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The NYCHA JOURNAL



NYCHA was honored to have First Lady Chirlane McCray as the keynote speaker at the Food Business Pathways graduation.

NYCHA LAUNCHES A NEW ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

On March 12, 2015, about 100 people, including New York City's First Lady, Chirlane McCray, and New York City Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, attended a very special event at NYCHA: the graduation of the first class of Food Business Pathways (FBP) entrepreneurs.

FBP is an innovative entrepreneurship training program for public housing residents with a passion for food and a drive to launch their own business ventures. It is the first of several economic opportunity and financial empowerment programs for NYCHA residents funded by the Citi Foundation. These programs will provide NYCHA residents with solid business development, financial counseling, job training, and employment opportunities. Other FBP partners include NYC Small Business Services, NYC Economic Development Corporation, and Hot Bread Kitchen, a business incubator for food ventures.

Joining the First Lady and Deputy Mayor were NYCHA Executive Vice President of Community Operations Melanie Hart, Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer, and Eileen Auld, Director for the New York Tri State Market, Citi Community Development.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Citizens of a Global Village

NYCHA kids join Global Partners around the world

EVERY TUESDAY AFTERNOON, children at Lehman Houses make virtual visits to countries as far away as Australia, Peru, and South Africa. They are part of an international program called Global Partners Junior that connects New York City youth to children around the world via an Internet forum. There are several New York City schools and afterschool

programs enrolled in Global Partners Junior, including NYCHA's afterschool programs at Parkside Community Center, Lehman Village, Saratoga Village, and Drew Hamilton Houses community centers.

This year, students from 50 international locations – including Berlin, Hong Kong, (CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

NYCHA residents Wilfredo Laguna, age 11; Jamia Jarvis, age 12; Christopher Bonillo, age 11; Bryan Paredes, age 12; and Yavette Martinex, age 12.



NEW BEGINNINGS



Talking with residents has been key to creating a strategic plan that will meet your immediate needs while also repairing and preserving NYCHA housing for the next generation.

IN THIS SPACE, in the news media, or on NYCHA's website, you've been hearing about the intended release of a plan for Next Generation NYCHA, a long range comprehensive strategy to preserve and maintain public housing.

As we head into April and the season of growth, renewal and promise, I'm pleased to say that NYCHA along with Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen will be presenting the plan to the public at the end of this month. And of course, in many ways that is just the beginning as we have much work ahead of us to reach the four important goals of Next Generation NYCHA:

1. Achieve short-term financial stability and diversify funding for long term financial stability
2. Operate as an efficient and effective landlord
3. (Re)build real estate
4. Develop best in class resident services and resident engagement models

These goals, and the multi-step strategic plan to reach them, reflect what we've heard from so many of you, as public housing residents have

been candid and thoughtful expressing their ideas to me and my many colleagues about what's needed and what can and will work. Next Generation NYCHA also reflects the reality of difficult financial and structural challenges NYCHA faces, the concerns that affect your homes and your families' lives, and it lays out what we can all do together to make meaningful sustainable change.

Following the official publication date, there will be many opportunities to learn more about the specific strategic steps that underpin each of the goals. For more information about our process to create this plan and residents' role in envisioning Next Generation NYCHA, visit NYCHA's website to read visioning plans developed at three NYCHA developments. I look forward to sharing more very soon and my thanks again to all of you who have been so forthright and helpful in voicing your thoughts. Let's keep the conversation going.

Shola Olatoye,
Chair and CEO, NYCHA

Lee Strasberg Scholarship winner Stephanie Dunn was incorrectly identified by her nickname, "Ming," on the front page of the February 2015 NYCHA Journal. We apologize for the mistake!

The NYCHA JOURNAL

ESTABLISHED 1970 • CIRCULATION 200,000

PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

250 Broadway, New York, NY 10007 • Tel 212.306.3322 • Fax 212.577.1358

www.nyc.gov/nycha

The First Anniversary Tour

On March 5, her first anniversary as NYCHA Chair, Shola Olatoye visited each borough to highlight the importance of resident engagement, community operations, safety, and security.

Lincoln Houses:
Patricia Herman,
Resident Association
President, and James
Green, Lincoln resident.



Goodwill Industries Job site in the Bronx: NYCHA resident Lavonia Chisolm (who learned she'd been hired later that day!) and Jobs Plus staff member Barbara Alvarez.



Latimer Gardens Senior/Community Center (from left): Carolyn Jasper, Queens/Staten Island Property Management Borough Director; Brandi Covington, Assistant Director, Child Center of New York Latimer Gardens Cornerstone Program; Cornell Wisby, Queens/Staten Island Community Operations Borough Director; Tony Bole, Program Director, Child Center of New York Latimer Gardens Cornerstone Program; Karen Anglero, Latimer Gardens Resident Association President; Cheryl Gersh, Program Director, Self-Help, Latimer Gardens Senior Center; Yvette Martinez, Latimer Gardens Property Manager.

