TO THRIVE, PEOPLE need access to more than just doctors and medical services – the recipe for a healthy community includes fresh, healthy foods, public spaces for exercise and play, and a sense of safety. Not every neighborhood in New York City has all the ingredients to promote overall health, but soon residents from 12 neighborhoods that incorporate more than 50 NYCHA developments, will be offered an abundant array of healthy opportunities as part of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s new Building Healthy Communities (BHC) program.

Launched in December, BHC is a multi-million dollar initiative that brings together private corporations, nonprofit organizations, and 10 city organizations, including NYCHA. Philanthropic partners include Unilever, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, and the New York State Health Foundation.

A major component of BHC is the creation of five urban farms modeled on NYCHA’s Red Hook Houses farm which will provide approximately four tons of local and affordable fresh produce per year, per farm. The next urban farm will be created at Howard Houses in Brownsville.
We are incorporating some groundbreaking architectural innovations in our mission to rebuild better, smarter, and stronger from Hurricane Sandy’s destruction. Check out the photo spread on pages 12-13 to learn more about the work we’re doing at Caney Island Houses in Brooklyn that will improve residents’ quality of life and make their buildings more sustainable and resilient for the future.

When thinking about the future of NYCHA, it’s a great pleasure to hear about young residents working to better their communities. Jewels Marshall, a 16-year-old resident of Jackson Houses, is the youngest member of Bronx’s Community Board 1, which covers Mott Haven, Port Morris, and Melrose. She has lots of terrific ideas and I hope you are as inspired as I was to read her story (page 7). And soon there will be more opportunities for young NYCHA residents to help better the health of their communities. NYCHA is one of 10 city agencies, nonprofits, and private corporations involved in a public-private partnership launched by Mayor de Blasio in December called Building Healthy Communities (BHC) (cover). The goal of BHC is to improve health outcomes for New Yorkers in 12 neighborhoods by increasing access to healthy food, increasing opportunities for physical, activity and promoting public safety.

NYCHA will help build community farms at NYCHA developments with young residents from Green City Force helping to manage the farms. This is a unique and important moment in NYCHA’s history. We’ve only just begun our work to transform NYCHA into our vision of safe, clean and connected communities and together we’ve already made significant progress. Thank you for your continued partnership! I look forward to working with you throughout 2016.

SIGN UP AT
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NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS
NYCHA’S BOARD MEETINGS, open to the public, take place on Wednesdays at 10 am in the NYCHA 12th floor conference room at 250 Broadway. People who wish to speak during the public comment period must pre-register at least 45 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin and can only comment about items on that meeting’s agenda. Each speaker’s time is limited to three minutes. The public comment period concludes either when all speakers are finished or after the 30 minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever comes first.

Copies of the calendar for the upcoming board meeting are available on NYCHA’s website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary, 250 Broadway, 12th floor after 3 pm on the Monday before the meeting. Copies of the dispositions of prior meetings are available on NYCHA’s website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary no earlier than 3 pm on the Thursday after the board meeting. Any person requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Office of the Corporate Secretary at 212.306.6088 no later than five business days prior to the meeting. For additional information regarding the calendar of meetings, dispositions, dates and times, please call 212.306.6088

UPCOMING MEETINGS:
February 24, 2016 June 29, 2016 November 23, 2016
April 27, 2016 September 28, 2016

* Note: There will be no board meeting in August. The November and December board meetings are scheduled for the second-to-last Wednesday.
Increasing Opportunity: New Workforce1 Career Center Opens for Far Rockaway Residents

ON DECEMBER 1, NYCHA joined with the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), and Citi Community Development to celebrate the opening of the Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center. The new center—part of the Rockaway Economic Advancement Initiative to provide a continuum of services to jobseekers—connects Rockaway residents to high-quality employment by providing comprehensive career services.

“Connecting NYCHA residents to quality employment is an important part of our long-term strategic plan NextGeneration NYCHA,” said NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly. “By working with partners like the Department of Small Business Services, the Center for Economic Opportunity and Citi Community Development, we can ensure our residents have increased access to job training and employment opportunities, and the support they need to achieve economic empowerment.”

The Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center will offer wrap-around career readiness and recruitment services, including:

• Career planning and job search preparatory services
• Recruitment and job matching
• Resume development and interview support
• Group and one-on-one financial counseling
• On-site occupational training for in-demand jobs

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• On-site occupational training for in-demand jobs

MyNYCHA Now Available Online

GOOD NEWS NYCHA residents! The popular MyNYCHA app, which allows residents to create, schedule, and manage repair requests on their smartphones or tablets, is now available as a website.

