

New York City Housing Authority Journal

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MAYOR BLOOMBERG HONORS NYCHA HERO FELIX VAZQUEZ



HERO Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg (right) presents Morris Houses Supervisor of Caretakers Felix Vazquez with a Bronze Medallion for saving the life of an infant.

THE NEW YORK CITY BRONZE MEDALLION, THE CITY'S HIGHEST CIVIC AWARD, WAS PRESENTED BY MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG TO NYCHA SUPERVISOR OF HOUSING CARETAKERS FELIX VAZQUEZ AT CITY HALL ON DECEMBER 16TH IN RECOGNITION OF HIS HEROISM FOR SAVING THE LIFE OF A TWO-MONTH-OLD BABY DURING A FIRE IN THE BRONX.

Mr. Vazquez was in his office doing paperwork on the early morning of December 14th, when he received a call on his radio informing him of a fire in a third-floor apartment at Morris Houses' 1460 Washington Avenue. After calling 911 he ran to the building, arriving minutes later.

When he looked up to the third floor he noticed what appeared to be a white towel being waved from the

window. Vazquez, who has been a NYCHA employee for almost 20 years, realized that what he was seeing was a baby. He yelled to the woman holding the baby not to drop it, saying he would get his caretakers to stretch out a coat to catch the infant.

Caretakers Luz Jusino, Donald Drayton and Blanco Ramos held onto a coat beneath the window to try to catch the baby if the mother let it go. The baby's mother,

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October 1st – May 31st

Minimum Indoor Temperature From 6AM to 10PM

68 degrees Fahrenheit whenever the outdoor temperature is below 55 degrees.

Minimum Indoor Temperature From 10PM to 6AM

55 degrees Fahrenheit whenever the outdoor temperature falls below 40 degrees.

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MEET ARTIST
MARTIN MEDINA



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THE BED BUG
FACT SHEET



PAGE 5
HEALING
THE WORLD!



FILE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT!

NYCHA ESTIMATES THAT AS MANY AS 30,000 RESIDENTS, OR ONE IN SIX FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING, MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) WHEN THEY FILE THEIR 2005 INCOME TAX. The EITC is a federal, state and city tax credit paid to qualifying workers. It can be claimed either as a credit on your taxes or as a cash refund and can be as high as \$5,940.

With an average payment of \$2,355 to qualifying New York City households in 2004, the EITC helps hard-working families make ends meet and contributes millions of dollars to the city's economy.

The EITC can mean a maximum combined federal, state and city credit of up to \$5,940 for families with a maximum income of \$35,263 and more than one qualifying child. Families with a maximum income of \$31,030 and one qualifying child can receive up to \$3,594 credit, and individuals with a maximum income of \$11,750 can receive a maximum \$539 credit.

The EITC does not count as income in determining NYCHA rent, so it will not affect other government benefits such as public assistance; nor

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BOARD ADOPTS 2006 SPENDING PLAN

On December 28, 2005, the Board of the Housing Authority approved a preliminary spending plan for 2006. This spending plan will allow the Authority to provide ongoing services to the 417,000 residents of public housing and 258,000 New Yorkers residing in private apartments utilizing Section 8 rental subsidies. Highlights of the plan include:

- Preserving core services to residents;
- New funding for apartment/public space painting, emergency boiler rentals, and opening of nine new community centers currently in construction or pre-construction phases; and
- Preserving funding for Tenant Participation Activities.

The plan is preliminary because there remains a \$168 million gap between revenue and expenses. Since 2001, NYCHA has self-funded over \$350 million in operating deficits. At the same time the operating subsidy we receive from Washington has been reduced and non-discretionary spending (utilities, pensions, health care) has increased by approximately 50%. Additionally 21,000 unsubsidized City/State dwelling units have continued to drain resources, contributing to more than 50% of the expected budget gap for 2006.

At the Board's request NYCHA's senior staff is in the process of developing a balanced financial plan for 2006 which will close the gap between revenue and expenses. The budget will preserve core services, minimize impact on the most vulnerable residents, and seek creative means to streamline service delivery. For more detail, please visit NYCHA's Web site at: www.nyc.gov/nycha.

NYCHA In the Movies

By Allan Leicht

NYCHA'S DEVELOPMENTS HAVE PROVIDED THE BACKDROP FOR MANY FEATURE FILMS, TELEVISION SHOWS, COMMERCIALS AND VIDEOS OVER THE YEARS AND 2005 WAS ANOTHER YEAR FULL OF CINEMATIC ACTIVITY. THE LONG-RUNNING TELEVISION DRAMAS, "LAW AND ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT" AND "LAW AND ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT" HAVE USED NYCHA LOCATIONS FREQUENTLY.

