



FORMER HPD COMMISSIONER BECOMES HUD SECRETARY

ON JANUARY 22, 2009, THE UNITED STATES SENATE CONFIRMED THE APPOINTMENT OF SHAUN DONOVAN AS PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD). Mr. Donovan is the former Commissioner of New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City Housing Authority's partner in a number of affordable housing initiatives under Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's plan to expand affordable housing.



**HUD Secretary
Shaun Donovan**

Upon Donovan's appointment, the Mayor stated, "The nation faces serious housing challenges today, and I can't think of anyone better suited to help President Obama and his Administration meet them than Shaun. ...Largely due to Shaun's stewardship, we've shown that through innovative thinking and responsible planning, government can be a stabilizing force during difficult times."

Donovan was Commissioner of HPD since 2004. He also

served at HUD as deputy assistant secretary for multi-family housing in the Clinton administration, managing a multi-billion dollar housing subsidy program.

He received graduate and undergraduate degrees from Harvard, where he studied at the Kennedy School of Government and at the Graduate School of Design.

\$3M CUT TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AVERTED IN 08-09 STATE BUDGET

By Eileen Elliott

NEW YORK STATE SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PEDRO ESPADA AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, INCLUDING FRESHMAN SENATOR DAN SQUADRON, WERE SUCCESSFUL IN RESTORING \$3 MILLION IN DEBT SERVICE FUNDING TO THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA) THAT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE HAD THREATENED TO CUT. The Governor proposed the cut in the State's 2008-2009 budget in an effort to mitigate a \$1.6 billion deficit. The \$3 million restoration is good news for NYCHA's 2008-2009 fiscal year (which runs on a calendar year). However the reduction has been proposed once again in the State's 2009-2010 Budget which is scheduled to pass on April 1, 2009. (The State Fiscal Year runs from April 1st to March 31st.)

On February 6th, the Senators mentioned above rallied the Majority conference to fight the cuts to NYCHA and won. Assembly Housing Chairman Vito Lopez and the Assembly Democrats were also helpful in this effort.

The \$3 million is debt service the State is obligated to pay on bonds that were sold to build 15 NYCHA developments the State built between 1958 and 1974.

State Operating Subsidy

In testimony he presented to State legislators in January, NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales asked for the

\$3 million to be restored. He also asked the State to show a renewed commitment to public housing by allocating \$61 million in funding needed to operate the 15 developments.

With the exception of State Fiscal Year 2008, NYCHA has not received State operating subsidy for the developments in the past decade. This has forced the Housing Authority to use its inadequate federal funding to support operations at those developments.

In State Fiscal Year 2008 NYCHA received an operating subsidy of \$3.4 million from the State, thanks to the efforts

of the legislature. Although the allocation was significantly less than what was needed to cover the actual operating costs, it was an important step in having the State meet its obligation to public housing.

Unfortunately there was not an allocation of operating funds in the State's 2009-2010 budget, nor in the Governor's proposed budget.

NYCHA is in the process of developing its 2009 budget, which, as it stands now, includes an estimated gap of \$129 million. The unfunded State developments account for 47% of the deficit.

NYCHA PARTNERS WITH CITY ON 2010 CENSUS



The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is working with NYC 2010 Census to make sure that NYCHA residents get counted. Shown above are NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales and City Coordinator for the 2010 Census Stacey Cumberbatch, formerly NYCHA's Chief of Staff. **See page 3 for more.**

It's tax time. Go get your EITC refund!

Tax season is here once again – which means that you could be eligible for tax credits and free or low-cost tax preparation. Your family could be eligible for up to \$6,500 with the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). You might also benefit from the New York City Child Care Tax Credit and other tax credits for parents, which could add up to an even bigger refund. **Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/ofe**, when you receive your W-2 form(s) to learn more about your eligibility for tax credits and to find a convenient location near you that prepares taxes for free or for just \$20.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

New Initiatives Help New Yorkers Stretch Their Paychecks This Tax Season



WITH THE ECONOMY ON THE DECLINE, THIS ADMINISTRATION IS DOING ITS BEST TO HELP NEW YORKERS STRETCH THEIR PAYCHECKS THROUGH A SERIES OF INITIATIVES. This year that support includes more free and low-cost tax assistance sites, and our new matching fund program—the SaveNYC Account program—which creates incentives for hard-working families to put away some of their refunds for future emergencies. We don't know how long it will take the economy

to rebound, but building some savings for next year is sound financial planning.

The SaveNYC Account Program

The SaveNYC Account program is a special savings account to help New Yorkers make the most of their tax refund by building savings through a privately funded City matching program. New Yorkers who visit select Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites to file their taxes may be eligible to open a SaveNYC Account with part of their tax refund and receive a 50 percent match (up to \$250) if they save the money for at least one year. The matching funds would be in addition to the 2 to 3 percent interest the savings accounts would earn.

