe Housing.

Since January 2003, Operation Impact has led the way for driving down crime in New York City, reducing and preventing serious and violent crimes by deploying approximately 1,000 Police Officers each day to strategically targeted locations or Impact Zones that exhibit a greater propensity for crime during certain hours and days. In June of 2004, I announced Operation Safe Housing, a four-pronged initiative aimed at reducing drug-dealing, sexual assault, and gun violence in New York City public housing.

With initiatives such as these and the help and cooperation of NYCHA residents, I am confident that we can build on our success to bring crime down even further in 2005. Have a great year!

Michael R. Bloomberg

Manhattan North Council Of Presidents Installation



Shown here (left to right) are NYCHA Board Member JoAnna Aniello, Manhattan North COP Vice-Chair Gloria Wright, Manhattan North COP Recording Secretary Patricia Herman, NYC Council Member Robert Jackson, Manhattan North COP District Chair Barbara G. Barber, NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez, Manhattan North COP Treasurer Paulette Fisher, NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Manhattan North COP Financial Secretary Cynthia Waiters-Artis, NYCHA Manhattan Borough Director Carolyn Jasper, and Community Operations' Deputy General Manager Hugh Spence at the Manhattan North COP Installation Ceremony.

The Manhattan North Council of Presidents (COP) Executive Board held its Installation Ceremony on November 10, 2004 at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building in Harlem. New York City Council Member Robert Jackson administered the oath to the Board's Chair, Barbara G. Barber, who is Resident Association President for Drew Hamilton Houses, and together New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Tino Hernandez and Vice Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr. administered the oath to the rest of the Manhattan North COP Executive Board. They are: Vice-Chair Gloria Wright Jr., who is Resident Association President of 131 St. Nicholas Houses, Recording Secretary Patricia Herman, who is Resident Association President of Lincoln Houses, Treasurer Paulette Fisher, who is Resident Association President of East River Houses, and Financial Secretary Cynthia Waiters-Artis, who is Resident Association President of the Fred Samuels Apartments.

There are nine COP districts representing NYCHA residents living in all boroughs of the City. The current Manhattan North Executive Board will represent over 60,000 residents from 32 developments over the course of the next three years. The current Board was elected in June.

The event was well attended, with special guests in addition to those shown in the photograph above, including Housing Bureau Chief Joanne Jaffe, and NYCHA's Deputy General Manager for Operations Robert Podmore.

In his remarks Chairman Hernandez congratulated the entire Board and extended his personal

gratitude to Ms. Barber, who has been Manhattan North COP Chair for 14 years. The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Ms. Barber for her dedication to resident issues and her passionate advocacy on behalf of residents over the years.

Department of Community Operations Deputy General Man-

ager Hugh Spence presided over the traditional candle lighting ceremony, during which Board Members pledged to faithfully perform the duties of their offices. NYCHA Executive Assistant Lorraine Glover and Chief Council of Presidents Liaison Keith Mitchell served as the Mistress and Master of Ceremonies.

Department of Resident Employment Services Job Development Unit

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The Job Development Unit operates like a full-service employment agency. We provide FREE employment services to NYCHA residents and prospective employers.

The services provided to NYCHA residents are as follows:

- job referral and placement assistance
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• access to job training and education programs

The services provided to prospective employers are as follows:

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• design of training programs geared to an employer's needs
• access to conference room space for job recruitment purposes
• technical assistance regarding new-hire tax credit incentives

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*Message From The Chairman***NYCHA Begins Its 71st Year**

As the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) begins its 71st year, we have much to be proud of. Our developments are safer than ever and the implementation of new initiatives, such as Operation Safe Housing, promises to make them even safer still. As we did for Fiscal Year 2004, once again NYCHA's Board, Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Member JoAnna Aniello, and I, has approved a balanced

budget for Fiscal Year 2005. That is no small thing, considering that the expenses of running this enormous public housing program in New York City have increased eightfold since 2002, while our funding has been cut dramatically.

Most importantly, we have successfully balanced our budgets while maintaining the core services to residents that are fundamental to our mission of providing decent and affordable housing for low and moderate-income New Yorkers.

The year 2004 also saw the implementation of a new program that is designed to improve the quality and timeliness of the construction work in our developments—the Construction Management Build or CM Build Program. In addition, the CM Build Program will offer residents with long-term job opportunities in the form of apprenticeships.