In just 2005 alone, the two "Law and Order" series filmed scenes at Manhattan's Carver Houses, Taft Houses, Fulton Houses and twice at Polo Grounds Houses. Fulton Houses also provided settings for the

(Continued on page 4)



UNDERCOVER Actors Richard Belzer (left) as Detective John Munch and Ice-T as Detective Odafin Tutuola star in *Law and Order, Special Victims Unit*, which sometimes films on NYCHA grounds. Photo courtesy of NBC Universal.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

BUILDING AN EVEN GREATER CITY



OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, I'VE MET AND TALKED WITH NEW YORKERS WHO PRACTICE EVERY RELIGION, SPEAK EVERY LANGUAGE, AND COME FROM EVERYWHERE ON EARTH. It's been the experience of a lifetime, not only because of the generous warmth — and advice — you've given me, but also because you've shared with me your deepest hopes and dreams. It's the enormous power of those dreams, over eight million of them, that gives our city its unique optimism.

On Inauguration Day in 2001, not long after the devastation of September 11th, I asked New Yorkers to keep faith in our common destiny, to think big, dream big, and prepare to build an even greater city. We've been united through blizzards and a blackout, and, most recently, we've overcome a transit strike that could well have shut down our city. We have accepted the risks and requirements of the post-9/11 world without abandoning our devotion to our liberties or our zest for life.

We've learned — or re-learned — that in this, the most diverse of cities, we are one people, with one common destiny. That same spirit of unity must continue to guide us now.

We have gone through the tough times, and come out stronger.

Our population is at an all-time high. Crime is going down; student achievement is going up; jobs are being created; new homes and parks are strengthening and revitalizing our neighborhoods.

United, we will take on new challenges — with the passion and dedication that New York demands of us. United, we will succeed.

Think about what we have accomplished in the last four years.

Against all odds, we've made the safest big city in the nation even safer. Our most urgent challenge now is ending the threat of guns and the violence they do. We have a duty to rid our streets of guns, and punish all those who possess and traffic in these instruments of death. We will take our message to Albany, to Washington, and to every capital of every state that permits guns to flow freely across its borders. We will not rest until we secure all of the tools we need to protect New Yorkers from the scourge of illegal guns.

Working together, we've overcome the worst fiscal crisis in a generation. We made a fundamental choice to face up to the crisis, and master it. We've done more with less, and today our quality of life is better and New Yorkers are living longer. This is not the time to relax our vigilance, or to make the wrong choice of shifting our financial burdens onto the shoulders of our children.

City government can and must live within its means. And we will do so without abandoning the compassion that defines our city. We will care for the elderly, the homeless, and all those in need.

City government must also be the catalyst of opportunity in all five boroughs. Private enterprise, not make-work public programs, always will account for New York's prosperity. The public sector's role is to create the conditions that foster private investment. That is why, from West Harlem to Jamaica, and from Hunts Point to Coney Island, we are building new parks, new homes, and new hope.

Staying united, we will pursue the most ambitious affordable housing initiative in New York's history. We'll encourage development where it's needed, and curb it where it's not.

At the beginning of my first term our city was caught in a deep national recession, and our economy was hemorrhaging jobs. Because we've stimulated growth in all five boroughs, today, by contrast, our economy is once again moving forward. But for too many in our city, opportunity is still elusive. And as long as that is true, this will not be the New York that we want it to be. Staying united, we will create more jobs for all New Yorkers.

Over the next four years, we will aggressively foster small business start-ups and expansion, and promote our growth industries — from tourism, to the arts, to the life sciences. We will also step up our efforts to move thousands more New Yorkers from the dependency of welfare to the dignity of work.

We've started to fulfill our most important obligation: to our children. To give them the future they deserve, we've established accountability and set standards in our public schools. We've begun to ensure all our students the first-rate education that is their fundamental civil right.

Over the course of my first term, I've learned even more what connects all of us to New York so deeply. It's possibility. It's opportunity. It's ambitions as bold as seeing your name in lights on Broadway, and as simple and universal as creating a good home and a better life for your children.

Michael R. Bloomberg

PROFILE

GRAPHIC ARTIST AND RESIDENT MARTIN MEDINA IS INSPIRED BY A LOVE OF ART AND COMMUNITY

By Heidi Morales

MARTIN MEDINA'S LIFE REVOLVES AROUND ART AND COMPUTERS AND SOMETIMES EVEN THE SPOKEN WORD. HE'S AN ARTIST IN THE TRUEST SENSE. "Think to inspire" is the motto he lives by and that's what he spends most of his "downtime" doing — inspiring youth to do better, be better and create.

Mr. Medina is the graphic artist for the Special Events Unit in Community Operations' Department of Citywide Programs. Although he's new at his post, he's not new to the New York City Housing Authority; in fact, he's lived at the Smith Houses on the Lower East Side for almost 20 years and has worked at NYCHA for three-and-a-half years.

"I got in through the mail room," Mr. Medina explained. Several months after taking a civil service test for a stock worker position he was hired by NYCHA. "I was working in the mail room for three years and everybody started seeing the work I could do — my portfolio — and from there I was in a resident art show and everybody saw my graphics and that's really the doorway that led me in here." Now instead of distributing the mail Mr. Medina is sharing ideas and conveying messages through his digital creations.

