



TAKING BACK THE STREETS (left to right) Woodside Houses Resident Association President Ann Cotton-Morris, PSA #9 Captain Nancy Barry, and Staten Island and Queens Borough Management Director Carolyn Jasper with a proclamation from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

NYCHA CELEBRATES 25TH 'NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME'

By Michelle Eames

SINCE 1984, THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY AUGUST HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME (NNO). What began nationally as a 400-community, 23-state, 2.5-million participant event has grown over the years to include over 10,000 communities including all 50 states and U.S. territories and well over 35 million participants. This year, August 5, 2008 marked the 25th anniversary of NNO and residents of NYCHA's Woodside Houses and the surrounding community in Queens, came out to make their voices heard and show their support for the campaign. Woodside was just one of ten sites where NYCHA residents "took back the streets" with a NNO event.

NNO is the brainchild of Matt A. Peskin, who as the executive director of the National Association of Town Watch (NATW)—a nonprofit umbrella organization for thousands of crime prevention groups and law enforcement agencies across the country—conceived of the event to improve community involvement in the fight against crime. NNO seeks to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anticrime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and send a message to criminals letting them know that neighbors are organized and are fighting back.

This year, the crowd at the Woodside Houses/Police Service Area #9 event grew

larger and larger as the DJ's harmonious sounds and the aroma of the smoking grill filled the air. That crowd included local police, residents and members of community groups.

Woodside Houses Resident Association President and Queens Council of Presidents Chair Ann Cotton-Morris served as mistress of ceremonies, kicking things off. Ms. Cotton-Morris thanked the residents for coming to, "show the bad guys that we are not afraid to be out in our communities."

The festivities continued when on behalf of NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez, Staten Island and Queens Borough Management Director Carolyn Jasper presented Captain Nancy Barry of PSA #9 and Ms. Cotton-Morris with the NNO proclamation from Mayor

(Continued on page 4)

MORE RENT PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

By Michelle Eames

THANKS TO THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY'S (NYCHA'S) COLLABORATION WITH THREE LOCAL BANKS, RESIDENTS NOW HAVE MORE OPTIONS WHEN IT'S TIME TO PAY THE RENT. In addition to mailing checks or money orders to the central "Lockbox"—a system which was implemented in the Spring of 2001—residents can now pay their rent at eight bank branches affiliated with Carver Federal Savings, Capital One and Wachovia Bank. Currently, approximately 94,000 NYCHA residents pay their rent using the Lockbox and another 68,000 pay through check cashing locations.

The initiative was designed not only to provide NYCHA residents with more rent-paying options, but also to encourage familiarity with banks, banking, and financial services. A *New York Observer* article dated May 21st cites a New York State Department Banking estimate that nearly one in 10 New Yorkers are "bankless" and that nearly three out of four public housing developments are closer to a check cashing store than to a bank.

"Our hope is to introduce residents to more traditional financial institutions so that they can use what banks are offering in terms of opening bank accounts and building credit history," said NYCHA's Department of Accounting and Fiscal Services Deputy Director Adham Choucri.

The pilot program first began in October 2007 at the Carver bank branch located in the Pathmark supermarket at 300 West 145th Street in Harlem. It was so successful that Carver's Jamaica Center Branch at

(Continued on page 7)

7TH ANNUAL KIDS WALK



The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) held its Seventh Annual Kids Walk at Clove Lakes Park in Staten Island on August 19th to emphasize the importance of exercise in the fight against obesity. NYCHA Board Member Margarita López was there to lend her support to the 1,850 youth from 44 community centers Citywide who participated in the two-and-a-half mile walk-a-thon. Big Apple Circus clowns, like the one above, kept everyone entertained. Community health providers taught about nutrition and proper eating habits, and a banner contest and group games centered on health and fitness completed the day's activities. Each child received a t-shirt, ball cap and a bag with health-related items provided by various sponsors, including Affinity Health Plan, Community Health Action of Staten Island, Health Plus, Maramont Corporation, and Staten Island University Hospital.

REGISTER TO VOTE!

The General Election is just two months away, on Tuesday, November 4th.

Residents of public housing are encouraged to vote. First-time voters must register by October 10th. For your convenience, enclosed is a New York State Voter Registration Form. You can also use the Voter Registration Form to update your name and/or address. Just fill out the form and mail or deliver it to your County Board of Elections by October 10th. Your County Board will notify you of your eligibility.

- For more information, call your County Board of Elections or (212) VOTE-NYC (212-868-3692)
- Residents of New York City can call toll-free at 1-866-VOTE-NYC.
- Hearing impaired people with TDD can call (212) 487-5496.
- To get the Voter Registration Form in Spanish, Chinese or Korean, call 212-286-3692.
- For more information, visit the Board of Elections website at www.vote.nyc.ny.us

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PAGE 2
BOXING CHAMP
NISA RODRIGUEZ



PAGE 7
HOW YOU CAN HELP
SAVE THE PLANET



PAGES 10 AND 11
END OF SUMMER
PHOTO SPREAD



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

New Executive Order to Expand Language Access



OVER THE SUMMER I SIGNED THE CITY'S FIRST LANGUAGE ACCESS EXECUTIVE ORDER, WHICH ESTABLISHES A UNIFORM POLICY AND STANDARDS FOR TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES FOR CITY AGENCIES THAT HAD DIRECT INTERACTION WITH NEW YORKERS. Executive Order 120 requires every such City agency to provide language assistance in the top six languages spoken by New Yorkers.

To ensure that limited-English-proficient residents

have meaningful access to City programs, services and activities, the City's new Customer Service Group, housed within the Mayor's Office of Operations, will work closely with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to facilitate the application and oversee compliance with the executive order by each agency.

For the 1.8 million New Yorkers with limited English proficiency, interacting with government all too often can be a challenge. All New Yorkers should have the same access to the same services and the same opportunities. This Executive Order will make our city more accessible, directly impacting thousands of New Yorkers while helping us become the most inclusive municipal government in the nation.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), which serves such a large population of applicants as well as residents and Section 8 Voucher Holders, has a Language Services Unit (LSU) through its Department of Equal Opportunity. LSU provides language assistance services by translating vital documents or providing interpreters for eligibility interviews, apartment rentals, termination of tenancy hearings, and public meetings and to disseminate important information to residents at individual developments. LSU also manages NYCHA's Language Bank, which consists of over 200 trained employee-volunteers who collectively speak 46 languages, and assist with these services.