The program has been launched at a dozen VITA sites in the five boroughs. Families earning less than \$45,000 and individuals earning less than \$20,000 are eligible to open a SaveNYC Account when filing their taxes at participating VITA sites.

VITA and Low-Cost Tax Prep Plus Sites

There are 54 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites, or VITA sites, throughout the City that prepare tax returns for families with dependents who make less than \$40,000, or individuals earning less than \$20,000, free of charge.

In addition to the VITA sites, this year the City expanded its Tax Prep Plus program Citywide, with 12 sites offering tax return preparation by a Tax One professional for only \$20. Tax Prep Plus sites offer professionally prepared tax returns to increase options and access to safe and affordable tax preparation. Families earning less than \$55,000 and individuals earning less than \$30,000 qualify. Tax Prep Plus sites will not offer refund anticipation loans and other predatory products to their customers, ensuring that consumers get every portion of their refund.

Both VITA volunteers and Tax Prep Plus preparers will help City residents claim the credits for which they qualify, which may include the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the New York City Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC).

The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Care Tax Credit

The EITC and New York City's local Child Care Tax Credit are two of the best tools we have to put money in the pockets of hard-working New Yorkers. For many New Yorkers, filing for tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Care Tax Credit can result in the single largest check they receive all year—as much as \$6,500. Families earning \$30,000 or less could be eligible to receive up to \$1,733 to reimburse costs for child care for children under 4 years old. New Yorkers can call 311 to learn the eligibility requirements for EITC and information about NYC CCTC, as well as other tax credits.

Working families and low-income New Yorkers are encouraged to call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov to learn how tax credits can boost their refunds; to see if they qualify for free tax preparation at one of the VITA or Tax Prep Plus sites; and to find out which VITA sites are offering SaveNYC Accounts.

Michael R. Bloomberg

THE FACES OF NYCHA

Meet Rosia Wyche: A 'Steel Magnolia'

By Heidi Morales



SHE STILL HAS THE MANNERISMS OF A SOUTHERN BELLE. By just talking with her you can perceive an undying appreciation and tradition of lady-like postures and impeccable dress. "Some people call me the 'Bloomie's' girl" (as in the department store Bloomingdale's), she said as she explained her passion for shopping and color coordination. She was born in North Carolina but later was persuaded by the excitement of this big city and moved to New York. But old habits die hard. I'm talking about a committed member of the NYCHA family, 30-year resident of Coney Island Houses, and a truly charming lady—Mrs. Rosia Wyche.

It takes true dedication and a strong desire for change to do what Mrs. Rosia Wyche does. After 34 years of working in the medical field as a nurse and administrator of various medical centers in the Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay areas of Brooklyn, New York; oh, and yes raising three children, she still has the energy within her to be the Resident Association President for Coney Island Houses, a post she has held for the past 12 years. Mrs. Wyche also represents her district, Brooklyn South, in the Council of Presidents and is the 2nd Vice-President of the City-wide Council of Presidents (CCOP). And, she does it all because she loves to help people.

She started out just lending a helping hand at TA meetings and soon after

was named Tenant Patrol Supervisor. "I thought I'd retire but I got a vision," she explained about her beginnings working with residents. "I'm just interested in people. I speak up and speak out and maybe I'll be able to help people." Despite the challenges Mrs. Wyche sums up her experiences as a TA and COP Chair as successful. "I say that with pride, successful." Mrs. Wyche believes she is a conveyer of ideas and information. "It's good to bring people knowledge. I find that a lot of residents don't have knowledge about NYCHA and what is going on. They only know what they hear, which 99 percent of the time is negative but I will bring you positive." A big responsibility, one she takes very seriously and is grateful for having. "I [also] like asking questions, such as: 'what would you like to see in NYCHA; what would you like to see in your development; what would you like me to take back to the administrators; what are

some things that you are tired of that you feel you can change.' I like for the residents to feel like they are on the same wavelength with NYCHA."

As we all can see, though she is retired Mrs. Wyche carries out her duties as a TA, COP Chair and 2nd Vice-President of the CCOP as if they were full-time jobs. "It is good to be a leader; to hear other sides

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Celebrate Women's History Month!

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

**Making Sure You Count
In the 2010 Census**



NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA) RESIDENTS AND SECTION 8 VOUCHER HOLDERS COMBINED OCCUPY 12.7% OF THE CITY'S APARTMENTS AND MAKE UP 7.9% OF THE CITY'S POPULATION. NYCHA residents are such a significant part of the City's population. Therefore, we are doing everything we can to make sure that public housing residents and Section 8 Voucher holders are counted when Census time rolls around again in 2010.

Getting counted is easy. Just fill out the Census form when you receive it and mail it in.

People of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens and non-citizens alike are to be counted.

There's no reason not to. By law, all personal information you provide on the Census questionnaire form is completely private and cannot be shared with anyone else (including the Housing Authority) or used outside of the Census Bureau. The information remains private for 72 years.