I think it's fair to say that NYCHA's 70th was a very good year. And I want to thank everyone who came to help us celebrate it at the beautifully renovated Brooklyn Museum back in December. Especially U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Michael Liu, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, and Dr. Gail O. Mellow who is President of LaGuardia College in Queens, which houses NYCHA's vast archives.

Not only has NYCHA found creative solutions for doing more with less in 2004 so that we can maintain the quality of life in our developments, we have also been working on increasing the number of affordable apartments in the City. Under the Mayor's direction, NYCHA has been working closely with the City's other housing agencies — the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) — to increase the supply of affordable housing in New York City. The Mayor's New Housing Marketplace Plan promises to produce or preserve 65,000 units of affordable housing over the the next four years.

I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished here at NYCHA in our 70th year and I am excited about the prospect of the year to come. I hope you are too.

Tino Hernandez

Increase In Fee For Pay-O-Matic Services

New York City Housing Authority residents who use Pay-O-Matic Check Cashing and Financial Services centers to pay their rent, should be aware that Pay-O-Matic has increased its fee for this service by 35 cents, bringing the total service charge to \$1.35. The increase provides for additional safeguards to protect rent payments made by NYCHA residents.

Residents who use Pay-O-Matic centers will have their rent credited to their accounts on the same day it is paid. Check with your Housing Assistant for a list of authorized Pay-O-Matic centers.

NYCHA strongly encourages all residents to pay their rent with a personal check or money order directly to the Lockbox, which is the address printed on the rent bill. It is still less expensive to send the payment in the form of a check or money order to the NYCHA Lockbox — you only pay the cost of one stamp.

And whether you use Pay-O-Matic or the Lockbox, please pay your rent on time!

South Beach CC

(Continued from page 1)

point it is 18½ feet from the floor to the top of the windowed wall, and the top row of window panels is 7½ feet high!

Center Director Kathleen Pesantes' informative Powerpoint presentation showed a typical day of recreation and education. It also featured the Feeding Program, and activities like Talent Night, with poetry readings, rap, singing and dancing.

"It's a fabulous center for the young people in Staten Island" said Chairman Hernandez. Deputy General Manager Spence added, "And one that will hopefully bring the community together in a facility where they can have a wonderful time. It will serve generations."

"The wait was justified," said South Beach Resident Association President Scherisce Lewis.

The afternoon's highlight came when the Broadway Kids took center stage to perform the City's anthem, "New York, New York." The audience was so moved by the children's singing and dancing that they gave them a standing ovation. "They stole the show," said Community Operations Staten Island Director Carl Billington.

Nearly all of the speakers praised NYCHA's Design Department for its creativity and hard work. The seniors presented Ms.

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**Deborah's Diary**

By Deborah Williams

Craftsmanship—The seniors from more than 15 Senior and Health Centers in Queens and Brooklyn were busy making dolls for the very first Doll-Making Contest that was held on October 13, 2004 at the Langston Hughes Senior Center in Brooklyn. "The purpose of this event was to celebrate the beginning of the renaissance of our senior doll-makers, crafters, and future entrepreneurs," said Community Operations Brooklyn Borough Administrator Sharon Barnett. Over 100 dolls were entered into the contest and placed on display. They were judged in categories ranging from best doll to most unusual doll, best dressed, cutest, most creative and most original. The show received rave reviews for its splendid craftsmanship and dynamic display. Brooklyn winners were from the Langston Hughes and Sumner Senior Centers and the Queens winners were from the Astoria Senior Center and the CNR Adult Day Health Center. Performing at the event was Community Operations's Carrie Payne and NYCHA's Senior Chorus. **Congratulations! Your craftsmanship is outstanding. It was great to see that the dolls represented diverse cultures. I applaud everyone who participated in this exciting contest. You did great!**