Nearly one-half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and 25 percent of City residents do not speak English as their primary language. New York City residents who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding English will now have better access to City government information and services in their language.

Executive Order 120 requires that City agencies provide interpretation services, including the use of telephonic interpretation, oral or written translation services, and translation of essential public documents into the most commonly spoken languages including Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian and French Creole. Each agency will designate a Language Access Coordinator who will work to develop a Language Access policy and implementation plan.

The Language Access Executive Order expands our commitment to accessible services for limited English proficient New Yorkers. In 2003, the 311 Customer Service Center changed the way New Yorkers interacted with City government by providing information for callers in 170 different languages. The expanded Translation Unit in the Department of Education currently provides parents with information in eight languages. Under Local Law 73, which I signed in 2003, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Homeless Services, the Administration for Children's Services and the Human Resources Administration already provide enhanced language access for limited-English-proficient individuals seeking vital services.

Michael R. Bloomberg

THE FACES OF NYCHA

GOLDEN GLOVES WINNER NISA RODRIGUEZ

By Ashley Grosso

ON THE FLOOR BENEATH THE HEAVY BAGS IN THE BOXING ROOM AT ST. MARY'S RECREATION CENTER IN THE SOUTH BRONX THERE WERE GYM BAGS, MATS, A PUDDLE OF SWEAT, AND A SINGLE PONYTAIL HOLDER. That ponytail holder was a sure sign that boxer Nisa Rodriguez was around.

Nisa, who lives across the street in the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA's) Betances Houses, started out as the only female boxer in the gym when her father brought her to the ring at the Betances Community Center and NYCHA's boxing program at the age of 12. Before that, all of her fights were in the schoolyard and on the street. Now, at 17 years old, Nisa has already fought seven official matches with women and frequently spars with men.

I caught up with her on an oppressively hot July 22nd, while she was back home in New York City, after fighting in the Women's National Golden Gloves competition in Florida (July 8-12) and just before the Empire State Games in Binghamton (July 24-26), which she won by default. Nisa's trainer of six years, Jay Kortright, founder of the Betances Boxing Program, had convinced her to work out despite the heat that day. "I don't give breaks," he said.

Even at six feet tall and 154 pounds, Nisa seems too sweet to fight. This quality earned her the nickname "Sweet Hands." She is quick to smile, chat with everyone in the gym, and show off her pictures from the trip to Florida. But when she trains, her appearance changes. Her jeans, t-shirt, and jewelry are replaced by layers of gym clothes that must be stifling: a long-sleeved shirt, zip-up jacket, baggy shorts, blue boxing shoes and green hand wraps. She looks determined. Her long wavy hair is pulled back loosely as she works out.

In the boxing room you can hear Spanish-language music, jump ropes snapping on the floor, and gloves hitting the heavy bags repaired with duct tape. Flags hang in the windows, and the walls are lined with pictures of Bruce Lee as well as some local boxers, including Sweet Hands herself. A boy passing through the room points out to his

(Continued on page 3)



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Senior Benefit and Entitlement Fair is a Great Resource for NYCHA's Seniors



ON OCTOBER 2ND, THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY'S (NYCHA'S) DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENT SUPPORT SERVICES WILL HOST ITS FOURTH ANNUAL SENIOR BENEFIT AND ENTITLEMENT (SBEF) FAIR AT RIVERBANK STATE PARK IN UPPER MANHATTAN. The theme for this year's fair is "Health and Financial Fitness," and all day long, from 10AM to 3PM, seniors will be able to take advantage of a comprehensive range of services.

The Senior Benefit & Entitlement Fair offers seniors the convenience of having a large

number of service providers in one location. There will be over 50 participating organizations and NYCHA expects approximately 1,500 seniors from all five boroughs to attend.

Prior to the Fair, pre-registered seniors will receive a list of the information required for the services being offered so that they can be prepared to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

Financial Fitness

A special component of this year's Fair is Financial Literacy. We've developed a series of brief, 20 minute seminars on How to Open and Manage a Bank Account, Check Cashing vs. Local Banking, and Identity Theft. Representatives from a number of banks and financial advocacy organizations will be present to address any questions or concerns.

Benefits and Services

The Senior Benefit & Entitlement Fair will provide attendees with application assistance and registration opportunities for various entitlements such as: Access-A-Ride, Reduced Fare MetroCard and the Food Card. Seniors will have the opportunity to arrange for Direct Deposit for their Social Security benefits, register to vote, be added to the permanent absentee voter list, and reclaim unclaimed funds being held by the state. The latest information and options on the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program will be available as well as other health related information.

Health Screenings and Services

A broad array of health services will be provided by various hospitals and health organizations including screenings for blood pressure, vision/glaucoma, diabetes/glucose/cholesterol, hearing, foot and prostate. In addition, flu shots will be provided by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and administered by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Massage therapists and group exercise classes such as Tai Chi will also be available on the plaza overlooking the Hudson River.

Don't Forget to Register

All costs associated with the production of this event have been covered by contributions from the participating Medicare Advantage Plans, banking institutions and other organizations. I'd like to thank them for the support.

I strongly urge our seniors to pre-register for this year's event. Interested seniors should call Resident Support Services at (212) 306-8443. (See the ad on page 13.)

Tino Hernandez

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GOLDEN GLOVES

(Continued from page 2)

friend, "Look, a real boxing ring." A younger girl shadowboxes in the mirror.

Other boxers stop working out and gather around the ring to watch Nisa. Her punches are so fast the camera cannot capture them. Jay wears focus mitts, padded targets for her to strike and practice combinations. One of the mitts is flung across the ring as she hisses with each jab of her fist.