This Census is so important. The 2010 Census will determine how many people live in New York City, and how much funding the City will get from the federal government to improve schools and health-care, fight crime, repair roads and support other critical City services. If the count is not accurate and people are undercounted, we'll be losing out on funds that we need for the City of New York and for you, New York City's residents.

An accurate Census account helps us in so many ways. In addition to providing financial resources, Census results provide the basis for redrawing State legislative and Congressional districts, so that you can better elect representatives who represent your concerns.

While the federal United States Census Bureau is responsible for administering the 2010 Census, given our City's size, diversity and complexity, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has appointed NYCHA's former Chief of Staff, Stacey Cumberbatch as the City Census Coordinator. Ms. Cumberbatch is working with City agencies to raise public awareness about the upcoming 2010 Census and its importance to the City, as well as to encourage full participation in the count by all New Yorkers.

I'm also pleased to add that NYCHA is the first City agency to formally support this important effort by providing the City's Census Coordinator's Office with a staff person who will work with NYCHA, the City Census Coordinator and the U.S. Regional Census in these efforts.

The United States Constitution mandates that the number of people living in the United States gets counted every ten years. So, if you aren't counted this year, there won't be a chance to make that right for another decade. Please make sure you are counted and ensure that the population of New York City, including all residents of the New York City Housing Authority, is accurately represented. New York City needs your cooperation.

Ricardo Elías Morales

Your Financial Health...

The article below was submitted by Carol O'Rourke, Executive Director of the Coalition for Debtor Education. It is the third in a series on financial health.

**A Spending Plan
Puts You in Control**

AT THE END OF THE MONTH, ARE YOU SURPRISED THAT THERE'S LITTLE OR NO MONEY LEFT OVER TO SAVE? If you're like most people, you probably underestimate what you need to spend on a monthly basis. This is especially true if you use a credit card for necessities like groceries, or for extras like eating out or new clothing. It's easier to spend more with a credit card because you don't feel or see the money coming out of your pocket immediately.

To give yourself more control of your money, create a spending plan for yourself and your family. Planning ahead will help you know how to use your money, and live within your means. It will also make it easier to talk about spending with your spouse and children.

Creating a spending plan is not difficult. Start by comparing your family income with your expenses. Pay your basic household expenses first. Some expenses are "fixed," that is, they occur regularly and do not change much (like rent or a car payment). Fixed expenses are predictable. But many of your other expenses are more flexible, like groceries, clothing and entertainment. Even cable and cell phone costs can vary depending on which services you choose. These are your "variable expenses" and this is where you have some control in your spending plan.

**Add A Savings Category for
Unexpected Expenses**

Consider unexpected or one-time expenses you may face, like a medical emergency, car repairs, or a wedding or other family event. Adding a savings category to your monthly spending plan will let you build a cushion for such unplanned events. With some cash set aside, you will not have to rely on credit cards or other forms of borrowing if your expenses for a month are more than your income.

To get a clear picture of your expenses, write down everything you spend money on in a week. When you know exactly

(Continued on page 4)

DEBORAH'S DIARY

By Deborah Williams



Remembering the man who dared to dream— Paying tribute to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. means so much more this year than ever before! That's because this year— 2009, Dr. King's speech "I Had A Dream" has become a reality with the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States.

To celebrate the man who dared to dream, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) partnered with NYCHA's Brooklyn Community Operations to create the "Picture the Dream Project," for the second consecutive year. The six week project took place at Stuyvesant Gardens Community Center in Brooklyn. Twelve participants of the Stuyvesant Gardens Community Center created collages of the life, times and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The artwork was on display at the BAM Café from January 16th through January 22nd. On January 19th the participants and their families were invited to BAM to be a part of the 23rd Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at which time the participants were acknowledged for their creativity during a breakfast reception and public program.

"The art project was a great learning opportunity in which the participants from Stuyvesant Gardens gained respect for their past, confidence in their present and enthusiasm for their future," said Brooklyn Senior Program Manager Eric Cumberbatch.



The participants were: Izenosa Edebiri, Omolara Saundo, Brittney Crute, Shamel Crossland, Iyana Crute, Simone Jennings, Ciera Clark, Destiny Williams, Dorell Barry, and Barry Sease-Bey. They were guided and taught by BAM Consultants and Brooklyn Community Operations staff. BAM and Brooklyn Community Operations are currently planning more theme-based programs throughout the upcoming year. For additional information about upcoming programs during the year, please call 212-306-3338.

A very special congratulations to all 12 participants! I want you to take what you have learned and pass it on to your friends and when you get older tell the story to your kids so that they in turn can keep history alive. Congratulations on your artwork! I know the collages were excellent!

