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A Federalization Update — NYCHA Set to Close the Deal



(l-r) City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, CCOP President Reginald Bowman, State Senator Daniel Squadron (partially hidden); NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Senator Charles Schumer, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, State Senator John Sampson, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Governor David Paterson, Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd (partially hidden), and Assemblyman Vito Lopez join in support of federalization announcement.

NYCHA WAS ON THE BRINK OF SECURING ITS FEDERALIZATION PLAN, AS THE *JOURNAL* WENT TO PRESS. All parties have agreed to the Public Housing Modernization Plan to secure permanent funding for its unsubsidized City- and State-built developments.

“Members of the State legislature, HUD and federal leaders have all responded overwhelmingly to one of the City’s top priorities enabling New York City to qualify for a substantial, permanent increase in federal funding for public housing,” said NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea.

Chairman Rhea first unveiled the “federalization” plan last December at resident meetings, public forums, the NYCHA Web site, and other venues. The plan would take advantage of a one-time opportunity in the 2009 Stimulus Act to qualify NYCHA’s unfunded units for federal funds to operate and modernize 11,000 units in the City/State developments.

All 21 developments would remain public housing and residents would retain all of their rights and protections as public housing residents. NYCHA’s existing federal developments would also benefit as less of its federal public housing

subsidy will have to be diverted to support units that receive no federal money, or other funds. “Our senior and support staff have worked long and hard to prepare the framework, and I want to acknowledge their contribution,” said Chairman Rhea.

The Chairman met with residents leaders of the affected developments on March 4 to keep them informed of the plan’s progress. As the *Journal* went to press, all parties were finalizing the agreement, with a formal closing expected by March 17. For the latest update, please visit www.nyc.gov/nycha.

Stars Come in Concert for Haiti

By Christian Nwachukwu

SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES IN MUSIC, DESIGN, MEDIA AND PUBLIC SERVICE CAME TOGETHER AT DONNA KARAN’S BEAUTIFUL URBAN ZEN CENTER ON GREENWICH STREET ON FEBRUARY 8, TO RAISE FUNDS TO HELP REBUILD EARTHQUAKE-RAVAGED AREAS OF HAITI. “Hope Help & Relief Haiti” headlined “A Night for Humanity” to launch their campaign “Tents Today, Home Tomorrow,” to raise funds to purchase fully-equipped tents that will provide accommodations for homeless families in Haiti.

“This tremendous outpouring of support for the people of Haiti is a story of communities coming together in the face of tragedy,” New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman John B. Rhea said in his address to the crowd. The Chairman went on to announce plans for a multi-year collaborative relief and rebuilding effort between NYCHA, Habitat for Humanity—New York City, and Habitat for Humanity International. It is a multi-year collaborative relief and rebuilding effort among the participating organizations, led by the Haitian-American Association at NYCHA, an employees group.

In all, the event raised \$1 million for Haiti, with \$100,000 from the live auction hosted by actress Whoopi Goldberg, and \$900,000 from the concert that featured legendary hip hop singer Mary J. Blige. Ms. Blige performed a full set with her band and rocked the house. She delivered a stirring rendition of her powerful ballad from the movie *Precious*, “I Can See in Color.” Haitian singer-songwriter-activist Wyclef Jean delivered the evening’s keynote address.

The mission of Hope Help & Relief Haiti is to, “create a conscious community of leaders to become agents of social change for the renewal of Haiti.” One of the night’s enduring themes was that this effort would be different. Celebrities repeatedly stressed that the assistance to Haiti in the wake of the devastating January 12th earthquake had to be sustained and long-term. They committed to giving not only their money, but also their time in creating awareness and action to aid the people of Haiti.

In this first phase of the relief effort, Hope, Help & Relief Haiti is raising money to send 50,000 tents to Port-au-Prince to provide shelter for those who have lost their homes. The tents cost \$1,000 each and anyone interested in the effort should e-mail: haitirelief@urbanzen.org.

The next phase will fall in line with the themes outlined in the Chairman’s address: an ongoing movement to build safe homes for the families of Haiti. Whoopi Goldberg, who hosted the live auction, and Wyclef Jean both spoke to that message.

CNN’s Soledad O’Brien was the night’s mistress of ceremonies and DJ Beverly Bond provided the music. Among those in attendance were: organizer Andre Harrell, Donna Karan, Robert De Niro and Grace Hightower, Gayle King, Russell Simmons, Rev. Al Sharpton, Daphne Guinness, President and CEO of BET Debra Lee, American Vogue Editor-in-Chief, Anna Wintour, and Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter. For more on NYCHA’s relief efforts for Haiti, go the www.nyc.gov/nycha.



(l-r) Record executive Steve Stoute, fashion designer Donna Karan, Chairman John B. Rhea and media executive Andre Harrell attend “A Night of Humanity” at Urban Zen in New York City.

COMING SOON!
Look out for the redesigned
NYCHA Journal!

