

## CHAIRMAN CONVENES ELEVATOR SUMMIT IN LONG ISLAND CITY



**SHARING RESPONSIBILITY** NYCHA Staff joined CCOP Chairs and a representative for Teamsters Local 237 at the Long Island City Elevator Training Facility to discuss elevator safety. Shown here, from left to right, are: NYCHA General Manager Douglas Apple, Manhattan North COP Chair Ethel Velez, Bronx North COP Chair Herma Williams, Manhattan South COP Chair Rose Bergin, Queens COP Chair Ann Cotton Morris, Deputy General Manager Hugh Spence, Brooklyn West COP Chair Raymond Ballard, Citywide and Brooklyn East COP Chair Reginald Bowman, NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales, Assistant Deputy General Manager Brian Clarke, Brooklyn South COP Chair Rosia Wyche, Deputy Assistant Director Domenico Vitauli, Teamsters Local 237 Secretary Treasurer Rubin Torres, Deputy Director Mike Abruzzo, Bronx South COP Chair Joanne Smitherman, Deputy Director John Ashton, Emergency Services Director Conrad Vazquez, Deputy Director Luis Ponce and Deputy Director Edwin McDonald. **See pages 10 and 11 for full story.**

## You Can Now Make Your Rent Payment By Phone

ADDING TO THE LIST OF RENT PAYMENT OPTIONS MADE AVAILABLE TO NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA) RESIDENTS, RESIDENTS CAN NOW PAY THEIR RENT OVER THE PHONE FOR A SMALL CHARGE OF JUST \$1.00. The payment will be electronically transferred from a resident's checking or savings account and credited to their NYCHA account on the same day if the call is made before 6:00 PM, or on the following business day if the call is made after 6:00 PM. Payments made on weekends or holidays are credited the next business day. Just call (866) 942-3104 toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to make a payment.

"NYCHA is committed to providing residents with more options and greater flexibility to pay rent through a variety of means. This is another initiative aimed at improving customer service," said NYCHA Deputy General Manager Felix Lam.

To utilize this service, residents must have a checking or savings account. You will need your checking or savings account number, and your nine-digit bank routing number, which is located on the bottom left side of your checks.

*(Continued on page 6)*



**NEW YORK'S FINEST** NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales addresses new Housing Bureau Police Officers at the New York Hall of Science shortly after their graduation.

## Chairman Morales Addresses New Officers

By Eileen Elliott

NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA) CHAIRMAN RICARDO ELÍAS MORALES ADDRESSED 128 NEW HOUSING BUREAU POLICE OFFICERS AT THE NEW YORK HALL OF SCIENCE IN QUEENS ON JANUARY 5TH, DURING THE OFFICERS' TWO-DAY ORIENTATION.

NYCHA's Bronx North Council of Presidents Chair Herma

Williams, who is Resident Association President for Pelham Parkway Houses, also spoke.

After congratulating the new recruits on their December 30th graduation at Madison Square Garden as part of a class of 1,129, the Chairman assured the officers that they will be working with the best police force in

the country at the best housing authority in the country.

And the most recent crime statistics for New York City back the Chairman up. In December 2008, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly announced that crime dropped nearly 4% in New York

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DON'T FORGET TO FILE  
FOR THE EITC

**PAGE 5**  
THE BIRTH OF  
PUBLIC HOUSING



**PAGE 7**  
ARE YOU READY FOR THE  
DIGITAL TV TRANSITION?

**MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

**The 2009 State of the City**



I HAD THE PLEASURE OF OUTLINING MY STATE OF THE CITY AGENDA FOR 2009 AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE IN FLATBUSH LAST MONTH. It is an agenda that aims to preserve and enhance core services and quality of life while moving the City through the national financial downturn as quickly as possible. The focus is on three key areas: 1) creating jobs, 2) strengthening quality of life, and 3)

promoting even greater accountability and efficiency to ensure quality services for New Yorkers who need them now more than ever. Here are some highlights:

**Spurring and Supporting Job Growth**

Over the past seven years, my five-borough economic development plan has created hundreds of thousands of new jobs, fueled emerging industries like film and television and tourism, developed record levels of affordable housing, and rezoned almost one-fifth of the City to create economic opportunities for communities. With the national recession claiming jobs throughout the five boroughs, however, I have outlined a series of next phase strategies to create 400,000 new jobs over the next six years. The nine-point plan includes:

- Investing in new infrastructure;
- Diversifying the economy;
- Focusing on small business growth;
- Targeting tax relief to encourage new investment;
- Making it easier to do business with the City;
- Growing green jobs;
- Reconfiguring and expanding job training programs;
- Making work pay for low-income New Yorkers; and
- Keeping New York City the strongest financial capital in the world.

**Strengthening the Quality of Life in Our Neighborhoods**

The best thing that we can do for the economy and for every corner store in the City is continue to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. And make no mistake—we will!

**Safe streets:** To make America's safest big city even safer, the Police Department will target quality of life offenders, deploy cameras in the precincts with the highest murder rates, and use GPS technology to keep gang members out of public housing. Continuing as the nation's leader in the fight against terror, the City will deploy license plate readers at bridges and tunnels and the number of officers trained and equipped with heavy weapons to respond to simultaneous, multiple attacks will be increased.

**Green and more affordable neighborhoods:** To create affordable housing opportunities Citywide, work will begin on large-scale projects in Coney Island, Willets Point, and Hunters Point South. To ensure that every neighborhood has green and accessible open space, nearly 70 more school playgrounds will be opened to neighborhood kids, a new waterfront park will open on the Bronx River, and more than 100,000 new trees will be planted Citywide.

**Good schools:** To continue the Administration's efforts to reduce overcrowding and expand school choice, a record more than 50 new schools will open this year. To help parents easily find information about admissions, transportation, and other everyday matters, "P-311" will launch so that answers to parents' questions can be answered by simply calling 311. I have also called on the State to reauthorize legislation that made the mayor accountable for public schools.

**Stretching Every Dollar Further**

In addition, I have outlined a number of new initiatives to make government leaner and ensure that City agencies work harder for the New Yorkers who need them now more than ever. To cut agency costs, data centers will be consolidated and a regulatory review panel will be appointed to strip away rules that unnecessarily burden City agencies, consumers, and businesses. To ensure that vital services are provided as efficiently as possible to the people who need them, online forms will be activated for senior citizens and efforts to crack down on Medicaid fraud will be intensified.