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THE NYCHA NOT WANTED LIST

In this issue we continue 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. What follows is a partial list of the people excluded after hearings were held on January 21 and 28, 2009. For a full list of the "Not Wanted" visit NYCHA's website at nyc.gov/residentscorner. **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 January 21, 2009

Irene Maldonado	Case 66/09 formerly associated with the eighth floor of 74 West 92nd Street, Wise Towers, Manhattan.
Daren Trea	Case 7851/08 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 470 Dekalb Avenue, Lafayette Gardens, Brooklyn.
Derrick Watson	Case 5971/08 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 619 Rockaway Avenue, Brownsville Houses, Brooklyn.
Juan Estrella	Case 134/09 formerly associated with the seventeenth floor of 177 Willis Avenue, Mitchel Houses, the Bronx.
Carl Harris	Case 5615/08 formerly associated with the first floor of 720 Kingsborough 7th Walk, Kingsborough Houses, Brooklyn.
Troy Young	Case 21/09 formerly associated with the second floor of 54-30 Beach Channel Drive, Ocean Bay Apts., Queens.
Shariff Harris Khalie Harris Hasan Harris	Case 8890/08 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 580 Castle Hill Avenue, Castle Hill Houses, the Bronx.
Heathcliff Persaud	Case 72/09 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 2120 Madison Avenue, Lincoln Houses, Manhattan.
Davon Walker Delshawn Walker	Case 5945/08 formerly associated with the second floor of 1460 Bronx River Avenue, Bronx River Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of January 28, 2009

Aaron Malone	Case 323/09 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 2832-36 West 23rd Street, Carey Gardens, Brooklyn.
Jesse Glenn	Case 191/09 formerly associated with the seventeenth floor of 157 Belmont Avenue, Seth Low Houses, Brooklyn.

**For a full list of the "Not Wanted"
visit NYCHA's website at
nyc.gov/residentscorner.**

A Spending Plan Puts You in Control

(Continued from page 3)

where your money is going it is easier to decide what is necessary, what is important to you — and also what is not.

Next, list all your sources of income and compare the "bottom line": is your income higher, lower or equal to what you spend? Once you know what you are spending your money on, you can decide what you can cut back on or eliminate so that your income is the same or more than your monthly spending.

Some tips to help you stay on track with your spending plan:

- Always shop with a list — and stick to it. Only look for coupons for items already on your list;
- Avoid temptations like shopping channels and other TV offers;
- Discuss with your family — make it a family project; and
- Don't be intimidated by persistent sales people or influenced by celebrity spokespeople to buy expensive products you don't need.

FIRE SAFETY

The New York City Housing Authority has developed procedures to ensure that proper fire safety measures are followed by staff and residents to prevent fires. Residents are reminded that fire safety begins at home. Every family should know the basics of how to prevent fires in your apartment and what to do in case of fire.

In the event of a fire always call 911 first!

Smoke Detectors

— Never remove a smoke detector for any reason. Smoke detectors save lives.

— All smoke detectors have a test button and should be tested each month by a member of your household.

— All smoke detectors installed by NYCHA whether hardwired (electrically connected) or battery operated are equipped with an audible "LOW BATTERY" warning signal. This signal is identifiable by an alternating "BEEPING" sound. When this warning "beep" is heard the battery must be replaced immediately.

— Be proactive. Change your smoke detector batteries twice a year — in the spring and fall when you change your clocks for Daylight Saving Time. (See Page 10.)

— The Fire Department sponsors free smoke detector battery giveaway campaigns throughout the year, especially at Daylight Saving Time. If you cannot afford batteries for your smoke detector, contact your local fire station.

Fire Safety Notices

— NYCHA is required to post a Fire Safety Notice on the inside of every apartment entrance door. The Fire Safety Notice is a white sticker with black lettering and describes the actions to follow in the event of a fire emergency in your building.

— If your apartment entrance door does not have the Fire Safety Notice sticker posted contact your Management Office immediately and they will provide one for you.

— If your apartment has a fire escape it must be kept clear of all items

General Fire Safety Tips

— Never use your stove or stove top burners as a source of heat. When you use your stove to heat your apartment, poisonous carbon monoxide builds up hour after hour. Carbon monoxide has no odor, smell or taste and can be deadly. Natural gas from your oven can also build up.

— Never smoke in bed.

— Space heaters are temporary heating devices and should only be used for a limited time each day and should never be connected to an outlet with an extension cord. Unplug any space heaters when not in actual use. Electric heaters with frayed or damaged cords should never be used.

— If you are having a heating problem call the Centralized Call Center at (718) 707-7771 and/or your Management Office.

Candles and Fire Safety

Never leave a lit candle unattended in any room of the house. Never leave a child or pet alone with a lit candle or any open flame. Children and unattended pets can knock over a candle causing a fire and possible burns. With open flames, such as those on a stove, loose clothing or fabric can easily catch fire. Never use candles near combustible materials such as curtains, drapes, bedding and/or cabinets. If you are going to use candles, make sure they sit properly in holders on a flat nonflammable surface.

**If You See It,
Report It!**

If you see conditions that need to be addressed in your development call NYCHA's Centralized Call Center.

**The Centralized Call Center.
Call Anytime - 24/7
718-707-7771
It's a shared responsibility.**

Centralized Call Center

DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE MEDICAL PLANS?