Mr. Medina takes pride in creating his work from scratch. "I don't use clip art. I create everything myself using Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. I use QuarkXPress to do layouts but I find it graphically impaired... it doesn't give me the ability to manipulate the graphics. If something's off on a flower I design, I go all the way back to the beginning and do it all over again."

Although Mr. Medina strives for flawlessness when it comes to his work, he doesn't consider himself a perfectionist. "I know you're only as good as your last job, so everything I do I try to put out my best."

Mr. Medina said making the transition from "stock worker" in the mail room to being one of the go-to people for graphics at NYCHA has been a learning experience to say the least.

"Now when I wake up in the morning I'm like 'Oh man, I can't wait to get to work.' I want to work on this or that, I have a new idea." And this enthusiasm doesn't end at close of business. "Everything I do stems into



GRAPHIC GURU Martin Medina with samples of his work in his cubicle at 90 Church Street.

the evening because I'm thinking about it all the time and I'm on a computer all the time. As soon as I go home it's back on a computer. I wake up in the morning and I'm back on a computer, so, it's art all day." After-hours his artistic juices flow for a reward more noble than money — the good of our communities.

Mr. Medina belongs to a not-for-profit organization called Coalition of Artists for Progression and Education — CAPE — which brings art to community organizations and schools to teach children not only how to create art but how art can help them better themselves. CAPE has had exhibits at East-side High School, the YMCA in

Brooklyn, Bank Street College and the Clemente School on the Lower East Side. "Sometimes we have kids in the actual show [display their art] to show them that if they keep doing their art it's going to pay off in the long run."

Mr. Medina created a Rosa Parks piece, which was on display at the YMCA in Brooklyn and which CAPE plans to donate to the "Y." He's given a lecture at the Beacon Theatre on entrepreneurship and he's taught a poetry lesson at Seward Park High School. He says poetry is like a bottle washing up on the shore. "Whenever you have the opportunity to get your voice out

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS



AS WE CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT NYCHA AND ACROSS AMERICA, WE UNDERSTANDABLY FOCUS ON GREAT HISTORICAL FIGURES, EXTRAORDINARY PERSONALITIES. We remember that we owe Black History Month to a Harvard scholar named Carter G. Woodson, the son of former slaves who spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines. Dr. Woodson instituted the first Black History Week in 1926 to ensure that Black History would be accurately documented and disseminated.

We remember the lifetime achievements of African-Americans who were pioneers, the first in their fields. Pioneers such as Benjamin Banneker — often considered to be the first African-American scientist, he published six annual Farmers' Almanacs from 1792 to 1797. We remember more famous pioneers including public officials from Shirley Chisholm to Colin Powell and athletes from Jackie Robinson to Tiger Woods. And of course, we pay tribute to the towering champions of freedom from Frederick Douglass to Harriet Tubman, who blazed trails wide enough for millions to follow. This year, however, one individual stands out not really for what she did but for what she refused to do.

Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat.

When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955, she changed the world. With one small, quiet, one might even say polite act of courage Rosa Parks made history. She was arrested. Her arrest triggered a 381-day boycott of the Montgomery bus system by African-Americans that was organized by a then unknown 26-year-old Baptist minister, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. The bus boycott catapulted Reverend King to the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement and led to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in November 1956 that segregation on transportation is unconstitutional. And Rosa Parks lived the remainder of her life in relative privacy, corresponding, lecturing, preparing meals, going to church, and visiting hospitals.

To be sure, Ms. Parks remained active in fighting racial injustice. She and other members of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development created a special program called Pathways to Freedom, for young people ages 11-18. Children in the program travel across the country tracing the Underground Railroad, visiting the scenes of critical events in the Civil Rights Movement and learning aspects of America's history.

Nevertheless, Rosa Parks always remained soft-spoken, dignified and much more of a private rather than a public personality, spending her last years living quietly in Detroit, where she died last October at the age of 92.

Yet there was one more pioneering achievement for Rosa Parks. Her casket was placed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol for two days, so that the nation could pay its respects to the woman whose courage had changed the lives of so many. Rosa Parks was the first woman in American history to lie in state at the Capitol, an honor usually reserved for presidents of the United States.

One of the things I enjoy most as Chairman is visiting developments and getting to know the many NYCHA residents who make extraordinary contributions in what seem to be ordinary ways: by mentoring children, visiting the homebound, showing your concern for the well-being of your neighbors, and sharing friendships in good times and through rough patches. Rosa Parks was by trade a seamstress, not what one might envision as a hero, but like so many NYCHA residents, what a difference she made.

Tino Hernandez

BOROUGH DIGEST

The Bronx:

In collaboration with Throggs Neck Houses Resident Association President Dwayne Jenkins, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. has secured funding for exterior lighting at Throggs Neck Houses. Carrion's office will contribute \$43,000 for 2006 and \$75,000 for 2007 for exterior lighting at the development. Throggs Neck Houses and Throggs Neck Addition comprise 33 residential buildings on approximately 42 acres of land.

Brooklyn:

On February 14th, 55 seniors from NYCHA developments in Coney Island including: Surfside, Gravesend, O'Dwyer, Carey Gardens and Coney Island Houses, will gather at the Surfside Community Center for a Senior Club Valentine's Luncheon. Not only will these seniors enjoy a delicious lunch, they will also be entertained, play games and win prizes.