New Yorkers have always rallied from every setback. We have always emerged even stronger than before. And now as one city, with one common destiny, we'll do it again. The best days for this great city, are still to come.

*Michael R. Bloomberg*

**THE FACES OF NYCHA**

**Meet Victor Gonzalez of Manhattan's Wise Towers**

By Ashley Grosso  
Intern

WISE TOWERS RESIDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT VICTOR GONZALEZ ESTIMATES THAT HIS \$900-PER-MONTH, THREE-BEDROOM APARTMENT IN THE RABBI STEPHEN WISE TOWERS ON MANHATTAN'S UPPER WEST SIDE WOULD COST HIM \$4,000 PER MONTH IF HE PAID THE MARKET RATE. The 57-year-old native New Yorker moved into the 19-story, 398-unit, State-built development on West 90th Street in 1972, the same year he started working for the United Parcel Service (UPS). He loves the neighborhood, and during our interview, mentioned that Babe Ruth was married in a nearby church, St. Gregory the Great.

A Vietnam veteran, Mr. Gonzalez describes himself as a "pleasant pain in the butt." In his position as Resident Association President, which he has held for the past eight years, Mr. Gonzalez does everything he can to improve his neighbors' quality of life—whether it's making sure repairs get done or traveling to Washington, D.C. or Albany to advocate for funding.

Mr. Gonzalez is also on the board of directors of the Goddard Riverside Community Center, located in the development, where he also enjoys playing dominoes with the senior citizens. And he sits on the Community Board for District #7, where he co-chairs the Housing Committee and serves as the liaison between the Board's Green Committee and NYCHA. He is just as comfortable answering a telephone call from his Council Member, Gale Brewer, as he is calling residents by name as they walk through the West Side Community Garden across the street from Wise Towers.

Mr. Gonzalez worked for UPS for 33 years. Before he retired, he ran a small international department whose main client was the United Nations. When packages got stuck in customs, he used his connections and reviewed the laws of the relevant countries to make sure the packages made it to their destinations. Other departments he worked for at UPS included accounting and finance, billing, damage control and customer service.

Not the type to stay at home after he retired, Mr. Gonzalez started getting involved with the community



**INVOLVED** Victor Gonzalez, Resident Association President of Wise Towers, with his wife of 31 years, Pura Mercedes Gonzalez, works to improve the quality of life of public housing residents.

when he saw that change had to come from the inside. "Public housing has its pitfalls like anything else," he said, "but you have to get involved to solve problems."

Mr. Gonzalez is not the only one in the household involved in the community. His wife of 31 years, Pura Mercedes Gonzalez, has worked for the Board of Education for 20 years at P.S. 84.

Mrs. Gonzalez, who grew up in a smaller apartment, said of their current home, "When I got my apartment I felt like we had a castle. It was beautiful, clean, fantastic, great. And here we are. We still live here."

Public housing has enabled the Gonzalez family to live comfortably while raising four daughters and helping three of them through college.

As he watched neighborhood children playing in a sprinkler, Mr. Gonzalez said he is trying to erase the stigma associated with living in public housing. "I enjoy living in public housing. This is a community within a community. Sometimes people look at public housing residents in a negative light. They don't know us. We're hardworking people. We pay our taxes; we've retired; we've raised our families here to be responsible citizens."

**Celebrate  
Black History Month!**

**The Housing Authority  
Journal**

**75**  
years  
of Public Housing  
in New York City

**ESTABLISHED 1970 • CIRCULATION 200,000**

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- Earl Andrews, Jr. ....Vice-Chairman
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- Deborah Williams.....Staff Writer
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**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

**NYCHA is Family**



NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA) RESIDENTS ARE PART AND PARCEL OF THE FABRIC OF NEW YORK CITY. Too often the media focuses on negative things that happen in NYCHA developments. Admittedly, crime does exist in public housing, as it exists in all parts of the City. But that's just part of the story. The more than 400,000 residents who make their homes in NYCHA developments form a very special kind of family. Where can

you read about the hundreds of thousands of upstanding citizens who live in NYCHA developments?

Well, one place is the *NYCHA Journal*. For example, on page 2, you can read about Wise Towers Resident Association President Victor Gonzalez and his wife Pura Mercedes Gonzalez. After a long career with UPS, Mr. Gonzalez, who is a veteran, has retired but he still remains very active in his community, working to make life better for his neighbors. After 20 years, Mrs. Gonzalez continues to work for the Department of Education; or look at "Deborah's Diary" and you can read about William Collier who works for FreshDirect.

Who lives in NYCHA's public housing developments? Everyone — your typical New Yorker, your typical family. NYCHA residents are children, teens, adults, and seniors. Residents work in factories, in schools, in the health care industry, in transportation, in the food industry and for City agencies. NYCHA residents keep this City going. There are many success stories — successes made possible by the fact that NYCHA has provided so many families with decent and affordable places to live.

We will continue to show "The Faces of NYCHA" in each issue of the *Journal* to counteract the negativity that is too often associated with public housing. When one in 13 New Yorkers either lives in a NYCHA development, or uses a Section 8 Leased Housing Voucher administered by NYCHA, you can be sure that whether you are a public housing resident or not, your life is touched by many public housing residents as you go about your day. And often enough, residents move on, out of public housing, providing an opportunity for someone else. Residents have become elected officials, journalists, authors, professional athletes, and famous musical artists.

NYCHA's communities provide special opportunities, whether recreational, educational, employment related, or cultural. Let's all work together to keep public housing strong in the coming year.

*Ricardo Elías Morales*

**Your Financial Health...**

*The article below was submitted by Carol O'Rourke, Executive Director of the Coalition for Debtor Education. It is the second in a series on financial fitness.*

**Your Credit Score and Why It Matters**

USING CREDIT WISELY CAN HELP YOU "BUILD CREDIT." When you need to buy a car or are ready to purchase a house you will have a credit report and score that shows that you are a responsible borrower — and that can save you money. In addition, landlords and employers often request a credit report for applicants.

The credit report is your credit history; it shows how many credit card accounts and loans you have and how well you pay your bills. Your credit score is based on information in your report. A score of 650 or higher is considered good; 720-850 is the highest, and can help you to negotiate a lower interest rate on your loan. If you have 620 or lower, you may be able to obtain a loan, but often at a more costly rate. The difference can be hundreds of dollars per month, thousands per year.

Your credit report includes personal information including your Social Security Number, current and former addresses, and employment history. All your major credit accounts and loans for at least the past seven years, your repayment history and the total amount of credit available to you are on your report. A bankruptcy will stay on your report for 10 years. Paying off a collection account or closing an account does not remove it from your credit report, but it is a step towards improving your credit score.