Glenwood Houses:
NYPD Housing
Officer Goran "Novic"
Cvijetinovic



Stapleton Houses:
Joseph Benson,
caretaker, Taiesha
Andino, caretaker,
and Orlando Arroyo,
grounds supervisor,
with Chair Olatoye.





Regular physical activity can help control your weight; reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some cancers; strengthen your bones and muscles; and improve your mental health.

NYCHA Resident Leads Free Shape Up NYC Classes, Encourages Others to Join the Fun

NYCHA RESIDENT MILEDYS PONS is on a mission this spring to get more NYCHA residents involved in the Parks Department's free Shape Up NYC classes. "I'm excited to be connecting with people who don't even know what Shape Up is," says the resident of East River Houses.

Shape Up NYC is a program offering free fitness classes at locations such as Parks Department facilities, schools, hospitals, and community centers. There are currently 57 classes operating every week at community centers and senior centers across NYCHA, and new classes are being added this spring. There are many different classes to choose from, ranging from Senior Fitness to Boot Camp, Zumba, and even African Dance. One of the newest

classes being offered is PiYo, a combination of Pilates and yoga.

A Shape Up instructor since 2013, Ms. Pons was recently hired by the Parks Department to work as a full-time Outreach Coordinator. The popular instructor has been drawing crowds of 50 or more at her classes, and she understands firsthand the challenges of getting motivated to be more physically active. She hopes to share her enthusiasm for fitness with others by leading short demonstrations and emphasizing that anyone can join classes – no membership or advance registration is ever required.

"We have a lot of fun and the spring is the perfect time to start getting more active," says Ms. Pons. To find a Shape Up NYC class near you call **311** or visit nyc.gov/shapeup.

NYCHA GM HOUSE RESIGNS; MICHAEL KELLY, FORMER GM, RETURNS

CECIL HOUSE, GENERAL MANAGER of NYCHA for two and one half years, has resigned effective April 15, 2015. Michael Kelly, NYCHA's GM during 2009-2011, is returning to resume that role and work with Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye on the roll-out of NextGeneration NYCHA.

"We thank GM House for his two and a half years of service to the residents and employees of the Authority. He has been a leader for our employees and in thinking through how we improve the quality of service and operations. During his tenure, he has helped reduce the work order backlog by 60 percent," said Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye.

"And we welcome Michael Kelly back to NYCHA. He will play a crucial role in preserving New York's public housing through our NextGeneration NYCHA initiatives." Mr. Kelly has spent the past four years as the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority and as the Director of the District of Columbia Housing and Development Corporation.



Building a Better Mental Health System

Above, the First Lady with NYC Health Commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett. Below, the Mayor and First Lady with their children, Chiara and Dante.

Hello, NYCHA residents!

When I talk with New Yorkers, one question always comes up: How can we make our communities healthier? So I'm writing today about one aspect of being healthy that most of us don't talk about. It touches almost every family in this city, no matter how much money you make or what neighborhood you call home. Yes, I'm talking about mental health—an issue that hasn't gotten nearly enough attention.

Consider this astounding fact: One in four people deals with mental illness in a given year. It's pretty much impossible to go through life without you or someone you love being touched by mental illness. And too many of the people who need services aren't getting them.

That has to change and I am committed to doing my part.

My passion for this issue is personal. For starters, both of my parents struggled with depression. Of course, they wouldn't have called it "depression" back then—people didn't talk about such things. Society expected people to keep their problems to themselves and tough it out.

We've come a long way since my parents and so many others had to suffer in silence. But we still have a long, long way to go. I saw that when my daughter, Chiara, came to Bill and me and told us that she was suffering from addiction, depression and anxiety.

Our family was lucky. We knew these challenges were treatable, and we eventually found enough of what we were looking for. Chiara is now kicking butt at recovery.

But many families aren't so lucky. We need to shatter the stigma of mental illness and start talking about our experiences. And we need to link mental health care with physical health care. Part of having a healthy body is having a healthy mind.

I am currently visiting New Yorkers in all five boroughs who have experienced mental illness firsthand. My goal is to hear some of the stories behind the troubling statistics. I am also going to sit down with service providers and advocates to learn what is working—and what needs fixing.

But talk alone is not enough. This summer, the de Blasio Administration will release a comprehensive plan for building a more inclusive and effective mental health system. As soon as the plan is ready, we will start putting it into action. There is no time to waste.

