



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



5

Eight Miles of Sidewalk Sheds Gone



6

Take the pledge



9

Fix-It-Forward

# The NYCHA JOURNAL

## A JOB AND A VOICE

### RESIDENTS LAUNCH WORKER COOPERATIVE IN QUEENS

A group of Astoria Houses residents has launched a worker-owned security services business. Called OnPoint Security, it is the first-ever worker cooperative launched by and for public housing residents in the New York City area.

Created with guidance from the nonprofit organization Urban Upbound, whose mission is to “break cycles of poverty in public housing neighborhoods,” OnPoint Security currently employs six residents and is in the process of training an additional 30 Astoria Houses residents for positions with the business, according to Fritz Vincent, the company’s general manager. The business will provide security services to buildings, night clubs, and businesses providing special events. After six months of employment, employees are able to buy shares in the company and become part-owners of OnPoint, sharing the profits and taking part in running the business.

“I think it’s important to be part of an employee-owned organization, because it gives you one of the most important things you can have on a job and that’s a voice—it allows you to give feedback and be heard,” said one of the employees, Dawn Mc. “As a single mother of five, I strive to instill in my children good morals and values that they can use throughout their lifetime. And something I tell them often is ‘always reach for better.’ The goal is to exceed me, so I’m setting the bar high.”

At the cooperative’s launch, at

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

# Summer Fun in the City Streets



This summer, almost 10,000 New York City children had the opportunity to have fun in the city streets, when the Police Athletic League (PAL) closed off streets throughout the five boroughs for its annual Playstreets. Every year since 1914, PAL Playstreets has provided kids with a safe, supervised space to play sports, do arts & crafts, listen to and play music, and dance during the summer months. This year, the program ran from July 6 to August 21 and some of the fun games included double Dutch, tug-of-war, skelly, and rock climbing. PAL Playstreets were held at ten NYCHA locations: Monroe, Forest, Brownsville, Linden, Marlboro, Ocean Bay, Wagner, Grant, Morris, and Mariner’s Harbor.



Members of the OnPoint Security workers’ cooperative at the Doorways to Opportunity launch in July 2015.



## SUMMER IN THE CITY!



**NYCHA'S BUSINESS** is being a landlord, but we're more than that – we are a community. We're home to 400,000 men, women and children, five percent of the City of New York. We employ 11,000 people, a group bigger than many small cities. When we were developing **NextGeneration NYCHA**, our 10-year strategic plan, I visited dozens of NYCHA developments to talk with residents and employees about their ideas and visions for the future of NYCHA. Connecting with our residents and employees provided the vision for our strategic plan: safe, clean and connected communities. As you'll see, this issue of the *Journal* is all about these connections, about the many positive ways we can grow individually and collectively when we work together. We can't build a better NYCHA without these relationships to one another.

I'm really inspired by a group of Queens NYCHA residents who were empowered to launch a new business, OnPoint Security, with support from non-profit Urban Upbound. OnPoint Security is the first ever worker-owned cooperative by and for public housing residents in New York City. This new business venture is the result of an important public/private partnership between NYCHA and Citi called Doorways to Opportunity. With \$1.4 million in funding from Citi and the help from partners including New

York Small Business Services, New York City Economic Development Corporation, Urban Upbound CAMBA, and Brownsville Partnership, NYCHA residents will receive programs and services, such as tax preparation, job placement, and support for new business start-ups, that will help them earn a decent living and save for the future.

When I talk about connections, I also mean keeping up with today's times. We live in a digital age and it's so critical to have access to the internet to get a job, good grades in school, or vital information. More than a third of New York City's low-income households don't have internet at home. That's why we're so pleased that President Obama and Mayor de Blasio are investing in free, high-speed internet access for thousands of New Yorkers (see the article on page 11). You'll also read about how one resident, a mother of four, used NYCHA's Digital Van to help her graduate from college.

As we think about the future of NYCHA, it's important to make sure our youngest residents are provided opportunities to become successful adults. This summer, NYCHA youth across the City are working as urban planners, mapping their developments to identify issues that need to be fixed as well as places to play, garden, recycle, and shop for food. They are helping to improve their community's quality of life through this awesome collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Operations.

I'm also happy that so many NYCHA youth had the chance to have some fun before school starts. Through the Police Athletic League's Playstreets, more than 10,000 young New Yorkers had some good, clean, and safe fun, while making positive connections with police officers in their neighborhoods.

By working together, we will keep making NYCHA a better, safer, cleaner, and more connected place to live. I hope that you and your family enjoy the rest of the summer!

**Shola Olatoye**  
Chair and CEO

# 100 Percent Affordable Housing To Be Built At 3 Developments

**O**N JULY 1, NYCHA released a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) from potential developers to expand 100 percent affordable housing opportunities at Ingersoll, Van Dyke and Mill Brook developments. The plan to create affordable senior and family housing on underused NYCHA property was the outcome of an extensive and meaningful planning process with hundreds of residents and community advocates.

"We must use every tool at our disposal to preserve public housing and create more affordable housing opportunities for seniors and families that are trying to make ends meet while living in the City they are proud to call home," said NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly. "By taking a thoughtful approach to how we use NYCHA property, we can create more affordable housing options for residents and New Yorkers."

Through the RFP, the City has invited

developers, including non-profit entities and M/WBE firms, to submit proposals for the design, financing, construction, and operations of 100 percent affordable new housing at the developments. For the purposes of this RFP, affordable is considered a senior or family household earning less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). The proposed developments will be 100 percent affordable and seek to reach households at lower AMI levels.

NYCHA will retain rights to the land developed through a long-term ground lease, provide critical oversight to the project, require developers to train and hire NYCHA residents, and proactively engage residents on a regular basis as the project moves forward. Additionally, NYCHA residents will have a preference for 25 percent of the units. There has been an overwhelming response to the RFP from potential developers wishing to work with NYCHA on this project.

## 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 may comment about items on that meeting's agenda only. 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 from 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:

**September 30, 2015**

**October 28, 2015**

**November 18, 2015**

**December 23, 2015**

\* Note: There will be no board meeting in August. The November and December board meetings are scheduled for the second-to-last Wednesday.

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

# Opening Doors to New Opportunity



On July 16, NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly told the audience that the new collaboration between Citi and NYCHA, "Doorways to Opportunity," "strengthens the fabric of our communities and the entire City" by empowering residents through employment opportunities, financial counseling, and entrepreneurship training.