Manhattan:

The Manhattan North Council of Presidents, led by Barbara G. Barber of Drew-Hamilton Houses, held its Second Awards Ceremony for Resident Participation for Leadership Training at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building on 125th Street on January 21st.

Queens:

Queens Community Operations, in collaboration with the NYPD, held its Second Annual "Stop The Violence" Basketball League Championship Games at the Hammel Houses Community Center on January 7th. Over 215 youth from Far Rockaway and Jamaica participated in the program this year in three divisions: ages 11 and under; ages 13 and under; and ages 15 and under. Players also participated in a series of workshops led by NYPD Youth Officers promoting community involvement, gang and drug prevention.

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DEBORAH'S DIARY By Deborah Williams



Protector — Herma Williams is not Wonder Woman or Superman but she is a champion and advocate for public safety. Herma has been a resident of Pelham Parkway Houses in the Bronx for the past 50 years. She gets a giggle in her voice when she says, "I have lived here all my life. I was born here and I have raised my

daughter here too." It wasn't until a group of Mary Williams' (Herma's mother) friends approached Herma on the subject that she actually decided to do something about public safety. Mary's friends believed that Herma would be the ideal person to address resident safety issues because she seemed to care a lot about others. In fact, when Herma's daughter Christine Williams was in public school and wanted to join the Girl Scouts but couldn't because there was no one to be a troop leader, she came home and asked her Mom to lead the troop. "Why me?" said Herma. "Doesn't one of the other mothers want to manage the troop?" "No, no Mom. We want you," answered Christine. So Herma became the troop leader of Brownie Troop 1-367. After working with the Brownies Herma wanted to do more to help the community. In 1994, she ran for the office of Tenant Association (TA) President of Pelham Parkway Houses and won. As TA President, she began to take a stand against drugs and violence in her community, focusing on senior safety. Through local meetings held by the 49th Precinct Community Council she was able to voice resident safety issues and has been instrumental in making Pelham Parkway Houses and its resident safe. On November 18, 2005 at the 49th Precinct Annual Fellowship Breakfast, the Precinct's Commanding Officer Captain George Smith and Community Council President Joe Thompson presented Herma with the Tom Twyman Citizen Award for being a true champion and advocating for public safety. Senator Jeffrey Klein also presented Herma with the Tom Twyman Certificate of Recognition for her outstanding work and dedication to the community. The event was covered by the *Bronx Times-Reporter* and appeared in its November 23, 2005 issue. Herma hopes to create a training center for residents to participate in ARISE (Assisting Residents in Services and Education), an organization she created. ***Sometimes it takes just one committed person to bring about significant change in a community. To the Pelham Parkway community, Ms. Williams, you are indeed that person. I extend my congratulations to you for being the recipient of the Tom Twyman Award and wish you success on your future endeavors.***

Update — In my November 2005 "Diary" I congratulated 20 NYCHA residents who graduated from a 12-week Introduction to Computers course. Well, since then 15 of the 20 have gone on to take the Intermediate Computer Training course, made possible by a collaboration between the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) and NYCHA's Department of Resident Employment Services (RES). Classes were held in the morning and afternoon for 12 weeks. The course covered Desktop Publishing, Excel, Powerpoint and E-mail Access. On December 19, 2005 the 15 students along with six others graduated from the Intermediate Computer Training course. The graduates are: Joan Diaz, Jacques Pavilus, Henry Splliers, Ndiaye Madieng and Kante Amhood of Carver Houses; Yadira Santos, Angela Scales, Peggy Taylor, Anna Rodriguez, and Antoinette Major of Johnson Houses; Marcus Asencio, Ralph Rodriguez, Paulette Massard, Rhonda Atlas, Jeanette Health, and Ursela Torres of Jefferson Houses; Lovey Murjenko and Jose Valentine of Washington Houses; Terrence Davis of Taft Houses; and Ann Ashwood of Lehman Village. On January 11, 2006 the Advanced Computer Training course began and all 21 graduates of the Intermediate course were registered to attend. ***Well, I am so proud of everyone. You have continued your education and gained useful computer skills that will lead you to the path of a great job. I look forward to hearing about your success in the Advanced Computer course. Congratulations and I wish you continued success!***

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 better yet, you can e-mail me at: williamd3@nycha.nyc.gov. 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.