If you want to follow my visits with New Yorkers, please check out my blog at FLO.NYC. And if you are struggling with mental illness, please ask someone you trust for help. Talking honestly about your pain is not a sign of weakness—it's an act of strength.

Many of us still remember when people were afraid to say "breast" and "cancer" out loud, like they were dirty words. Thankfully, that has changed. Today, breast cancer survivors are proud to tell their stories, because they know the community has their backs. It's high time for us to come together as a city and do the same for mental illness.

Sincerely,

Chirlane McCray



SPRING CLEANING

MANAGING MOLD AND MILDEW

PREVENTING MOLD

- Remove sources of moisture by keeping your apartment well ventilated. Open windows and use fans.
- Use your stove only for cooking, never for heating. When cooking, keep pots covered and windows open, even keeping windows slightly open will help.
- Keep your drapes open during the day.
- Request repair of leaky plumbing or other water leaks as soon as possible.
- Keep the "drip pans" in your air conditioners, refrigerators and dehumidifiers clean and dry.
- Keep your bathroom window open even a little, when weather permits, especially when you are showering.
- If you have an exhaust fan in your bathroom, make sure it is working. Cover the entire opening with a piece of paper. If it falls when you let go, your exhaust fan is not working; call the Centralized Call Center at **718.707.7771**.
- Hang wet clothes to dry in open areas, such as on bathroom shower rods, or on drying racks; thoroughly wring out clothes prior to hanging.
- Take slow drying heavy items to the Laundromat.

CLEANING MOLD

- Mold should be cleaned as soon as it appears.
- Do not clean mold yourself if you have allergies, nasal congestion, cough, sore throat, or upper respiratory infections.
- Wear gloves and protective eye goggles and clean only small areas at a time using a detergent/soapy solution, or an appropriate household cleaner, preferably one that is labeled "antimicrobial."
- The cleaned area should then be thoroughly dried, and any sponges or rags used to clean mold should be thrown away.
- Absorbent materials that contain mold, such as linen or carpets, might need to be replaced.

When you've tried cleaning fluids and proper ventilation and nothing seems to help, report the mold problem to the Centralized Call center at **718.707.7771**

CLEAN OUT YOUR FRIDGE

According to the USDA, if you are ever without power for more than two hours, you should clean out your refrigerator. Bacteria that cause illnesses grow rapidly in food at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

DON'T

- Rely on taste or smell to determine food safety. Instead use a thermometer. If the food is warmer than 40 degrees, throw it away.

DO

- Discard meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers warmer than 40 degrees (use a food thermometer to check).
- Keep on hand dry goods like pasta and beans, packaged foods, boxed or canned milk, bottled water, and canned goods.
- Use frozen cooler packs to keep refrigerated food cold if the power goes out longer than four hours; and pack items close together in your freezer to help food stay cold longer.

GARBAGE DISPOSAL DO'S AND DON'TS

- Take the trash out every night.
- Use small kitchen bags.
- Place all household garbage in the garbage chute located in the hallway of each floor.
- Remove large bulky items such as old furniture to designated areas.
- Do not throw garbage out windows.
- Do not leave bulky garbage in the stair halls or near exits.
- Do not leave household garbage bags in front of building entrances, walkways or exits.

CEASE THE GREASE

PROPER DISPOSAL OF COOKING OIL AND GREASE

- ◆ **Cooking oil poured into a drain clogs pipes in your home and city sewers.**
- ◆ **Clogged sewers cause sewage backups into your home and neighborhood.**
- ◆ **Clogged sewer pipes can release sewage into local waterways, harming the environment.**



DON'T pour cooking oil or grease down the kitchen sink, toilet, or any other drain in your home.

DO pour **cooled** cooking oil and grease into a container, then seal and discard with your regular garbage.



Before washing pots, pans, and dishes:

DO wipe off oil and grease with a dry paper towel.

DO scrape leftover food into the trash.



Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Emily Lloyd, Commissioner

For more information,
please visit:
nyc.gov/dep

Are you a resident with something to say or a letter you'd like to share?
Send it to journal@nycha.nyc.gov. Please include your contact information.



Department of Community Programs & Development
Community Operations

45th ANNUAL TALENT SHOW COMPETITION

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2015

12:00 PM



**BOYS AND GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
1700 FULTON STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11213**

For more information please call
(212) 306-3368/2864
or visit www.studionycha.org

The event is free, but a ticket is required for entry.
For ticket information, please call 212-306-2864/3368 or 212-683-3647.