**LAST MONTH NYCHA AND CITI** announced "Doorways to Opportunity," a multi-partner initiative that provides public housing residents across New York City with access to employment opportunities, free financial counseling and entrepreneurship training in partnership with community organizations.

Citi Community Development has provided \$1.4 million in funding to enable community organizations including **The Brownsville Partnership** with Community Solutions, **Food Bank For New York City**, **Hot Bread Kitchen**, **University Neighborhood Housing Program**, **CAMBA** and **Urban Upbound** to collaborate with NYCHA, New York City Department of Small Business Services,

New York City Economic Development Corporation and the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity to create a network of financial support and economic empowerment services for NYCHA residents.

"Partners like Citi have played a critical role in helping link our residents with targeted economic opportunities," said Michael Kelly, NYCHA's General Manager. "By connecting our residents with the tools and programs to empower themselves and their families with financial stability, we strengthen the fabric of our communities and the entire City."

"NYCHA residents comprise approximately 5 percent of New York City's population, about the number of people who reside in all of Boston—the oppor-

tunity for outreach and impact is enormous," said Eileen Auld, Director of New York Tri State Market, Citi Community Development. "By founding this program on cross-sector partnerships, driven by data and designed in response to local demands, 'Doorways to Opportunity' can become a replicable model."

- **Job Placement:** Brownsville Partnership is coordinating a 5,000 jobs campaign as the anchor for several other community services that bring together partners around the single goal of increasing employment in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn by 30 percent.
- **The creation of a worker-owned cooperative business,** the first of many, in Hallet's Point under the direction of Urban Upbound, a nonprofit that works to connect public housing residents with the resources to break cycles of poverty. (See story on page 1)
- **Financial Capability:** University Neighborhood Housing Program has expanded its financial capability services to NYCHA residents through its Northwest Bronx Resource Center.
- **Workforce Development:** The New York City Department of Small Business Services, CAMBA, and CEO are expanding place-based economic empowerment and mobility to connect Far Rockaway residents with high-quality, full-time employment. Expanded services will

include, assessments, career counseling, resumé and interview development, connections to training, financial counseling, screening and referral to employment opportunities, and more. The service will be fully integrated into the Far Rockaway community through a strong network of community-based organizations, workforce development providers, training providers, faith-based organizations, and social service agencies.

- **Technology Tools:** NYCHA Information Technology and NYCHA Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability are launching a new technology platform to connect residents to vetted economic opportunity services.
- **Entrepreneurship Training:** Food Business Pathways Program, in partnership with the New York City Department of Small Business Services, Hot Bread Kitchen and Start Small Think Big, will enable 90 NYCHA food entrepreneurs to advance their businesses through training, coaching, access to free permits and licenses, and subsidized incubator space.
- **Tax & Support Services:** NYCHA Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability and Food Bank For New York City are expanding NYCHA resident access to free tax preparation services and SNAP screenings. This partnership has already served thousands of NYCHA residents during the 2014 tax season.

## Tracking Changes Where They're Needed Most NYCHA's Newest Urban Planners

**T**HE FIRST TASK of the day for Nyasia Artest, 20, and Erika Verdesoto, 21, was to plot the beautifully kept vegetable garden behind Queensbridge House's community center. It took just an instant to identify the garden with a pink flower icon on their shiny, new electronic tablets; they took another few seconds to note some details, like how collard greens grew in one corner, squash in another. Then they marked the location of a recycling bin a few dozen steps away. Although they know the grounds of North America's largest development well, since they've lived here most of their lives, this was the first time they've ever viewed it like this.

For a month this summer, 30 NYCHA residents, ages 16 to 24, armed with Samsung tablets, are mapping their developments as part of a collaboration between NYCHA and the Mayor's Office of Operations (MOO). The 15 developments in the study are identified as suffering from the highest crime rates citywide. This summer, these budding urban planners are using mapping software to identify issues that need to be remedied, such as broken doors and graffiti, in their development and the surrounding neighborhood as well as food stores and other retailers and community organizations that could provide resources and support to residents.

"People ask us a lot what we're doing.



Alan Alvarado from the Mayor's Office of Operations shows Nyasia Artest (l.) and Erika Verdesoto (r.) how to use mapping software on their tablets to record issues, such as areas in need of repair, at their development.

When we tell them, they're happy and excited about what will come as a result. Looking at doors, elevators, and mailboxes to make sure they're working and in good condition is really important for the people who live here," Ms. Artest said. "Anything they see, we'll take action to make it better," said Alan Alvarado, the quality of life inspector from MOO who is supervising the team at Queensbridge.

"NYCHA's Department of Research and Management Analysis is bringing sophisticated mapping technology that professional urban planners use to engage our youth to work with us in improving the quality of life at their developments, while providing them a skill set for the 21st cen-

tury," said Lauren Gray, the department's deputy director. "And we're making them feel like they can effect positive change where they live," said Yuet Sim Cheung, the NYCHA staff person who developed the mapping software.

The mappers can even take pictures of needed repairs. These photos are geocoded, or linked, to the actual locations, and that information is sent electronically to NYCHA in real time. At the end of the program, the participants will present a summary of their findings. The program has evolved since it started last year, when the surveys were conducted using the old-fashioned technologies of pen and paper. Those who participated in



both years are very enthused about the real-time nature of the tablets and their ease of use.

"This project touches on all three of our major NextGeneration NYCHA goals of 'safe, clean, and connected communities,'" said NYCHA Deputy Director Gray. "And we're especially pleased that we can empower our youth to partner with us, get inspired to perhaps pursue this kind of work in their future, and get better connected to their neighborhoods today."

These young cartographers are not only gaining valuable skills and helping to improve their communities, but are also earning some real spending money—the initiative is part of the City's Summer Youth Employment Program, and they're making \$8.75 an hour.

"My priority is to keep the community clean and peaceful," Ms. Verdesoto said. "It's my community and I want to do everything possible to help it and make it a better place," Ms. Artest added. "And now I'm inspired to work at NYCHA when I graduate!"