Dedication—"I hadn't seen my son in three years and when he finally returned home at the beginning of 2004, I was nervous and my heart pounded. Don't get me wrong, I was happy and nervous at the same time. I never thought anything bad would happen to my son but you always have the fear lingering over your head." Those were the words of Ms. Christine Ratliff, of Baruch Houses in Manhattan, mother of Justin Lawrence Ratliff a Private 1st Class Specialist presently serving in the United States Army. Justin returned home from what he referred to as a really rough experience in Iraq and Pakistan. Justin's military career started at the age of 18. After serving his country for four years he decided to reenlist. At the age of 24 he continues to serve his country, only now he is a husband and father as well. Justin is currently stationed at Fort Drum in Watertown, New York but will soon be heading to Colorado to further his military career. **Justin you have made your Mom so proud that she picked up the phone and called me because she wanted to share her joy and let everyone know what a terrific son she has. I too think you are a terrific and dedicated individual. Thank you for the courage and commitment you demonstrate every day in serving your country. You take care and stay safe.**

Football has its perks—the Falcons weren't the only winners on November 21, 2004 at the Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Donald Bing, 15, known to his family and friends as DJ, enjoys playing football with his peers at Unity Plaza Houses in Brooklyn. He has been a member of the Police Athletic League (PAL) Football League, coordinated by Detective Walter Bryant of Police Service Area (PSA) # 2 for the past three years, where flag football has become such a popular sport that the team players entered the Pepsi/NFL Punt, Pass and Kick (PPK) Football Competition. Of the 16 youth who participated, it was DJ who took Fifth Place in the final PPK kickoff game on November 11, 2004 at Giants Stadium. DJ won tickets to the November 21, 2004 Falcons vs. Giants game, and during halftime all the winners and participants were called onto the field to be acknowledged. The first- through sixth-place winners all received plaques and an official Pepsi/NFL PPK uniform. It was a very exciting and fun-filled evening for DJ. **Well, I congratulate you on a very successful win! You showed remarkable athletic ability and great promise. Who knows? Maybe some day soon you may be more than just a spectator at a game—you may be a player with the Falcons or the Giants. Again, congratulations and keep up the good work!**

If you have good news you would like to share with your neighbors, drop me a few lines care of The NYCHA Journal/ 250 Broadway, 12th Floor/New York, New York 10007 or by fax at (212) 577-1358. Or hey, make it personal! Give me a call at (212) 306-4752. I can't 100% guarantee it but I'll do my best to see that your good news makes it into this column.

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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. This list is part of NYCHA's effort to keep residents informed of the Housing Authority's ongoing effort to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of our facilities. Here follows a list of the people excluded after hearings were held on November 17, September 24, and October 1, 8 and 15, 2003. **REMEMBER, IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR THE POLICE! THIS LISTING IS PROVIDED TO ALL POLICE SERVICE AREAS.**

Prohibited as of November 17, 2003

Tireal Davis Case 5292/03 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 40-03 Vernon Blvd., Queensbridge North Houses, Long Island City.

Tivon Rice Case 6207/03 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 1236 Burke Avenue, Eastchester Gardens Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of September 24, 2003

James Delgado Case 4426/03 formerly associated with the first floor of 505 East 120th Street, Wagner Houses, Manhattan.

Ramon Ortiz Case 6238/03 formerly associated with the twenty-third floor of 2999 Eighth Avenue, Polo Grounds Towers, Manhattan.

Kevin Harris Case 6282/03 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 40 West 115th Street, King Towers, Manhattan.

Michael Diggins Case 6301/03 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 2225 Lacombe Avenue, Castle Hill Houses, the Bronx.

Saquan Parker Case 6303/03 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 466 Columbia Street, Red Hook West Houses, Brooklyn.

Rashwan White Case 6415/03 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 162 Troy Avenue, Albany Houses, Brooklyn.

Devon Dantzler Case 6390/03 formerly associated with the first floor of 1189 229th Drive North, Edenwald Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of October 1, 2003

Myetta McNeill Case 3307/03 formerly associated with the first floor of 535 Havemeyer Avenue, Castle Hill Houses, the Bronx.

Gilbert Howlett Case 6456/03 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 2698 Eighth Avenue, Drew Hamilton Houses, Manhattan.

Irving Fernandez Case 5409/03 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 80 East 110th Street, Lehman Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of October 8, 2003

Richard Arrington Case 5485/03 formerly associated with the second floor of 1260 Loring Avenue, Pink Houses, Brooklyn.

Christopher Smith

Thomas Adams Case 6339/03 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 18 Avenue V, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.