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OUR PARTNERS

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NYCHA ANNOUNCES ITS SAFETY
& SECURITY TASK FORCE

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

The New Housing Marketplace Plan



SINCE 2004, WE'VE FUNDED THE CREATION AND PRESERVATION OF NEARLY 100,000 UNITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGHOUT THE FIVE BOROUGHES. That's enough to shelter the entire population of Pittsburgh. In no small part because of those efforts, the most recent independent housing survey mandated by our City Charter rates our housing stock in better condition than at any time on record. And the supply of housing has also reached record levels, outpacing the rate of our population growth. During 2009—one of the worst years in housing in a very long time—New York City still financed the creation and preservation of 12,500 units of affordable housing—almost as many as the entire State of California accomplished during that same period.

But of course, many people are wondering: With all the difficulties in the market, and with the hard budget choices government faces, can New York keep it up? Or like cities across the nation, will we have to scale back? Will we have to compromise the goals of our New Housing Marketplace Plan: building and preserving 165,000 units of housing—enough for half a million New Yorkers—by the year 2014?

We're not turning back. We're still on course to hit our affordable housing targets on time.

Let me speak for a moment about the extraordinary efforts Chairman John Rhea and his team at the New York City Housing Authority are making to preserve our large-scale public housing. Some 403,000 people call NYCHA developments home. That's roughly one out of every 20 New Yorkers—more people than live in St. Louis or Minneapolis. Right now, with the help of \$423 million in Federal stimulus funds, John is overseeing a major upgrade and modernization of our public housing complexes.

Even more important, he has put together a public-private financing plan that will leverage Federal funds for the long-term operating needs of some 18,000 NYCHA units. They're in developments that have never before qualified for Federal funds, because they were financed locally. Talk about no good deed going unpunished! John's plan is a model of innovative and responsible fiscal management and would go a long way toward bringing in Federal dollars that will make NYCHA financially solvent, and ensure good living conditions for NYCHA tenants.

Affordable housing and good living conditions are critical to our City being able to grow and continue to prosper. We've been through quite a lot together. We launched the New Housing Marketplace Plan in the teeth of the post-9/11 recession. It was a time when many thought that New York City was finally down for the count. We proved them wrong. Our City came roaring back.

Our New Housing Marketplace Plan will succeed because of the strong collaboration that's been its hallmark from the start. And in today's perilous housing environment, collaboration among City agencies, and with our partners in the private and non-profit sectors, is more important than ever. Our frontline housing agencies—the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the NYC Housing Development Corporation and NYCHA—all work together closely to ensure our success.

We also benefit from our strong collaborative relationships with the State Department of Housing and Community Renewal, the State's Housing Finance Agency, and also with the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. They and the major foundations and philanthropies that have pulled together to support the New Housing Marketplace Plan have created a model now duplicated in cities and states across the nation.

During the past eight years, we've made so many of the right choices for this City. Crime is at an all-time low. Our public schools have improved dramatically. We've added significantly to the best system of municipal parks and playgrounds in the nation. And we're creating the affordable housing that working and middle-class New York families need.

For all those reasons, we're poised to come out of the recession in better shape than any other City that I can think of. The short term will test us—no question about it. I've never sugar-coated the challenges we face—and I'm not going to start now. We will have to be even smarter, more efficient, and harder-working than we've been in the past.

But we've known tough times before. And if we work together, and remain confident and strong during the difficult days ahead, we'll see all our hard work for this City is rewarded. And we'll have the satisfaction of knowing that the best days for New York are still to come.

Michael R. Bloomberg

Is Your Intercom Not Working?

If you use your household telephone to talk on the intercom and open the building entrance door, you have a telephone entry intercom system. With this type of system, if you have opted to get your phone service through the use of cable or cellular phone, you will find that your intercom is not working. This is due to the fact that your phone is no longer connected to the telephone lines. To correct this condition you should put in a work ticket and the Housing Authority will have a vendor install a dedicated intercom phone in your apartment. This will correct the condition and ensure you have a working intercom.

**Census 2010
Timeline**

U.S. Census Bureau mails letter informing households that the Census form is coming **February - March, 2010**

U.S. Census Bureau mails Census forms to households **March 15 - 17, 2010**

U.S. Census Bureau mails letter in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese to inform households how to obtain a Census form in those languages **Mid-March, 2010**

U.S. Census Bureau mails reminder postcards **March 22 - 24, 2010**

U.S. Census Bureau mails second Census form to households in low-response/hard-to-count areas from 2000 Census **March 28, 2010**

Census takers visit households that haven't returned the Census form **April - July, 2010**

**The Housing Authority
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76
years
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in New York City

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

In Collaboration with our Partners



AT NYCHA, WE ARE RETHINKING THE DEFINITION OF “COMMUNITY,” AND WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US IN THE CONVERSATION. What community does each of us belong to? Is a community limited by place and by time? Is it about shared experience, or is it, perhaps, about sharing our experiences with each other? We want our community to be the place where new, constructive ideas are created and fostered, and we want to expand what and who a community is and extend NYCHA's reach to those who our community can touch in positive ways.

In the past, our annual celebrations of Black History, Hispanic Heritage, and Women's History, while important, have been held only among NYCHA employees. Now, beginning with Black History Month 2010, we have opened the doors—to resident families and leaders, our friends in the philanthropic and non-profit communities, and our strategic partners in public service and in the private sector.