# Rental Assistance Demonstration Brings Hope to Far Rockaway Residents

**M**ORE THAN 200 residents of Ocean Bay/Bayside Apartments and members of the Far Rockaway community attended a meeting held by Councilmember Donovan Richards and NYCHA on June 24 to discuss the benefits of HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. RAD enables public housing authorities to convert a select number of their traditional public housing units to a project-based Section 8 funding stream.

NYCHA has recently secured HUD's approval to convert approximately 1,400 units at Ocean Bay/Bayside through RAD. The conversion, which would bring permanent federal funding for the affected units, would enable NYCHA to rehabilitate and preserve the entire 24-building development with 1,389 apartments that are over 50 years old.

In explaining NYCHA's need for additional funding, General Manager Michael Kelly remarked, "The path that NYCHA is on now is simply not sustainable for our residents or our organization. To over-



come these challenges, we developed NextGeneration NYCHA, our 10-year strategic plan to ensure the future of public housing in New York and to create safe, clean, and connected communities."

RAD is one initiative to help NYCHA attain financial stability as outlined in NextGeneration NYCHA. The federal funding stream provided by RAD for Ocean Bay/Bayside would reduce the



Residents of Ocean Bay/Bayside Apartments address fellow residents, community members, elected officials, and NYCHA staff at a special meeting held on June 24 regarding HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Additional meetings at Ocean Bay will be scheduled throughout the year.

Authority's overall capital needs by nearly \$90 million. Ocean Bay/Bayside will have capital needs of over \$161 million over the next 15 years.

"We can't afford to do nothing," said Councilmember Donovan Richards, who thanked NYCHA for its efforts to secure additional funding for the development.

In addition to full rehabilitation of the development and a shift to a more stable federal funding stream, the Section 8 conversion will ensure permanent affordability for residents in the affected units, which

cannot charge more than 30 percent of household income for rent.

Provisions of the program also ensure that rights of residents who choose to convert to Section 8 will remain in line with protections for public housing residents. Moreover, after one year, all Section 8 residents have the option to relocate to any Section 8 housing in the nation.

"The residents seem to be receptive to the initiative because they know that it would bring a lot of improvements to the development," said Property Manager Tabia Heywot. Residents have heard about the kitchen upgrades, bathroom upgrades, new building entrances and lobby renovations, she said.

The June 24 meeting is part of a series of recent meeting with Ocean Bay residents. Additional meetings are planned to discuss such topics as job opportunities for residents through capital and repair work and the nature of the Section 8 voucher program.

NYCHA already manages the nation's largest Section 8 program, which provides approximately 220,000 people with federal Section 8 vouchers.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Urban Upbound's headquarters in Astoria, NYCHA General Manager Kelly stressed how a key component of NextGeneration NYCHA, the Authority's long-term strategic plan to become financially stable and preserve public housing, is its focus on improving how residents are engaged in the work of creating safe, clean, and connected communities.

"To do that critically important work," GM Kelly said, "residents need and want to become economically empowered and financially stable themselves. NYCHA is working to achieve that goal by connecting residents to high-quality programs, services, and opportunities like the worker co-op, which will enable participants to earn a decent living, build their assets, and save for the future."

Urban Upbound plans to start a number of worker-owned businesses that will employ residents of the NYCHA complex in the Halletts Point peninsula, where the group says 47 percent of tenants are unemployed or underemployed.

## Happy 116th Birthday to NYCHA Resident Miss Susie, the Oldest Person in the World.



Miss Susie, designated the oldest person in the world by Guinness World Records, blows out birthday candles surrounded by family, friends, and many well-wishers at her birthday bash on July 7 at Vandalia Houses Senior Center in Brooklyn.

**W**HEN YOU'RE 116 years old every birthday is special. For Susannah "Miss Susie" Mushatt Jones, who turned 116 on July 6, this year's birthday celebration was even more special thanks to an early present from Guinness World Records—the organization declared her the record holder for oldest living person in the world.

To celebrate Miss Susie's long life and achievements, a big birthday bash was thrown by Millennium Development, which runs the senior center Vandalia Houses. Miss Susie has been a resident of Vandalia Houses since the residence opened in 1983.

Chandra Simpson, Miss Susie's niece, came to celebrate the auspicious occasion with her family. She is

one of Miss Susie's more than 100 nieces, nephews, and godchildren. She said that her aunt has "stated numerous times that she doesn't believe she is the oldest person in the world. To think, she's older than six billion people, that's amazing."

In addition to many family members, Miss Susie's large crowd of well-wishers included Congressman Eugene Jeffries, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, politician Charles Barron and City Council Member Inez Barron, and representatives from the Mayor's Office, Department for the Aging, the Brooklyn Nets, the Brooklyn Cyclones, and Fidelis Care. She received lots of presents: proclamations from various government offices, numerous bouquets of flowers, a personalized jersey from the Nets, and a beautiful birthday cake with some of her favorite foods on it. Children from Millennium's afterschool program performed a dance routine and Greg Kelly, co-host of *Good Day New York*, led the partygoers, which included many news camera people and reporters, in singing Miss Susie happy birthday.

After blowing out her candles (with help from her family), Miss Susie told the crowd, "Thank you. I love you all."

Valerie Price, a niece and godchild of Miss Susie spoke about her aunt has always taken care of the family, "She has a very giving spirit, that's why she's alive today—God has given back to her."



# Let There Be Light: Over Eight Miles of Sidewalk Shedding Removed



At Sheepshead Bay Houses on July 9, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that more than 43,769 feet of sidewalk shedding has been removed from NYCHA developments throughout Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens.

**O**N JULY 9, Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye visited Sheepshead Bay Houses to announce that over eight miles—43,769 feet—of sidewalk shedding have been removed from NYCHA developments throughout the City in an effort to make neighborhoods safer and cleaner.

“For too long, government ignored the needs of NYCHA residents. These unnecessary sidewalk sheds at developments across the city were a vivid, constant reminder of this neglect,” Mayor de Blasio said. “We committed to removing the sidewalk sheds that weren’t under active construction last year, and we’ve removed over eight miles of sidewalk sheds. Now, when a NYCHA resident sees a sidewalk shed on their building, it will be a sign of progress—improvements and repairs coming to their home.”

The Mayor and Chair made the announcement against the backdrop of the remaining sidewalk shedding at Sheepshead Bay being removed. In total, 7,100 feet of shedding, almost 1.5 miles, was removed at the development.