Credit reports are provided by three companies: Experian, Trans Union and Equifax. You are entitled to one free credit report per year from each company. See below for information on how to order your free credit report.

Review your report carefully. More than 75% of all reports have some errors. For example, your report may contain information about someone with a similar name. You can correct errors by contacting the credit bureau online or in writing.

Payments 30, 60 or 90 days late are highlighted and will reduce your credit score.

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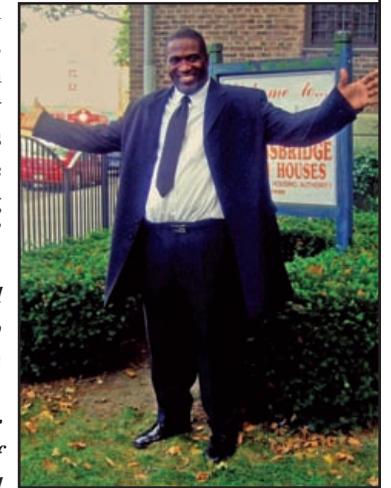
**DEBORAH'S DIARY**

*By Deborah Williams*



**He's A Hero** — William Collier, a resident of Queensbridge Houses, is a "FreshDirect Hero." You ask, "why?" Well, he is a dedicated member of his community. That's all it takes to be a FreshDirect Hero — dedication and hard work. Just four years ago, Mr. Collier was unemployed and searching for a job. That search

led him to the East River Development Alliance (ERDA) Workforce Development program. At ERDA, Mr. Collier met with a career counselor who told him about an available position at FreshDirect — the online gourmet food service. Today, Mr. Collier is proud to say that for the past four years he has been employed with FreshDirect where he has advanced to the management level. Mr. Collier will be featured on the FreshDirect website and local advertisements. In addition, FreshDirect will make a donation to the Bread of Life Food Pantry affiliated with Mr. Collier's Church, Center of Hope International, located in Long Island City. **Congratulations! There's an old saying that, "There is a hero in all of us" Well I guess you have found the hero in you. Wear the title "hero" with pride because you have earned it. Again, congratulations on your success and don't ever take off your hero cap because the world needs good guys like you!**



**You're Never Too Old To Learn** — The saying may be a cliché, but the "End of Term Celebration" for the graduates of the Technology Gateway Centers and the Computer Training Career Development Programs has proven the cliché to be true. These programs are made possible by a collaboration between NYCHA and City College, with classes at 15 NYCHA Community Centers.

Courses were open to NYCHA residents ages 13 and older, including seniors, who, according to Educational Services Program Manager D'Andra VanHeusen, "were a positive force with a dynamic spirit." The courses provided between 60 and 160 hours of instruction and were held during the day and in the evening, making it possible for working adults to gain the skills needed for career advancement. Not only did the programs help adults and seniors overcome their fear of computers, they also taught youth and adults basic skills, including navigating the Internet. And there was a GED component for youth interested in earning their GEDs.

The celebration took place on December 18th at the Manhattanville Community Center, where participants received certificates of completion and shared personal stories about the benefits of their experience. A total of 117 residents from both programs received a Microsoft Office 2003 Certificate of Achievement. Of the total 117 residents who participated, 45 were seniors. Thirty students who registered for the GED classes qualified to take the GED Predictor exam in December, a prerequisite for taking the actual GED exam last month.

**Good Luck everyone! Congratulations to participants residing in the Wagner, Pelham, Astoria, South Beach, Seth Low, Sheepshead, Surfside Gardens, Manhattanville, Drew Hamilton, Adams, Bushwick and Sumner Houses on your success. And to all the senior participants — congratulations for having the courage to learn about the Internet! You will now be able to access a world of useful information. Again congratulations to all**



Seniors with their Certificates

N Y C H A  
**YOUTH CHORUS**  
A U D I T I O N S

WE ARE LOOKING TO AUDITION NEW MEMBERS  
DURING OUR RECRUITMENT DRIVE.

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TO DEVELOP YOUR MUSIC SKILLS, GIVE US A CALL,  
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**TAFT HOUSES**  
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AUDITIONS ARE OPEN TO  
BOYS AND GIRLS FROM  
12 TO 19 YEARS OLD

Community Operations  
Department of Administration

## THE NYCHA NOT WANTED LIST

In this issue we continue publishing the names of individuals who have been permanently excluded from our public housing developments. The purpose of this list is 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. What follows is a partial list of the people excluded after hearings were held on December 24 and 31, 2008 and January 7 and 14, 2009. For a full list of the "Not Wanted" visit NYCHA's website at [nyc.gov/residentscorner](http://nyc.gov/residentscorner). **Please note: These exclusions are based on NYCHA's Administrative Hearing Process and should not be confused with the Trespass Notice Program 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 24, 2008

Kendale Robinson Donald Watson	Case 8410/08 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 772 Henry Street, Red Hook East Houses, Brooklyn.
Christopher and Marion McCaa	Case 85509/08 formerly associated with the second floor of 720 Kingsborough 7th Walk, Kingsborough Houses, Brooklyn.
Gregory Massey	Case 8552/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 90 Amsterdam Avenue, Amsterdam Houses, Manhattan.
Johnathan Galloway	Case 7585/08 formerly associated with the sixteenth floor of 305 Livonia Avenue, Tilden Houses, Brooklyn.
Brandon Griggs	Case 2459/08 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 390 Sutter Avenue, Van Dyke Houses, Brooklyn.
William Jamison Shawn Jamison	Case 5660/08 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 50-20 31st Avenue, Woodside Houses, Queens.
Rashaun Moore	Case 8375/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 1000 Trinity Avenue, Forest Houses, the Bronx.
Tasheam Jackson	Case 9379/08 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 106-12 Farragut Road, Bruekelen Houses, Brooklyn.
Robert Bynum	Case 8374/08 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 2160 Seward Avenue, Castle Hill Houses, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of December 31, 2008

Darell Jenkins	Case 8578/08 formerly associated with the third floor of 1368 Webster Avenue, Butler Houses, the Bronx.
Johnny Vives Michael Cooke	Case 8647/08 formerly associated with the tenth floor of 953 DeKalb Avenue, Roosevelt Houses, Brooklyn.
Maliska Blyden Gregory Lavan	Case 8639/08 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 1348-1350 Webster Avenue, Butler Houses, the Bronx.
Pedro Geraldino	Case 8594/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 1061 Myrtle Avenue, Sumner Houses, Brooklyn.
Vanessa Morales	Case 8694/08 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 220 East 102nd Street, Washington Houses, Manhattan.