CALL 311 FOR ALL CITY NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES

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 December 29, 2004 and January 5, 12, and 19, 2005. **Please note: These exclusions are based on NYCHA's Administrative Hearing Process and should not be confused with the recently implemented Trespass Policy under Mayor Bloomberg's Operation Safe Housing Initiative.**

**REMEMBER,
IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ON
HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL
YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR NYCHA'S SPECIAL
INVESTIGATIONS UNIT AT (212) 306-8595.**

Prohibited as of December 29, 2004

Gary Coleman	Case 3661/04 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 1810 Watson Avenue, Bronxdale Houses, the Bronx.
Mark Green Samuel Green	Case 10370/04 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 444 Beach 54th Street, Ocean Bay Apartments, Far Rockaway.
Alton Garner III	Case 10430/04 formerly associated with the eighth floor of 81 North Portland Avenue, Whitman Houses, Brooklyn.
Terrance Johnson	Case 10430/04 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 1348-50 Webster Avenue, Butler Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of January 5, 2005

Jimmy Farris	Case 10463/04 formerly associated with the nineteenth floor of 456 Dekalb Avenue, Lafayette Gardens, Brooklyn.
Tyrone Winslow	Case 10599/04 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 1270 Redfern Avenue, Redfern Houses, Far Rockaway.
Danny Caraballo	Case 10625/04 formerly associated with the first floor of 90 Amsterdam Avenue, Amsterdam Houses, Manhattan.
Richard Poche	Case 10643/04 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 484 East Houston Street, Wald Houses, Manhattan.
Juan Jiggetts	Case 10671/04 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 288 10th Avenue, Elliott Chelsea Houses, Manhattan.
Yidamis Ferdinand Yidamis Erdinand	Case 10672/04 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 2949 8th Avenue, Polo Grounds Towers, Manhattan.
Hector Gonzalez	Case 10501/04 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 16 Mill Street, Red Hook East Houses, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of January 12, 2005

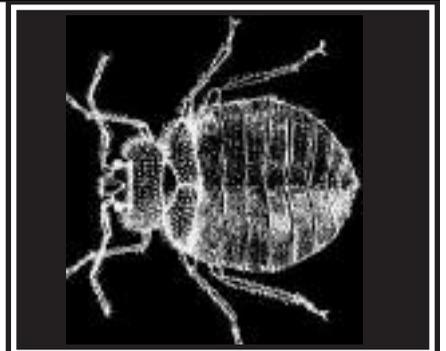
Adam Concepcion	Case 10663/04 formerly associated with the first floor of 535 East 143rd Street, Betances Houses, the Bronx.
Jacquelyn Skipper	Case 10719/04 formerly associated with the second floor of 21-09 35th Street Avenue, Ravenswood Houses, Queens.
Phillip Moreira	Case 10760/04 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 3550-60 Bivona Street, Boston Secor Houses, the Bronx.
Norman Robinson	Case 10747/04 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 2410 Eighth Avenue, Saint Nicholas Houses, Manhattan.
Tamara Moody	Case 10795/04 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 41-01 10th Street, Queensbridge North Houses, Long Island City.
Anthony Sandoval	Case 3036/04 formerly associated with the tenth floor of 235 Hoyt Street, Gowanus Houses, Brooklyn.
Brian Grays Ernest Huey	Case 10806/04 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 1710 Randall Avenue, Soundview Houses, the Bronx.
David Torres	Case 10803/04 formerly associated with the first floor of 113 Ten Eyck Walk, Williamsburg Houses, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of January 19, 2005

Jason Serrano Jonathan Serrano Walter Serrano	Case 10848/04 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 212 Broad Street, Stapleton Houses, Staten Island.
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Stop Bed Bugs Safely

Last winter, the *NYCHA Journal* ran its first article on bed bugs. These nocturnal parasites have resurfaced in New York City. They only come out at night and they can be hard to detect, but once you have them you will need a NYCHA exterminator to get rid of them. Find out what you need to know...



What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on human blood. They are usually active at night when people are sleeping. Adult bed bugs have flat, rusty-red-colored oval bodies. About the size of an apple seed, they are big enough to be easily seen, but often hide in cracks in furniture, floors, or walls. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell and become brighter red. They can live for several weeks or months without food or water.

What does a bed bug bite feel and look like?

Most bed bug bites are initially painless, but later turn into large, itchy skin welts. These welts do not have a red spot in the center like flea bites.

Are bed bugs dangerous?

Although bed bugs are a nuisance, they are not known to spread disease.

How does a home become infested with bed bugs?

In most cases, people carry bed bugs into their homes unknowingly, in infested luggage, furniture, bedding, or clothing.

How do I know if my home is infested with bed bugs?

You may notice itchy skin welts. You may also see the bed bugs themselves, small bloodstains from crushed insects, or dark spots from their droppings. It is often hard to see them because they hide in or near beds, other furniture, and in cracks.

What should I do if I find I have bed bugs?

If you discover that you have bed bugs, contact your Management Office immediately, so that a work ticket for a visit by a NYCHA exterminator can be filled out: Remember, residents of Queens and Staten Island should call the Centralized Call Center at: (718) 707-7771.

Treatment for bed bugs will be done in three phases:

- 1.) A NYCHA exterminator will inspect, make recommendations and schedule a date to treat the apartment. You will be advised to vacuum, wash, and remove all bedding so that the exterminator can treat thoroughly. A plastic cover is advised for affected mattresses. Affected clothes and items from the floor should be placed in plastic bags, then washed in hot water.
- 2.) On the scheduled treatment date, the exterminator will thoroughly treat all visibly affected areas, vacuum mattresses and the edges of carpets. Closets and any other areas where bed bugs may be hiding will also be treated and vacuumed.
- 3.) The NYCHA exterminator will return to the apartment within ten days. S/he will then apply a follow-up treatment. The NYCHA exterminator will inform the residents if an additional treatment is necessary.