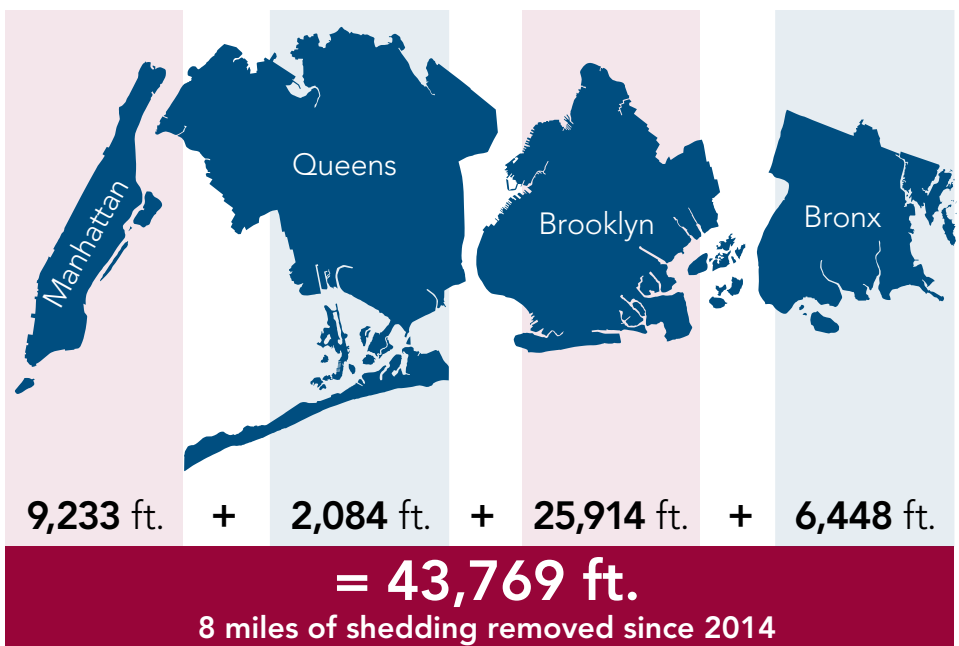
“The removal of unnecessary sidewalk shedding addresses a long-term annoyance for public housing

residents. This common-sense change, championed by Mayor de Blasio, will help connect NYCHA developments with the surrounding community through limiting the placement of obstructive shedding and scaffolding to only those areas where construction work is being done,” Chair Olatoye said.

NYCHA residents had complained for years about the sheds, which obstructed visibility, created a sense of danger, and often collected trash. From now on sidewalk shedding will only go up for active construction and will be removed as soon as construction is over. A remaining 9,966 feet of sidewalk shedding at NYCHA developments is supporting safety at active construction sites where much-needed repairs are currently underway.

“Not only were they unsightly, they were a safety issue for our community. But now that they’re gone we feel less vulnerable. The more neighbors that can see who is coming and going, the better,” said Sheepshead Bay Resident Association President Linda Wade.

Also in attendance at the event were Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, and City Council Member Alan Maisel.



## \$80 Million Investment in Public Safety Lighting to Begin at 15 NYCHA Developments

### \$4.4 Million Project Breaks Ground at Polo Grounds Towers

**ON AUGUST 4,** NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye (3rd from r.) was joined by (from l. to r.) NYCHA EVP for Capital Projects Ray Ribeiro; NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly; Polo Grounds Towers Tenant Association President Barbara Williams; City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito; NYCHA Board Member Victor Gonzalez; and NYCHA Board Member Willie Mae Lewis for the groundbreaking of new, energy efficient LED lighting for the entrances, walkways and parking areas at the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem. They were also joined by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance and other elected officials. The \$4.4 million lighting project at Polo Grounds Towers will replace the development’s current outdated exterior lighting system, which was installed when the buildings were originally built in the late 1960s and does not provide adequate lighting.

“Everyone, no matter where they live, deserves to live in a community that’s safe, clean, and connected,” said Chair Olatoye. “Today’s ground breaking is laying the foundation for more, better lighting, which is an important component to improve community safety. Together—residents, community members, and organizations—from elected to public safety officials, we can work together to increase the safety and security of our neighborhoods.”

The Polo Grounds Towers is part of the Mayor’s Action Plan (MAP) for Neighborhood Safety, an initiative to reduce crime at 15 NYCHA development sites. As a partnership between NYCHA, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the NYPD and other city agencies, MAP was launched to target crime prevention efforts at the public housing developments that drove 20 percent of NYCHA’s violent crime in 2014.



## Upcoming REES Events

**GREEN CITY FORCE** provides NYCHA residents between the ages of 18-24 with PAID college prep and job training in the green industry. Applicants must have a High School Diploma/GED and not be enrolled in college for 2015. If selected into the program, participants will receive a bi-weekly stipend and a Metrocard. Information sessions will be held at NYCHA REES Office, 787 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY at 11 a.m.

To RSVP for an information session, contact REES at **718.218.8100**.  
The next scheduled sessions will be held on:

- Monday, August 17, 2015
- Monday, August 24, 2015
- Monday, August 31, 2015
- Monday, September 14, 2015



# Smoke-Free at 830 Amsterdam



830 Amsterdam Resident Association President Shirley Williams proudly displays the plaque NYCHA gave residents in celebration of their work to become a smoke-free building. She is joined by (from l. to r.) Otilia Rivera, Co-captain of Resident Watch; Herminia Perez, resident; Cynthia Torres, Correspondence Secretary; Jimmie Macklin, Vice President; and Michelle Lane, Recording Secretary.

**R**ESIDENTS OF 830 Amsterdam in Manhattan have taken a stand for the health of their families and neighbors by taking a voluntary pledge to maintain a smoke-free environment.

On May 19, NYCHA staff and partners came together to celebrate the residents as the first NYCHA building on its way towards eliminating secondhand smoke which can cause heart attacks, strokes, and lung cancer, and worsen asthma symptoms. Residents of 830 Amsterdam were proud of being the first NYCHA building to overwhelmingly sign on to a voluntary smoke-free pledge.

Going smoke free means that residents who signed the pledge will not

allow smoking in their apartments. It does not mean that smokers can't live in the building or visit residents, but as Andrea Mata, NYCHA's Senior Manager for Community Health Initiatives, explains it: "It means that indoor air is cleaner because residents who smoke do so outside of the building where it will not impact the health of family members and neighbors." Eighty-five percent of households in the building have signed the smoke-free pledge, including nine floors where all residents have taken the pledge.