Benjamin Warner Case 6703/03 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 100 Pitt Street, Gompers Consolidated Houses, Manhattan.

Derick Hamilton Case 6704/03 formerly associated with the fourteenth floor of 200 West 143rd Street, Drew Hamilton Houses, Manhattan.

Rahiem Malette Case 6852/03 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 580 Castle Hill Avenue, Castle Hill Houses, the Bronx.

Shakira Mallette

Prohibited as of October 15, 2003

Clarence Powell Case 6655/03 formerly associated with the first floor of 772 Henry Street, Red Hook Houses, Brooklyn.

Martin Harris Case 6975/03 formerly associated with the second floor of 745 East 152nd Street, Adams Houses, the Bronx.

NYCHA Observes World AIDS Day with High Fashion in Brooklyn



NYCHA TEENS SERVED AS MODELS in the Fabulous World AIDS Day Fashion Show at the Williamsburg Community Center on December 1, marking NYCHA's first entry in the international observance.

"Women and AIDS" was the theme when NYCHA participated in the observance of World AIDS Day for the first time on December 1, 2004. A fashion show organized by Brooklyn Borough Community Operations Senior Program Manager Lisa Davis, was the culmination of a month-long series of 26 workshops to raise teenage awareness of the AIDS epidemic.

"The target was to educate teens about AIDS/HIV and other sexual health issues, leading up to the Fabulous World AIDS Day Fashion Show," said Joseph Booze, 17, of Cypress Hills Houses and the Tompkins Community Center, who served as one of the hosts for the evening at the Williamsburg Community Center. "The show gave us, the teens, the opportunity to shine. We were the hosts, photographers, stage hands, models, entertainment and reporters.

"I didn't realize that AIDS was such a big problem in New York, let alone in Brooklyn," Mr. Booze continued. I thought it was only bad in Africa, but Brooklyn has the third largest AIDS population in the US following Manhattan and Los Angeles. Brooklyn has more people who have been diagnosed with AIDS than 45 states and more children with AIDS than 47 states."

The workshops were conducted by teenage staff members from SUNY's Downstate Medical Center, the Kings County Hospital HEAT (Health and Educational Alternatives for Teens) *(Continued on page 9)*

PEACE ON EARTH HOLIDAY CONCERT



HOLIDAY SOUNDS The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) celebrated its third annual Peace on Earth Holiday Concert on December 10, 2004, at Brooklyn College's Whitman Theater. It was an event to remember as the NYCHA Senior Chorus, Youth Chorus, Symphony Orchestra and Senior Performing Arts Unit joined their talents to bring a very special holiday extravaganza to residents, employees and friends. The Summer Community Center youth took center stage to open the evening with their rendition of the classic, "The Little Drummer Boy." The Senior and Youth Choruses delighted the audience with "Silent Night," "Home for the Holidays," and a host of other holiday favorites. NYCHA's Symphony Orchestra provided the musical accompaniment for each song, as well as playing "Feliz Navidad" and "Festival of Hanukkah" unaccompanied by song. The highlight of the evening was the performance of "Wedding Bell Blues," a musical first staged by the Senior Performing Arts Unit over the summer, only this reenactment had a little holiday flavor added to it. The performances brought the spirit of the holiday to life. Department of Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh Spence said it best when he remarked, "The residents of NYCHA are extraordinary people."

NYCHA CELEBRATES ITS 70TH

(Continued from page 1)

tremendous growth in public housing here in New York City. "Seventy years ago was 1934," the Mayor said. "In 1935 Eleanor Roosevelt helped dedicate our very first public housing development in the City, First Houses. Today, NYCHA apartments are home to one of every 12 New Yorkers."

He thanked NYCHA for working with him on his administration's plan to create or preserve 65,000 units of affordable housing by 2008, and spoke briefly about another important initiative — Operation Safe Housing — which aims to reduce crime in the developments.

The Mayor then presented Chairman Hernandez with a proclamation, declaring December 1, 2004 in the City of New York, "New York City Housing Authority Day."

"Size does matter!" exclaimed Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Michael Liu, after commenting that NYCHA is the largest housing authority in the U.S. and sets the standard for housing authorities nationwide. "You have the ability to do great things."