Just this past month, we welcomed members of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's staff; district chairs of the Citywide Council of Presidents and Resident Association Presidents; Board members of Lincoln Houses; members of NYC City Planning; representatives of Mary J. Blige's Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now (FFAWN); as well as representatives from diverse organizations such as the non-profit Robin Hood Organization, the Board of Lincoln Center; and leaders from Habitat for Humanity—NYC; and students, parents and staff members of the Harlem Children's Zone. Each of these is a partner with NYCHA on new, ambitious initiatives we are working on for the benefit of you—our residents. Let me tell you about some of those plans.

The Mary J. Blige and Steven Stout Foundation for the Advancement of Women (FFAWN) is an organization to inspire women from all walks of life to gain the confidence and skills they need to reach their individual potential. NYCHA will partner with FFAWN to develop workshops and programs for the young women in public housing developments in a first ever Girls Initiative. Our hope is to help disconnected youth begin thinking about their future; help them secure a quality education that will empower them in their futures; guide them toward envisioning a better life for themselves; and show them how to look out for each other—girls helping other girls—both socially and emotionally. Look for these efforts to take shape this summer.

NYCHA's Haitian American Association is playing a pivotal role in leading our relief and long-term rebuilding efforts in Haiti in a project we're calling, “Housing for Housing.” The employees' group is taking the lead in fundraising efforts in support of Habitat for Humanity-NYC and Habitat International in efforts to repair and rebuild long-term housing in Haiti in the wake of the devastating January 12th earthquake. NYCHA and Habitat-NYC are building on their ongoing partnership, focused on housing revitalization and renovation. Both organizations will work together to assist in what is certain to be a multi-year effort to help provide homes in partnership with Haitians devastated by the earthquake. And early last month we joined with FFAWN, the Urban Zen Foundation and others to help raise \$1 million for relief and rebuilding efforts in Haiti, with the money partially distributed to Habitat for Humanity.

Since 2007, NYCHA and Habitat-NYC have had a partnership through which Habitat volunteers have assisted in revitalizing and renovating public housing facilities. The Haitian-American Association at NYCHA, along with other employee associations at the Authority, will lead the ongoing effort to raise funds needed to support Habitat in rebuilding permanent, safe housing in Haiti. A key component of the partnership includes the active participation of NYCHA resident and employee volunteers in Habitat-NYC endeavors, who will then leverage their local experience to assist with rebuilding efforts in Haiti.

NYCHA is also working collaboratively with the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) and President and CEO Geoffrey Canada to construct a new Harlem Children's Zone charter school and housing serving 1,300 students in grades K-12 on the grounds of the St. Nicholas Houses. These efforts will also involve HCZ's non-profit developer Civic Builders; the NYC Department of City Planning; the NYC School Construction Authority; and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). The St. Nicholas Houses will be the launching pad for a revolutionary approach to revitalizing our communities through close connections among housing, educational opportunities, and wrap-around services. President Barack Obama has proposed what he's calling the “Choice Neighborhoods Initiative” and the model for that project is New York City's own Harlem Children's Zone.

Mary J. Blige, Geoffrey Canada, the Habitat for Humanity organization and many of our valued employees and residents—all are key contributors to NYCHA's new effort to bring its mission forward. These efforts are only the beginning of NYCHA's new focus, making our mission to provide public housing with a sense of community—both within the developments, and in their surrounding neighborhoods—real for the families of New York.

John B. Rhea

Resident Green Committees Give Back to their Communities

By **Cristiana Fragola**
Deputy Director, Strategic Initiatives

ESSENCE JACKSON IS THE CAPTAIN OF THE BREEVORT HOUSES RESIDENT GREEN COMMITTEE (RGC) IN BROOKLYN—ONE OF 24 SUCH COMMITTEES IN NYCHA. According to Ms. Jackson, her favorite thing about the RGC is that it gives members “a chance to rebuild the community in a youthful and positive way.” Over the last year, NYCHA residents have been coming together to form Resident Green Committees in their communities. Commissioner Margarita López, NYCHA's Board Member and Environmental Coordinator, visits developments throughout New York City and gives a presentation on the challenges that we are all facing in connection with the changes occurring in our global climate.

After the Commissioner's presentation, the residents, assisted by a team of eight bright and motivated AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTAS), join a green committee and participate in a NYCHA-wide effort to reduce the Authority's impact on the environment.

Currently, the VISTAs are providing technical assistance to the 24 Resident Green Committees throughout all five boroughs of New York City with a total of approximately 120 RGC members. The VISTA volunteers will only be assisting RGCs for one year, at most, as the goal is to make each RGC self-sustainable. The power is in their hands!

The residents are motivated largely by the desire to promote positive changes in the environments of the developments in which they live. This month, Ms. Jackson of Breevort Houses and her green

committee organized a bake sale to raise funds for their RGC. However, the RGC members recognized that they have the power to not only contribute to their own local community, but to the larger global community. Sixty percent of the proceeds from their bake sale were donated to aid relief efforts in Haiti. Breevort Houses has demonstrated how a group of active and engaged people can choose to join their powerful hands and serve a cause greater than their own...cooking some delicious food, too.