Residents who do not have Android or Apple mobile devices can visit nyc.gov/mynychapi to take advantage of all of MyNYCHA’s features from a computer in their homes, the library, or NYCHA’s Digital Vans. Residents can also subscribe to NYCHA Alerts to learn about outages in their development and view inspection appointments. MyNYCHA is one strategy of NextGeneration NYCHA, the Authority’s 10-year plan to create safe, clean, and connected communities. The app empowers residents by putting the repair process in their hands, allowing residents to choose times for repairs to be made and to cancel and reschedule as needed.

Launched in September, the MyNYCHA app has been a big hit with almost 15,000 downloads and over 12,000 logins. More than 10 percent of all work orders are created by MyNYCHA. A Spanish version of the app will soon be released, and NYCHA is working on providing the option for residents to upload photos when requesting repairs.

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Why Does NYCHA Need a Strategic Plan?

NYCHA OWNS A lot of land and buildings but over the past few decades, our funding from all levels of government to care for our buildings has been cut dramatically. Meanwhile, our buildings, many of which are more than 60 years old, have not had proper maintenance. Now they are in really bad shape, made even worse by Hurricane Sandy. To properly fix all of our buildings would cost $17 billion. What’s more, over the last 15 years, the federal government discontinued annual funding that NYCHA had received; if it had continued at the regular rate, we would have received an additional $2 billion dollars from HUD since 2001 to cover the cost of daily operations at our developments.

We are broke. If we do not figure out how to change things, we will be taken over by HUD who can force us to sell our properties among other things, like other cities have already done.

Neither Mayor de Blasio nor NYCHA wants that to happen. NYCHA believes it is important to have public housing for today’s public housing residents and for the next generation of public housing residents. We want you to have apartments that are in good repair, that are safe, healthy places for you and your families to live. We want you to have safe, clean communities that are connected to the rest of New York City.

So we created a plan, NextGeneration NYCHA, which will help us save the Housing Authority over the next ten years. A major focus of the plan is the Housing Authority’s return to our core purpose of being a landlord. To save public housing for today’s residents and the next generation of New Yorkers, NYCHA must return to the basics: making sure that we have money to operate and guaranteeing quality property management and customer service.

GOAL: NYCHA will have the money it needs to run the Housing Authority and have money to improve its buildings.

NYCHA has developed several strategies to generate funds that will help us pay for operating costs. The City of New York and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development have agreed that NYCHA no longer needs to make annual payments to New York of $100 million. NYCHA plans to improve our rent collection process, and to rent out ground floor spaces in our developments to businesses that can provide valuable services to residents such as grocery stores and day care centers. We will raise the monthly rate of parking spaces to the local market rate and will rent those that are not used by residents to non-residents. This means residents will pay the local market rate up to a cap of $150, even if the local market rate is higher than $150. NYCHA residents will always have first priority for spaces. We will also cut expenses at our central offices by integrating some services with other City agencies.

NYCHA BY THE NUMBERS

1 IN EVERY 12 NEW YORKERS

77,000 SENIORS
65 YEARS OLD OR OLDER

110,000 CHILDREN
UNDER 18 YEARS OLD

40% OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE 62 YEARS OLD OR OLDER

25% OF NYCHA EMPLOYEES ARE RESIDENTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

GOAL: NYCHA will improve property management and customer service.

To provide better customer service to residents, NYCHA is implementing a number of service improvements. These include: the MyNYCHA app, launched in September 2015 and on the web, that allows residents to place work orders at their convenience without contacting the Customer Care Center; OPMOM, the local property management model launched last January in 18 developments that shows great potential for significant improvements in faster repair times, reduced costs, and enhanced resident satisfaction; new environmental and sustainability programs like the recycling initiative which will improve resident health and safety and reduce NYCHA’s carbon footprint; our Sandy repairs program which has secured a $3 billion FEMA grant and begun work
NYCHA BY THE NUMBERS

NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS COVER 2,473 ACRES.

NEW YORK’S PUBLIC HOUSING POPULATION IS THE SAME SIZE AS THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS.

at 17 developments, and new safety enhancements including exterior lighting, cameras, new doors, and layered access to improve safety at NYCHA developments.

GOAL:
NYCHA will repair and rebuild our existing buildings and build new housing.