The Assistant Secretary emphasized the importance of recognizing that public housing must be about programs as well as buildings, and serve, "not as a hand out but as a hand up." "We will continue to see the transformation of public housing in this City," the Assistant Secretary promised. "We have allocated millions of dollars to create new environments, a new society."

LaGuardia Community College President Dr. Gail O. Mellow congratulated NYCHA on its 70th Anniversary and remarked that many students who attend LaGuardia live in public housing. LaGuardia Community College also plays another important role in relation to NYCHA: it is home to the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives which serves as a repository for a huge accumulation of historical documents and photos which tell NYCHA's story from the beginning.

A special exhibit, entitled, "Generations Of Excellence" showed the history of NYCHA in a series of nine panels focusing on building design, infrastructure, resident life, employees, and art in the developments. The NYCHA Youth Chorus provided entertainment.

Sponsors for the event included: Anderson, Kill & Olick, Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, Bank Of America, Brooklyn Brewery, Cafe Health Exchange, Citibank, Hawkins, Delafield & Wood, LLP, Hudson Meridian Construction Group, LiRo Group, PMS Construction Management Corp., Tetra Tech, Inc., UBS Financial Services and the URS Corporation.

South Beach Community Center

(Continued from page 3)

Pesantes with an American flag. Assemblyman Matthew Mirones summed it up by saying, "It's all about the children and families in this community being able to experience life at its fullest." And it was Ms. Pesantes, who as the ribbon was being cut, told the children, "Now the Center is officially yours!"

The South Beach Community Center is open from 2 PM to 6 PM for after-school programs for children ages 6 to 12 years and has an evening program from 6 PM to 10 PM for teens ages 13 to 19 years old.

"This Center is better than the other, and has more programs than before. I like it," said 10-year-old Rasheidah Reid who has been coming to the Center for two years. "Ms. Kathy taught us to dance and sing, one of my favorite things," 10-year old Shunna Moore added.

Annual Holiday Tree Lighting



THE NYCHA YOUTH CHORUS was the musical feature of the 91st Annual Holiday Tree Lighting in City Hall Park in lower Manhattan on a rainy December 6, 2004 by invitation from one of their biggest fans, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez, General Manager Douglas Apple and Deputy General Manager Hugh B. Spence were among the damp but undaunted gathering who sipped hot chocolate and watched the Mayor flip the switch to officially inaugurate the City's Holiday Season. "There is no better place to be during the holiday season than New York City," said Mayor Bloomberg. "New Yorkers have a lot to be thankful for: our City is safe, strong and prosperous, and I want to wish all New Yorkers a Happy Holiday season." Over 600 ornaments hang from the display, created by students from downtown schools P.S. 1, P.S. 42, and P.S. 234, and children participating in free after-school programs at the Parks Department's Recreation Centers.