APPROVED FOR POSTING



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & DEVELOPMENT

2015 RESIDENT ART SHOW COMPETITION



Group Project, Astoria Senior Center, Title, "Inside A Fantastic Tree"

OPEN TO ALL NYCHA RESIDENTS
Artwork will be accepted from
Monday, April 6th through Friday, April 17th
Between 12 and 5 PM
At the Harborview Visual Arts Center
536 West 56th Street
(Between 10th and 11th Avenues)
New York, NY 10019

For more information and to schedule an appointment, please
call: 212 306-2864/5165 or 212-541-5172

REES CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Food Business Pathways Information Sessions, Cohort 2 (starting in May)

- Monday, April 13, 6-8 pm, REES offices, 787 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn
- Tuesday, April 14, 6-8 pm, Queensbridge Resident Association Office, 10-44 41st Avenue (near 12th Street), Long Island City, Queens

REES Information Sessions

- Every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30am at REES offices,
- 787 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn
- Wednesday, April 22, 10 am, Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, 250 West 65th Street, New York Residents should RSVP for all the events by calling the REES Hotline at **718.289.8100**.

The Summer Youth Employment

PROGRAM FOR TEENS AGES 14-15 offers a maximum of 20 hours of work a week, Monday through Thursday, July 6 through August 15, 2015, at \$8.75 per hour. NYCHA residency is not required to apply. Interested youth can apply on-line or download an application from the City's Web Site: www.nyc.gov/dycd. Applications will also be available at NYCHA Development Management Offices.

Young Men's Initiative Brings Opportunities to Brooklyn

MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO recently announced the next phase of the Young Men's Initiative (YMI) at the bright, new Jobs-Plus Center at Van Dyke Houses in Brownsville. "The Jobs-Plus program at Van Dyke Houses is the kind of thing that really reaches people – that helps them build skills, helps them connect to jobs," the Mayor said. Then he introduced proof of his proposition: 21-year-old Lafayette Gardens resident Alaquan Bell, a Jobs Plus graduate who is well on his way to reaching his career goals in aviation.

Funded nationally by YMI, Jobs-Plus helps young men of color achieve educational and career goals by providing working-age residents with job placements, training, financial counseling, and a range of supportive services. In New York City, Jobs-Plus is supported by the Human Resources Administration, NYCHA, the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Consumer Affairs. A total of 23 developments are currently served by Job-Plus, with one located in each borough.

At the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation Jobs Plus program,



Mayor de Blasio said that the YMI program boosts the city's efforts to improve literacy, workforce training, and crime prevention. Below, Alaquan Bell, a YMI success story.



Alaquan worked on his job search cover letter, updated his resume, and soon found a job working at Walgreens. But he wasn't satisfied earning \$8.50 an hour, so Alaquan discussed training and employment opportunities with his counselor. After

earning a security guard license and OSHA certification, Alaquan was hired by Universal Protection Services, where he now earns \$13 an hour.

He also learned about the Earned Income Disallowance at Jobs Plus. With EID, increased earnings are not counted

for eligible residents when calculating rent levels. More than 6,000 NYCHA residents now have the EID work incentive. Alaquan planned to use his credit on college studies at *Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology*, in Queens, so that he can work in aviation at a New York airport.

Asked what motivated him to keep striving, Alaquan replied, "I want to be a good provider for my future family, so they can have things that I didn't have and do things that I couldn't do."

To find the Jobs-Plus center nearest to you, contact NYCHA's Dept. of REES at **718.289.8100**.



SOUNDS SO SWEET!

Members of the NYCHA Youth Chorus performed four songs at the 4th Annual Federal Inter-Agency Celebration of National African American History Month. Held at the offices of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on lower Broadway in Manhattan, the event featured an address by Public Advocate Leticia James. Pictured from left to right: Jessenia Peña, Stephanie De Los Santos, Meshach Jackson, Samaya Kanu, Clayton Bryant McNair, Ronnie Artis, and Micayla Garcia. For more information on the NYCHA Youth Chorus, contact Carmen Roman at 212.427.6648. The Chorus is currently auditioning young people ages 9-21.



Mr. Reyes-Santos demonstrates how to use a snack box made from recycled milk jugs, and filled with healthy treats!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Johannesburg, Lima, Melbourne, Mumbai, and Prague as well as New York – are focused on environmental sustainability.

Throughout the school year, children participate in activities that are both fun and educational, finishing in May with a capstone project they present to family and friends at Gracie Mansion. Educator Miguel Angel Reyes-Santos, who teaches the Global Partners curriculum at all four NYCHA locations, has focused on re-using and recycling: his students have made everything from shoes and vests out of discarded cardboard and comics to re-usable shopping bags crafted from industrial plastic wrappers and snack boxes fashioned from milk jugs.

The online forum is a critical component of the program. “All of the students respond to a question and post back and forth to one another about their responses,” Mr. Reyes-Santos explained. “The forum stimulates their interest in other counties and cultures, and encourages them to think differently about their own communities.”