Smoke-free housing is a growing trend, with many buildings across the city and country adopting rules to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and has wide-

spread support by HUD, American Lung Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and more.

At the celebration, many residents were inspired to share how important they felt going smoke free for their community and how smoking has affected their lives, including a man whose smoking worsened his heart condition and woman who lost her sister to emphysema. Many NYCHA residents suffer from high asthma rates and other diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancers that are impacted by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.

"What we're trying to do at 830 Amsterdam is become a family who really cares about where they live, who cares about their children, who cares about the air. We want to be that model building who knows that there are certain things that are not healthy for us," Resident Association President Shirley Williams said at the event. Ms. Williams was presented with a plaque that commended residents on their efforts to "promote community health by working to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke."

In addition to residents of Douglass, many people came out to recognize the groundbreaking achievements of

830 Amsterdam residents including Roger Hayes, Assistant Commissioner of the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and Dr. Maida Galvez, New York City Chapter President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who emphasized that secondhand smoke is especially dangerous for children. 830 Amsterdam resident Atiyya Muhammad spoke on behalf of the younger generation, telling her neighbors that even though she doesn't smoke being around resident smokers is like picking up the habit.

Roger Hayes from the DOHMH talked about how going smoke-free can be the first step in helping smokers quit: "One of the things that helps people break the habit is having all these hassles of trying to find a place you can smoke and if you can't smoke here and you can't smoke there pretty soon it becomes easier for you to quit."

Dr. Maida Galvez told residents that they accomplished something phenomenal: "When people ask me what's at the top of my list for environmental concerns, a safe and healthy home environment and smoke-free housing is at the top of the list. This will go a long way to ensuring the healthy development of children's lungs and reducing the risk of asthma not only for today's generation but for the next generation as well."

Also present at the celebration was Ajamu Brown, who worked with residents at 830 Amsterdam and other







## How to Maintain a Smoke-Free Apartment

- Tell everyone you do not allow smoking in your home—family, friends, guests, and caregivers.
- Post a “Smoke-Free Home” sign on your door or somewhere visible to everyone, this will spare you having to tell people one-at-a-time.
- Make your whole home smoke-free, not just a couple of rooms! Smoking in another room, opening a window, or using a fan or air filter does NOT protect people. Using candles or air fresheners also doesn’t help.
- Remove ashtrays, lighters, and matches from your home.
- Have low-calorie or sugar-free gum or candy available as an alternative to smoking. Or try cutting up fresh fruit and raw vegetables for people to snack on.
- Be polite but firm. If people must smoke, insist that they do it outside.
- Thank people for helping you keep your home smoke-free. Let them know you’re rejecting the smoke, not the smoker.
- It may take hard work and a little time to get everyone to agree. Don’t give up—you’re doing something important!
- Keep your home smoke-free even when no one else is around. Second-hand smoke lingers long after a cigarette is put out.



## Why have a smoke-free home?

### It’s harmful to your health and your family’s health:

- Non-smokers who live with second-hand smoke are more likely to get sick or die from serious illness such as cancer and heart disease.
- Women who live with second-hand smoke are more likely to have low-birth weight babies, pre-term delivery, and miscarriage.
- When parents smoke babies are more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and children have more illnesses, including ear infections and asthma.
- Secondhand smoke is especially dangerous for children and harmful to seniors and adults with vulnerable health.

### Smoking damages your apartment:

- Cigarette smoke permanently damages furniture, curtains, rugs, paint, clothing, bedding, books, art, and other items.
- Cigarettes can leave burn marks on furniture and rugs.
- Smoking is a leading cause of fires in the home.

\*adapted from “How to Make Your Home Smoke-Free” bulletin by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



# Smoke-Free Home Pledge

Living in a smoke-free home promotes healthier hearts and lungs.

There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Research shows that secondhand smoke does not stay contained within individual apartments and as a result can harm residents in non-smoking apartments.

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Print name)

**pledge to protect the health of my family and my neighbors by keeping my home smoke-free. I will inform my family, friends and neighbors smoking is not allowed in our home and request those who smoke to do so outside the building.**

(Signature)

(Date)

## **Congratulations on making your home smoke-free!**

Please note that this is a voluntary pledge and not a legally binding agreement with NYCHA.

Sign and date your pledge, then cut it out and post it where everyone can see it. Be sure to tell your family and friends you’ve pledged to be smoke-free!

Take a photo of you and/or your family with the Smoke-Free Home Pledge and share it with us on **Twitter @NYCHA!**

developments across NYCHA to promote health by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke and increasing resident access to resources for smokers who want to quit. This work was inspired by a citywide survey of NYCHA residents in 2012 that found over half of respondents reported smelling cigarette smoke

in their home that came from another apartment or outside. The survey found nearly three-quarters of all respondents think some NYCHA developments should be smoke-free.

“What you’re doing can affect lives, you’ve seen residents in this building who have health issues and this is now a place that they can actually come back to and breathe,” Brown said. “NYCHA is the largest public housing authority in the country, what you guys are doing people can do in smaller public housing authorities in other

states, what you are doing can have a ripple effect on other places.”

William DeVoue, a Douglass resident who served as a Community Health Leader helping to lead the community-based research at 830 Amsterdam and has presented on smoking and health and smoke-free housing at a number of community events, said, “If you have two smokers on your floor and you’ve been on your floor for 10 years, then you have 10 years of accumulation in your house, on your walls, on your pictures, on your fridge on your door. So when it’s put like that, you have to say to yourself, I have to do something.”

Want to get involved? Residents interested in bringing outreach and education on smoking and health to their development can call **212-306-8299** or email **partnerships@nyc.nyc.gov**.

Are you a resident who smokes and wants to quit? Learn more about available resources by calling 311 or texting NYC QUILTS to **877-877**. Information is also available online at **nyc.gov/nycquits**.



## BEAUTY AND THE STREET

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL YOUNG



**RESIDENTS WILL BE** seeing all sorts of colors this summer as new murals adorn the streets of Mott Haven. With the support of a grant from Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education, Bronx Health Reach and NYCHA, Betances Houses were the first to see the art pop off the walls, with two more murals set to be completed soon after. Reflecting the vibrant and diverse community, the mural project stems from “Faces from the Block,” a multicultural collaboration between Brazilian artists Ananda Nahu and Izolag Arneidah and Bronx photographer Ricky Flores, who have been working together for eight years.