At Manhattanville Houses in West Harlem, the Resident Green Committee members also share in the goal of being a positive influence in their community. The group's mission statement says that by being a part of the RGC, members “will improve the quality of life for [Manhattanville] residents, do its part in preserving public housing, and represent the New York City Housing Authority at its finest.” The Manhattanville RGC has already begun fulfilling its mission by planning recycling workshops in each of the buildings at its development to educate all residents about New York City's recycling rules and regulations.

Through the commitment of members like those at Breevort and Manhattanville, these RGCs will no doubt succeed in their goals of influencing their communities in a positive way and help preserve our planet as well as public housing for many more years to come.



(l-r) Joseph Moriera, Emilie Rosenblatt, Channie Allen and Cheryl Minor.

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 efforts 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 December 2, 9, 16 and 30, 2009.

Prohibited as of December 2, 2009

Joseph Williams	Case 8083/09 formerly associated with the 8th floor, 45 Warren Street, Stapleton Houses, Staten Island.
Tyson Hermidas	Case 8092/09 formerly associated with the third floor of 2946-50 West 23rd Street, Carey Garden Houses, Brooklyn.
Anthony Crum	Case 8146/09 formerly associated with the third floor, 231 Throop Avenue, Sumner Houses, Brooklyn.
John Roberts	Case 8114/09 formerly associated with the 5th floor, 138 Cumberland Walk, Whitman Houses, Brooklyn.
Duane Bellamy	Case 8129/09 formerly associated with the 8th floor of 456 Richmond Terrace, Richmond Terrace Houses, Brooklyn.
Lourdes Delgado	Case 10054/07 formerly associated with the 3rd floor, 160 Boerum Street, Borinquen Plaza Houses, Brooklyn.
Tiaquan McCroskey	Case 5036/09 formerly associated with the 7th floor 1010 Soundview, Bronxdale Houses, Bronx.
Lakeame Foy	Case 8162/09 formerly associated with the 1st floor 1410 East New York Avenue, Garvey Houses, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of December 9, 2009

Cosseam Williams Anna Ramirez	Case 7301/09 formerly associated with the 3rd floor, 465 Columbia Street, Red Hook East Houses, Brooklyn.
Darryl Drone	Case 8200/09 formerly associated with the 1st floor, of 919 Myrtle Avenue, Tompkins Houses, Brooklyn.
James Selby	Case 8269/09 formerly associated with the 1st floor, 385 Fountain Avenue, Cypress Hills Houses, Bronx.
Richard Hagar	Case 8227/09 formerly associated with the 11th floor, 108 Avenue D, Riis Houses, Manhattan.
Jamaine Mitchell	Case 7100/09 formerly associated with the seventeenth floor of 815 East 152nd Street, Adams Houses, Bronx.
Ronald McKinney	Case 8159/09 formerly associated with the second floor of 106-16 159th Street, South Jamaica Houses, Queens.
Alvaro Barrios	Case 8223/09 formerly associated with the third floor of 2409 7th Avenue, Fredrick Samuels Houses, Manhattan.
Isidro Gomez	Case 8224/09 formerly associated with the first floor of 1120 E. 229th Street, Fredrick Samuels Houses, Manhattan.
Selwyn Lee	Case 8256/09 formerly associated with the first floor of 1120 E. 229th Street, Eden Wald Houses, Bronx.

Prohibited as of December 16, 2009

James Pryor	Case 8503/09 formerly associated with the first floor of 390 Bushwick Avenue, Bushwick Houses, Brooklyn.
Clarence Hodrick	Case 8502/09 formerly associated with the 7th floor, 830 Columbus Avenue, Douglass Houses, Manhattan.
Darnell Bussey	Case 8508/09 formerly associated with the 4th floor, 111 Nostrand Avenue, Marcy Houses, Brooklyn.
Jeavon Williams	Case 8340/09 formerly associated with the 3rd floor, 69 225th Street, Marble Hill Houses, Bronx.
Darryl Graymon	Case 8340/09 formerly associated with the 3rd floor, of 69 225th Street, Marble Hill Houses, Bronx.
Percy Green	Case 931/08 formerly associated with the 2nd floor 2732 Dewey Avenue, Throggs Neck Houses, Bronx.
Shaquille Fuller	Case 8452/09 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 60 Avenue D, Wald Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of December 30, 2009

Fabian Henderson	Case 8529/09 formerly associated with the third floor of 28 West 9th Street, Red Hook East Houses, Brooklyn.
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Fire Prevention Can Help Save a Life

Prevention and preparation are two important keys to Fire Safety. Are you doing everything you can to keep your family and property safe from injuries, death and destruction caused by fire? Please note these important fire safety tips that summarize what you can do to prevent fires and what to do if a fire occurs in your apartment.

Smoke Detectors

- Call NYCHA's Customer Contact Center 718-707-7771 if you need a Smoke Detector.
- Inspect and test your Smoke Detector on a regular basis to determine that it is in good working order.
- Be proactive. Change the smoke detector battery twice a year – in the fall and again in the spring at Daylight Savings time.
- All smoke detectors, whether hard wired (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.
- Never remove a Smoke Detector for any reason.