### Prohibited as of January 7, 2009

Leroy Simmons	Case 8762/08 formerly associated with the second floor of 1102 Longfellow Avenue, Murphy Houses, the Bronx.
Ronnell Madison	Case 8755/08 formerly associated with the seventeenth floor of 157 Belmont Avenue, Seth Low Houses, Brooklyn.
Luis Pastor	Case 8100/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 1672 Ralph Avenue, Glenwood Houses, Brooklyn.
Manuel Andino	Case 8809/08 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 325 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.
Shakeel Walker	Case 8565/08 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 1736 Ralph Avenue, Glenwood Houses, Brooklyn.
Thomas O'Neil	Case 8835/08 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 192 Sands Street, Farragut Houses, Brooklyn.
Jean Pierre Graham	Case 8846/08 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 2356 Bragg Street, Nostrand Houses, Brooklyn.
Daryl Bullock	Case 8845/08 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 2101 Madison Avenue, Lincoln Houses, Manhattan.
Octavious Williams	Case 9380/07 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 2352 West 8th Street, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.
Anthony Williams	Case 8781/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 546 Flushing Avenue, Marcy Houses, Brooklyn.

### Prohibited as of January 14, 2009

Darrel Lee	Case 8885/08 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 45 Warren Street, Stapleton Houses, Staten Island.
Steven Givens	Case 8588/08 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 160-170 Madison Street, Rutgers Houses, Manhattan.
Devon Davis	Case 8912/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 470 DeKalb Avenue, Lafayette Houses, Brooklyn.

## It's tax time. Go get your EITC refund!

Tax season is here once again – which means that you could be eligible for tax credits and free or low-cost tax preparation. Your family could be eligible for up to \$6,500 with the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). You might also benefit from the New York City Child Care Tax Credit and other tax credits for parents, which could add up to an even bigger refund. **Call 311 or visit [nyc.gov/ofe](http://nyc.gov/ofe), when you receive your W-2 form(s) to learn more about your eligibility for tax credits and to find a convenient location near you that prepares taxes for free or for just \$20.**



## NYCHA BUILDING ENTRANCE DOORS AND INTERCOM SAFETY

Note: This article is part of an ongoing awareness campaign to encourage residents to report conditions that need to be addressed in their developments.

### Building Entrance Doors

The building entrance door is the first line of safety and security for NYCHA residents and guests. Proper working front entrance doors enhance security and keep unwanted persons from entering your building. If either the building entrance door or its locking mechanisms are malfunctioning, building security could be compromised. The following conditions should be reported immediately to the Centralized Call Center (CCC) at (718) 707-7771:

- Door does not lock
- Door cylinder is loose/damaged/missing
- Key gets stuck in door lock cylinder
- Electro-magnetic lock is "buzzing" and not locking
- Loose or missing parts, e.g., exit button, magnet, door glass
- Obstructions inserted in the door to keep it open, e.g., rocks, sticks, tape, debris

### Intercoms

The intercom system is the communication method that visitors must use when visiting your apartment. If you have a visitor they must call your apartment through the intercom service from outside the building entrance. The intercom provides you with the security of only allowing persons you know to enter your building. The following conditions should be reported to the Centralized Call Center at (718) 707-7771 immediately:

- Your apartment intercom device is damaged, has parts missing or is out of order
- The entire building's intercom system is out of order
- The building entrance intercom panel buttons are damaged
- The building's entrance intercom panel directory is damaged or missing
- If you use your telephone both to talk on your building's intercom system and to buzz open your building's entrance door, you have a telephone entry system
- If you discontinue phone service or switch to a cable or fiber optic system (FIOs) your intercom will not operate with the new system. You must call the Centralized Call Center (CCC) (718) 707-7771 to have your intercom connected to your new phone or cable service.

**If You See It,  
Report It!**

If you see conditions that need to be addressed in your development call NYCHA's Centralized Call Center.

The Centralized Call Center.  
Call Anytime - 24/7  
**718-707-7771**  
It's a shared responsibility.

Centralized Call Center

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT

**Don't give out personal information over the phone, Internet or by mail for anything suspicious or confusing. Shred or safely store documents containing personal information. Carry only needed credit cards and IDs. Watch cashiers when they are handling your credit cards.**



## SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARIES!



The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) commemorated the 60th Anniversary of **Amsterdam Houses** on Manhattan's Upper West Side on December 17, 2008. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg issued a proclamation declaring December 17, 2008, "Amsterdam Houses Day." Shown above, from left to right, are: Amsterdam Houses Manager Clarence Gordon, NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales, Superintendent Philip Morales, Resident Association President Margarita Curet, City Council Member Gail Brewer and a representative from Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal's office, David Weinberg. Just a few blocks from the Hudson River, Amsterdam Houses is bordered by West 61st and West 64th Streets, and Amsterdam and West End Avenues. The development is situated on over nine acres and consists of 13, six-to-13-story buildings with 1,084 apartments housing some 2,394 residents. The architects of Amsterdam Houses, Grosvenor Atterbury, Harvey Wiley Corbett and Arthur C. Holden, were among the country's best and worked on many of New York City's best loved buildings such as Rockefeller Center. Amsterdam Houses was the last of NYCHA's developments designed to reflect the surrounding street grid.

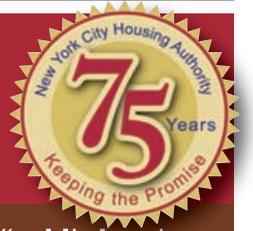


The New York Housing Authority (NYCHA) commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the **President Abraham Lincoln Houses** in the East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan on December 29, 2008. Bounded by East 132nd and 135th Streets and Fifth and Park Avenues, Lincoln Houses is situated on over 11 acres and consists of 14, six-to-14-story buildings with 1,283 apartments housing some 2,972 residents. Lincoln Houses is named for the 16th President of the United States, who lived from 1809 to 1865, and served as President from 1861 to 1865. Lincoln led the Union during the Civil War and issued the Emancipation Proclamation which led to the end of slavery. He is consistently ranked as one of the country's greatest presidents. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg issued a proclamation

(Continued on page 9)

## The Birth of Public Housing

This is the first of a special feature to run each month in the NYCHA Journal in 2009 in honor of NYCHA's 75th anniversary.