When Jay first saw Nisa boxing he knew that she had a special skill and made it his business to pay attention to her. The training has paid off so far. Nisa came in second place at the Women's National Golden Gloves in Miami, a somewhat disappointing experience after winning the New York Golden Gloves competition in Madison Square Garden on April 17th of this year. She waited five years to be able to compete at the Garden and it was one of her most memorable matches, so far—she defeated her opponent with a knockout in the first round.

Many people at the gym and in the community are supportive of Nisa and want her to succeed. Another boxer says of Nisa and Jay, "Both of them are formidable. She's the real thing." The press keeps reaching out to her, including the *Daily News*, *New York* magazine, and the *Bronx Beat*. She keeps a low-key attitude.

Nisa said that as a woman it was especially hard for her to earn the respect of the male boxers when she began boxing. But earning respect is not the only problem for female boxers like Nisa. Sparring matches with men do not count on her official record, and some other women are afraid to fight her. Women's boxing is not as well known as men's boxing, though it is growing in popularity. Boxing is currently the only Olympic sport without a women's event. Nisa's dream is to compete in London if the International Olympic Committee decides to add boxing to the roster of women's sports in the 2012 Games.

Since women boxers also

(Continued on page 7)

DEBORAH'S DIARY

By Deborah Williams



Celebration of Life – They blew out the candles and in that instant Brooklyn's Vandalia Houses residents Susie Mushatt Jones and Leocadio Figueroa Vazquez marked their 109th and 96th birthdays, respectively. Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes joined 135 seniors at the Vandalia Senior Center to celebrate what can only be remembered as a milestone event, with cakes, fruit salad, and the dances, the Electric Slide and the Macarena. The DA presented both celebrants with Citations of Honor, as "Extraordinary Elders" for living their lives with "grace, dignity and wisdom."

Susie Mushatt Jones

Ms. Jones was born on July 6, 1899 in Loundes County, Alabama and says she has held on to many good memories during her 109 years. She remembers that Booker T. Washington sat on the Board of Trustees of the school she attended—the Calhoun Colored School in Calhoun, Alabama. She lived through many historic events including the Civil Rights Movement. "I remember meeting



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Blumstein's department store, during his book signing tour," Ms. Jones, or as she is better known, Miss Susie, said. (The book Ms. Jones is referring to is "Stride Toward Freedom," which was copyrighted in 1958.) Ms. Jones also witnessed the Harlem Renaissance (approximately 1920 to 1930), and the women's struggle for the right to vote, granted in 1920.

After graduating from the Calhoun Colored School, Ms. Jones was accepted into Tuskegee University, in Alabama, but was unable to attend because her father couldn't afford the tuition on his sharecropper's salary. Ms. Jones vowed to make sure everyone had a chance to go to college. One of her many achievements while at Calhoun was co-founding the "Calhoun Club," to help financially disadvantaged youth with scholarships or loans for college. In honor of her work with the Calhoun Club, the Harvard University Library Open Collections Program presented Ms. Jones with a portfolio of prints of the Calhoun Colored School during the 2005 Family Day celebration.

In addition to her work with the Calhoun Club Ms. Jones promised herself that she would send the first girl born into her own family to college. True to her word, on the meager salary of \$50 per week she made as a housekeeper and childcare provider, Ms. Jones financed her niece Lavilla Watson's college education. Today, Lavilla—Dr. Lavilla Watson—is just one of the three nieces that Ms. Jones has put through college.

Ms. Jones attributes her longevity to good health and loving relationships. As one of 10 children, with more than 100 nieces and nephews combined, and 13 godchildren, Ms. Jones has many loving relationships. Ms. Jones has resided in Vandalia Houses for 20 years and even though she lost her sight in 1999, she sat on the Vandalia tenant patrol until the age of 107.

Leocadio Figueroa Vazquez

Mr. Leocadio Figueroa Vazquez was born at Naranjito, Puerto Rico on April 8, 1912, as one of three siblings. At age 15 Mr. Vazquez's mother passed away and because he was the oldest child, he was forced to work on sugar cane plantations to support the family. Mr. Vazquez eventually enlisted in the U.S. Army serving as a civil patrolman in Europe, stationed in Belgium, France and England. He was awarded the American Defense Service and Good Conduct Medal with seven overseas bars. In 1945, Mr. Vazquez was discharged from the Army and returned to Puerto Rico. To fulfill his desire to learn the culinary arts trade Mr. Vazquez enrolled in and attended the University of Rio Piedras where he mastered the art of baking and became a baker. Mr. Vazquez came to the mainland U.S. in 1954 and moved into Vandalia Houses in 1988. As a result of two marriages, Mr. Vazquez is the proud parent of five children.



THE NYCHA NOT WANTED LIST

In this issue we continue our editorial policy of publishing the names of individuals who have been permanently excluded from our public housing developments. The purpose of this list is to keep residents informed of the Housing Authority's ongoing effort to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of our facilities. Here follows a list of the people excluded after hearings were held on May 2, 9, 16 and 30 and June 6, 2007. **Please note: These exclusions are based on NYCHA's Administrative Hearing Process and should not be confused with the Trespass Notice Program under Mayor Bloomberg's Operation Safe Housing Initiative.**

REMEMBER, IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR NYCHA'S SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT AT (212) 306-8595.

Prohibited as of May 2, 2007

Chaniqua Williams Case 3164/07 formerly associated with the second floor of 40-05 12th Street, Queensbridge North Houses, Queens.

Prohibited as of May 9, 2007

Terry Johnson Case 3095/07 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 405 Lexington Avenue, Louis Armstrong Houses, Brooklyn.

Corey Danzy Case 3093/07 formerly associated with the second floor of 255 West 114th Street, King Towers, Manhattan.

Evelyn Puelo Case 3293/07 formerly associated with the first floor of 240 Lockman Avenue, Mariner's Harbor Houses, Staten Island

Prohibited as of May 16, 2007

Michael Pledger Case 3243/07 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 51-15 Almeda Avenue, Ocean Bay Apartments, Queens.

Lamar Brown Case 352/07 formerly associated with the third floor of 333 Georgia Avenue, Unity Plaza, Brooklyn.

Efrain Baez Case 3301/07 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 65 East 99th Street, Carver Houses, Manhattan.

Ziomar Correa Case 3326/07 formerly associated with the first floor of 500 West 177th Street, Fort Washington Consolidated, Manhattan.