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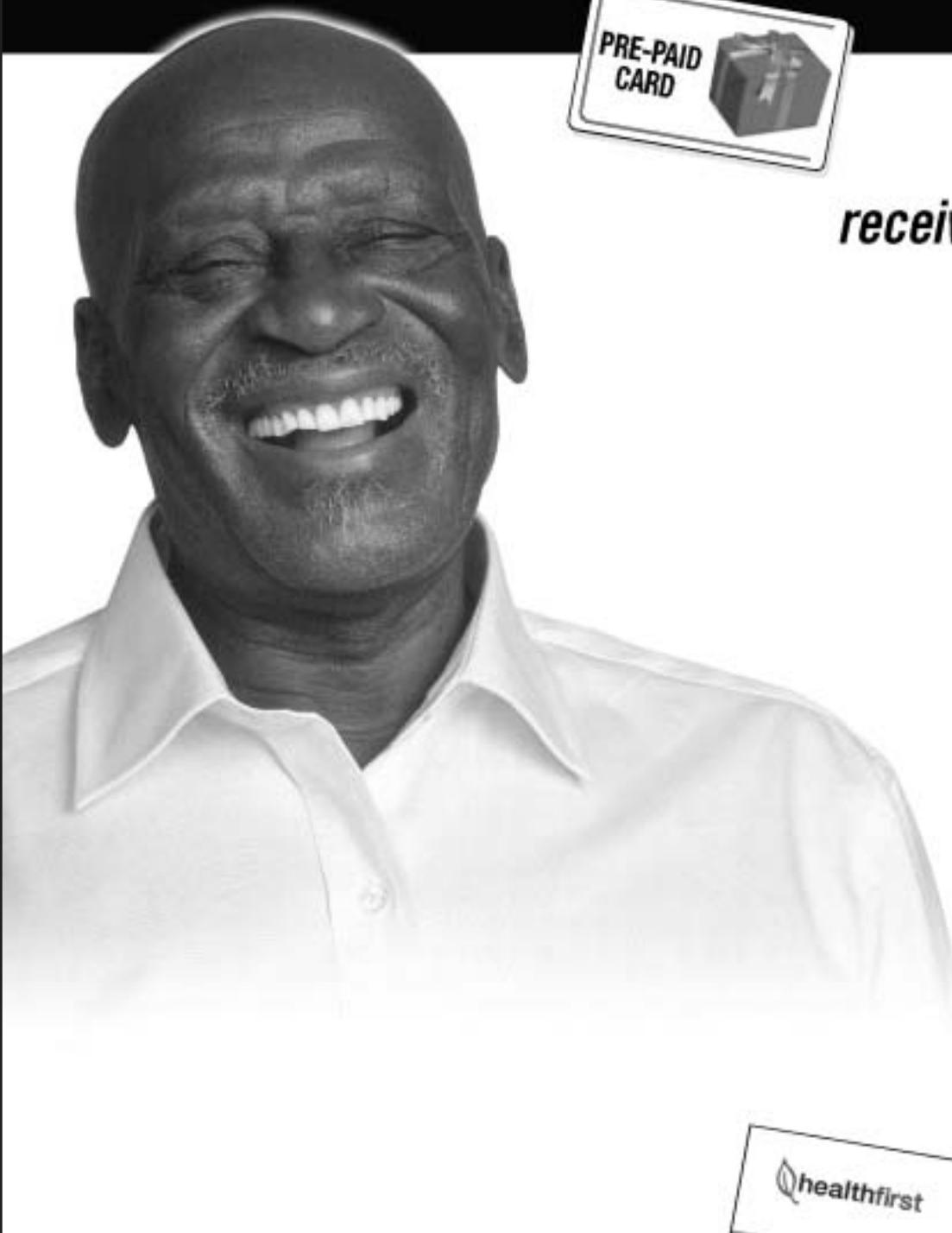
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If you or anyone in your family is aware of any fraud or corruption committed against the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") by any NYCHA employee, contractor, vendor, or resident, we urge you to call the NYCHA Inspector General ("IG") at 212-306-3355 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 at large to report fraudulent and corrupt activity they see or hear.



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If you have children and your household income is less than \$35,000 a year, you can qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a cash refund from the federal, state and city governments that can pay as much as \$5,000 for each year that you qualify. You can only get it when you file your taxes. And it's your money, a tax refund for doing your part, earning a living while taking care of your family.

In January, when you receive your W-2 forms, call the NYC general helpline at 3-1-1 to learn more about the EITC or check online to www.nyc.gov/eitc.

BUT YOU WON'T GET IT IF YOU DON'T FILE



Fashion Marks World AIDS Day *(Continued from page 4)*

Program and from Life Force: Women Fighting AIDS, Incorporated.

The designer clothing modeled by the teens was donated by Sean John, Phat Farm, Roca Wear, Nike, Moshood and Tres Elegante. Donations and support also came from Cakeman Raven Bakery, Kum Kau Restaurant, PSA #3, JLF Productions, Zaire & Visualizer Filmz, AIDS activist Maria Davis, Crown Heights resident Vera Hudson, R&B artists Force M.D.'s and vocalist Lubna Lundy.

With 46 million people HIV infected worldwide and more than three million who have died because of AIDS in 2003, HIV/AIDS is the world's fourth



Joseph Booze, 17, of Cypress Hills Houses, served as one of the hosts for the Fashion Show.



Christina Rodriquez, 13, of Tompkins Houses wore a gown from Tres Elegante.

leading cause of death. Therefore, the NYCHA staff who worked with the teenagers in the awareness campaign were a particularly motivated team.