Over 70 years ago, New York City made the first crucial step in taking "public housing out of the realm of debate and into the realm of fact", as Langdon W. Post, first chairman of the New York City Housing Authority put it. Behind the planning and construction of the First Houses development in the Lower East Side, history shows us how committed groups and individuals can tackle a problem such as overcrowded, unsanitary tenement housing for poor and immigrant populations, and turn it into a successful experiment.

By the late 1800s, New York City had become the nation's foremost immigration and domestic migration destination. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants entered through New York's ports each year, and many stayed. Unprepared for such a rapid population boom, New York's existing housing stock would have to be hastily converted into multiple family dwellings, as landlords maximized their profits. Neither the older houses that were subdivided to take in more tenants, nor the new constructions, put up quickly and cheaply, provided running water or electricity. Light and ventilation were nonexistent in back rooms facing the inner courtyards, where waste disposal and lavatories were located and laundry was hung.

No one could turn a blind eye any longer. Critical studies by reformers and physicians showed that the cramped quarters and a lack of hygienic facilities in tenement buildings aggravated outbreaks of tuberculosis and other contagious diseases. In 1890, Jacob A. Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* exposed the tenement life to the general public and New York's Lower East Side became a focal point for activists, from social worker Mary Simkhovitch and nurse Lillian Wald of the Settlement House movement, to labor leader and Councilman B. Charney Vladeck, to First Lady and champion of human and civil rights Eleanor Roosevelt.

After several housing regulation laws and the momentum generated by progressive activists, the City of New York gained the very first housing authority in the country, invested with power by Mayor LaGuardia on January 20th, 1934. With its mission to root out the unhealthy, unsafe, and unappealing tenements and replace them with quality housing for the working poor, the New York City Housing Authority established a legacy of public housing in the United States of America.

Content provided by NYCHA's Department of Communications

Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia poses with prospective tenants (left) of the soon-to-be-built Vladeck Houses on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, November 22, 1939. Mary Simkhovitch, vice chair of the New York City Housing Authority (she was the founder of the settlement organization Greenwich House), is at right.



Many thousands applied for the limited number of apartments in public housing. Here people - note how they are dressed: everyone knew that the Housing Authority applied rigorous standards to prospective tenants - queued at the Housing Authority central office in Lower Manhattan to apply for apartments in the new projects, February 11, 1946

Photos and captions courtesy of LaGuardia Archives



First Houses, 1936

# Chairman Addresses Officers

City in 2008, marking the 18th straight year in which major felony crime had declined. Crime in public housing also dropped in 2008.

The Chair gave a brief history of the NYPD Housing Bureau, which started as a security force under Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1934. The security guards were eventually trained as police officers and by 1952, the Housing Police, an entity separate from the NYPD, was created. In 1995, under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the Housing Police merged with the NYPD, becoming the Housing Bureau as it exists today.

Chairman Morales' message focused on the core values the officers will bring to their jobs, as well as the outstanding training they've received at the Police Academy.

"The majority of NYCHA residents are nice, cool, decent people. The way you treat them is what they're going to

take back to their families," the Chairman said. He added, "The relationships you have with your community and with your partners are of paramount importance."

The Chairman praised Housing Bureau Police Chief Joanne Jaffe, calling her "an extraordinary leader," and noted Police Commissioner Kelly's detailed knowledge of Housing Bureau initiatives.

The NYPD Housing Bureau works closely with resident patrols, community groups and development managers to reduce crime and aggressively target violations and other conditions that detract from the quality of life at NYCHA developments. Officers are deployed from nine Police Service Areas, or PSAs, around the City.

Two notable initiatives are: the Housing Bureau's Operation Safe Housing and the NYPD's Operation Impact.

(Continued from page 1)

Operation Safe Housing, announced by Mayor Bloomberg in June 2004, is a four-pronged initiative, aimed at reducing drug dealing, sexual assault and gun violence. It includes a "No Trespass" policy in which a person who is 16 years old or older and is arrested for the sale of a controlled substance, or a felony on NYCHA property is issued a NYCHA Trespass Notice which excludes him or her from NYCHA property. If the person is then found on NYCHA property, he or she is arrested for trespassing (unless he or she is a resident.)

Under Operation Impact, specially designated Impact Zones in high crime areas are flooded with teams of police officers during the hours when crimes are most likely to occur. There are three designated Impact Zones in NYCHA developments.

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In addition, you will need your nine-digit NYCHA Tenant ID number which is printed on your Remittance Slip or Bank Acceptance Slip, and your five-digit zip code.

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Residents who have questions about the new phone payment system should feel free to contact the Lockbox hotline at (212) 306-6776.

(Continued from page 1)

Service is available in English and Spanish. NYCHA included a flyer announcing the new program with the February rent bill.

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## NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY Board Meeting Schedule

Notice is hereby given that the New York City Housing Authority's Board Meetings take place every other Wednesday at 10:00 A.M. (unless otherwise noted) in the Board Room on the 12th Floor of 250 Broadway, New York, New York. The meetings for Calendar Year 2009 are as follows:

February 4, 2009  
February 18, 2009  
March 4, 2009  
March 18, 2009  
April 1, 2009  
April 14, 2009 (Tuesday)  
April 29, 2009  
May 13, 2009  
May 27, 2009  
June 10, 2009  
June 24, 2009  
July 8, 2009  
July 22, 2009  
August 5, 2009  
August 19, 2009  
September 2, 2009  
September 16, 2009  
September 30, 2009  
October 14, 2009  
October 28, 2009  
November 10, 2009 (Tuesday)  
November 25, 2009  
December 9, 2009  
December 23, 2009  
January 6, 2010



Please note that these dates are subject to change. Any changes to the schedule above will be posted on NYCHA's Website at [nyc.gov/nycha](http://nyc.gov/nycha) and in the NYCHA Journal to the extent practicable at a reasonable time before the meeting.

These meetings are open to the public. Pre-registration of speakers is required. Those who wish to register must do so at least forty-five (45) minutes before the scheduled Board Meeting. Comments are limited to the items on the agenda. Speakers will be heard in the order of registration. Speaking time will be limited to three (3) minutes. The public comment period will conclude upon all speakers being heard or at the expiration of thirty (30) minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever occurs first.

For Board Meeting dates and times, and/or additional information, please visit our website at [nyc.gov/nycha](http://nyc.gov/nycha) or contact us at (212) 306-6088. Copies of the agenda can be picked up at the Office of the Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, New York, no earlier than 3 P.M. on the Friday before the upcoming Wednesday Board Meeting.