Luis Gonzalez Case 3447/07 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 1670 Pacific Street, Albany Houses, Brooklyn.

John Johnson Case 3448/07 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 681 Courtlandt Avenue, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.

Dominique Frazier Case 3580/07 formerly associated with the sixteenth floor of 344 East 28th Street, Straus Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of May 30, 2007

Kenneth Lloyd Case 3648/07 formerly associated with the first floor of 1-04 Astoria Blvd., Astoria Houses, Queens.

Daniel Whitfield Case 3767/07 formerly associated with the first floor of 1144 Lenox Road, Reid Apartments, Brooklyn.

Danny Jones Case 3713/07 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 123 East 112th Street, Johnson Houses, Manhattan.

Curtis Woodley Case 3778/07 formerly associated with the third floor of 225 West 152nd Street, Harlem River Houses, Manhattan.

Edioriel Garcia Case 3839/07 formerly associated with the first floor of 5612 Farragut Road, Glenwood Houses, Brooklyn.

Michael Pledger Case 3243/07 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 51-51 Almeda Avenue, Ocean Bay Apartments, Queens.

Ramel Gibson Case 2315/07 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 3194 Bayview Avenue, Gravesend Houses, Brooklyn.

Elbert Mordaunt Case 3880/07 formerly associated with the first of 63 Avenue W, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.

Shamar Watts Case 681/07 formerly associated with the second floor of 2935 West 33rd Street, O'Dwyer Gardens, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of June 6, 2007

Gerald Liverman Case 3908/07 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 2331 West 11th Street, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.

Marion Johnson Case 3911/07 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 671 Willoughby Avenue, Sumner Houses, Brooklyn.

Charlene Soto Case 8528/06 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 435 East 105th Street, Wilson Houses, Manhattan.

'NIGHT OUT'

(Continued from page 1)

Michael R. Bloomberg. "Tonight sends the message that we are organized and our neighborhoods are getting safer and safer. With the ongoing partnership of the NYPD and NYCHA, we will work to stay that way," Borough Director Jasper said.

Captain Barry spoke of the necessary partnership required to keep crime down. "We all have the same agenda in mind—keeping housing developments throughout Queens safe."

The Captain highlighted some of the community and law enforcement initiatives in place to honor the principle of NNO all year long. They include the 24-hour hotline for anonymous reports of suspicious behavior: 1-888-NYC-SAFE; the Auxiliary Police Program open to the general public ages 17 ½ to 60; and the Law Enforcement Explorers, a program for youth and young adults ages 14 to 20 who are interested in law enforcement as a career.

Renee Brailsford, a city employee who attended the event, was accompanied by her two granddaughters, one of whom has a keen interest in criminal justice, and the other, aspirations of being a scientist. Brailsford indicated that NNO is, "helpful to the community and to the young people. As a community we have to come together. It is not only up to the police."

Night Out was also celebrated at LaGuardia Houses, Jackie Robinson Houses and Manhattanville Houses, in Manhattan, sponsored by PSAs #4, #5 and #6, respectively. NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr. presented Mayoral proclamations to Department Inspector Stephen Capasso of PSA #5 for Jackie Robinson Houses and Captain Elisa Cokkinos of PSA #6 for Manhattanville. Board Member Margarita López presented a Mayoral proclamation to Captain Edward F. Britton, Commanding Officer of PSA #4 for LaGuardia Houses, on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

In Staten Island Night Out was celebrated at Midland Beach for all NYCHA residents. Staten Island is served by PSA #1A Satellite. In the Bronx, Night Out was celebrated at Patterson and Throgs Neck Houses, which are served by PSAs #7 and #8. In Brooklyn, Night Out was celebrated at Pink Houses, Bushwick Houses and Coffey Park, served by PSAs #1, #2 and #3.



ONWARD AND UPWARD Ruth Boddie (center) and Jacqueline Pimentel (right) of NYCHA's Resident Employment Services join NYCHA residents (left to right) Justina Moore, Keanna Moseley and Jennifer Thompson at the Year Up Graduation Ceremony on August 29th at the Embassy Suites Hotel.

Bright Futures For 'Year Up' Grads

By Ming Fearon

YEAR UP NYC CELEBRATED ITS JULY 2008 GRADUATES IN THE STYLISH ATRIUM OF THE EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL AT THE WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER. The 280 attendees of the graduation ceremony lauded the efforts of the 32 graduates, four of whom are NYCHA residents and plan to continue their education.

Year Up was founded in Boston in October 2000 by Harvard Business School graduate Gerald Chertavian and is now operating in five cities. Its goals are to close the "opportunity divide" and empower urban talent to reach their potential. Participants in Year Up NYC take six months and 16 credits' worth of courses at Pace University, and work for six months in internships with prestigious Fortune 500 companies such as Merrill Lynch, Bank of America, and Morgan Stanley. Each student receives a \$150 weekly stipend for the year. Mentors and volunteers of the program were in attendance at the ceremony, as well as Year Up NYC staff and private and corporate partners of Year Up.

JPMorgan Chase Global Infrastructure Managing Director John Ropas was the keynote speaker. Mr. Ropas noted that he was a former resident of NYCHA's Ravenswood Houses in Queens. His speech included tips on how to get ahead in the corporate workforce and detailed his success story. "If I could do it," Mr. Ropas declared to the graduates, "you can, too."

While Year Up has requirements for applicants — they must be high school graduates or GED recipients between the ages of 18 and 24, and low-to-moderate income residents of participating cities—Mr. Chertavian noted that "motivated students who are willing to work hard and take advantage of a good opportunity are always the ideal applicants."

"It takes a lot of dedication but don't give up," said Jennifer Thompson, 22, a resident of Brooklyn's Howard Houses, who was the Student Speaker at

the ceremony. Ms. Thompson introduced herself to the audience as a former introvert. She commented that Year Up doesn't tolerate that kind of behavior and helped her to come out of her shell. "Today I'm speaking in front of hundreds of people," she said in her speech. "I guess I can't call myself shy anymore."