Global Partners Junior was developed by NYC Global Partners, the not-for-profit organization located in the Mayor’s Office that connects the City of New York to cities around the world, in cooperation with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation. For more information on the program, visit the New York City Global Partners website.

Getting to Know NYCHA

MY NAME:
MARISOL SEMPRIT

MY HOME:
WALD HOUSES

MY JOB:
SUPERINTENDENT’S SECRETARY
AT GOMPERS HOUSES, AND
LANGUAGE BANK VOLUNTEER

My job is great because:

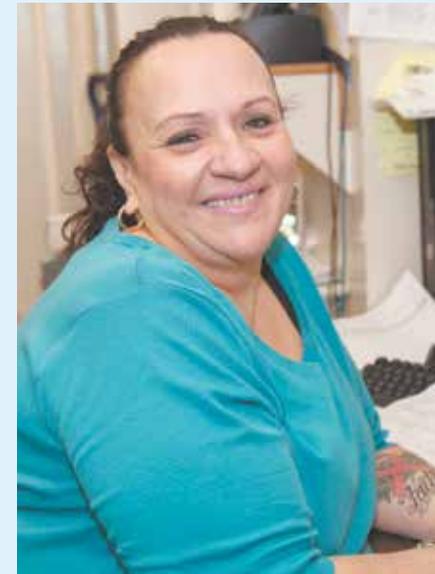
We have everything here at NYCHA, all nationalities – it’s the United Nations. And my residents know me. When I go outside, they talk to me like I’m family. If you help people, they will always remember that about you. That’s why people are always looking for me specifically!

Why I do it:

I love speaking and writing Spanish, and it has improved a lot! Spanish varies so much – words can have different meanings depending on where you’re from. Because NYCHA has such a variety of people, I’ve learned from all the people I speak to, from places like Mexico and Nicaragua.

My funniest work experience was:

When I first joined NYCHA, I translated a tenant meeting here at 80 Pitt Street, and I said something and the whole audience laughed at me. I didn’t know what I said that was so funny! Apparently I said this, this, and this, and it was totally wrong! The tenants busted up, and some of the staff who were there still crack up about it when they see me.



My favorite place to eat out:

The Odessa diner on Avenue A. I really like it because it’s not fancy and the prices are good. So it’s great when I don’t want to cook.

What I do for fun:

Reading, traveling, spending time with my family – my four grandkids are my pride and joy

I love listening to:

Spanish music – merengue, reggaeton, salsa (which is my favorite). Marc Anthony. I have to see him someday, but his tickets are so expensive.

My favorite get-away:

Florida, because I have a lot of family there, including my sister, who’s like my other half. So I need at least a week there. Only been to Las Vegas once, but I loved it.



PARKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER REMEMBERS ROSA PARKS

Children ages 6-12 at the Parkside Community Center celebrated Black History Month by reenacting scenes from the Montgomery Bus Boycott, including Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on the bus. They also performed an original show that featured poems, skits, songs, and trivia, including the game “Who Am I?” during which the children took turns pretending to be recognized Black Americans throughout history, such as Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman, and Oprah Winfrey.



MARCH

Fulton Houses
Mott Haven Houses
Rutgers Houses
131 Saint Nicholas Ave



MAY

Van Dyke I House
Red Hook II Houses

Are your child's immunizations up to date?

Shots or Spots?

FIDELIS CARE®

Call your child's doctor today!

Fidelis Care is working to keep our members and the community healthy.

Measles and Chickenpox are just two of the diseases that you can prevent by having your child immunized.

Children under the age of 2 don't have all the defenses they need to fight off infection. Immunizations (shots) protect them from dangerous childhood diseases like:

- Whooping Cough
- Hepatitis
- Rotavirus
- Mumps
- Diphtheria
- Flu
- Polio
- Measles
- Chickenpox
- Tetanus and more...



Is Your Child Covered? Fidelis Care offers New York State sponsored free or low-cost health insurance coverage for children under 19 through the Child Health Plus program.

1-888-FIDELIS · fideliscare.org
(1-888-343-3547) | TTY: 1-800-421-1220



To learn more about applying for health insurance including Child Health Plus and Medicaid through NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace, visit www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call 1-855-355-5777.

2015 HUD Changes to Flat Rent

Due to a new HUD requirement, all public housing authorities including NYCHA are required to increase flat rents over the next three years to 80 percent of Fair Market Rent (FMR).

If you are one of the 141,000 NYCHA households who pay 30 percent of your income toward rent, your rent will not be increased.