Prevention

- Check your apartment door to ensure that it is self-closing (when opened and released, the door swings shut and completely closes and latches by itself) to prevent the spread of fire. If your apartment door is not self-closing, contact the Customer Contact Center 718-707-7771.
- Never smoke in bed and make sure there are no smoldering butts when you empty ash trays.
- Replace old, damaged or frayed extension cords.
- Don't overload outlets.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended in any room of your home.
- Never leave a child or pet alone near any open flame.
- Never use your stove or top burners as a source of heat
- Space heaters are temporary heating devices and should only be used for a limited time each day. They should never be connected to an outlet with an extension cord. Unplug any space heaters when not in actual use.

Fire Safety Notice

Have a family meeting with all members of your family to discuss the information below, found on the "Fire Safety Notice" sticker on the back of your apartment door:

If The Fire Is In Your Apartment

- Close the door to the room where the fire is and leave the apartment.
- Make sure EVERYONE leaves the apartment with you.
- Take your keys.
- Close, but do not lock, the apartment door.
- Alert people on your floor by knocking on their doors on your way to the exit.
- Use the nearest stairwell to leave the building.
- DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.
- Call 911 once you reach a safe location. Do not assume the fire has been reported, unless firefighters are already on the scene.
- Meet the members of your household at a pre-determined location outside the building. Notify the firefighters if anyone is unaccounted for.

If The Fire Is Not In Your Apartment

- Feel your apartment door and doorknob for heat. If they are not hot, open the door slightly and check the hallway for smoke, heat or fire.
- Exit the apartment and building if you can safely do so, following the instructions above for a fire in your apartment.
- If the hallway or stairwell is not safe because of smoke, heat, or fire and you have access to a fire escape, use it to exit the building. Proceed cautiously on the fire escape and always carry or hold onto small children.
- If you cannot use the stairs or the fire escape, call 911 and tell them your address, floor, apartment number and the number of people in your apartment.
- Seal the doors to your apartment with wet towels or sheets, and seal air ducts or other openings where smoke may enter.
- Open windows a few inches at top and bottom unless flames and smoke are coming from below.
- Do not break any windows.
- If conditions in the apartment appear life-threatening, open a window and wave a towel or sheet to attract the attention of firefighters.
- If smoke conditions worsen before help arrives, get down on the floor and take short breaths through your nose. If possible, retreat to a balcony or terrace away from the source of the flames, heat or smoke.

TABLE TENNIS, ANYONE?

By Heidi Morales

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES URBAN YOUTH ENGAGE IN, TABLE TENNIS OR PING PONG AS MOST OF US HAVE COME TO KNOW IT, IS NOT USUALLY THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND. It used to be that if you were serious about learning to play table tennis you would have to travel across the world to places like China, Germany or Moscow. Now you just have to take the train to one of the dozen USA table tennis-sanctioned clubs taking New York City by storm, including Spin New York — the City's first private table tennis club. Here on East 23rd Street in Manhattan, you can socialize with some of the most fascinating people in this City.

One of these people is Wally Green, 30, former resident of NYCHA's Marlboro Houses. Mr. Green is not only a founding member, resident instructor and Hall-of-famer at Spin New York, but a rarity as a professional African-American table tennis player in the United States and the world. He is a former member of team USA's table tennis pro tour and provided the motion-capturing realism for the "Rockstar Games Presents table tennis" video game launched in 2007 on Nintendo's Wii.

Mr. Green, with his eye-catching orange hair, has not played table tennis, or Ping Pong all his life; he started playing at 19. He says he picked up table tennis after losing money to pool hall hustlers. "I came up to some guys and asked them if I could play and by chance I hit the ball."

They told him about a club in the City where he could learn how to play but initially, he said, he felt very discouraged. "Nobody would play with me. I mean you gotta remember now, I'm dressed like a 'hood' gangsta'd out with a little bit of bling-bling...They were all looking at me like I'm crazy."