NYCHA’s housing portfolio, which includes buildings and open space, also includes some valuable real estate. Potential new housing on some of the developments could help pay for repairs at our existing buildings, which will dramatically change the lives of our residents. It also has the potential to house thousands of additional New Yorkers.

We have created a new development strategy that combines repairing and renovating our existing buildings with subsidies and funding from the City, State and federal programs; building new affordable housing on our developments that adds to the supply of affordable housing in New York City and provides funds to enable us to renovate and repair developments on the same properties; and preserving existing NYCHA housing through HUD programs.

It’s important to note that NYCHA residents will not lose their housing in any of these programs. All of these programs are designed to keep NYCHA residents in their apartments and to make money to repair and rebuild their apartments to improve every resident’s quality of life.

GOAL:
NYCHA will connect residents to the best social services available.

NYCHA is undertaking a variety of initiatives to improve services and opportunities for our residents. NYCHA is employing the Zone Model that NYCHA’s REES (Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability) program uses to connect residents with social services providers, employment and economic advancement opportunities, health and wellness services, and education and training opportunities. Through the Zone Model, residents can engage with local providers that offer expert services in their own neighborhoods.

We have also transferred the daily management of 24 NYCHA community centers to the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and 17 senior centers to The Department for the Aging. These two agencies have relationships with the best social services providers in the City as well as funding opportunities for programming that offer many new opportunities for NYCHA residents.

In November 2015, NYCHA founded the Fund for Public Housing, a not-for-profit organization that will raise $200 million in its first three years to connect NYCHA residents to organizations which provide job training and social service programs. In addition, our REES program will connect 4,000 residents to new jobs by 2025.

If our plan works—and we think it will—we will be able to stabilize our finances, reduce our backlog, have money in the bank to run daily operations, and make sure that all residents are living in safe, clean, connected communities. It will take some time—and we will need to do hard work together—but we think that, in the long run, saving public housing is worth it. Let us know what you think.

NYCHA OWNS 74% OF THE APARTMENTS IN NEW YORK CITY THAT RENT FOR LESS THAN $500/MONTH.

NYCHA OWNS 51% OF THE APARTMENTS IN NEW YORK CITY THAT RENT FOR LESS THAN $800/MONTH.

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.NYC.GOV/NYCHA
Free Tax Prep Options in NYCHA Neighborhoods and Beyond

IT’S TAX TIME; for many people that means the anticipation of an income tax refund. To ensure that you get every penny you’re entitled to, NYCHA has partnered with the New York City Tax Credit Campaign to promote free tax preparation services available citywide for New Yorkers earning less than $53,000 a year.

Free tax preparation services are available from late January through mid-April; some services are located in NYCHA neighborhoods. Also, thanks to a partnership with Food Bank for New York City, City Commi-

NYCHA’s Office of Emergency Preparedness—created in 2014—is now hard at work strengthening the Authority’s emergency response by developing the agency’s first-ever overall emergency plan. This comprehensive emergency plan will improve both preparation and response to emergencies to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents in case of another natural disaster or other catastrophe.

Since the storm, NYCHA’s Office of Emergency Preparedness has quickly proven its readiness for emergencies by successfully responding to five major emergency and disaster operations in every NYCHA department, and communicate critical information to employees, residents, and other stakeholders. These plans outline roles and responsibilities of NYCHA staff, other government agencies, and volunteer organizations during an emergency.

NYCHA has taken other steps to increase readiness: last year the Authority led or participated in more than 20 trainings and preparedness exercises with other City agencies and organizations and more than 1,100 NYCHA staff were trained on a system that enables multiple agencies to work together effectively in response to an emergency.

For instance, New York City Emergency Management provided emergency preparedness training to NYCHA seniors and residents in hurricane evacuation zones and recruited volunteers to help their neighbors and communities get prepared.

Making Progress on Emergency Preparedness

AFTER EMERGENCIES, big and small, NYCHA works to figure out how it can better respond to future incidents. Based on lessons from Superstorm Sandy, NYCHA’s Office of Emergency Preparedness—created in 2014—is now hard at work strengthening the Authority’s emergency response by developing the agency’s first-ever overall emergency plan. This comprehensive emergency plan will improve both preparation and response to emergencies to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents in case of another natural disaster or other catastrophe.

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Year Up is currently recruiting young adults ages 18 to 24 for its free, year-long education and job training program.