- 5,000 flat rent households with incomes between 80 percent and 100 percent Area Median Income (AMI) were charged 80 percent of the FMR for their flat rents starting with the December 31, 2014 annual reviews. These households are in compliance with the law and will not have additional rent increases.
- Flat rent households (5,200) with incomes greater than 100 percent of AMI currently pay 85 percent of the FMR for their flat rent and are in compliance with the FY 2014 Appropriations Act. These households will not have additional rent increases due to the proposed Amendment.

If you are one of the 14,700 flat rent households with an income

less than 60 percent of AMI and you currently pay less than 30 percent of your income for rent, your rent will increase over the next three years.

- Your rent will be increased over three years until you pay either 80 percent of FMR or the Brooke Amendment income-based rent, whichever is less.
- The proposed rent increase of 12 percent will result in an average increase of \$89 per month for 2015.
- The average household income for these families is \$37,000 and the average monthly rent payment is \$730 a month.
- NYCHA will begin to increase rent for households in this category on November 1, 2015.

If you are one of the 10,500 households with income between 60 percent and 80 percent AMI and you pay less than 30 percent of your income for rent, your rent will increase over the next three

years to 80 percent of FMR or the Brooke Amendment income-based rent, whichever is less.

- This 9 percent rent increase will result in an average increase of \$78 per month for 2015.
- The average household income of this group is \$50,186; the average rent is \$979.
- NYCHA will increase rent for households in this category starting on November 1, 2015.

TERMS

- **Flat Rents** are based on the market rent charged for comparable units in the private unassisted rental market. The flat rent is designed to encourage self-sufficiency and to avoid creating disincentives for continued residency by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient.
- **Brooke Rent (Income Based Rent)** is a tenant rent that is based on the family's total household income

and the PHA's rent policies for determination of such rent. Public housing families do not pay more than 30 percent of their total income for rent.

- **Area Median Income (AMI)** refers to the income level earned by a given household in a geographic area where half of the households in the area earn more and half earn less. Area Median household incomes are frequently used to determine housing affordability.
- **Fair Market Rent (FMR)** is the estimated amount of money a property with a certain number of bedrooms, in a certain area of the country, will rent for. HUD calculates the numbers for each area with the help of census data and through renter surveys. Fair Market Rents are used to determine rental voucher amounts for government assistance housing programs such as Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher Program).

Faster Repairs, More Jobs for Tenants



LAST MONTH NYCHA announced a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with the Building and Construction Trades Council (BCTC) of Greater New York that will benefit residents in two ways: faster repairs and access to union jobs and training. The agreement will impact major capital repairs such as construction and rehabilitation work.

"This agreement benefits NYCHA residents in multiple ways – faster and better quality work, real-life convenience and above all, access to skills that will lead to good, long-term employment," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "We thank the Building and Construction Trades Council for their collaboration and support to improve the quality of life of our residents."

As part of the PLA, unions have agreed to adjustments on shift premiums, a no-strike or work stoppages clause and universal dispute resolution mechanisms that prevent interruptions in the project work. This will help reduce labor costs by approximately 3 percent, as well as improve the quality of our construction projects.

To benefit our residents further, NYCHA and BCTC signed a Memorandum

of Understanding (MOU) to provide residents union jobs and training through pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The apprenticeship programs are an opportunity for NYCHA residents to not only learn a new trade but become union members, which opens doors to better jobs, better pay and more employment opportunities in the long run. These are "earn while you learn" programs with on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

NYCHA and the unions will work with The Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills (C-SKILLS), Helmets to Hardhats (H2H), Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW), Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans Employment, and other such organizations to recruit residents, assess their construction aptitude, make referrals to apprenticeship programs or hiring halls, provide counseling and support and offer employment opportunities. Residents who have already been trained through NYCHA's Resident Training Academy (NRTA) can also be referred to the apprenticeship programs.

For more information, contact REES at **718.289.8100**.

FY2015 ANNUAL PLAN MEETINGS

Highlights of the meeting presentations can be found at:
on.nyc.gov/nycha-fy15

What Would You Do with Your Refund?

DEAR NYCHA RESIDENT,

This tax season, make sure you take advantage of important tax credits and the City of New York's free tax filing program so you can put more of your hard-earned money back into your pocket. You have until April 15!

If you earned money in 2014, you could get a refund of up to \$10,000 for you and your family, just by qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Care Tax Credit. One out of five, or about 250,000 New Yorkers who qualify for the EITC don't claim it, leaving thousands of dollars on the table. Many New Yorkers use these tax refunds each year to save for an emergency or pay off debt.

Remember: the only way you can get the EITC refund – money you earned – is if you file your taxes.

And, the City of New York offers free and confidential tax preparation so you don't have to spend extra money. To file safely and for free, visit one of the more than 200 tax prep sites around the city or you can file online.