Any person requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the Board Meeting, should contact the Office of the Secretary at (212) 306-6088 no later than five (5) business days before the Board Meeting.



## THE DIGITAL TV TRANSITION

### Are You Ready?

### What You Need To Know About DTV

After February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations will broadcast only in digital. If you use "rabbit ears" or a rooftop antenna with your analog television you must take action to continue receiving television broadcasts after February 17, 2009.

There are three options to keep receiving television broadcasts after February 17, 2009:



Buy a converter box that will plug into your analog TV.



Buy a TV with a digital tuner.



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**NOTE:** NYCHA residents are prohibited from installing any television or satellite antennas on the window sill or at any place outside of the apartment such as window frames, window guards, or the brickwork on the exterior of the building without prior written consent from NYCHA.

- Certified TV converter boxes are expected to cost between \$40 and \$70.
- The Federal Government is offering U.S. households up to two \$40 coupons to help with the cost of certified converter boxes.
- Coupons are free, but supply is limited.
- Coupons expire after 90 days and cannot be reissued.
- Coupons will be mailed to you from the Federal Government. The coupon will look and work like a plastic gift card.

With your coupons you will also receive instructions for using the coupon, a list of coupon eligible certified converter boxes, a list of retailers where you can use the coupon, and frequently asked questions about the Program.

**i** For more information or to request your coupons, call 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY) visit online at: [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov), apply by mail at: P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208, or fax 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632).

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## Your Credit Score

(Continued from page 3)

Using more than 30% of the total credit available to you is considered risky and will begin to lower your score. Multiple, authorized checks on your credit can also lower your score because this could be a sign that you are looking to borrow even more.

Your race, religion, national origin, gender and marital status, age, occupation, and salary are not considered in your credit score. Additionally, some bills you pay, like rent, utilities or alimony, are not reported to the credit companies so unfortunately you are not recognized for paying these bills regularly and on time.

To raise your score, make bill payments as soon as possible. Most credit cards now only give you 25 days to pay, usually

beginning when they process the bill, not when you receive it. Do not add more credit cards. Having more credit available to you can lower your score. Pay down balances and do not borrow up to your credit limit.

Bottom line: when you seek a car loan or mortgage, a new apartment or job, a good credit score can help show that you are a responsible borrower, tenant or employee.

Note: Several companies offer to monitor your credit history and provide you with your credit reports for a fee. This is an expensive and unnecessary service because by law, you are entitled to one free credit report per year. The cost of ordering your credit score and additional reports is less than the fees charged by these companies.

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By Phone: 877-322-8228

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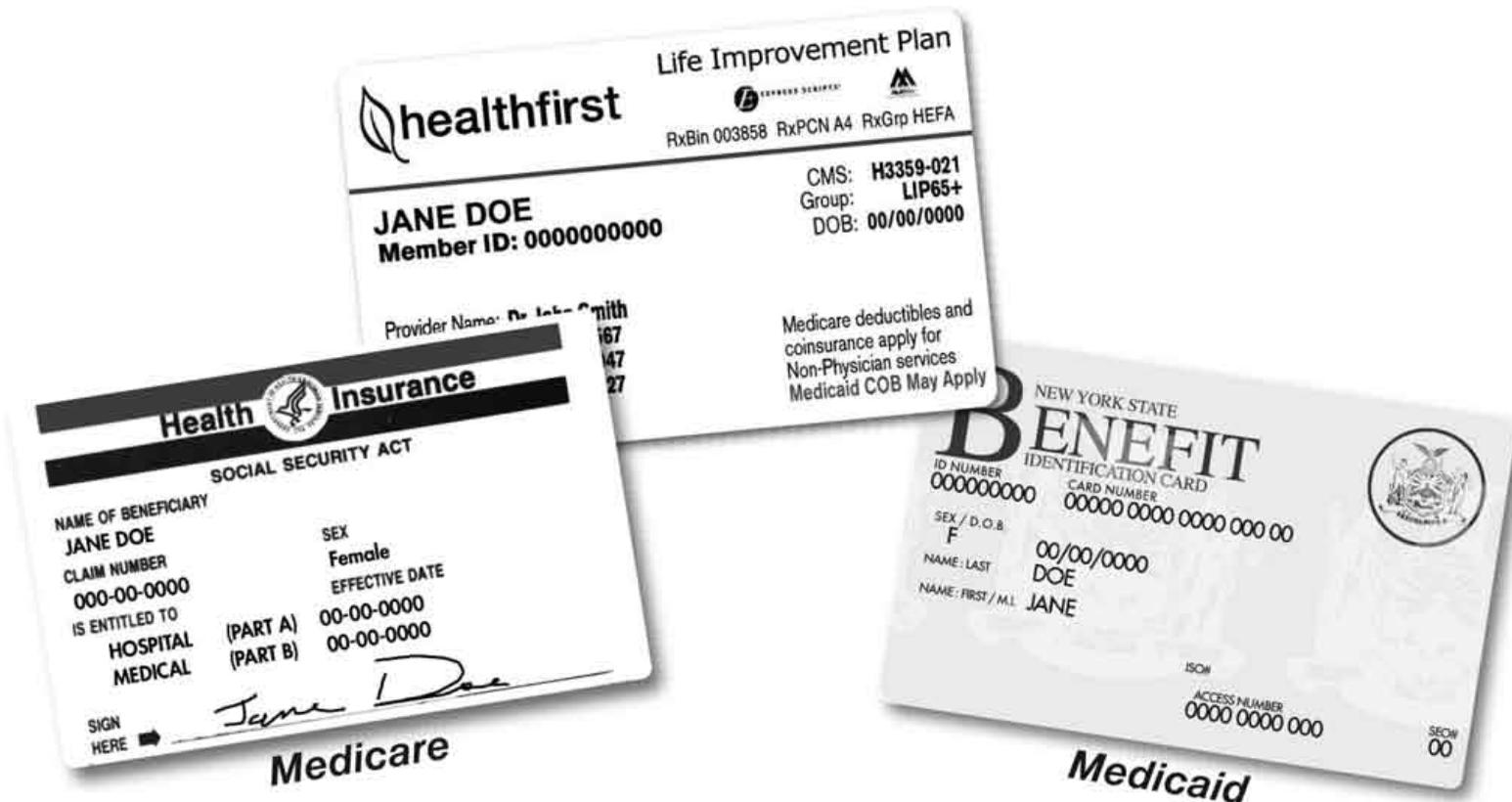
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## RENTAL UNITS AT MARKHAM NEARLY COMPLETE

By Eileen Elliott

THE FIRST 37 RESIDENTS OF THE EDWIN MARKHAM GARDENS' NEWLY COMPLETED RENTAL UNITS WILL BE MOVING IN SOON AS THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT'S \$60 MILLION NEW CONSTRUCTION NEARS COMPLETION. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) announced its plans to replace the West Brighton development and replace it with public/private affordable housing in 2004. The development had structural and other problems that no amount of renovation could adequately address. Ultimately, Markham Gardens will include 240 mixed-income rental units, 25 attached two-family homes available for homeownership, and a senior building.