March is the last month that you can switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan (Medicare HMO). If you are currently enrolled in a Medicare HMO and would like to join a different Plan, you must start the process before March 31st. We recommend that you check with your personal physician before doing this. For more information on Medicare or changing to a different Plan, call 1-800-633-4227 and when someone answers, just say "Agent" to receive personal attention. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Spanish speaking representatives are available upon request.



75 Years of Public Housing



This is the second article in a special series which will run each month in the NYCHA Journal in 2009 commemorating the Housing Authority's 75th Anniversary. The photos of Jacob Riis and Marcy Houses, shown below, as well as Johnson Houses on page 9, were chosen to mark the developments' recent 60-year anniversaries.

Along with the rest of the country, New York City was experiencing a post-war housing shortage when these developments were completed, in 1949. That same year, President Harry S. Truman signed the landmark Housing Act of 1949 which provided federal financing for slum clearance programs associated with urban renewal projects in American cities and extended federal money to build more than 800,000 public housing units. The Housing Act of 1949 would result in a seven year period (1952 to 1958) during which NYCHA built a record number of federally funded dwelling units in New York. The historical photos shown below are courtesy of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives.

Jacob Riis Houses



The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the **Jacob Riis Houses I and II**, located in Manhattan's East Village, on January 17, 2009. Jacob Riis Houses is named for the famous Danish-born journalist and reformer, Jacob August Riis (1849-1914), whose newspaper articles and book, "How the Other Half Lives," published in 1890, inspired the housing movement that spurred Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to create NYCHA in 1934. **The photo above left, shows the Careathers Family, from the back of moving truck preparing to move into the development in 1948.** The family previously lived in temporary housing for veterans in Jamaica, Queens. **In the photo above, center, the family was greeted by NYCHA's fifth Chairman, General Thomas Farrell, in their new apartment at Jacob Riis Houses.** Riis Houses was built in sections so that parts were completed and ready for occupancy before the entire development was completed. **Shown in the last photo (left to right) are: Manhattan Borough Administrator Louis Nieves, Jacob Riis Manager**

Dorothy Harris, Resident Association President Odell Parnias and Vice-President Fanny Rodriguez, and Superintendent Kenneth Lloyd, with a proclamation from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg commemorating the occasion. Jacob Riis Houses I is bounded by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive and Avenue D, and East 8th and East 13th Streets. The development was completed on January 17, 1949 and is situated on nearly 12 acres. Riis Houses I consists of 13, six-, 13- and 14-story buildings with 1,191 apartments housing some 2,739 residents. Jacob Riis Houses II is bounded by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive and Avenue D, and East 6th and East 8th Streets. The development was completed on January 31, 1949 and is situated on approximately six acres. Riis II consists of six, six, 13- and 14-story buildings with 578 apartments housing some 1,299 residents. Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTVs) were installed in all 19 buildings of Jacob Riis I and II in 2007 and 2008 to deter crime. The developments have also received new trees as part of the MillionTreesNYC initiative, sponsored by Mayor Bloomberg, NYCHA and the New York Restoration Project.

Marcy Houses



Marcy Houses, located in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, celebrated its 60th Anniversary on January 19, 2009. Marcy Houses sits on the former site of an old Dutch windmill. **The photo above, left depicts the beginning of the demolition of tenements as part of the clearance for the site. Shown, above, center, is the newly completed Marcy Houses in 1949. Above, right are Marcy Houses Superintendent**

Otelio Maldonado, Resident Association President Naomi Colon, and Manager Leroy Scotland, with a proclamation from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg commemorating the occasion of the development's anniversary. Marcy Houses covers approximately 26 acres and is bounded by Flushing, Myrtle, Marcy and Nostrand Avenues. It consists of 27 six-story buildings with 1,717 apartments housing some 4,382 residents.



'Keeping the Promise' (continued on page 9)

BULB GIVEAWAY AT RICHMOND TERRACE



NYCHA collaborated with the nonprofits ReLightNY and Children for Children to provide residents of Richmond Terrace in Staten Island with free energy-saving Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) on Feb. 9th. Approximately 600 bulbs were distributed.

**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 meetings for Calendar Year 2009 are as follows:

- March 4, 2009
- March 18, 2009
- April 1, 2009
- April 14, 2009 (Tuesday)
- April 29, 2009
- May 13, 2009
- May 27, 2009
- June 10, 2009
- June 24, 2009
- July 8, 2009
- July 22, 2009
- August 5, 2009
- August 19, 2009
- September 2, 2009
- September 16, 2009
- September 30, 2009
- October 14, 2009
- October 28, 2009
- November 10, 2009 (Tuesday)
- November 25, 2009
- December 9, 2009
- December 23, 2009
- January 6, 2010




Please note that these dates are subject to change. 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 3 P.M. 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.