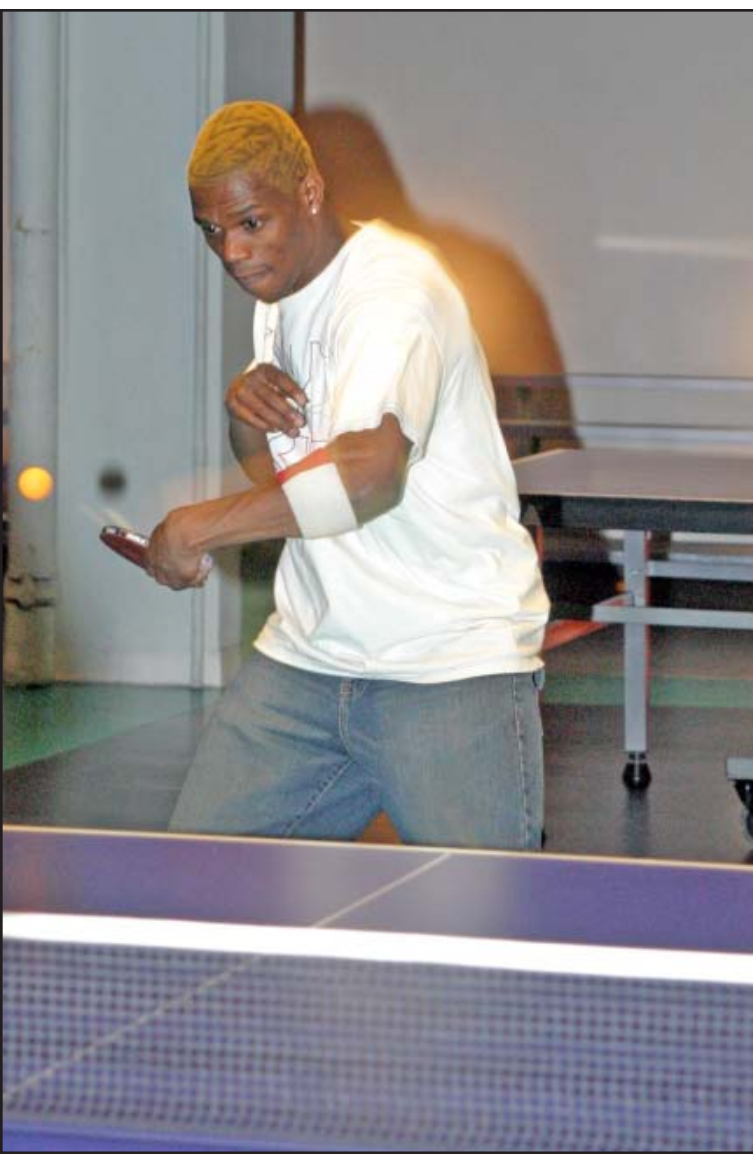
Prior to that, at 14, Mr. Green left home to escape the domestic violence that overshadowed his dreams and kept him living in a state of indifference. He lived for many years on the streets sleeping on park benches and friends' living room floors. "I used to be in a gang. When I was 13 I was carrying guns to school, carrying knives, doing a bunch of crazy things and getting into a lot of trouble but I always went to school." He said he began to see that school provided a safe haven where he could get away from his

mother's cries and his step father's beatings, as well as the bad influence of peers around his development.

Although he's proud of where he comes from Mr. Green did not forget about the growing pains he experienced because he was a kid from public housing. "Usually teachers know where you're from and if you're from the projects they automatically label you as the bad kid. So, either they labeled you as a bad kid cuz you were from the projects or if you did something wrong it was okay cuz you were from the projects." He said low expectations from teachers, family and friends left him feeling indifferent about his own well-being and success.

"Then you see other kids who are not from the projects and they have nice things and a totally different way of thinking.

(Continued on page 8)



NYCHA Announces Its Safety & Security Task Force



Members of NYCHA's Safety & Security Task Force.

IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS CONVENED THE NEWLY CONSTITUTED SAFETY AND SECURITY TASK FORCE TO IMPROVE SAFETY IN NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE RESIDENTS. It will review the policies and procedures that govern the conduct of the relationship between the residents, NYCHA, and the police.

"The establishment of the Safety and Security Task force is of great importance to NYCHA as we bring together groups and individuals who have a paramount interest in helping the Authority in reducing crime and criminal activity," said John

B. Rhea, Chairman of NYCHA. "Residents of NYCHA should know that NYCHA leadership, along with members of the Citywide Council of Presidents and the NYPD, are committed to working together to provide safe and secure housing for the future—and creating a climate of mutual respect."

The Task Force came together after initial discussions with Chairman Rhea and residents in September, 2009; there was also a meeting with NYPD Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly. The Task Force formally convened for the first time in December, 2009, as it outlined issues and defined the group's scope;

made initial recommendations; appointed other Task Force members; established timelines, and defined the next steps to be taken.

"We are pleased to be involved in this very significant effort to assist NYCHA, its residents, and the NYPD in maintaining safety and security within each and every public housing development," said Reggie Bowman, President of the Citywide Council of Presidents (CCOP). "With our voices at the table, we feel confident that issues and concerns that residents express everyday will be brought to these very important discussions. While we are working to reduce

crime, we also hope to increase good will between residents and police."

"The Task Force is a great vehicle for residents, police, and housing officials to focus on safety in housing developments in a collaborative way," said NYPD Commissioner Kelly. "I want to thank all the participants who worked so hard to make it a reality."

The committee will look at current regulations concerning NYCHA property, along with adjoining parks and buildings, technology improvements, and capital work needed to increase security.

Since inception, the Safety and Security Task Force has

been expanded to include individual experts with resources and expertise to ensure input not only from NYCHA residents, but also from external stakeholders, such as the Department of Youth and Community Development, the Community Affairs Unit, and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The Task Force, which will be composed of five subcommittees, will research leading practices and make recommendations on improving safety and security for residents.

NYCHA Set to Host Its Annual Night of Neighborhood Stars

By Christian Nwachukwu



Youth with winning talent in the 2009 show.

FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS, THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS BEEN DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING TALENT – YOUNG AND OLD – AS A PART OF ITS ANNUAL TALENT SEARCH COMPETITION AND TALENT SHOW. This year NYCHA is proud to host the 40th Annual Talent Show at Harlem’s legendary Apollo Theater on Saturday, April 10th from 2pm to 5pm.