The Markham Gardens redevelopment is part of NYCHA's collaboration with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's plan to expand affordable housing in the City.

Thirty-two of the 37 new renters slated to move in are former Markham residents and an additional five are NYCHA residents

who are transferring from other developments.

"Demolition of the outdated structures has given NYCHA the opportunity to provide new quality and affordable housing for many years to come," said NYCHA's Assistant Deputy General Manager for Development Ilene Popkin.

Markham Gardens was completed during World War II, in 1943, to serve as temporary housing for workers employed under defense contracts at nearby shipyards. The apartments were undersized by current standards and the buildings' wooden frames and stucco exteriors left them vulnerable to termite infestation and erosion by salt air.

The 360-unit development comprising 23 two-story buildings was never intended as permanent housing. Over time, NYCHA invested approximately \$15 million in renovations in attempts to maintain the original structures.

Because of the development's history, plans for its demolition drew the attention of the New

York State Housing and Preservation Office, which set a number of guidelines, including the condition that NYCHA create an historic exhibit of the original Markham Gardens.

Of the 240 mixed-income rental units, 150 are reserved for Section 8 voucher holders, and the remaining 90 are for residents with incomes between \$42,350 and \$85,080 for a family of four.

The final phase of the new development at Markham will be an 80-unit senior residence. The Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul, a national nonprofit, has received a Section 202 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct and operate the senior residence. One-quarter of the units will be set aside for eligible NYCHA residents.

The developers for the project are the Arker Companies, the Domain Companies and Neighborhood Housing Services of Staten Island.

### Are You a NYCHA Resident With Fond Memories to Share?

To commemorate our 75th Anniversary, the New York City Housing Authority is collecting photos and stories from residents about your experiences living in public housing. How has being part of a NYCHA community had a positive impact on your life or the life of a family member? Perhaps you attended a NYCHA-led job training workshop that launched your career; or maybe a caretaker, development manager or neighbor was instrumental in getting you help when you needed it most; maybe you bonded with a Housing Bureau Police Officer as a child and decided to become an officer yourself when you grew up? If you have fond memories to share, we want to hear them! We will post selected stories on the Residents' Corner of our Web site at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha) and publish one story each month in the NYCHA Journal. Please e-mail stories and photos to: [NYCHA75@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:NYCHA75@nycha.nyc.gov). If you don't have electronic files to send, you can mail to:

THE NYCHA Journal  
Department of Communications  
250 Broadway, 12th Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Don't forget to include your full name, age, the name of your NYCHA development and the number of years you've been living in public housing. Also please make sure your return address is on the envelope if you would like us to mail your photos back to you.

## SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARIES!

(Continued from page 5)

congratulating NYCHA and the Lincoln Houses on the development's anniversary and noting Lincoln Houses' invaluable contribution to the dynamic neighborhood of East Harlem. Shown in the photo on page 5, from left to right, are: NYCHA Vice Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Lincoln Houses Resident Association President Patricia Herman, the development's Manager Samuel Yohannan and Superintendent Fernando Manso.

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<b>Achievement First Bushwick Middle</b> 1300 Greene Ave. Accepting applications for grade 5	<b>Achievement First East New York</b> 557 Pennsylvania Ave. Accepting applications for grade K
<b>Achievement First Bushwick Elem.</b> 1137 Herkimer St. Accepting applications for grade K	<b>Achievement First Endeavor</b> 850 Kent Ave. Accepting applications for grade 5

**Community Information Sessions:**

<b>Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA</b> 1121 Bedford Ave. Tuesday, 1/27 @ 6 p.m.	<b>Coalition for Hispanic Family Services—Beacon Program for Arts and Leadership at IS 291</b> 231 Palmetto St. Saturday, 3/7 @ 10 a.m.
<b>Brownsville Public Library</b> 61 Glenmore Ave. Saturday, 2/28 @ 10 a.m.	

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# CHAIRMAN RICARDO ELÍAS MORALES NYCHA Citywide Council of Presidents Brings Fresh

By Howard Silver  
Editor, NYCHA Bulletin

THE CITYWIDE COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS (CCOP) AND A TEAMSTERS LOCAL 237 OFFICIAL ATTENDED A BRIEFING ON NYCHA'S ELEVATOR INITIATIVES AND TOUR OF THE ELEVATOR TRAINING FACILITY AT LONG ISLAND CITY ON JANUARY 8TH. The meeting was organized to provide resident leaders and the workforce with information about plans and efforts now underway to improve and modernize NYCHA's elevator fleet. NYCHA's 3,338 elevators—which make a total of 1.7 million trips each day—represent five percent of all of the elevators in the City and constitute one of the largest elevator fleets in the nation.

"I would like the CCOP to participate more in communicating our efforts to residents," Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales told the Chairs from NYCHA's nine COP districts, "and report to us their constructive concerns."

**"I would like the CCOP to participate more in communicating our efforts to residents, and report to us their constructive concerns."**

Chairman  
Ricardo Elías Morales

Responding in part to incomplete media reports on elevator outages, Chairman Morales pledged to "further the hard work on this issue that has already been done," and praised the Elevator Division's staff for "working day and night" to provide residents with safe and reliable elevator service.

"This issue didn't come from neglect. It comes from aging infrastructure, heavy use and sometimes vandalism," Chairman Morales noted. These issues must be resolved with NYCHA's limited staff and financial resources. Nonetheless, concrete solutions were put forward, and resident input on soliciting additional suggestions and support was welcomed.



(Left to right) Teamsters Local 237 Secretary-Treasurer Rubin Torres with Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales at NYCHA's Elevator Training Facility in Long Island City.

### Short- and Long-term Solutions

Short-term measures to improve elevator performance include increasing staff for elevator inspection and maintenance teams; enhancing their training; and targeting preventive maintenance at locations with a history of more frequent outages. Longer term solutions include efforts to make limited funds more available for increased infrastructure investments, and expediting NYCHA's elevator modernization program.