What NYCHA Graduates Say About the Program

Nineteen-year-old Justina Moore, a resident of Brooklyn's Van Dyke Houses, remarked that the program, "isn't hard if you're motivated. Take in all the knowledge you can and network. In the long run it'll get you far," Ms. Moore said.

"In order to finish, you need to be really committed, especially if you're young," said Keanna Moseley, a resident of the South Bronx's Webster Houses. At 18 years of age, Keanna was one of the two youngest members of the graduating class. "Year Up is very different from high school," Ms. Moseley continued. "In high school there's a 'me mentality'—you do things your own way, you're not focused on punctuality. For the program you have to break out of your comfort zone, learn to network, and gain confidence." With a huge grin, Ms. Moseley added, "At the end of it, you'll be a whole new person."

If You Are Interested...

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40-35 21ST ST
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NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY Board Meeting Schedule

Notice is hereby given that the New York City Housing Authority's Board Meetings take place every other Wednesday at 10:00 A.M. (unless otherwise noted) in the Board Room on the 12th Floor of 250 Broadway, New York, New York. The remaining meetings for Calendar Year 2008 are as follows:

- September 3, 2008
- September 17, 2008
- October 2, 2008 (Thursday)
- October 16, 2008 (Thursday)
- October 29, 2008
- November 12, 2008
- November 26, 2008
- December 10, 2008
- December 24, 2008



Any changes to the schedule above will be posted on NYCHA's Website at nyc.gov/nycha and in the NYCHA Journal to the extent practicable at a reasonable time before the meeting.

These meetings are open to the public. Pre-registration of speakers is required. Those who wish to register must do so at least forty-five (45) minutes before the scheduled Board Meeting. Comments are limited to the items on the agenda. Speakers will be heard in the order of registration. Speaking time will be limited to three (3) minutes. The public comment period will conclude upon all speakers being heard or at the expiration of thirty (30) minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever occurs first.

For Board Meeting dates and times, and/or additional information, please visit our Website at nyc.gov/nycha or contact us at (212) 306-6088. Copies of the agenda can be picked up at the Office of the Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, New York, no earlier than 3PM on the Friday before the upcoming Wednesday Board Meeting.

Any person requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the Board Meeting, should contact the Office of the Secretary at (212) 306-6088 no later than five (5) business days before the Board Meeting.

RENT PAYMENT OPTIONS

(Continued from page 1)

158-45 Archer Avenue in Jamaica, Queens, also began accepting rent payments this past summer. Since June 1, 2008, residents have also been able to make rent payments at the Capital One branch located at East 3rd Street and Avenue C, and at the Wachovia branches located at Avenue of the Americas and 45th Street, Park Avenue and 48th Street, and Broadway at 10th, 70th, and 85th Streets—all in Manhattan.

While the transaction fee of \$1.50 remains the same whether payments are made at a check cashing establishment or a bank branch, the bank affiliation does provide access to a full array of banking options including investment, credit and small business services.

Online Rent Payments

NYCHA residents can also pay their rent online 24 hours a day, seven days a week through NYCHA's ePayment system by logging on to NYCHA's Website at nyc.gov/nycha and clicking on the "ePayment—online rent payment" logo. Within the first month of availability (February 2008) over 7,000 residents took advantage of this new high tech option.

ePayment presents a way to add convenience and expediency to an already too short day. To take advantage of ePayment residents need only have a checking or savings account and access to a computer with Internet capabilities. Where typically a payment by mail can take four days or more for processing, ePayment allows for same-day processing for any payments made before 6:00 PM EST. Payments made after 6:00 PM EST or on weekends and holidays are credited to the residents' rent accounts the next business day. ePayments are confidential and easy to track. There is a \$1.00 processing fee.

Rent Payment By Payroll Deduction for City Employees

In 2007 an additional rent payment option became available to employees of the City of New York who also live in public housing, which is to have the rent paid through a payroll deduction.

GREEN TIPS TO HELP SAVE OUR PLANET

By Ming Fearon



HOTLY DEBATED ONCE UPON A TIME, MOST PEOPLE NOW BELIEVE THAT HUMAN BEINGS DO HAVE AN IMPACT ON GLOBAL WARMING. The need to be environmentally friendly is more urgent now than ever.

Minute changes in your habits and lifestyle are all that is necessary to lessen the negative impact you have on the earth's environment. Current trends toward eco-friendliness have led to a surge in the number of methods and products available, making it easier than ever to live green. Although the following suggestions are no quick-fixes, these five simple habits are both cost-effective and will help to preserve the earth for your children and theirs. Websites such as Nationalzoo.si.edu (the website for the Smithsonian National Zoological Park) and www.energy.com not only highlight the following tips but provide many more that may better suit your lifestyle.

Ditch Bottled Water – Take advantage of living in New York. The city health commissioner, Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, described New York City tap water as "the Champagne of municipal tap waters." The New York Times calculated that drinking eight glasses of water a day will cost you about 49 cents a year if you take it from a New York City tap and \$1,400 a year if you buy it bottled. Why spend money on something you could get for virtually no cost. Purchasing a reusable bottle to drink from will also have a vast impact on the environment by eliminating the waste of the approximately 60 million plastic water bottles thrown away each day. While you're at it, try turning the tap off while brushing your teeth or scrubbing dishes.

Bring Your Own Bag – Plastic bags are not biodegradable and trees need to be cut down for paper bags. Refuse both plastic and paper from stores and bring your own reusable canvas or cloth bags to carry groceries in. Some stores, like Trader Joe's, have even taken to rewarding customers that do so with a monthly chance to win store gift certificates.



Change Your Light Bulbs – Unscrew those traditional incandescent light bulbs from your lamps and switch them with compact fluorescent light bulbs, or CFLs. Although CFLs are initially a little pricier, they use 75% less energy, last ten times longer than an incandescent, and will ultimately end up saving you money.

Switch the Oven Off a Little Sooner – A simple trick to save electricity is to turn the oven off before the full recommended cook time. It takes a little bit of time for an oven to cool down. For every hour of cook time, shave off five minutes of oven time; it'll have the same effect on what's cooking as turning it off after the complete cook time would and thousands of watts of electricity a year can be saved.