To learn more about whether you qualify for the EITC, see an interactive map that can point you to a free tax prep site in your neighborhood, and a link you can take to the City's online tax preparation assistance, visit DCA's website at

www.nyc.gov/taxprep

What would you do with *your* tax refund?

Julie Menin
Commissioner,
Department of
Consumer Affairs



Join us for a day of empowerment.

Numerous women's organizations will be available to provide resources for job readiness, wellness, dance, theatre, music and more.

YOUNG WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

| Location | Harlem Police Athletic League (PAL)
441 Manhattan Ave (@119th Street)
New York, NY, 10026

| Date | Saturday, April 18th 2015

All Day
Resource Fair!

| Time | 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

This event is **FREE** and open to all young women ages 12-18

Questions? Call (212) 335-9064

Register for workshops at: bit.ly/YWES2015



Pop Up Prom Shop

PROM IS AN EVENT MOST HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS CAN'T WAIT FOR, but it can also come with major expenses. The "1st Annual Prom Pop Up Shop" can help ease some of these costs by offering free prom dresses, tuxedos, and accessories to those who attend.

The Prom Pop Up Shop features a full day of events: time to "shop" for dresses, tuxes, shoes, jewelry, purses, and bowties; free hair and make-up appointments; and presentations from guest speakers Keynon Jackson, a motivational speaker, and Seleah Simone, a fashion stylist. Personal shoppers will be on-hand to assist attendees in finding their perfect outfits. In addition to all the prom goodies they'll get to take home, two lucky attendees – one teen boy and one teen girl – will receive \$500 scholarships.

The event is organized by S Cubed Productions, LLC., and co-sponsored by NYCHA Manhattan Community Operations, The Girl Scouts, Ignite, The Writerz Rumble, Fashion I, DTN, and Miss New York Plus America.

The Pop Up Shop will be held on Saturday, April 18, from 12 to 4 p.m. at the Clinton Community Center in East Harlem. The event is free and open to all high school students with a school ID who pre-register online at <http://www.scubedproductionsinc.com/future-events.html>.



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NYPD SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY WHILE EARNING GOOD PAY AND BENEFITS!

School Crossing Guards help children safely cross busy intersections on their way to and from school. School Crossing Guards control traffic flow around schools in the morning, at lunch time and at the end of the school day.

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There are no formal education or experience requirements for this job, but all candidates must be able to understand and be understood in English.

Prospective candidates must pass a qualifying medical examination, which includes drug screening and a character/background investigation, prior to appointment. You must also complete six (6) days of training at the Police Academy once appointed.

If you are interested in applying for a School Crossing Guard position please visit:

<http://nypdcivilianjobs.com/schoolcrossingguard/>

and provide your information and you will be contacted by an NYPD representative.



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Delicious, Nutritious, Free!

IF YOU LIKE good food and food that's good for you, you'll love "The Future of Food in Harlem," a free conference open to the public. On Thursday, May 14 and Friday, May 15, from 5 pm to 9 pm each day, the event will feature film screenings, interactive workshops, kids' activities, Harlem Grown farm produce give-aways and, best of all, free food. Sponsoring organizations include West Harlem Group Assistance, Harlem Grown, CONNECT, the Area Health Education Center, Corbin Hill Farms, Enza Academy, Maysles Documentary Center, International Youth Leadership Institute and the School of Design Strategies at Parsons The New School of Design. The event will be held at the Oberia Dempsey Multi-Service Center at 127 West 127th Street (off Lenox Avenue). RSVP by calling **212.862.1399** ext. 40 or emailing harlemdempseycenter@gmail.com.



FOOD PATHWAYS PROGRAM



(L to R) Anthony Robinson, Jaynine Taylor, Sherri Royes, Shadawn Jennings, Katrina Kelly, Meredith McKellar, Simone Campbell, Stephanie Anderson-Meynard, Tarsha Harrison.



John Childress says this class is one of the best he's taught in over 20 years as an entrepreneurship instructor.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"For far too long, the odds have been stacked against men and women who want to start their own businesses," the First Lady said. "Food Business Pathways provides budding entrepreneurs with the tools they need to turn their skills and passion into a successful business."

"NYCHA is proud to offer to our residents the first of several Business Pathways programs. With our partners, we have crafted a program that takes budding food entrepreneurs from their dreams to reality by providing them with education, coaching, financial support, incubator space, and mentoring," Chair Olatoye said in a statement. "Empowering NYCHA residents to start and grow their own businesses is just one facet of NYCHA's strategy of keeping our developments and our communities strong for the next generation."

The first FBP cohort is comprised of 21 students representing all five boroughs. Students were selected through an application process; most of them had prior food business experience and all of them have a dream they passionately want to realize.