"We found out that the adults do understand our likes, wants, issues that concern us," said Mr. Booze, "and they haven't given up on us." Mr. Booze and his fellow participants gave a special vote of thanks to the NYCHA staff: Juanita Brown, Nikki Johnson, Sura Kahn, Kevin Peacock, Tyrone Lewis, Tracey Toomer, Keisha Jackson and the staff at the Williamsburg Community Center.

"Some of the teens had never worn clothes like that before," said Ms. Davis. "In fact," one of the models in the show never even wore a dress before in her life, only 'tomboy' type clothes. She discovered something wonderful about herself."

Cash Refunds Await Many NYCHA Residents

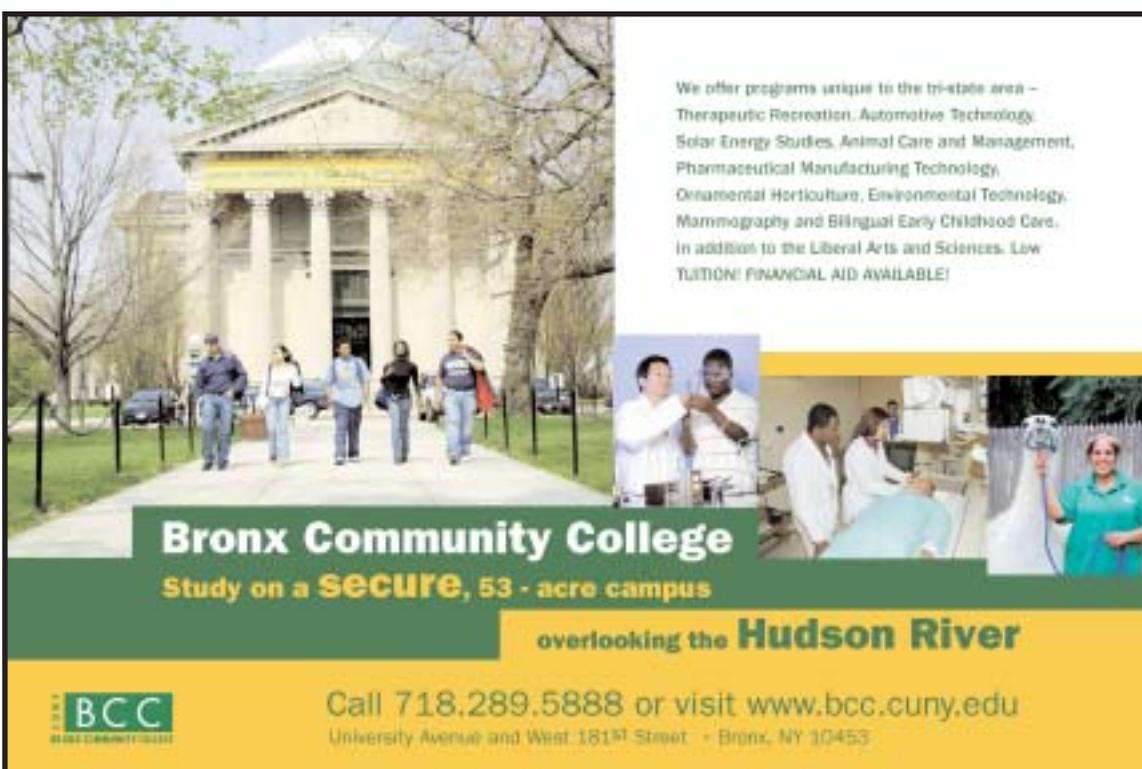
As many as 31,000 NYCHA residents could qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Described in the advertisement above on this page, the EITC can be worth as much as \$5,805 (combined federal and state), with the average refund for NYCHA families expected to exceed \$2,000.

The EITC is available to families earning less than \$34,458 a year with more than one child, families earning less than \$30,338 annually with one child, and individuals 24 years of age and older making less than \$11,490 annually. The amount of credit is determined by the amount of income and family size.

NYCHA residents who earned under \$35,000 last year (2004) can get FREE HELP in preparing their taxes at many locations throughout the city – some of them are at NYCHA locations. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will work with residents to prepare basic income tax returns at no charge at VITA sites. These are knowledgeable volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service. To find the location nearest to you or for further information call 311.

The EITC does not count as income in determining NYCHA rent, so 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.

The tax filing deadline is April 15.



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