“I’ve been involved with the show for over 20 years,” said NYCHA’s Deputy General Manager of Community Operations, Hugh Spence. “I’ve seen it evolve to a professionally staged show for amateur talent.”

All of the Talent Show’s performers hail from a NYCHA housing development and compete in one of six categories: Vocal Performance (Pop, Ballads, Religious or Folk Music); Classical Music; Instrumental; Dance; Comedy; and Drama (Reading and Poetry). But, great as the night of stars is, the performance is only the main event of a broader embrace of the arts.

The Talent Show “is not just an event,” says NYCHA Creative Arts Manager, Juan Santiago, “it’s a program out of which we have an event,” he added. “We’re not putting people on stage who’ve done

this all their lives,” Santiago says. Instead, NYCHA is molding raw talent with the help of professional directors, coaches and artists. Many performers say their participation in this free NYCHA Performing Arts program is an opportunity not to be missed.

“I wanted to do something with my time instead of just going straight home from work and going to bed,” said Sheila Wheeler of Gompers Houses, who performed a bluesy, soul-filled rendition of the Lou Rawls classic, “Tobacco Road,” at last year’s Talent Show. “It’s a lot of work, and then you have to put feeling into it—and I’m just starting to get the feeling part,” she said with a laugh. “It’s fun though.”

“These people are giving of themselves—teaching the tenants skills for free that people pay a lot of money for,” said Talent Show Stage Manager, Michele Noble about the director, vocal coach and choreographer who prepared contestants for the 2009 Talent Show.

“I enjoy working with people who have a passion for art and may not be formally trained or have an opportunity to formally train, but still have a desire to share it,” said, Broadway choreographer Kenya U. Massey, who counts *Oprah*

Winfrey Presents The Color Purple, among her credits.

But not everything is peace, love and good times.

“I kind of beat them up, get them in there, work them out,” Broadway singer and last year’s vocal coach Cheryl Freeman said. “They call the room the Torture Chamber.”

In spite of the rigorous rehearsal schedule and the commitment required of each Talent Show contestant, performers look forward to returning each year.

“The reason why it’s important to me is it’s a chance for me to have fun on stage, not just go on stage to win anything, but just to have fun,” said young Idja Ferguson of Tremont Houses, who performed a West African drum-accompanied spoken word and dance number. “I dream to be the second Will Smith,” he added.

Or, maybe the first Idja Ferguson.

To learn more about the NYCHA Talent Search Competition and Talent Show visit our Community Programs and Services web page at www.nyc.gov/nycha or call to speak with one of NYCHA’s Community Coordinators: 212-306-3511.

NYCHA’s 2010 Summer Youth Employment Program

NYCHA is seeking youth between the ages of 14 and 21 for the 2010 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). SYEP is sponsored by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and the 2010 program will run from July 6, 2010 through August 20, 2010. Participants will work 25 hours a week, Monday through Friday. NYCHA residency is not required to qualify for the program.

NYCHA’s SYEP participants gain valuable employment experience working in Community Centers as Counselors-in-Training (16 and 17 year-olds only), or on NYCHA development grounds. Starting April 1, 2010, interested youth will be able to apply on-line or download an application from the City’s Web Site:

www.nyc.gov/dycd.

Beginning April 2, 2010, SYEP applications will also be available at NYCHA Development Management Offices, Community Centers and at the Department of Resident Employment Services, located at 787 Atlantic Ave. 2nd Floor in Brooklyn. Completed applications may be returned to any NYCHA Development Management Office.

For more information about SYEP, please visit DYCD’s website at www.nyc.gov/dycd or contact NYCHA’s AskHR at 212-306-8000.

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APPROVED FOR POSTING

Council Member Sanders Allocates Funds to Beach 41st Street Community Center



Chairman John Rhea and Council Member James Sanders greet seniors at Beach 41st Street Community Center.

Rockaway Community Center Gets City Council Funds for Afterschool Programs

By Eileen Elliott

City Council Member James Sanders announced a \$60,000 allocation to supplement after-school programming at NYCHA's Beach 41st Street Community Center in Far Rockaway. The Council Member made the announcement at a press conference held at the Center, and was joined by NYCHA Chair John B. Rhea, Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh B. Spence, Resident Association Presidents Lizzie Brown and Peggy Thomas of Beach 41st and Hammel Houses, respectively, as well as residents from the development.

"We're trying to find a way to make something even better than it was before," Council Member Sanders said. Chairman Rhea added, "I've committed to working in partnership with Council Member Sanders and with residents to make sure it actually is a new day and a better, brighter future for the residents of the Rockaways."

The Beach 41st Street Community Center, located at 426 Beach 40th Street, was sponsored by the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club until October 16, 2009. NYCHA took over the club three days later and has been operating the club ever since. Planned programming includes computer classes, homework assistance, sports, trips, arts and crafts, dance and other educational, cultural and recreational programs for youth ages six to 12, teens and adults.



Anadelia Cuellar and her daughter.

