

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2008
Submitted by: José Rodriguez, District Manager

Welcome back everyone! I hope that you all enjoyed a safe and restful summer. As I had stated in June this community continues to enjoy the resurgence, the renewed strength and the forward minded thinking that has encourage the turn around that we currently are experiencing.

However, while we enjoy our success we must be mindful of the impending fiscal reality that we are soon to face. Simply put, we will be asked to do more with less. With that said we must remain vigilant in ensuring that the standard of our quality of life continues without interruption. That will mean that every resident of this community must come together and truly work with one another despite our differences to safeguard our community from any adverse events that we may face.

We have a responsibility to care and plan for every segment represented in our district, including the young, the elderly, the native born, the foreign born, the poor, the disabled...all residents!

Community Boards must continue to be a voice for the voiceless and a strong advocate for every constituency. It is the responsibility of municipal government to provide the services and

resources to community districts in this city that will enable them to thrive and meet their community development goals.

Listed below are some of the meetings, events and announcements held over the Summer.

July 2nd (Meeting with Bronx District Attorney's Office)

Meeting with the D.A.'s Community Affairs office, Director Barbara Robles-Gonzalez regarding their initiative on sexual assault prevention. The discussion held was to identify sites within the District for the District Attorney's committee to visit. Since District #4 will play host to this project the idea is for the committee members to gain a better understanding of the District by driving through areas like the Highbridge and the Mt Eden sections.

July 7th (Meeting with Mayor's Office DVFRC)

Discuss the first 2 years of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee and the data collected during the study showed that family-related homicides committed during 04 and 05 were concentrated-that is, 4-6 homicides occurred within one mile of each other- in 8 of the City's 59 Community Districts. Five of those Community Districts are located in the Bronx, Community Board 4,5,6,7 and 9.

The FRC through its participating agencies and representative contract agencies will undertake activities that seek to understand why family-related homicides are clustered in these neighborhoods and to determine what barriers may exist that hinder victims from seeking

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services. To maximize limited resources while having the largest potential impact, the committee decided to work in the area of highest concentration-Bronx Districts 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9.

In order to assist the Committee in their efforts we talked about assisting in organizing and arranging meet and greets with our community based organizations/service providers in our district.

July 10th (Meeting with residents around the EAU)

Meeting with the homeowners and residents around the EAU was very spirited to say the least. As expected folks expressed their frustrations and disappointments on how the City handled the former EAU and the placement of the new EAU. Concerns ranged from neighborhood cleanliness, criminal activity, environmental, parking and other general quality of life issues.

The residents could not understand why the City would site the EAU at the proposed location especially when the area is currently undergoing redevelopment which will result in a socio-economic turnaround. The intention of the meeting was to provide a brief logistically overview of the new EAU.

Randolph D. Quezada, Director of Community Relations/Government & Community Relations, Dept. of Homeless Services attend on behalf of the DHS. After extreme dialogue for about two hours the community participants decided to organize a meeting for August 7th. The meeting and

location was subsequently changed to August 5th, 6pm at Pregones Theater, 571 - 575 Walton Avenue.

July 15th (Community event with CFC)

On this day Children for Children (CFC), a New York not-for-profit founded by parents to foster community involvement and social responsibility in young people. They offer opportunity for young people from preschool through high school to "grow involved," through hands-on service and philanthropy programs that teach the value of volunteering and giving.

CFC spent an entire day volunteering in the Highbridge Section of our district. Their programs accommodate a wide range of ages, abilities, interests and busy schedules just right for kids, families, schools, educators and other community youth organizations.

July 21 (Meeting with Bridge Builders)

As part of my community meet and greet meetings I met with Joseph Jenkins, New Executive Director of Bridge Builders and Analiz Figueroa. [Bridge Builders/CPI, a community-based demonstration project focused on three census tracts in the south-west Bronx, began providing services in 2003. The project tests the hypothesis that family well-being and child welfare outcomes will improve as a result of: community members working together in a collaborative to reach out to and assist their neighbors; provision of targeted social services and legal representation; meaningful parent and youth involvement; collaboration by neighborhood-based service providers and strengthened relationships with the Administration for Children's Services.](#)

In addition to ACS, the project is supported by a donors' collaborative of thirteen foundations, the Administration for Children's Services, and is administered by the Fund for Social Change. The project is governed by the Executive Committee (consisting of twelve agencies and parents) and led by the Project Director and the co-chairs of the Executive Committee.