GOLDEN GLOVES (Continued from page 3)

to deal with less money than men, Nisa has been pursuing as many options as possible for sponsorships. Although she goes to the salon only once a year and rarely gets dressed up, Nisa used to model when she was younger and has been getting offers recently for modeling opportunities again.

Outside of the gym, Nisa loves music and movies. She has two brothers and one sister. A goal-oriented young woman, Nisa is working toward her GED.

As a lifelong Betances resident, Nisa has Bronx pride and missed her neighborhood during the recent trip to Miami. The community appeals to her because the location is lively, there is always noise, and the store is right there.

In the future, Nisa wants to give back to her community through an animal shelter (she loves her dogs) or a program for alcoholics and their families, something close to her heart based on experiences in her own life. Her philanthropic goals stem from a realization of how she herself has been helped. She says of boxing and sports, "It saved my life."

The kids in the gym look up to her and ask her to train them. Her advice for the next generation in her neighborhood is "If you want something, do it. Don't let nobody tell you otherwise. It doesn't hurt to try." It doesn't hurt, that is, unless you are fighting Nisa.

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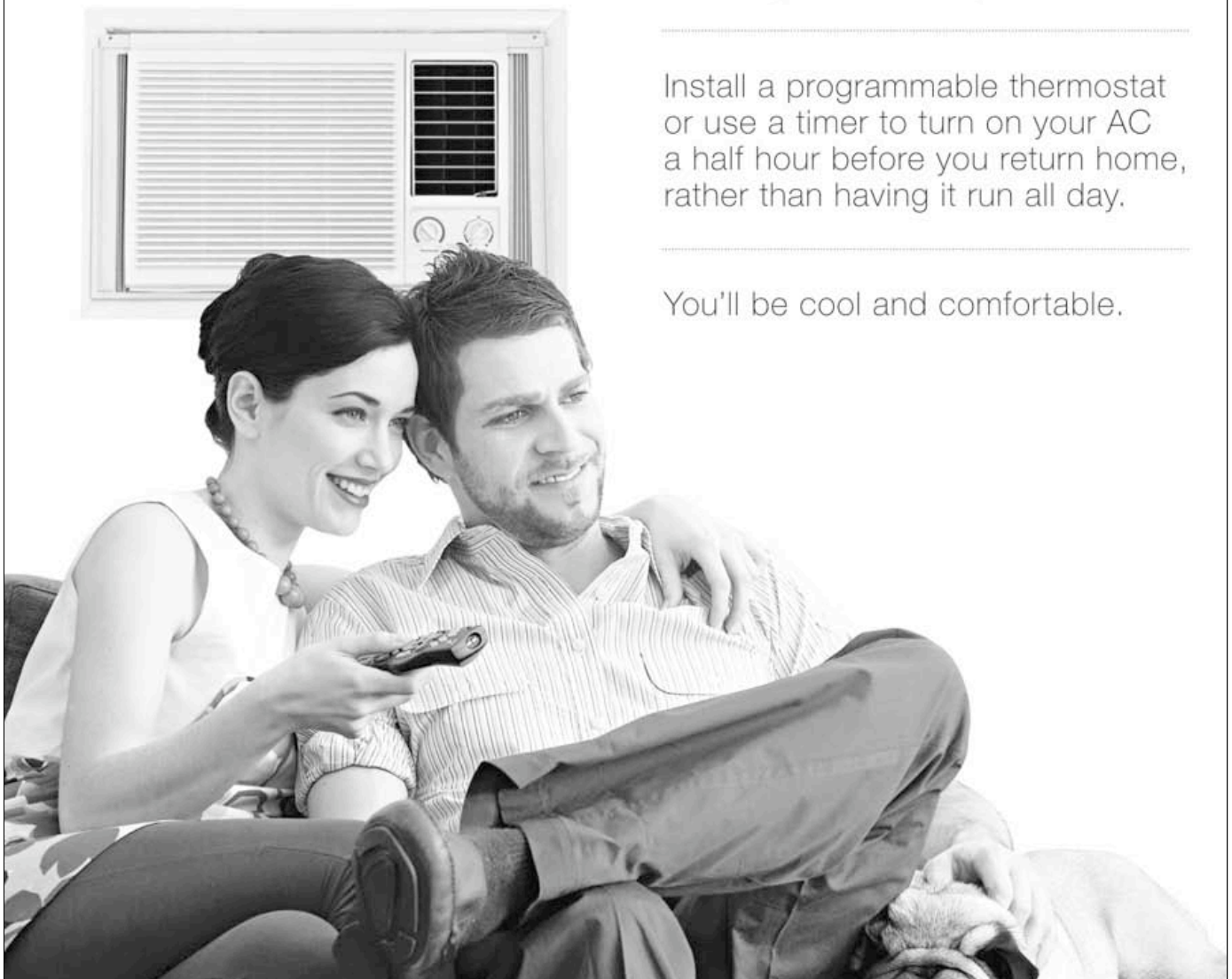
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Set your AC no lower than 78 degrees. Any lower can increase your costs by up to 40 percent.

Turn off your AC when you leave home.

Install a programmable thermostat or use a timer to turn on your AC a half hour before you return home, rather than having it run all day.

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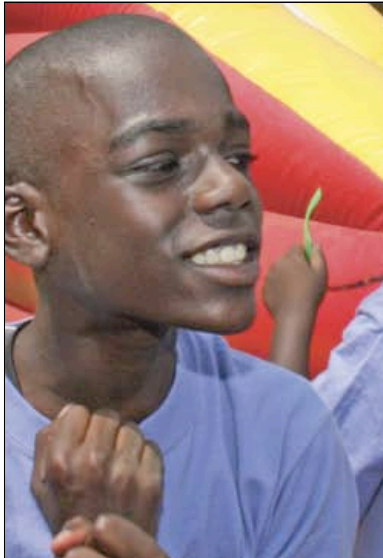
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CELEBRATING SUMMER



Assembly Member Vito Lopez (third from left) hosted his annual picnic for seniors at the Sunken Meadow Park in Long Island on July 17th. The Assembly Member is shown here with (left to right) NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Chairman Tino Hernandez and Assembly Member Michael N. Gianaris.