How can I keep bed bugs out of my home?

Wash clothing and bedding immediately after returning from a trip. Never bring used or discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs, or upholstered furniture into your home.

How can I keep my furniture from infesting someone else's home?

Never resell or donate infested furniture. If you throw infested furniture away, make it undesirable to others by cutting or poking holes in its upholstery or making it unusable. You should also notify your Management Office so that the mattress or furniture can be removed immediately from the garbage pick up area.

The above article was written by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) in collaboration with the New York City Housing Authority.

NYCHA In the Movies

(Continued from page 1)

feature film "The Interpreter," which starred Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn.

Thanks to the overall success of Mayor Bloomberg's "Made In New York" incentive program for film and television production in New York City, 2005 saw \$600 million worth of new production business in the city, creating jobs for more than 6,000 New Yorkers. As a direct result of Made In New York, over 250 independent and studio films and a lineup of over 100 new and returning television productions were shot in New York City's streets and studios last year.

The Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting is the first point of contact for a production company wishing to film on NYCHA property. It is there that the companies apply for

information and permits to film in public locations. A production using NYCHA buildings and grounds must then be coordinated with the Authority's Department of Public and Community Relations (PCR). PCR's Audio Visual Unit works to ensure that the film production is accommodated with little or no disruption of normal life for NYCHA residents.

NYCHA managers and superintendents make sure the spaces needed for filming are ready and caretakers may work late to help out.

Ravenswood Houses in Astoria, Queens was a setting for "Rescue Me," a dramatic series about the New York City Fire Department starring Denis Leary on the Fox Network. "Rescue Me" was also shot at Lower East Side II Houses in Manhattan.

Smith Houses in Manhattan has been popular among filmmakers because of its proximity to classic views of the East River Bridges and the New York skyline. The development was a recent location for a feature film entitled "A Crime," starring Harvey Keitel.

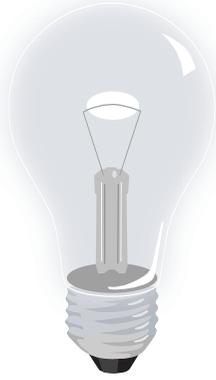
NYCHA rooftops are often the location for scenes using the backdrop of the city or as the point from which a long shot is executed, such as a shot of a bus driving across the Williamsburg Bridge in the film version of "Rent," which was shot from the roof of Baruch Houses last year.

Among other motion picture personalities who have worked on NYCHA locations are Sean Connery, who appeared in "Finding Forrester," which was shot for nearly a week at Jefferson

(Continued on page 10)

New York City Housing Authority Energy Saving Tips

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is asking residents to help save energy. Between 2002 and 2005, energy spending at the Authority has increased by an incredible 70%. You can help NYCHA reduce the impact of skyrocketing energy costs. By following these tips you will be able to use energy more efficiently, while staying safe and helping the Authority to save money on energy costs. If you are among the 16% of NYCHA families who pay their own utility bills, the money you save will be your own.



Heating – heat rises but costs don't have to!

- Never use your stove/oven to heat your home! Stoves and ovens were not designed for heating rooms. Using them for this purpose can cause a fire, or can reduce oxygen levels and produce deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- Use natural light. It's free. Open drapes or blinds and let the sunlight heat the room.
- Don't cover the radiator with drapes because the heat will be trapped behind the drapes.
- Use portable electric space heaters sparingly. They can add 25 cents to NYCHA's energy costs for each hour of use. Eight hours use costs \$2.00. If you multiply this by 30 days, that's \$60.00 a month.

Lights – new technology is lighting the way toward savings!

- Always turn off the lights when no one is in the room.
- Replace old incandescent bulbs with new compact fluorescents. You'll get the same amount of light and help the Authority save money.
- Don't light a room too brightly. To decide how much is too much, try turning off a table lamp or unscrewing a fluorescent bulb and see if you even notice it.
- Dust light bulbs and fixtures to improve light output.

Water

- Report leaking faucets as quickly as possible; a steady drip of hot water wastes gallons per month as well as the energy required to heat it.
- Don't run the water while shaving, washing your hands or brushing your teeth. Faucets use two to three gallons a minute.
- Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket and don't flush it unnecessarily.

Appliances

- Purchase appliances with the Energy Star label. Energy-efficient appliances save energy and money!
- Be sure your range is turned off immediately after use.
- Avoid opening the oven unnecessarily to check on food. Each time you open the oven door, the baking temperature drops 25-50 degrees.
- Be sure the refrigerator door is always shut tightly.
- Keep your refrigerator clean; it will run more efficiently.
- Always cover foods or liquids in refrigerators. This will keep the food from drying out and the refrigerator will not have to work as hard to remove excess moisture.
- When appropriate, microwave foods instead of using a stove-top. It saves time and energy.