“ONE YEAR OF YOUR LIFE TO THE CAREER OF YOUR DREAMS”

That’s the motto of Year Up—and it Works

EAR UP SAYS they empower low-income young adults to go from poverty to professional careers in a single year, and given the results of the 79 NYCHA young adults who’ve already attended their programs, it appears to be true. Year Up offers a free, year-long education and job training program for young adults ages 18 to 24 to bridge the gap between young adults looking for work and companies in need of qualified workers. Young adults who complete the year leave the endowed with the skills, experience, and confidence they need to succeed.

The national nonprofit’s beginnings can be traced back to a Virtual VITA NYCHA site brought home $1,437 in refunds and tax credits.

For a listing of free tax preparation services and on average, taxpayers who filed their taxes

For a listing of Virtual VITA NYCHA sites offering free tax preparation, visit www.opportunitynycha.org/taxprep.

For a listing of free tax preparation sites citywide, visit www.nyc.gov/taxprep or call 311 and ask for tax preparation assistance.

NYCHA’s Office of Emergency Preparedness is working on comprehensive agency-wide plan to help strengthen the Authority’s response during emergencies.

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During the 2015 tax season, more than 1,000 NYCHA residents took advantage of free tax preparation services and on average, taxpayers who filed their taxes at a Virtual VITA NYCHA site brought home $1,437 in refunds and tax credits.

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Never Too Young to Make a Difference

Jewels Marshall: Member, Bronx Community Board 1

"IF YOU SEE something and you have the power to change it, go out and make a difference. Do your best and try to change it; your voice will be heard and it will mean something."

That’s Jewels Marshall’s advice for other young people seeking to make an impact on their communities. She’s a high school junior and, at 16 years old, the youngest member of her local community board. The Jackson Houses resident was appointed this past summer by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. to serve on the Bronx’s Community Board 1, representing the neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Port Morris, and Melrose. 2015 was the first year that 16- and 17-year-olds could join New York City community boards; previously, the minimum age was 18. Ms. Marshall is one of five 16- and 17-year-olds serving in the Bronx, and one of 19 serving on community boards citywide.

“I decided to become a community board member because I wanted to take advantage of the fact that young people can be involved, and because I thought that the youth needed a voice,” Ms. Marshall said. “When I first heard about the opportunity I wasn’t sure about doing it; it seemed like a lot of responsibility. But my mom said that it was something I could do to help the community and make a difference, and I agreed.”

Of her first meeting she said, “It was nice to have my opinion valued; I thought the adults were going to look down at me, but they talked to me like an adult and treated me like a complete equal.”

As a community board member, Ms. Marshall would like to install a new hoop at a local basketball court. She believes there should be a curfew for young people so that they can focus on homework and wake up refreshed for school and also wants to provide more after school activities for her peers.

Ms. Marshall wants to earn a medical degree and become a pediatrician, which unites her interests in helping people and working with children. In addition to her community board work, she helps raise funds for her school and volunteers at a special education elementary school.

The Woodlands: New Section 8 Senior Housing in the Bronx

The new development is an eleven-story building with 100 apartments: 90 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom apartments. Apartment features include full kitchens, wood flooring, and air conditioning, and all are fully handicapped accessible. Building amenities include a laundry room, community room, landscaped sitting areas, a computer learning center, electronic surveillance equipment and security, parking, and an on-site superintendent and porter. The community room will host a variety of activities for seniors, including arts and crafts, exercise classes, and bingo. The Woodlands’ lucky new residents were chosen from NYCHA’s Section 8 waiting list. NYCHA has also created a waiting list of over 300 senior Section 8 voucher holders to fill future vacancies at The Woodlands.

First Houses 80th Anniversary Celebration

THE NAME SAYS it all – First Houses is the first public housing development in the United States. When it welcomed its first families on December 3, 1935, then-Mayor Fiorello La Guardia proclaimed, “There is sunshine in every window!”

Last month at the First Houses 80th anniversary celebration, NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye remembered NYCHA’s humble beginnings from its first development to now being the largest public housing authority in the country.

Jewels Marshall, 94, has lived in First Houses since 1946.

Joining Chair Olatoye at the special event were First Houses residents and leaders, including the youngest resident and the oldest, Mary Hladek, 94, who moved into First Houses with her late husband Andrew in 1946. Also in attendance were New York City Public Advocate Letitia James, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, New York State Senator Daniel Squadron, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and New York City Council-member Rosie Mendez.

First Houses opened to 122 families in 1935.