The primary goals of the project are to improve four key indicators: the number of children who enter foster care for the first time, the number of children who re-enter foster care, the length of time children remain in foster care, and the overall occurrence of abuse and neglect within the Highbridge community.

Meeting with Mayor's Community Assistance Unit

Ms. Ezell and I met with George Torres and Monica Tavares of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit to discuss better coordination between Community Board Four and the agency.

(Meeting with Bronx USA Help)

Later that day I met with Mike Ruiz, Executive Director of Bronx Help USA Bronx Morris and Crotona Park North.

HELP Bronx Morris Avenue is a transitional housing facility which accommodates up to 212 families. 80 percent of the families served here are headed by single mothers. Established in 1992, HELP Bronx Morris Avenue has served approximately 5,000 families.

Available services include:

Medical Services

Dental Services

Mental Health Services

GED Classes

Housing Placement Assistance

Early Childhood Education/Daycare

Evening Childcare Services

After School Programs

Mentoring of Children

Department of Education Programs (to re-establish children in schools)

Client Case Management

Recreation

On-Site Security

HELP Bronx Crotona Park North is a transitional housing facility serving a maximum of 96 families. Approximately 33 percent of the heads-of-household are employed. The average stay is 9 months. Since its inception in 1991, HELP Bronx Crotona Park North has served over 2,000 families. 100 percent have been placed into permanent housing. This facility's record of success makes it a federal government model for transitional housing.

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July 22nd (Meeting with SoBRO)

I met with Phillip Morrow, President/CEO Neil Pariser, Senior Vice President of SoBRO as part of my meet and greet meetings. SoBro adopts a comprehensive approach to improving life in the South Bronx. SoBRO not only do they provides direct services to community residents, but they also focuses on rebuilding the infrastructure in which we live. Their all-encompassing strategy includes helping to create and strengthen small businesses, building affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods to stimulate commercial growth.

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On an individual level, SoBRO concentrates on giving people the necessary tools to succeed. Their broad range of programs includes youth and adult education, career training and job placement services.

SoBRO aims to help clients in every step towards their personal or professional goals. Some of the things we spoke about were coordination of resources to assist community district #4 in Youth Development & Education, Adult Education, Career Development, Real Estate Development Community and Economic Renewal.

July 30th (Community Assessment Meeting with Mayor's DVFRC)

As part of the Mayor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee's community assessment I assisted the DVFRC in coordinating two meetings with several community based organizations/community service providers. The 1st meeting was held at Woodcrest for Human Development and the 2nd meeting was held at Bronx Help USA Morris Avenue site. Through a community assessment, they hope to determine the extent to which services are delivered and received in the Bronx, what barriers to accessing services exist, and to find a way to maximize and network services that already exist. To accomplish these goals, the Committee seeks to obtain the perspective of agency representatives, community/contract organizations, domestic violence victims and other community residents in the focus area regarding: 1. barriers that may be present which may prevent victim from accessing services, 2. service coordination and factors leading to the cessation of domestic violence and 3. reviewing existing materials, distribution and communication strategies to inform the community of domestic violence services and

determine if/how these can be utilized more effectively in building a public education outreach efforts.

July 31st (Drive through with SoBRO)

District area drive through with Neil Pariser, Senior Vice President and Charles LP Jackson, Director of Bronx Resource Initiative Community & Economic Development of SoBRO. We drove through the areas of 167th Street to Mt. Eden from Jerome and University Avenue to discuss SoBRO assisting the Community Board develop a 197-A plan and part of the discussion was about building new property and rehabilitates existing buildings in vacant spaces to transform blighted areas into beautiful and viable spaces for living and working.

By developing both residential and commercial real estate, we would foster a mutually beneficial relationship between businesses and the neighborhood residents they serve.

Replacement Parks Community Update Meeting

Later that evening myself, Ms Ezell and Robert Garmendiz attended the community overview of the Yankee Stadium Park Redevelopment program conducted by New York City Parks and Recreation.

