



Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
Commissioner

**Department for
the Aging**

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City Department for the Aging Announces Opening Of Two New Innovative Senior Centers in Brooklyn

*Riverway and Surf Solomon Join Eight Other New Centers
As Part of Ambitious Initiative to Help Seniors Stay Active and Healthy*

NEW YORK, NY – August 20, 2012 – Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli today announced two new Innovative Senior Centers (ISCs)—Riverway in Brownsville, and Surf Solomon in Coney Island. These two new centers—part of Age-friendly NYC—will serve as models for how the agency can best serve the changing needs of older New Yorkers. The initiative seeks to create a network of centers for active older New Yorkers that offer enhanced programming, including robust wellness programs, additional access to health care services, arts and cultural programs, as well as new technological and volunteer opportunities. The innovative senior centers also go beyond the offerings of the traditional senior centers to include flexible and expanded hours on evenings and weekends, and flexible café-style meal times. Joining eight other ISCs that were previously announced by Mayor Bloomberg in April 2012, the addition of the two Brooklyn centers means that there are now ISCs in each of the five boroughs.

The ISC model was conceived in partnership with the Council of Senior Centers and Services and uses public and private funds. The Innovative Senior Centers are one of the 59 public initiatives announced by Mayor Bloomberg in August 2009 as part of Age-friendly NYC, a partnership among the Mayor's Office, the New York City Council and the New York Academy of Medicine to make New York City more livable for the City's growing population of older adults. The City's senior population—today at 1.3 million older New Yorkers—is expected to grow by 46 percent in the next 25 years.

Riverway, sponsored by Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services, has expanded its health and wellness programming through partnerships with other organizations in the neighborhood. For instance, Riverway members will have access to fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers markets and community-supported agricultural programs, geriatric mental health services, chronic disease self-management programs and meditation classes. The center, located

in a newly developed senior housing facility, will be opened in January.

Surf Solomon, sponsored by the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, will offer programming that highlights different cultures and meets a variety of interests. These include a Chinese opera program and an international choral group performing songs in various languages; health and wellness programs that include Tai chi, dancercise, yoga, animal therapy, nutrition and health education programs, as well as memory workshops and seminars on issues such as elder abuse prevention and awareness. Members will also enjoy recreational activities that take advantage of its beachfront location, like the Coney Island walking tour and visits to the Aquarium.

“The innovative centers contribute to our vision of making New York the most age-friendly city in the world,” said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs. “In partnership with its network of nonprofit providers, DFTA is on the cutting edge of developing and launching new programs for older adults.”

“The Innovative Senior Center model is the vision of what today’s senior center should look like,” said Lilliam Barrios-Paoli. “The new Brooklyn ISCs presented fresh new program ideas that are culturally sensitive to the needs of their diverse populations and focus on education, ESL classes for non-English speaking members and helping seniors access benefits and support services.”

“CSCS is pleased that Brooklyn will have ISCs that will provide new and enhanced services for older adults. Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli is truly leading the way to allow new models of senior centers to be developed,” said Igal Jellinek, Executive Director of CSCS.

“Riverway is excited by the opportunity to partner with New York City's Department for the Aging to create more innovative programs that address the changing needs of our diverse senior population,” said Donna Corrado, Chief Operating Officer of Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services. “We are committed to building a senior center model for the city and one that can be replicated nationally.”

“The Coney Island Seaside Senior Center will be closely aligned with the Mayor’s plan for the revitalization of Coney Island,” said Rabbi Moshe Wiener, Executive Director of Jewish Community Council Of Greater Coney Island. “The combination of a bold plan to revitalize a community’s infrastructure with an exciting new approach to supporting healthy aging through the introduction of an ISC, the City will create a new model for urban redevelopment.”

In addition to Riverway and Surf Solomon, the other Innovative Senior Centers are Lenox Hill and YM & YWHA in Manhattan; Bronxworks Morris Senior Center in the Bronx; Selfhelp Benjamin Rosenthal Prince Street and SNAP in Queens; The Staten Island Jewish Community Center, and two senior centers for special populations—SAGE, the first center in the nation to serve an LGBT senior population, and VISIONS, the first center in the nation to serve a blind and visually impaired senior population.

Examples of specialized programming by the Innovative Senior Centers:

Bronxworks (Bronx)

- Community gardening through City's Green Thumb program;
- Nutrition programs to help seniors who may have nutrition-related health issues; and
- Expansion of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (both English and Spanish versions); and
- Geriatric mental health programming.

Lenox Hill (Manhattan)

- Vegetarian and locally sourced organic meals;
- Access to a swimming pool for activities like a "Watercize" class and an underwater photography class, and a garden club to create a rooftop garden;
- Pro-bono legal clinics; and
- Depression and alcohol screenings.

YM-YWHA (Manhattan)

- Dinner cafe with self-service option;
- Programs such as classes on SKYPE communication and bird watching; and
- NY Public Library "Satellite branch" to sign seniors up for library cards and run a monthly book club.

Selfhelp Ben Rosenthal Senior Center (Queens)

- Using technology in health and wellness programs, including that which helps improve cognitive acuity;
- Tele-Health kiosks to help members monitor their own health;
- Virtual senior center programming enabling homebound seniors to participate in senior center classes and activities through two-way video; and
- Wellness coaching.

SNAP (Queens)

- Specialty programming for the Indian immigrant community, done in partnership with India Home, a local neighborhood organization. Examples include:
 - The Indian seniors are primarily vegetarian, so India Home brings in vegetarian meals and also leads an Indian dance class, and, in turn, other SNAP members teach their Indian visitors "American" dancing (line dancing etc.)
 - Through linkages to other community groups, expanded mental health services that explore topics such as Alzheimer's and other cognitive impairments
 - Guest chef program—prominent members of community prepare favorite meals and engage seniors in preparation; focus is on healthy eating;

SAGE (Citywide)

- First of its kind center providing congregate and social services to NYC's LGBT seniors;
- Healthy meals program includes nutritional counseling, green market initiatives, food pantry, and frozen take-home weekend meals; and
- Mental health programming designed specifically for the LGBT population.

Visions (special populations/Citywide)

- Services designed to provide a vast number of workshops for seniors who are blind or visually impaired, including adaptive technology, Braille and various education programs;
- Health and wellness programming focused specifically on issues related to seniors who are blind or visually impaired, including diabetes, mental health, etc.; and
- Off-site meal voucher program.

JCC of Staten Island

- Unique health promotion program utilizing JCC's fully equipped and staffed fitness center—including Olympic-size swimming pool.

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