Anniversary Celebration

First Houses 80th

The Woodlands offers plenty of outdoor space, including an area for gardening and beautiful landscaped seating areas, for seniors to relax and visit with friends.
Sunday Suppers for Seniors at Stanley Isaacs

A NEW TRADITION IS taking root at Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center in Manhattan. Once a month on a Sunday, the Center hosts Sunday Suppers where several dozen lucky seniors are treated to delicious home cooked meals. The Center raised funds for this special event which is staff by talented volunteers who host, cook, and serve meals. Launched in October 2015, more than 80 seniors were served a juicy roast chicken entrée by volunteers from the Microsoft Store. In November, over 90 seniors were served a savory roasted pork dish by volunteers from the New York Junior League and the Hilton Garden Inn. Sunday Suppers are a chance for the guests, many of whom live alone, to create new memories with friends. The Isaacs Center serves residents who live in Isaacs Houses and Holmes Towers.

If you are interested in volunteering for future Sunday Suppers please contact the Center at 212.360.7620. Future Sunday Supper dates in 2016: January 24, February 21, March 13, April 24, and May 15, 2016.

MORRISANIA WELCOMES LA PRECIOSA
First public housing located on private property

La Preciosa’s lobby is adorned with art crafted by young people from the community.

The numerous partners behind La Preciosa gathered on November 17 for a ribbon-cutting event to introduce the building to the community.

(APRIL SANDERSON: A HEROINE OF EL BARRIO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) hundred years."

Residents, NYCHA staff, and NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye were joined by City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Mr. Vega, and other members of the community in late November to unveil the mural at the Corsi Senior Center.

“I had the privilege of getting to know Dr. Pantoja,” Speaker Mark-Viverito said. “She believed in ethical leadership and that’s something that continues to inspire me.” The Speaker also credited Dr. Pantoja with teaching her that everyone must work together to move the community forward. She noted that murals are an indelible way to tell the story of a community.

NYCHA Chair and CEO Olatoye said, “Public art is important to all neighborhoods. Not only does it add beauty, but it helps establish a sense of belonging and togetherness in communities. At NYCHA, we want residents to be proud of where they come from and where they live. Our strategic plan, NextGeneration NYCHA, envisions communities that are safe, clean, and connected. Public art is a meaningful and expressive way to create those connections."

In the mural, Dr. Pantoja wears her Presidential Medal of Freedom and is surrounded by icons of her life, legacy, and culture. The inscription in gold reads: I am me and my community, all that has come before me, and all that will be after me.

To its completion expressed their excitement and gratitude at the ceremony. Funding for the $21 million project came from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.’s Office; Enterprise Community Partners, an affordable housing advocate and developer; and JPMorgan Chase. Also in attendance at the opening was the building developer, Bronx Pro, Services for the UnderServed, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

A poet from Melrose Houses, Haydíl Henríquez, concluded the ribbon-cutting ceremony with a passionate ode to the Bronx: “The Bronx is never silent, never timid, always running, always fierce, the Bronx is heaven.”
Everyone deserves to breathe clean, smoke-free air in their homes. Smoke-free housing protects New Yorkers, especially children from secondhand smoke. For more information on going smoke-free, or to lend your support, visit NYCSmokeFree.org.
Stay Fit! At-Home Exercise for Seniors

K EEPING FIT AND active is important for everyone. Moderate exercise can help improve health and keep us strong and healthy as we age. The NYCHA Journal visited the Move and Groove Chair Fitness class held on Mondays at St. Nicholas Senior Center in Harlem to learn some simple, yet fun exercises seniors can do from the comfort of their homes. The class is free and is provided by Shape Up NYC, sponsored by Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, and taught by Miledys Pons. Below are three exercises that may be done seated or standing, with or without props; repetitions may be increased as you get stronger. See more of the exercises in action here: http://on.nyc.gov/senior-fitness-vids.

Stretch It Out
Stand or sit with feet hip distance apart. Stretch both arms up above your head. Open arms wide and look up. Swing both arms left, repeat on the right side. Bring one hand up and touch your shoulder. Use your other hand to gently lift your elbow up, repeat on the other side. Repeat four times.

Sweep It Out
Stand up straight and hold a broom (or mop) close to your chest. Bend your back and push the broom away from your body. Bring the broom back to center. Hold the broom in your left arm and push the broom away from your body to the side. Repeat on other side. Lift the broom up to chest level and hold horizontally at your chest. Turn your body to the right and to the left. Repeat four times.

Pick It Up
Grab two 6-8 oz. cans or two small bottles of water (can also be done using only your hands). Sit or stand with feet hip distance apart. Hold cans or bottles up to your chest. Extend arms to the front. Bring arms back to chest, and then lift one arm up, repeat on the other side. Hold cans at your side and then lift arms up. Repeat two times.