August 5th (National Night Out)

This year the 44th Precinct was chosen has the host Precinct in the Borough. Mayor Bloomberg, Police Commissioner Kelly, Borough President Adolfo Carrion and Bronx District Attorney

Robert Johnson and other elected officials attended. It was a day filled with fun, family and friends.

Meeting with area residents around the EAU

About 75 community residents attended a meeting they organized to bring their question and concerns to DHS representatives and Community Assistance Unit representatives regarding the City's decision to site the EAU at Walton Avenue. Unfortunately, the City was not prepared to address the concerns presented by the community.

The City Representatives however, did agree to coordinate a meeting with DHS Commissioner Hess. At the same time community members voiced their frustration and asked Congressman and State Senator Serrano, who were in attendance to assist in preventing the placement of the new EAU at Walton Avenue.

August 7th (Meeting with Bronx Community Health Network Strategic Planning Committee)

The BCHN asked that I give an over view of Community Boards within the City government structure and outline issues and concerns relating to District #4.

The BCHN, Inc. is a not-for-profit, community-based organization that was established in 1996. BCHN's mission is to secure resources to assure access to the highest quality, comprehensive health care service that will improve the health status of residents of disadvantaged and

medically underserved NYC communities. BCHN is committed to the provision, continued development and delivery of high quality, comprehensive primary health care services, particularly for persons with little or no health care insurance. BCHN-sponsored health care services are provided in an environment that is sensitive to and respectful of the diversity and cultural differences of the residents of the communities they serve.

August 20th (Drive through with the Bronx District Attorney's committee on sexual assault prevention)

As part of the District Attorney's initiative on sexual assault the following are the areas we visited.

198 EAST 161STREET to 161st and River Avenue -Civic Center Area.

156TH Street and Sheridan Avenue-Concourse Village and the Mott Haven School Campus.

153rd Street and Walton Avenue-the Site of the EAU.

165th Street and the Grand Concourse-Bronx Museum of the Arts 1040 Grand Concourse.

165th Street and River Avenue-Mullay Park and the New Yankee Stadium Construction.

164th Street and Ogden Avenue-Highbridge Community Life Center 156 164th Street and Ogden Avenue.

166th and 167th Street Ogden Avenue (Highbridge House) 1133-1131 Ogden Avenue Between 166th and 167th Street.

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Nelson Avenue Between Edward L Grant HY and 172nd Street-Highbridge Community Development Corp. 1465 Nelson Avenue Between Edward L Grant HY and 172nd.

Townsend Avenue and 172nd Street New Settlement Apt. 1512 Townsend Avenue.

Teller, Findlay, College, Morris and Grant Avenue Between 169th and 170th Street.

Mt Eden and Grand Concourse-Bx Lebanon Hospital and the Community Board (CB4).

167th Street between River Avenue and Grant Avenue-170th Street between Jerome Avenue and Morris Avenue.

August 27th (Meeting South Bronx Community Association regarding the EAU)

Ms Ezell and I met with the leadership of the newly formed South Bronx Community Association to better coordinate their efforts with the Community Board, discuss recent activity and Board action involving the EAU and how to discuss coordination of our Public Hearing.

September 3rd (Bronx Borough Services Cabinet)

Pursuant to Chapter 4, Section 85 of the New York City Charter the Bronx Borough President held a meeting of the Bronx Borough Service Cabinet. The following items were discussed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Current Immunization Efforts, Presentation by Jane R. Zucker, M.D., Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Immunizations; Bronx-Wide HIV

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Testing Initiative, Presentation by M. Monica Sweeney, MD., M.P.H. Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control; Update on School Based Health Centers and Clinics, Presentation by Roger Platt, M.D. Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of School Health.

September 8th (Meeting with Marco Carrion Regional Representative to Governor David A. Patterson)

During our meeting we discussed items of importance to Community District#4 and I gave him an overview of the District 4. In addition, we spoke of the possibility of coordinating an event at District #4 with the Governor.

September 12th (Meeting with D. Lee Ezell, Board Chair, Bob Sancho, VP Bx Lebanon and Dr. Telzak on HIV/AIDS Initiative)

We discussed coordinating efforts and recourses to bring about more awareness to HIV/AIDS in District #4.