## Eat Smart for a Good Start to the New School Year

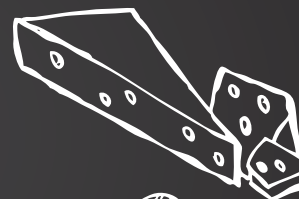
**A** healthy diet spells success for a good start to the new school year. Kids who eat well feel better and have more energy throughout the day. Here are some tips to sneak healthy foods into the diets of even the pickiest eaters and all those children who seem to exist solely on junk food.

- The best way to begin the day is with a high protein, low sugar breakfast. Check cereal labels for the sugar and fiber content, and consider alternatives: low fat yogurt, nuts, fruit, maybe an egg.
- You can serve frozen and canned fruits and vegetables in addition to fresh—they all count towards those all-important five servings of fruits and veggies a day.
- Look for lean lunch meats and low fat cheeses, plus all natural peanut butters and whole fruit spreads rather



than jam and jellies with added sugar.

- Apple slices, and celery and carrot sticks are great snacks, because kids can carry them in their backpacks all day long—sprinkle a little lemon juice on them to keep them from turning brown.
- Serve water and flavored seltzer instead of beverages with added sugar. Leave bottles of water on the counter or table and your kids really will drink them.
- Mixing vegetables into favorite dishes is an easy way to add vegetables to childrens’ diets. Try adding peas into sauces and casseroles, and adding cucumbers or zucchini slices to sandwiches.
- Switch to low or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.



- Switch to skinless chicken and extra lean ground beef for sauces and main courses, and bake or grill instead of frying.
- A great way to cut extra calories for kids is to use smaller plates—after all, if they are smaller than adults, they should eat less than we do!





# NextGeneration NYCHA: Fix-It-Forward Common Sense Solutions to Repairs and Maintenance

IN JULY, GENERAL Manager Michael Kelly announced “Fix-It-Forward,” common-sense initiatives to decrease response times and increase the customer satisfaction.

“Our track record on maintenance and repairs has been poor—period,” said GM Kelly. “While funding continues to be the primary obstacle for fully addressing maintenance and repair issues in NYCHA’s aging buildings, inefficient procedures have also caused residents to experience unnecessary delays in maintenance and repair work. We’ve listened to resident concerns and feedback from our field staff, and we’re hopeful these measures will address those delays.”

Fix-It-Forward includes immediate measures and long-term strategies outlined in the *NextGeneration NYCHA* plan to fundamentally change the way the Authority manages repair requests and processes. The meaningful changes included in Fix-It-Forward are intended to increase efficiency, provide a more timely sequencing of work, decrease wait times and most importantly, enhance customer service. Operation strategies are being piloted in several test developments and best practices will be assembled to implement across all developments.



**PROBLEM:**  
*Mold continues to be an issue.*

**SOLUTION:**  
**Capital Repairs & Revised Procedures**

The City is investing \$300 million in a roof replacement program over the next three years, which will enable NYCHA to complete repairs at the worst roofs in the portfolio, addressing one of the primary causes of mold. NYCHA has systematically changed how mold is handled, with a greater emphasis on determining the root cause which leads to mold, instead of superficial repairs that don’t address the underlying problem. In collaboration with the New York City Department of Mental Health & Hygiene, NYCHA engaged environmental scientists from Rutgers University and Hunter College to help design new training programs. NYCHA has trained more than 350 supervisors in mold remediation. Supervisors have trained staff in the field to improve staff competency on how to address the root cause (leaking roof/pipes, moisture build up in the bathroom, etc.) Revised procedures instituted in June; roof repairs to 66 buildings across the City with the highest numbers of maintenance repair requests such as leak repairs, painting and mold, started at the Queensbridge Houses in June, impacting 3,147 apartments.



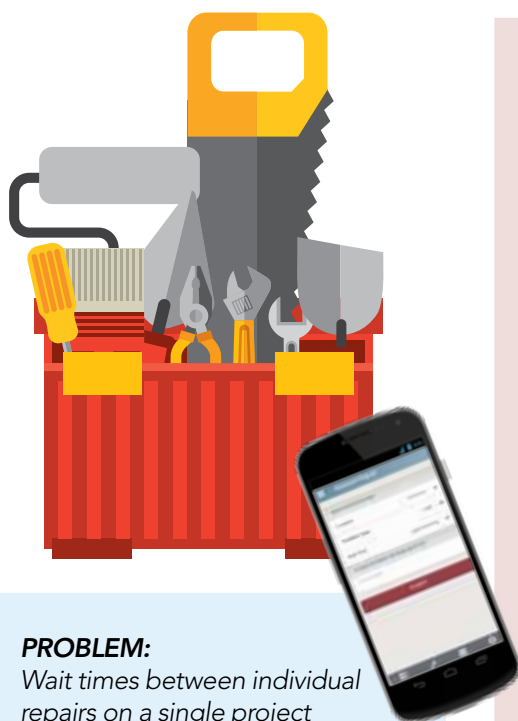
**PROBLEM:**  
*Minor repairs should not take as long as they do.*

**SOLUTION:**  
**Real-Time Repairs**

Instead of scheduling individual work orders for each minor repair, which is inefficient and time consuming for both residents and workers who must schedule multiple visits, all repairs can occur in real-time, when an apartment is inspected. Simple repairs, such as smoke detectors, window guards, and minor plumbing repairs, and more complex repairs requiring skill trades or vendors will be scheduled with the residents in real-time. Real-Time Repairs launched in June in the developments of Mott Haven, Seth Low and Woodson, impacting 1,936 apartments. In August this initiative will be deployed at 15 additional developments: Tilden Houses, Unity Plaza, Langston Hughes, Butler Houses, Morris, Linden, Fulton Houses, Chelsea, Marcy Houses, Pink Houses, Whitman, Pomonok, Ravenswood, LES Manhattan, and Douglass Houses.