BOROUGH DIGEST

(Continued from page 3)

Staten Island:

City Councilman Mike McMahon, who represents the North Shore, joined NYCHA General Manager Douglas Apple, Assistant Deputy General Manager Hugh Spence, and Community Operations Borough Director Carl Billington to welcome more than 100 seniors to the West Brighton Senior Center which reopened on January 9th, after being closed for renovation. The \$3.3 million renovation increased the size of the Center, which will also serve area youth, by half its original size. An official ribbon-cutting ceremony is slated for March.



NYCHA HERO FELIX VAZQUEZ

(Continued from page 1)

Tracinda Foxe, threw her two-month-old Eric Guzman, out the window.

Mr. Vazquez, who is a catcher on the NYCHA softball team, ran to the rescue. "She was panicking, and she just said, 'Catch my baby, catch my baby,'" said Mr. Vazquez. "But she didn't let it go straight, she just threw him. I had to jump over the gate and I caught the baby."

Once he caught the baby he noticed that it was not breathing so he gave it mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, which he learned years earlier as a lifeguard in the Bronx. After a few breaths the baby began to breathe on its own.

Within minutes FDNY firefighters D.J. Martin and Bobby Eustace burst into the burning apartment, gave Ms. Foxe fresh air and carried her to safety. Both mother and child were taken to Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, where they were treated and released.

"I said, 'God, please save my son,'" Ms. Foxe said. "I prayed that someone would catch him and save his life."

"He coughed and started yelling and crying," said Vazquez. "It's a miracle, just a miracle... and it's a beautiful thing." The father of three added, "I didn't think. I just reacted."

Ms. Foxe has asked Mr. Vazquez to be the baby's godfather and Mr. Vazquez has accepted.

The story of NYCHA's hero caught the attention of media around the world from the U.S. to Canada to Australia to Nigeria. Vazquez was kept busy as he appeared on the Today Show, Good Morning America, local television and radio programs and a special Saturday night appearance on Sabado Gigante, the international Spanish-language TV program where he was honored with a standing ovation and a special plaque. He was also honored when he was named "New Yorker of the Week" by NY1.

The Bronze Medallion is designated to be presented by the Mayor to those who have demonstrated exceptional citizenship and outstanding achievement. The recipients come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some are ordinary citizens while others are foreign dignitaries, superstar athletes, and film stars.

'HEAL THE WORLD' HOLIDAY CONCERT



The NYCHA Youth Chorus helps to 'heal the world' on December 15th at FIT.

By Allan Leicht

The NYCHA Holiday Concert 2005, entitled "Heal the World," enchanted a capacity audience in the auditorium of Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology on the evening of December 15th. Written and directed by Drama Consultant Jessie Saunders Petrus and with overall musical direction by Charles Carrington, the evening featured a reprise of "Reunion," a musical mystery play originally performed in September at NYCHA's Senior Festival. Aptly renamed "Holiday Reunion," the NYCHA Performing Arts Group romped through a kaleidoscopic dream-journey that paid homage to the inimitable character and history of New Orleans – its message as fresh in winter as it was in the fall.

NYCHA's musical forces were in full flourish, led by the NYCHA Symphony Orchestra under conductors Jack Jeffers and Lloyd Carter and the NYCHA Drum Ensemble from Brooklyn's Sumner Community Center. The La Guardia Senior Choir led by Jie Ling Gao, the NYCHA Youth Chorus under the direction of Larry Matthew and the Senior Chorus conducted by Carrie Jones Payne and Herold Nicolas spanned the vocal generations with an all-encompassing program celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Soloist Rebecca Lewis opened the second act with a soulful styling of Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria" and the entire performing ensemble numbering over 100 voices and instrumentalists raised the roof with a thunderous celebration in song with "Joy to the World."



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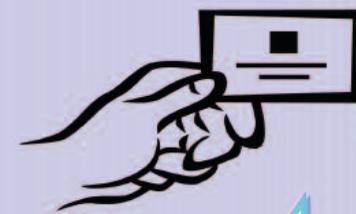
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Movies

(Continued from page 1)

Houses in Manhattan, and Spike Lee, who filmed a portion of a UNICEF AIDS awareness film at Gowanus Houses in Brooklyn. Brooklyn was also the scene for the feature film, "My Brother," a drama to be released in 2006, written and directed by Anthony Lover and starring Vanessa Williams and Nashawn Kearsse, which was filmed at Marcy Houses. Marcy was also a location for "99 Problems," a rap music video by Jay-Z, made in 2004.

Lillian Wald Houses on the Lower East Side was the location for scenes from a musical based on Beatles songs to be released in 2006. "Across the Universe" was directed by Julie Taymor, who directed the Broadway stage

production of "The Lion King." Commercials have also put NYCHA sites on screen, and many student films have been shot on NYCHA grounds.

However, perhaps one of the most appropriate productions to have been filmed at a NYCHA location was by a NYCHA resident, Selena M. Blake, who with filmmaker Gregory O. Larkin made "Queensbridge: The Other Side," a documentary about Queensbridge Houses in Queens, the nation's largest public housing development. Ms. Blake's goal was to depict the most positive aspects of life at Queensbridge.