See more of the exercises in action here: http://on.nyc.gov/senior-fitness-vids.
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Residents selected the location of this new boiler building, which will be elevated above the anticipated flood level (raising the boilers in this way will help prevent the interruption of hot water service in the event of a storm). Boilers will be on the second level, and there will be a multi-purpose room on the lower level. The building will connect to an existing boiler flue (chimney) in an adjacent building, so a new flue will not need to be built.

New playgrounds will be built for the development. Backup generators will be installed on the roof of each building on top of new, waterproof, liquid-applied roofing membranes. The generators will receive service from raised ancillary buildings (the shorter building behind the playground in this picture). Having the generators and ancillary buildings elevated above the anticipated flood level will help ensure that the development has power in the event of a storm or blackout.
Hurricane Sandy inflicted incredible damage on New York City, including many NYCHA developments. However, the silver lining to the catastrophe is that it provides NYCHA the opportunity to not only repair its buildings, but to rebuild smarter and stronger. With the “Recovery to Resiliency” program, NYCHA is using Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to ensure that its infrastructure is more resilient—and residents are better protected—against whatever the future brings. Here are some of the improvements coming to Coney Islands Houses in Brooklyn as part of that program. Not pictured are new flood panels that will be stored on-site and deployed in case of a storm or anticipated flooding; they will flood-proof each building by covering windows, doors, doorways, and any other exterior openings. The development will also receive new underground electrical conduits, energy-efficient lighting, security cameras and layered security, and mailbox upgrades.
Scholarships Help Students Aim High

Four NYCHA Residents received Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships ranging from $1,000 to $2,500 to help them pursue their higher education goals. Awarded in partnership with the National Leased Housing Association’s Education Fund, these scholarships are based on financial need, scholastic merit, community leadership, and volunteerism, and can be used for tuition, books, and education-related activities.

Brenda Brumaire and Sabihah Khawja, both of Breukelen Houses, are using their scholarships to study criminal justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Deyuan Zeng, of Ingersoll Houses, is studying pharmacy at Long Island University Brooklyn. Justin Concepcion, of Adams Houses, is following his dream of becoming a minister through his studies at Nyack College.

Ms. Brumaire intends to finish her first year as a first-generation college student “strong,” and said her drive derives from her belief that “giving up is not an option.” She ultimately wants to earn a PhD in forensic psychology. About her ambitions in life, Ms. Khawja said, “I want to become a person who improves the world instead of waiting for it to improve on its own.” Mr. Concepcion is extremely grateful for the scholarship, saying that it puts him a step closer to achieving his goal of helping others achieve their goals. He believes his “desire to persevere” was partly the reason for winning the scholarship.

“Aimco is proud to help students across the country realize their dream of a college education,” says Patti Shwayder, Aimco’s Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Communications. “Education is a critical tool for success, and we are so pleased to be able to provide financial assistance to promising students in New York. We look forward to hearing of their accomplishments.”

Since 2010, the Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships have helped more than 150 students living in federally subsidized housing nationwide attend college, including 27 this year. Aimco Cares is the philanthropic arm of Aimco, which owns and manages apartment communities throughout the United States, including subsidized, affordable housing. Students interested in applying for the 2016 Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships can visit https://nlhascholars.communityforce.com.

When times got tough and we couldn’t afford healthy food, SNAP helped.
-KARIMA, GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Brooklyn

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UPCOMING REES EVENTS

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR

Brooklyn NYCHA residents: Get answers to your questions about buying a home at this FREE seminar sponsored by Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union! Quality for the HomeFirst Down Payment Assistance program with a First-time Homebuyers Certificate (attendance on both days is required). Refreshments provided!

Saturdays, January 23 and 30 at 10:00 a.m.
Macon Library, 316 Lewis Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11233
http://opportuntnycha.org/events/first-time-homembeer-seminar-3

FREE PERSONAL FINANCE CLASS

Sponsored by University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), the workshop’s classes meet for two hours each week for five consecutive weeks. Residents who complete all five can access services from Neighborhood Trust’s network of community partners.

Call 718-933-2539 to RSVP!
Starting Thursday, January 28 at 6:00 p.m.
UNHP, 2751 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468
http://unhp.org/calendar

IT TRAINING FOR YOUNG ADULTS

UNHP, 2751 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468
Starting Thursday, January 28 at 6:00 p.m.
Call 311 for more information

scholars.communityforce.com

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.NYC.GOV/NYCHA