**PROBLEM:**  
*Complex repair projects have unnecessary delays.*

**SOLUTION:**  
**One Call**  
Complex repair projects typically require multiple components (for example plumbing, carpentry, plastering, and painting) and require an individual work order to be opened for each part of the job, since each task requires a specialized trade and skill. Currently, only one skilled trade work order may be opened at a time for a repair project, which leads to unnecessary delays between open and closed work tickets related to a project. The One Call initiative will allow residents and property managers to schedule all necessary components of a repair project with ‘one call.’ This program will allow operations to plan complex repairs with residents when the request is initiated, not follow-up as parts of the repair are completed. One Call is to launch in August at the developments of Patterson, Mott Haven, Mitchel, Mill Brook and Melrose, impacting 6,794 apartments.



**PROBLEM:**  
*Wait times between individual repairs on a single project take too long; multiple requests have to be made for repairs.*

**SOLUTION:**  
**Real-Time Dispatching & MYNYCHA App**

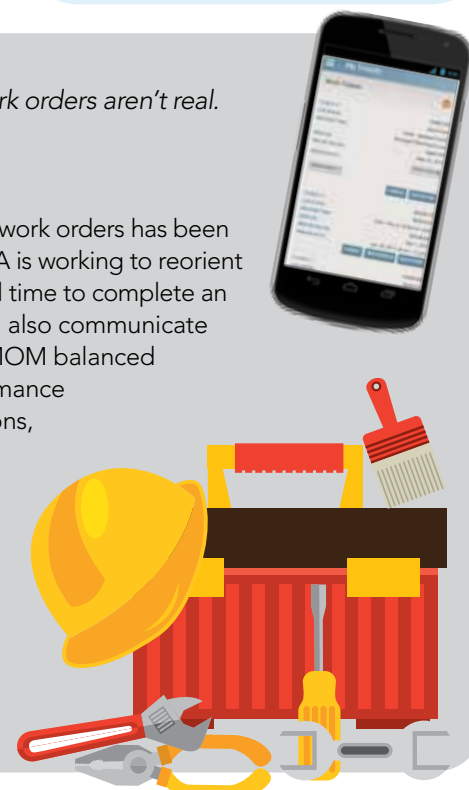
Tracking and reporting repairs and work order completion in real-time through dispatch communications, instead of through paper work slips. Data and notes are entered into the repair database in real-time, which enables the dispatcher to schedule necessary follow-up work orders on-the-spot and to call residents to verify if the appointment was missed. The response time for emergency repairs is expected to be faster, because the location of workers will be known in real-time, enabling the dispatcher to deploy the closest worker as a first responder. The MYNYCHA app will enable residents to create, submit, view, schedule/reschedule and update inspections and maintenance service requests 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Real-time dispatching launched in June at Woodside Houses and next in Brownsville Houses impacting 2,695 apartments; the MYNYCHA app is in testing and is scheduled to be launched at the end of the summer.



**PROBLEM:**  
*Perception that data and metrics on work orders aren’t real.*

**SOLUTION:**  
**Enhanced Performance Measures**

For too long, the number of outstanding work orders has been the sole measure of performance. NYCHA is working to reorient performance-based measures to the total time to complete an entire repair, or service time. NYCHA will also communicate performance results by posting the OPMOM balanced scorecard that tracks metrics and performance at a property in the key areas of operations, including maintenance and emergency service levels, budget, customer service and resident satisfaction. With a localized property management model and use of the balanced scorecard, NYCHA will be better equipped to isolate and report on each development’s metrics. Scorecards to be launched in the fall.







## ~~\$149~~ \$60 Annual Membership for NYCHA Residents



A fun, affordable option for transportation or fitness! Thousands of bikes available at hundreds of stations. Coming soon to more of Brooklyn & Queens.

Sign up today!

Descuento disponible para residentes de NYCHA  
NYCHA居民可享受折扣

For more information on Citi Bike pricing, locations, and how to get your NYCHA discount:

VISIT  
[citibikenyc.com/nycha](http://citibikenyc.com/nycha)

OR CALL  
**1-855-BIKE-311**

## West Nile Virus Mosquito Treatment



The New York City Housing Authority will be treating all of the catch basins located on Housing Authority developments to reduce the mosquito population in an effort to minimize the transmission of the West Nile Virus. These treatments will take place between June and September of 2015. One or more of the following pesticides will be used:

Vectolex CG, EPA Reg. No. 73049-20, Toxicity Category – "Caution"  
Summit B.t.i. Briquets, EPA Reg. No. 6218-47, Toxicity Category – "Caution"  
Altosid XR, EPA Reg. No. 2724-421, Toxicity Category – "Caution"

Contact names and numbers for this application are:

### NYC Housing Authority:

Debbie Wolf, Associate Staff Analyst, **718-707-5709**  
available from 9 am – 5 pm

Denise Torres, Technical Resource Advisor, **718-707-8032**  
available from 8 am – 4 pm

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Region 2,  
Bureau of Pesticide Management – **718-482-4994**

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network – **1-800-858-PEST**

**Inquiries concerning symptoms of pesticide poisoning should be directed to the Poison Control Center  
1-800-222-1222**

## FREE 14-week job training program for homeless & low-income women

### First Step Program

Computer Training - Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook  
Internet Research • Resume Writing • Interviewing Skills  
Job Placement Assistance • Self-Esteem Building  
2 Month Internship • Case Management • Typing  
Literacy Building • Mentoring • Yoga & Meditation  
Support Groups • Empowerment

GED not required • New class starting soon!

### FREE Continental Breakfast & Metrocards Provided

For more information, please call (212) 776-2074



## NYCHA Workers Protected By State Safety Law

**LIKE FIRE FIGHTERS** and police officers, NYCHA employees are public servants who take their job responsibilities very seriously. Property management staff works hard to keep NYCHA developments and facilities clean, safe and well-maintained. And, like fire fighters, police officers and other public servants, NYCHA employees receive special protections under the law.

Any individual who physically assaults any NYCHA employee may be charged with violent felony and receive a sentence of up to one year in prison. Legislation passed last year provides NYCHA staff with the same deterrents to assault that protect NYPD and MTA workers, and state crossing guards. The legislation was sponsored by Assembly Member Joe Lentol (D-Brooklyn) and State Senator Andrew Lanza (R-Staten Island).

"All employees deserve to be safe and respected in the workplace," says Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "The Mayor, NYCHA leadership and the Teamsters worked together to get this bill approved in Albany. It is an example of what can be achieved when we work as one for a common goal. I want to thank the Legislature and Governor for recognizing the important work that our front-line staff does every day."