(Above) Young residents compete at 5 Field Day at Riverbank State Park in Upper

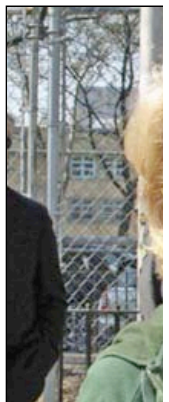


(Left) Wall climbing at the Citywide Carnival, hosted by NYCHA's Sports Through Education Program and (above) face painting at the Kids Walk Event on August 19th.

The O'Jays were the subject of a special tribute concert kicking off the Harlem Summer Show shown above (left to right) are O'Jays Eric Nolan Grant, Walter Williams, the show's producer through September 11th. The Phil Young Trio, Ghanniyya Greene and Seleno Clarke are



NYCHA senior residents kick up their heels at the 23rd Annual Senior Resident Volunteer Luncheon at Leonard's in Great Neck, Long Island. The luncheon honored seniors for their volunteer work.



(Above, left to right) Board Member Ma

R 2008 NYCHA-STYLE!



Sports Through Education's Track and Field event in Manhattan in July.

(Above) Youth from the South Beach Community Center in Staten Island, fishing off the pier, and, (at left, and below) more fun at one of the Citywide Carnivals, which were held in Manhattan's Central Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, and Baisley Park in Queens.



Stage Concert Series held at the Harlem State Office Plaza on 125th Street on July 17th. Hosted by DJucer Chris Curry, and Eddie Levert. The concerts are on Thursday nights and will continue scheduled for September 4th and Battle of the DJs on September 11th.



Entertainer Bette Midler of the New York Restoration Project joins NYCHA Assembly Member Margarita López for a Million Trees New York initiative.



Seniors from the Bushwick Senior Center lined up for this photo at Assembly Member Vito Lopez' Annual Picnic in Sunken Meadow Park in Long Island on the first of two picnics the Assembly Member hosted, July 17th

**NYC Department of Sanitation
Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling**

Fall 2008 Electronics Recycling & Clothing Donation Events



When & Where: All events will be held from **8am to 2pm** (rain or shine)

Sunday, September 7	Brooklyn	Keyspan Park, Coney Island , Surf Ave. & 19th St.; take Cropsey Ave. exit off the Belt Parkway
Saturday, September 13	Manhattan	Columbia University , 116th St. btwn. Amsterdam Ave. & Morningside Dr.; cars enter at 116th St. & Amsterdam Ave.
Sunday, September 14	Staten Island	Staten Island Mall, Parking Lot F , near main entrance, 2655 Richmond Ave.
Saturday, September 20	Queens	Forest Park, Bandshell Parking Lot ; enter park at Forest Park Drive & Woodhaven Blvd.
Sunday, September 28	Bronx	Lehman College, North Lot , Goulden Ave., just south of Bedford Park West

If you can't make these events, visit www.nyc.gov/wasteless/electronics or www.nyc.gov/stuffexchange for additional options.

For more info, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/wasteless/electronics

The NYC Department of Sanitation is sponsoring this event with assistance from the Lower East Side Ecology Center, Goodwill Industries, and the Staten Island Mall/General Growth Properties, with additional support from Best Buy, Con Edison, and Intel.

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The New York City Housing Authority
 Community Operations
 Resident Support Services Department

is pleased to announce the 4th annual
SENIOR BENEFIT + ENTITLEMENT FAIR

This year's theme:
"Health and Financial Fitness"

Date: Thursday, October 2, 2008
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Location: Riverbank State Park
 679 Riverside Drive at 145th Street, Manhattan

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Call (212) 306-8443 to
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Conflict?

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The Safe Horizon Mediation Program is a leader in the practice of mediation as an effective cost-free alternative to expensive litigation or violence. Safe Horizon's Mediation Program can provide New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and staff with a safe, confidential environment where a neutral mediator will assist parties in diffusing their conflict, communicating more effectively, and in considering mutually agreeable solutions to problems.

For more than 25 years, Safe Horizon mediators have helped thousands of New Yorkers to peacefully address many kinds of disputes related to housing, families, schools, courts and much more. Other typical disputes involve parent-teen conflicts and other family conflicts, elder-care planning, noise complaints, harassment, and problems with merchants.

Of course, reaching an agreement or a resolution can't be guaranteed, but approximately 80% of the people who choose to mediate a dispute report that they are satisfied with the outcome. The large majority of people who reach an agreement stick to their agreement; because in mediation people voluntarily fashion their own solutions. The mediator is not a judge; instead he or she facilitates understanding between the participants.

Although Safe Horizon already provides services to many members of the NYCHA community, many New Yorkers aren't aware that mediation services are convenient and free. It's as easy as picking up the phone, dialing one of the numbers listed below and talking to a case manager about your conflict. Many of the centers are open in the evening for those who work day shifts. **See the list below to find the Dispute Resolution Center nearest to you.**

New York City Community Dispute Resolution Centers

Brooklyn and Manhattan: Safe Horizon Mediation

Brooklyn Mediation Center
 210 Joralemon Street, Room 618
 Brooklyn, NY 11201
 (P) 718-834-6671 Ext. 13 (F) 718-834-6681

Manhattan Mediation Center
 346 Broadway, Suite 400 W
 New York, NY 10013
 (P) 212-577-1740 Ext. 125 (F) 212-577-3879

Queens:
Community Mediation Services
 89-64 163rd Street
 Jamaica, NY 11432
 (P) 718-523-6868 (F) 718-523-8204

Staten Island:
New York Center for Interpersonal Development
 130 Stuyvesant Pl, 5th Floor
 Staten Island, NY 10301
 (P) 718-815-4557 (F) 718-876-6068

Bronx:
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To: Public Housing Residents

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

What is this notice about?

This notice is about a lawsuit called *Blatch et al. v. Hernandez, et al.*, 97 Civ. 3918 (LTS) (HBP).

What was the Blatch case about? Who brought it?

The Blatch case was brought by mentally disabled tenants and occupants of public housing run by the New York City Housing Authority (also called NYCHA) who had administrative grievances, tenancy termination proceedings, eviction proceedings in housing court, or appeals from administrative determinations.