"With your help, we will advocate for more funds and resources," Chairman Morales told those present. "Right now, we must maximize our use of the staff and funds we have at hand."

Speaking on behalf of Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd, Secretary-Treasurer Rubin Torres, who was raised in a NYCHA development, remarked, "Our members and leaders understand how important elevator service is for residents. We want to help NYCHA all we can to achieve

**"Our members and leaders understand how important elevator service is for residents. We want to help NYCHA all we can to achieve their goals. Our dedicated employees will go the extra mile with NYCHA."**

Local 237  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Rubin Torres

their goals. Our dedicated employees will go the extra mile with NYCHA."

In thanking the union for its support, Chairman Morales also acknowledged the "terrific job that General Manager Doug Apple has done in managing this issue," as well as the support from the NYCHA Board.

### CCOP Offers Suggestion

Queens COP Chair Ann Cotton Morris noted, "Many problems we get from breakdowns come from residents inadvertently overcrowding elevators."

"Sometimes contractors overload elevators with heavy equipment that throws them out of whack," Manhattan North COP Chair Ethel Velez added.

Reflecting on the willingness of resident leaders to help NYCHA maintain safe and reliable elevator service, CCOP Chair Reginald Bowman observed: "We don't want to blame the victims, but a lot of people in our developments abuse elevators in ways that can damage important safety devices, so we have to educate them."

Deputy Director for Technical Services John Ashton, who has 29 years of service in the Elevator Division, delivered an important part of the elevator safety message:

"If you get stuck in an elevator, stay there. Do not try to get out. You are always safe inside until someone who is authorized to get you out arrives."

"We want you to have confidence that when you get up in the morning and hit the elevator button, that elevator

is coming," Assistant Deputy General Manager (ADGM) for Support Services for Management Brian Clarke declared as he began a PowerPoint presentation on NYCHA's elevator program.

### Shared Responsibility

NYCHA is designing a public awareness campaign to encourage a shared sense of responsibility with residents for the proper maintenance and safe use of NYCHA's elevators. "Staff will attend every Resident Association meeting to get your input and to get the word out," ADGM Clarke said.

COP Chair Ann Cotton Morris suggested that residents might sign a safe elevator use document included as part of their annual income verification packet.

Brooklyn South COP Chair Rosia Wyche later commented, "I will inform my residents about proper elevator use, so they know better what not to do."

Bronx North COP Chair Herma Williams wanted to take back information about vandalism to her residents "because those costs are passed on to us in rent and increased fees."

Asked to comment on the meeting, CCOP Chair Reginald Bowman noted, "This presentation is an essential step in educating residents on the

importance of elevators as a vital tool for residents and a way of preparing the general public to utilize them safely."

In his concluding comments, Chairman Morales remarked, "It is not enough to say we are doing something. This has to be followed up by action that is recognizable and informs the public about what we are going to do. Please explain to the residents that we need their cooperation and input."

**"It is not enough to say we are doing something. This has to be followed up by action that is recognizable and informs the public about what we are doing..."**

Chairman  
Ricardo Elías Morales

CCOP Chair Mr. Bowman indicated, "The CCOP will put together a standing committee to work out the details for the issues we met about this week."

### New Third-Party Inspections

Elevators are inspected twice annually by a licensed NYCHA inspector. Since January 2009, new city regulations require that one of the annual inspections be

## If You See It, Report It!

If you see conditions that need to be addressed in your development call NYCHA's Centralized Call Center.

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# LEAS CONVENES ELEVATOR SUMMIT

## Ideas to Meeting at Long Island City Training Center



Members of CCOP discuss elevator safety with staff during tour in Long Island City.

witnessed by an independent, third-party inspection firm. "Full load" tests that are performed every five years also now have third-party verification.



Technical Services Deputy Director John Ashton with a prototype of the handheld device used for elevator inspections.

In addition, non-mandated inspections are performed daily by elevator and development staff. Also, inspection results are now being electronically transmitted by handheld devices operated by NYCHA's elevator inspectors. The handhelds eliminate paperwork and get the information to the right people so repairs and adjustments are made faster and shutdowns can be avoided. A process that previously took weeks now takes just a few days "and tremendously enhances the operation," ADGM Clarke said.

### Facility Tour

Mr. Ashton led the group on a tour of NYCHA's state-of-the-art training facility. In addition to training NYCHA's elevator mechanics and other staff, the unique facility is used to train staff from the NYPD and FDNY, and from housing authorities as far away as Puerto Rico.

The facility houses equipment that staff encounter in developments, such as elevator motors, pulleys, relays and control boards. Simulators allow staff to practice troubleshooting techniques for problems they encounter in the field. In addition to their initial training, elevator staff come in once a year for refresher courses on equipment and to learn new technology.

Starting in January, the enhanced training program includes training for

elevator supervisory staff in supervisory and administrative procedures, and training for elevator and management staff in presenting elevator safety tips for the general public.

"We are alert to the needs of the field staff so that they can be sensitive to your needs," Mr. Ashton told the COP Chairs who accompanied him throughout the large training area to view different kinds of apparatuses.

One-third of NYCHA's elevators have solid state circuitry. As these older elevators complete their life cycle, they are replaced with solid state models. In addition to eliminating a great number of moving parts, this newer technology enables elevators to be remotely monitored at borough stations.

"Remote monitoring instantly reports and analyzes elevator outages or problems so we can respond promptly with the proper staff to resolve the job," Mr. Ashton said.

Pointing to a display of elevator relays used in the older elevators, Domenico Vitulli told another group of COP Chairs, "Every moving component in the elevator gets its source of energy from here." Overloading elevators with too many people or too much material can cause an overload that triggers relays to shut down."



Resident leaders ask the NYCHA experts questions about elevator mechanics and safety.

### Elevator Division Mission:

— Provide Safe and reliable elevator service.

— Respond to elevator emergencies and outages expeditiously.

— Ensure elevators operate in compliance with all applicable codes and regulations.

### Elevator Upgrades

— In the past 10 years, NYCHA has modernized over 2,100 of its 3,338 elevators. The average age of the elevator equipment is 12 years old.

— There are currently \$11 M in active elevator modernization contracts.

### Implemented Advancements in Safety and Reliability

— Hoistway doors safety measures

— Tamper proof vision panels

— Remote monitoring system installed in 920 elevators

— Closed Circuit TV installed in 774 elevators

— Upgrading from relay logic to solid state equipment

— Utilizing computerized handheld devices to perform and track inspections