They participated in a 10-week training program that provides 28 hours of classroom time over a ten-week period. Classroom topics include developing a business concept, assessing the competition, capacity-building, licensing, and operations and management. At the end of the course, all participants will have the knowledge to develop a business plan and a funding strategy, plus a new network of contacts for future advice and support, additional guidance from the instructor, and mentors.

Following a presentation of their business plans to an evaluation committee, all students complete an application for the second step of the program, during which five of these students will have the opportunity to launch their businesses using Hot Bread Kitchen's incubator space for six months. They will also get funding to pay for licenses, permits and fees and fees, and additional business coaching. The applications will be reviewed by a team of experts represent-

ing each of the organizations involved in the initiative who will use a rubric that evaluates each candidate's business plan including business concept, available resources, competitive analysis, and funding strategy. The five finalists will be announced in mid-April.

Among the students' business ideas are: a healthy baked goods business; a "new" soul food restaurant where "classic" dishes are updated with healthier ingredients; catering services and event planning; a "casual Caribbean" eatery; a restaurant called After Five for "people who've had a rough day" that will be open from 5:05 pm to 5:05 am; and a restaurant featuring healthy cooking where all dishes are "sinfully good yet guilt-free."

NYCHA will offer two more FBP courses this year, one beginning in May and one in September. For more information on the program or to apply, visit www.opportunitynycha.org/food or call REES at 718-289-8100.

JOANN POE
Patterson Houses
Goal: Open a bakery.

Joann's Elegant Cakes and Confections will feature cupcakes, pies, tarts and candies made with all-natural ingredients. Joann also does event planning and decoration and hopes someday to have a mobile dessert truck.



MICHELLE BUTTERFIELD
Eastchester Houses
Goal: Own her own bakery.

Named for her two granddaughters, Skylar and Janelle, Michelle's Skynelle Bakery is halfway there to becoming a reality thanks to Michelle's concerted fundraising efforts. Michelle plans to launch in Yonkers.



LANCELOT BROWN
Breukelen Houses
Goal: Open a casual dining restaurant showcasing Jamaican cuisine.

This native of Jamaica plans to open a casual, elegant authentic Jamaican eatery in Canarsie. He's already identified a financial manager, business manager, marketer and four cooks, and has create a fundraising plan built on crowd sourcing, bank loans and support from family and friends.





(L to R) Joann Poe, Michelle Butterfield, Vanessa Dixon-Munford, Cherylann Cross, Robin Alexander, LeKeesha Chapman, Lancelot Brown, Shyritta Conley, Ndeye Fatou Diop



SARAH STEVENS

Carver Houses
Goal: Owning a small restaurant.

Attention hard working Manhattan folk: Sarah plans to open After Five, an adults-only restaurant that will be open from 5:05 pm to 5:05 am for folks who've had a rough day and need to treat themselves.



OPENING SOON!

FOOD BUSINESS PATHWAYS' GRADUATES AND THEIR BUSINESSES

- Anthony Robinson – C.A.S.A. Café
- Cherylann Cross – Cheryl's Gourmet Dogs
- Jaynine Taylor – TaylorMade Creations for All Occasions
- Joann Poe – Joann's Elegant Cakes
- Katrina Kelly – Kodi's Kitchen
- LaKeesha Chapman – Eva's Comfort
- Shadawn Jennings – Every Juicy Bite
- Sherri Royes – Chef Sherri's Catering
- Shyritta Conley – Ritta's Treats
- Simone Campbell – Simma's Caribbean Cuisine
- Stephanie Anderson-Meynard – Im Victoriouz Creationz
- Tarsha Harrison – Coco Food for Your Soul
- Vanessa Dixon-Munford – The Queen's Palace
- Lancelot Brown – Jamaica Grill
- Marcus Butler – Hungre Huzlaz Group Inc.
- Meredithe MCKellar – Simply Deliciousness
- Michelle Butterfield – Skynelle Bakery
- Ndeye Fatou Diop – Chez Maytre
- Robin Alexander – Lady Aries Soul Food
- Sarah Stevens – After 5



MEREDITHE MCKELLAR

Unity Plaza
Goal: Food truck, on line sales, maybe even a storefront.

Meredithe has launched a range of delicious desserts packaged in reusable mason jars in various sizes. Selections include banana pudding and peach cobbler. Meredith's already using the internet to stimulate sales; next on her to-do list is finding retail outlets.



ANTHONY ROBINSON

Van Dyke
Goal: Envisions a restaurant serving classic his mom and grandmother made.

CASA – that stands for Cynthia (his mom), Anna (his grandmother), southern (his heritage) and American (his nationality) – is Anthony's American/soul food restaurant concept. He plans to open this home cooking haven in Brownsville.





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