What did the tenants and occupants who brought the case say was the problem?

The tenants said that the New York City Housing Authority does not try to solve problems of tenants with mental disabilities before they try to end their tenancy and make them leave. The tenants who brought the case also said that NYCHA did not try to help tenants and occupants with mental disabilities at each stage of the process of ending their tenancy. The tenants said that NYCHA did not give these people the help they were supposed to at the project level, at NYCHA and in court. The tenants who brought the case said that NYCHA did not accommodate tenants and occupants with mental disabilities as they were supposed to under the law.

What did the New York City Housing Authority say about the case?

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) said that it was following the law about how to treat people with mental disabilities. Specifically, NYCHA said it tried to solve problems of disabled and non-disabled tenants by consulting with the tenant, family members and outside agencies. NYCHA said that it notified both the New York City Human Resources Administration and the City Marshal of impending evictions of disabled people so they could try to solve the problem leading to the eviction. NYCHA said that it asked tenants if they had any disabled residents in their household and, if so, if they needed any help for their disability. It had an employee whose job was to resolve complaints of discrimination against the disabled. Since 1997, it had a formal procedure to determine if a tenant is mentally disabled and to not go forward with termination of tenancy proceedings against mentally disabled people who were not properly represented.

What happened to the case?

In 2005, the judge issued a lengthy decision discussing all of the claims. She found that occupants of public housing apartments who have not signed the lease do not have any rights in their apartments that are protected by the United States Constitution; that the Disability Rights statutes do not require NYCHA to provide personal financial management, apartment cleaning, or other individualized services to mentally disabled tenants; and that not all mentally disabled persons need a guardian or other expert representative at grievance or tenancy termination hearings. On the other hand, she found that NYCHA's procedures were insufficient to protect the rights of mentally disabled tenants at administrative hearings because it did not present to hearing officers information that may indicate a mental disability, it did not always suspend hearings for mentally disabled tenants who were not properly represented, and it did not always evaluate a tenant's mental competence when such an evaluation was required. The judge also found that NYCHA must notify the Housing Court about information in its possession that may suggest the tenant may need a guardian. The judge did not resolve other aspects of the case. She ordered plaintiffs and NYCHA to discuss with each other, and with a Magistrate Judge, a plan for solving the problems that she found with NYCHA's procedures. The tenants and NYCHA have now reached a plan they both agree on that will resolve the whole case. But first, the Court has to say that the settlement is ok.

How will the Court decide if the settlement is ok?

The judge must decide if the settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

Does the Court have to listen to any of the tenants or occupants with mental disabilities who were residents of public housing who are affected by this case?

Yes. If you are a class member of this case, you can tell the Court what you think about this settlement and the Court will listen to you. Keep reading to learn how to get in touch with the Court or the lawyers on this case.

Who is a class member of this case?

You are a class member in this case if you are now:

- A tenant or occupant who lives in housing owned and operated by NYCHA and
- You have a mental disability and
- You had administrative grievances and/or tenancy termination proceedings and/or eviction proceedings in housing court or appeals from NYCHA's

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administrative determinations in State Supreme Court.

What is the settlement?

The Housing Authority has established certain procedures that it will follow with respect to class members who are or may be incompetent.

What does it mean to be incompetent?

A tenant is incompetent if, as a result of mental disease or defect, the tenant is not able to understand what is going on with the proceedings to end her tenancy or evict her or not able to adequately protect her rights to her apartment.

What will NYCHA do with class members who are or may be incompetent?

NYCHA will not go ahead to end a tenancy when a person is incompetent unless the person is represented by a guardian.

What is a guardian?

A guardian is a person who is appointed to represent the interests of someone who has been found to be incompetent.

What will NYCHA do with class members who may be incompetent when NYCHA brings them to Housing Court?

NYCHA will tell the court if it has information that the tenant may be incompetent when it appears before a housing court judge or when it requests a warrant of eviction.

What about cases that are in court right now?

For cases that are in court now, or old cases that are brought back to court, NYCHA will also tell the court if it has information that the tenant may be incompetent when it appears before a housing court judge or when it requests a warrant of eviction on the case.

How long will NYCHA follow these rules under the settlement?

Some parts of the settlement will be permanent. The rest of the settlement will be in effect for a 4 year period unless modified by the Court. For more information about this, please review the whole settlement.

Can I ask for a copy of the settlement?

Yes. Please contact one of the lawyers for the tenants or NYCHA listed below.

Can you object to or comment on the settlement?

The Court must approve this settlement. You may comment on it or object to it. This settlement has not yet been approved by the Court. If the Court approves it, members of the class will be covered by this settlement and will have to follow it.

How do you comment on or object to this settlement?

The Court will hold a hearing to consider this settlement on September 23, 2008 at 11:00 am in Courtroom 17C of the United States Courthouse at 500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10038.

You may present comments or objections in writing to this

Proposed Settlement. You may also consult with a lawyer of your choice regarding this settlement. If you wish to present written comments or objections, you must indicate on the letter that it relates to *Blatch et al. v. Hernandez, et al.*, 97 Civ. 3918 (LTS)(HBP), and must mail them so as to be received by September 12, 2008 to:

Hon. Laura Taylor Swain
 United States District Court
 Southern District of New York
 500 Pearl Street
 New York, NY 10007

Please send copies of your comments to the attorneys for the tenants and the attorneys for the Housing Authority listed below:

Judith Goldiner, Esq.
 The Legal Aid Society
 Law Reform Unit – Civil Practice
 199 Water Street
 New York, NY 10038
 Attorneys for the Plaintiff Class

Ricardo Elias Morales
 General Counsel
 New York City Housing Authority
 Steven J. Rappaport, of counsel
 250 Broadway, 9th Floor
 New York, NY 10007
 Attorneys for Defendant
 New York City Housing Authority

How do I contact lawyers for the tenants who brought this case if I have questions about the settlement?

If you have questions concerning the settlement, you may also call the attorney for the plaintiff class at 212-577-3640.

A translation of this document is available in your management office. Please call the Language Services Unit at 212-306-4443 for an oral interpretation of this document in other languages.