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- Be enrolled full time in an Associate or Baccalaureate degree program at any CUNY, Senior or Community College.
- Be an authorized New York City Housing Authority resident.
- Be a sophomore, junior, senior.
- Have a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Demonstrate financial need.
- Major in film, broadcasting, dance, drama, fashion, marketing/merchandising, journalism, music, photography, literature or fine and/or performing arts, public administration, public affairs, business.

Apply by filling out the NYCHA Resident Scholarship Application available at www.cuny.edu/nychascholarship (must be typed in lower case).

The application deadline is April 30, 2009.

Scholarships will be available for a limited time.




JOIN THE MORE THAN 17,000 SUBSCRIBERS WHO RECEIVE THE NYCHA JOURNAL ONLINE EACH MONTH BY SIGNING UP AT WWW.NYC.GOV, OR BY VISITING NYCHA'S WEBSITE AT NYC.GOV/NYCHA.

NYCHA'S Comic Book Crusaders

By Eileen Elliott

WITH DEATH-DEFYING MISSIONS SUCH AS LIBERATING NON-HOSTILE BIO-DROIDS FROM THEIR HOSTILE COUNTERPARTS, OR SAVING SCIENTISTS TRAPPED BY A FLOOD IN AN UNDERGROUND BUNKER, YOU CAN BE SURE THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF KERSPLOOSHES!!!, KKAAVVOOOOMS!, SPLASSSSHES!!! AND FREEZES!!! TO GO AROUND.

And the Superheroes who undertake these missions—such as the Gamma StarKnights and Team KO—must rely on all of their super powers to accomplish their goals.

So it was for these two groups of comic book heroes created by ten young New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents in the Rutgers Community Center After-school Program, located on Manhattan's Lower East Side. During the 2007 to 2008 school year, with the help of the 12Comics Learning Support Program, the youth created their characters and brainstormed story lines into exciting adventures, which were then illustrated by professional artists and published as comic books.

The goal of the 12Comics Learning Support Program is to motivate youth to realize their talents by making the educational process fun and creative as well as providing them with tangible results for their efforts. At the end of the class each student receives 250 business cards and one school bag with their Superhero printed on it, plus 50% of the royalties from online sales of the comic books they created.

In the words of "Starquan," created by 12-year-old Starquan Fleming, "Hacked Bio-Droids! Explodin' volcanoes! Somethin' big is goin' down!"

The young residents were involved every step of the way, right up to the printing and publishing. The final results of the program were the two unique comic books, "The Gamma Star-Knights" and "Team K.O." A page in each book is devoted to each of the young artists and their corresponding Superhero.

The Gamma Star Knights are: Rishon Benyahmeen, 17, who created, "Haze," a teleporter and expert in hand-to-hand combat; Matthew Cameron, 9, who created "Minute" with the capacity to run at super speeds and shoot from his hands; Amadou Bah,



Young NYCHA residents working in collaboration with professional artists from 12Comics, created the two colorful comic books shown above, "Gamma Star-Knights" and "Team KO."

13, who created "Greenblazer" with the special ability to generate and manipulate fire; Jon Montas, 10, who created "IQ," the smartest human on the planet; and Starquan Fleming; 12, who created "Starquan," with enhanced speed and alien armor.

Team KO consists of: Peter Lok, 12, who created the half human, half dragon "Knightfyre" with super strength and enhanced healing abilities; Raje Mines, 10, who created "Lady Ice" with the ability to generate and manipulate ice; Takrem Harris, 10, who created "Metal X" with the ability to transform his body into organic steel; Nkenge Foster, 11, who created "Shape Shifter"—half-human, half-wolf; and Chermel Thompson, 13, who created "Starmel," with super strength,

enhanced speed and the ability to generate powerful plasma energy blasts.