"NYCHA employees are on the front line of efforts to protect and care for public housing residents and they deserve this increased protection," said Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd, who advocated forcefully for the legislation. "Now the hard working employees at NYCHA who make so many sacrifices for others can feel more secure working at housing developments throughout city."

## All About That Grill: Summer Grilling Safety

**NOW THAT SUMMER** is here you may be looking to fire up the grill at your next family gathering. While grilling is a popular way to cook food, it comes with an increased risk of home fires and injuries. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an average of 8,000 home fires are caused by grilling, and close to half of all injuries involving grills are due to thermal burns.

Learn how to grill safely before you throw one on the barbie with these NFPA tips:

- Only use propane and charcoal grills outdoors;
- Keep young children and pets away from the grill area;
- Never leave a lit grill unattended;
- Maintain a clean grill by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill; and
- Keep the grill away from your home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

Protect your family and home this summer! Get more facts about grilling safety with this public service announcement from the U.S. Fire Administration.

*\*From the National Fire Protection Association*





# ConnectHome: Five NYCHA Developments Join National Effort to Provide Digital Broadband Access to Everyone

ON JULY 16, HUD Secretary Julian Castro, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Maya Wiley, Counsel to the Mayor, and New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito joined NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye at East Side House Mott Haven Community Center to announce an historic investment in free, high-speed broadband service for more than 16,000 New Yorkers living in five public housing developments in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx.

The initiative, led by the Office of the Mayor's Counsel in partnership with DoITT and NYCHA, will invest up to \$10 million dollars for the five developments, starting with a demonstration project that will bring wireless access to the 7,000 residents of NYCHA's Queensbridge North and Queensbridge South Houses, which together make up the largest public housing development in the nation.

The announcement comes in conjunction with ConnectHome, a bold new initiative by President Obama to bring together internet service providers, non-profits and the private sector to offer broadband access, technical training, digital literacy programs, and devices for residents in HUD-assisted housing units. New York City—one of 27 cities which won HUD's competition to participate in ConnectHome—has been recog-



On July 16, NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye was joined by HUD Secretary Julian Castro, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, and New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito to announce that free, high-speed broadband service would be provided to more than 16,000 residents in five NYCHA developments.

nized for its commitment to aggressively expand affordable access to broadband, including the wireless corridors.

"President Obama has been a tireless leader for universal broadband," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "And Secretary Castro, a former mayor himself, knows firsthand the importance of solving income inequality. HUD has long been a critical partner, supporting the City's ability to survive disaster and

serve low-income residents. Through ConnectHome, my administration will be able to deepen our private partnerships and leverage our public investment in universal, affordable broadband for hard working New Yorkers who struggle to support their families and desperately need broadband."

"NYCHA's vision for the families who live in our communities is one that is safe, clean and connected. Our

residents, who include more than 100,000 children, have lacked access to the benefits that the wireless broadband Internet provides," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "Today, thanks to the vision of our President and our Mayor and the commitment of our partners to equal opportunity for all New Yorkers, the digital divide between NYCHA and the rest of our City begins to close."

## Taking the Digital Van to Success

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY like clockwork, the NYCHA Digital Van visits Forest Houses and every other Tuesday Marsha Robinson is there, too, ready to use one of the van's laptops and free Wi-Fi.

Robinson, a mother of four children and resident of Forest Houses for the past 10 years, has been using the Digital Van for two years. She has used the van to update her résumé but mainly uses it to complete homework for her online college courses.

"I'm very proud to say that being able to use the Digital Van has helped me advance my education," Ms. Robinson said. "I want to thank NYCHA for the Digital Van, for providing an important resource to residents so that we have access to opportunities and advancement."

The van assists NYCHA residents, like Robinson, who don't have computers or access to broadband high-speed Internet service. The two digital vans come equipped with eight laptops, wireless Internet access, and printers and operate throughout the five boroughs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On July 9, 2015, Robinson graduated



from Monroe College with an Associate's Degree in Medical Assisting. She is both excited and prepared to continue her education and is enrolled in the bachelor's degree program at Monroe College for healthcare management.

Currently, she is studying for finals in her summer online class and in the fall will continue classes on campus at Monroe College. She says, "It's great to know that I'll be able to head down to the Digital Van every other Tuesday to do my online coursework to help me complete my degree." She added that the van staff has been very helpful, even helping her type when she injured her hand.



Forest Houses resident Marsha Robinson credits the NYCHA Digital Van with helping her achieve her educational goals. For the past two years Ms. Robinson has used the van to complete her college coursework and graduated with an Associate's Degree from Monroe College in July.

"NYCHA created the Digital Van program in order to help residents make progress in their lives, be it to create a résumé, search and apply for jobs, do homework and so much more that can often only be done over the Internet, and on a computer rather than on a smartphone," Diane Chehab, NYCHA's

Project Manager for Information Technology, said. "I was so happy to hear that the Digital Van had helped Ms. Robinson in her goal to obtain a college degree. Congratulations!"

To view the Digital Van schedule, visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/adults.page>





# WELCOME TO NEW YORK QUALITY HEALTH INSURANCE



THE HIGHEST-RATED  
Qualified Health Plans\* and  
Medicaid plan in NYC and LI\*\*

PLUS

THE TOP-RATED  
Medicare Advantage  
HMO Plan in NYC<sup>1</sup>

New Yorkers know quality. That's why more than one million New Yorkers choose Healthfirst for top-rated health plans in NYC and Long Island. Our plans offer the coverage and benefits you deserve, whatever your age or income. Let us help you find a plan that's right for you.

Call **1-888-974-8517** (TTY: 1-888-542-3821)

Monday to Friday, 8am–6pm

[www.HFLocal.org](http://www.HFLocal.org)



Plans are offered by affiliates of Healthfirst, Inc.

\*2015 Quality Rating by NY State of Health, the official health plan marketplace.

\*\*Based on indicators chosen by the New York State Department of Health and published in its 2014 publication A Consumer's Guide to Medicaid Managed Care in NYC and on Long Island.

<sup>1</sup>4-star rating is for the 2015 plan year that runs from 1/1/15 through 12/31/15. Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system. Star Ratings are calculated each year and may change from one year to the next.

©2015 HF Management Services, LLC.

NYCOR002236

INA15\_77(a)  
H3359\_MKT15\_111