Proceeds received for filming on NYCHA grounds have been used to fund scholarships for NYCHA residents who are studying the arts and related fields at City University of New York (CUNY) colleges.

Income Tax Credit

(Continued from page 1)

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.

NYCHA families with incomes under \$40,000 last year can get free help preparing their taxes at

many locations throughout the city, some of which are in NYCHA developments. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will work with residents to prepare basic income tax returns at no charge at VITA sites. Volunteers at these sites are trained by the Internal Revenue Service. To find the nearest location, or for further information, call 311.

Remember, the tax filing deadline is April 15th!

Black History Month Essay Contest

Who is Angela Davis?

Youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who are registered with a New York City Housing Authority Community Center in Brooklyn are eligible to participate in the Black History Month Essay Contest. If you're interested, pick up an application at your Community Center. The topic: "Who is Angela Davis?" The contest runs from January 11th to February 10th. First prize is an iPod Shuffle and second prize is a \$50 Best Buy Gift Certificate. Good luck!

GRAPHIC ARTIST AND RESIDENT MARTIN MEDINA

(Continued from page 2)



to people, there should be a message of encouragement or positive influence or even a joke to make someone laugh."

And, speaking of laughter, what does the "graphics guru" do for fun? "I go to open mike nights. I also perform poetry at CAPE. I paint, play football and basketball. I have a guitar. I just learned how to play the Fugees' "Ready or Not," "Lean on Me," and an Ozzy Osbourne song."

He's even helped build a home for Habitat for Humanity. "I wanted to help out the victims of Hurricane Katrina." So, on September 30, 2005 Martin and his friends went to Radio City Music Hall and built a frame for a house within two hours. "From 11:30 PM to 1:30 AM, after banging nails and lifting wood that late, I went home, woke up the next morning and came to work feeling blessed I was able to come to a job and go home to a bed."

Mr. Medina also spent three months volunteering as a flag football coach at his neighborhood's YMCA and also volunteers at the Seward Park Community Center. Every Monday for about two months now, he has been teaching youngsters about graphic art. "Right now I try to teach something that the kids want to learn, so, I teach them how to do mix-tape covers, how to do flyers,

something that they are interested in."

Mr. Medina was a little younger than some of his own students when he was bitten by the art bug. He recalls being awarded the prestigious "Best Artist Award" during his fourth grade graduation, a coveted prize amongst all the wannabe artists. He says that's when he knew he had talent although it had not been developed. Once in Junior High School he fought to be placed in the art program. He began studying architecture and commercial art and one teacher saw that this witty boy with a smile as genuine as it was wide had a natural talent and convinced Mr. Medina to take the entrance exam to the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan.

Mr. Medina attended St. Francis College in Brooklyn for two years until he got a big break working for a clothing line. "I ended up putting school to the side for a little while and started working for the clothing line full-time for a year. I went to Hong Kong, China and Taiwan." Mr. Medina says this is really where he learned the tricks of the trade. "After the clothing line I started working independently with a couple of photographers, record labels... I did a lot of freelance work."

His interest kept growing and he began to teach himself how to use different computer programs such as Adobe Photoshop; Adobe Illustrator; Adobe After Effects; QuarkXPress; Micro Media Flash; Micro Media Dreamweaver (breathe...); and eventually went back to school to get certified as a Graphics and Professional Development Programmer in 2001 from the Apple

Macintosh Learning Center in Manhattan. "That's really what gave me the edge," he said.

Overall, Mr. Medina says the key to his success has been time management, and a love for art and his community. "This is my opportunity to do graphics, do what I love and still reach the kids; that's what it comes down to at the end of the day." Passionate words from a man who never had what he offers neighborhood youth with such fervor. "When I was younger I really didn't look up to anybody; I always did my own thing."

Mr. Medina remembers a time when he needed direction, when he wanted to hear a kind voice but he faced the pressures and obstacles of growing up in the "hood" by himself. "I had to grow up really fast [but] I was focused," he said. "I had an outlet — art, poetry, sports." And that's what he wants to give kids, an outlet, and an option. "Nobody helped me when I was young so I want to help them. So, to give kids less of a struggle I teach them, this way I put them on the right path early. Like Gandhi said, 'You must be the change you want to see in the world,' that's what I'm trying to live by right now."



Brooklyn Observes World AIDS Day



The theme for World AIDS Day, December 1, 2005, was "Stop AIDS... Keep the Promise." Brooklyn teens helped raise awareness of AIDS and HIV in their borough through skits, dancing, and song at the Williamsburgh Community Center. More than 325 residents, most of whom were teens themselves, came to see the show. At left are dancers from Atlantic Terminal: Joshua Hidalgo, Will Hyman, Chauncey Coley, and Jonathan Hidalgo. Teens from the following centers participated: Roosevelt, Williamsburg, Gowanus, Atlantic Terminal, Bushwick-Hylan, Hope Gardens, Sheepshead-Nostrand, Carey Gardens, Albany and Farragut.



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