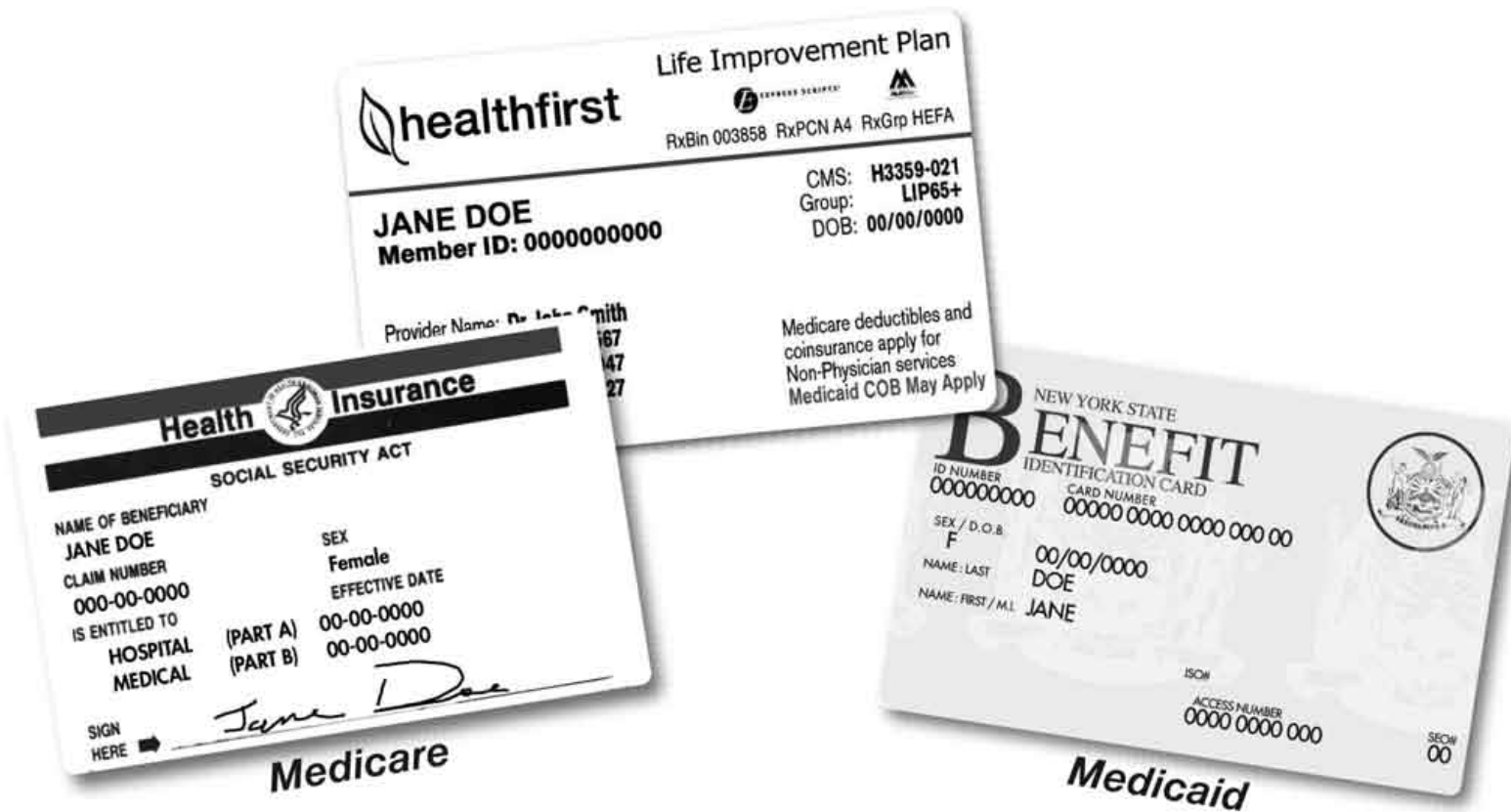
"Students were excited to see their character brought to life from concept to the final printed comic," said Creative Arts Unit Manager Juan Santiago. He continued, "Parents were encouraged to see their child actively engaged in the academic components that went into the creation of the books."

NYCHA has plans to start a second class at the Rutgers Community Center, to bring the program to the South Beach Community Center in Staten Island, and to seniors at the Sumner Community Center in Brooklyn. The books are available online at www.12comics.com.



Shown above are the young residents who collaborated on the "Team KO" and "Gamma Star-Knights" comic books with the book bags depicting the Superheroes they created. **Kneeling front:** Raje Mines; **Middle row, left to right:** Matthew Cameron, Chermel Thompson, Nkenge Foster, Rishon Benyahmeen and Starquan Fleming; **Back row, left to right:** Jon Montas, Peter Lok, and Amadou Bah. **Standing in the back row** is 12Comics founder and CEO Mark Hair.

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Healthfirst Medicare Plan is a health maintenance organization that has a Medicare Advantage contract with the Federal government and is available in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Westchester and Nassau. Not all plans available in all counties.

Digital TV Transition Extended to June 12th

The deadline for the switch from analog to digital TV has been extended from February 17th to June 12th. After that time, all full-power television stations will broadcast only in digital. If you use "rabbit ears" or a rooftop antenna with your analog television, you must take action to continue receiving television broadcasts, by:

- Buying a converter box that will plug into your analog TV
- Buying a TV with a digital Tuner
- Connecting your analog TV to a cable pay service

Note: NYCHA residents are prohibited from installing any television or satellite antennas on the window sill or at any place outside of the apartment such as window frames, window guards, or the brick-work on the exterior of the building without prior written consent from NYCHA. For more information, call: 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-3888-2009) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY) or visit: www.DTV2009.gov online.

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Are You a NYCHA Resident With Fond Memories to Share?

To commemorate our 75th Anniversary, the New York City Housing Authority is collecting photos and stories from residents about your experiences living in public housing. How has being part of a NYCHA community had a positive impact on your life or the life of a family member? Perhaps you attended a NYCHA-led job training workshop that launched your career; or maybe a caretaker, development manager or neighbor was instrumental in getting you help when you needed it most; maybe you bonded with a Housing Bureau Police Officer as a child and decided to become an officer yourself when you grew up? If you have fond memories to share, we want to hear them! We will post selected stories on the Residents' Corner of our Web site at www.nyc.gov/nycha and publish one story each month in the *NYCHA Journal*. Please e-mail stories and photos to: NYCHA75@nycha.nyc.gov. If you don't have electronic files to send, you can mail to:

THE NYCHA Journal
Department of Communications
250 Broadway, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Don't forget to include your full name, age, the name of your NYCHA development and the number of years you've been living in public housing. Also please make sure your return address is on the envelope if you would like us to mail your photos back to you.



'Keeping the Promise' (continued from page 5)

Johnson Houses



The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the James Weldon Johnson Houses, located in Harlem, on December 27, 2008. Johnson Houses is bounded by East 112th and East 115th Streets, and Third and Park Avenues. Johnson Houses consists of ten, 14-story buildings with 1,299 apartments housing some 2,277 residents. The development is named in honor of poet and civil rights leader James Weldon Johnson, who played a vital role in the civil rights movement as a teacher, diplomat. From 1916 to 1930, he was the key policy maker for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and later became the Executive Director. **The photo above, left, depicts pushcarts**

resting next to a curb on streets in East Harlem in 1944, in front of tenements that were torn down to build the James Weldon Johnson Houses. The photo, above center, shows the development shortly after its completion, in 1949. Gathered together to commemorate the development's 60th anniversary, from left to right are: Resident Association Vice-President Henry Lonon, Treasurer Marie Hines, Superintendent Milton Morris, Sergeant at Arms Linda Johnson, NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Resident Association President Ethel Velez, Secretary Eva Varnum, Sergeant at Arms Ruby Jones and Johnson Houses Manager Ynoemia Cruz.

March Is Kidney Month—Do You Have Kidney Disease?

What Is Kidney Disease?

According to the National Kidney Foundation, an estimated 26 million Americans suffer from kidney disease. Kidney disease results from damage to the nephrons, the tiny structures inside your kidneys that filter blood. Usually the damage occurs very gradually over years. It happens in both kidneys. There aren't any obvious symptoms, so you don't know it's happening.

Common Causes of Kidney Disease

Diabetes: In diabetes, the body doesn't use glucose (sugar) very well. The glucose stays in your blood and acts like a poison. If you have diabetes, you can prevent kidney disease by controlling your blood sugar levels.

High Blood Pressure: High blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels in your kidneys. When this happens your kidneys cannot filter wastes from your blood very well. If you have high blood pressure (hypertension) be sure to take any medicines your doctor prescribes.

Heredity: Some kidney diseases result from hereditary factors, and can run in families. If your family has a history of any kind of kidney problems, you may be at risk for kidney disease and should talk to your doctor.

If you have any of the above risk factors, you should talk to your doctor or health care professional about getting tested for kidney disease.

How Can My Doctor Tell If I Have Kidney Disease?

To detect the disease doctors can do very simple tests that include:

- Measure the level of serum creatinine in your blood to estimate your glomerular filtration rate (GFR)
- Measure the level of protein in your urine (increased levels of protein show your kidneys are not working right)
- Checking your blood pressure

Undiagnosed kidney disease can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney failure.

For more information visit the **National Kidney Disease Education Program web site at: www.nkdep.nih.gov**

A 'Steel Magnolia'

(continued from page 2)

of things so you can try to address it," she added.

Mrs. Wyche's positions require her at times to act as a mediator. "I tell them [residents] 'give your manager a chance; it doesn't matter if she's been there two or three years. Things change for her too. NYCHA is short staffed.'" According to her these 'talks' are her way of keeping the communication going while still addressing the resident's issues. "Somebody has to have a clear head to let you know, *with a smile*, 'it's not right now but don't worry, soon.' You have to make them understand that you can't get to everything just right now," she added.

"[As a resident] you see a lot of things but as a former administrator I see other things that we just can't do right now and people don't like that. I try to explain to them that NYCHA tries to do stuff on time but people do get sick, people don't come into work everyday but they'll get to it. I tell them, 'if you feel you are not satisfied all you have to do is put a note in my box and I will call you. We can work on it together.'"

Although, she's very humble and considers that she's "never done anything important," Mrs. Wyche takes pride in returning calls and said she has returned every single call

she's ever received from residents no matter how busy she is. "I'm just being myself," she declared as she shrugged her shoulders. Mrs. Wyche even funds the celebration of her development's Family Day. "I don't have a problem because God blesses me right back. It doesn't matter to me." "Hey," she added as she chuckled with amusement "with Rosia Wyche, live big."

Mrs. Wyche said she has noticed an increase in resident participation and is very pleased with that. Overall "change is what I would like to see." And, according to her residents of Coney Island Houses are on board.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS!

This year Daylight Saving Time begins at 2AM on Sunday, March 8th, so don't forget to turn your clocks ahead by one hour. Clocks are turned back one hour on Sunday, November 1st.

New York City Police Department Toll-Free Terrorism Hotline

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