NYCHA Residents on the Path to Homeownership

By Christian Nwachukwu

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF OWNING YOUR HOME? Maybe you thought it wasn't for you, or that owning your family's home was out of reach. Maybe you are still looking for your path to a mortgage instead of a lease. Homeownership doesn't mean much if you don't put the money on the table. That's just what HUD and NYCHA are currently making possible.

"It is a great, great opportunity," Anadelia Cuellar, former Board President of Jennings Garden Terrace HDFC, said. "For anybody who has an apartment and the government is giving them this opportunity, this is the chance of a lifetime."

Jennings Garden Terrace, formerly the Jennings Street NYCHA houses, is one of three developments that have successfully gone through the Multi-Family Home Ownership Program (MHOP), and one of six that were slated for rental to co-op conversion.

Five NYCHA developments in the Bronx were identified for conversion — Prospect Avenue, Jennings Street, Southern Boulevard, West Farms Square and Franklin Avenue — and a sixth — Frederick Samuel Houses, which was designated in Manhattan.

Of the five Bronx developments, three have been converted to co-ops. Prospect Avenue, converted in late 2008, and is now Plaza Off the Park-HDFC; Jennings Street, also converted in late 2008, is Jennings Garden Terrace-HDFC; and Southern Boulevard, converted in May 2009, and is Mott Haven Victory-HDFC.

In June 2005, HUD and NYCHA agreed to extend a federal grant and allow money to be used toward a re-designed homeownership program. Under the program's guidelines, a number of NYCHA developments would be converted to co-ops. Those co-ops would hire a management

company like any other, own their building like any other, and most of the families living in them would own their homes.

To bring the program full circle, the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) was brought on as the program's non-profit consultant. They help coordinate outreach to residents and provide pre-conversion assistance including training classes, conversion assistance, post-conversion assistance, and long-term program monitoring.

"UHAB was very helpful, very attentive," Ms. Cuellar said. "They were there for us — holding our hands while we went through the transition."

UHAB worked with NYCHA to let families know what MHOP was and how they could qualify. To enter the program, all applicants have to be in good standing with NYCHA—up-to-date on rent payments, have a good rent history for at least two years, and pass a background and criminal check. Applicants also have to fall in at least one of four eligibility tiers, with precedence allotted on a sliding scale from tiers one to four.

Tier 1: Residents who live in the development undergoing conversion

Tier 2: Residents who live in that development's borough

Tier 3: NYCHA residents in the five boroughs

Tier 4: Households in the five boroughs on the NYCHA waiting list for public housing, but must meet the income criteria, roughly 51–80 percent of median income for that area

Before a development can convert, 67 percent of the apartments must be sold. To buy their apartments, the government grants residents what's called an "evaporating loan," which is forgiven at the end of 20 years. During the 20 year life of the loan, owners are responsible for paying their co-op's monthly maintenance fee, between \$450 and \$850. They cannot sell their apartment for a profit during the life of

the loan, and if they do sell before the end of 20 years, it must be to a family that meets the eligibility requirements.

If a resident chooses not to buy their unit, but is in good standing with NYCHA, they are allowed to relocate to another development. They can also stay in their current unit as a renter, but they will have to pay the market rate for rent, which often exceeds the maintenance fee.

"It's an excellent and affordable opportunity for low-income families to become home owners," NYCHA Financial Management for Operations Department staffer Maria Lopez said.

While the former developments turned co-ops will no longer be on NYCHA's books, the Authority's commitment goes beyond the financial. NYCHA must maintain a fund for the 20-year life of the evaporating loans; and the Authority is using its own reserves to shore up the transition process.

"The benefits are largely social," Ms. Lopez said. "We want to help NYCHA residents become homeowners."

The homeownership program also builds on NYCHA's renewed commitment to improving life in the city for all New Yorkers. "We are expanding the definition of 'community' so that we extend our reach to who the NYCHA community can impact in positive ways," NYCHA Chairman John Rhea said.

NYCHA and UHAB are now working aggressively to fully convert the remaining three developments: Approximately 62 percent of the units in West Farms have been sold, and Franklin Avenue is at 42 percent. NYCHA hopes to convert both later this year. Units will go on sale at Fred Samuels later this year with possible conversion in 2011.

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TABLE TENNIS, ANYONE?

(Continued from page 5)

For us it was about the hustle: How to make money to get this? What am I going to do to get this? If we got beef with this crew, are we going to take a different route? Whereas, the other kids were just free.”

An arrest for weapons possession sent Mr. Green’s life into a tailspin and landed him in a boarding school in his biological father’s native Nigeria for two years in order to avoid jail time. For a long time he didn’t know who he was or where he was going but he found the direction he needed through table tennis.

Mr. Green said that the more people told him he couldn’t play the more determined to play he became. A chance meeting with a business man with a big heart

and a passion to play table tennis changed Mr. Green’s life. “He would pay me to play with him three times a week. We became really close friends and one day he told me ‘I’ll pay for you to go to Germany for two months to learn table tennis.’ That was the start of me changing because I got exposed to something different.”

Once he returned to the States, his desire to play Ping Pong became ferocious. He practically lived at the Ping Pong clubs playing some of the best in the City and even began teaching to make some extra money. Soon prepping for tournaments became part of his life. “In one year I went to 15 countries; travelling to play Ping Pong...that’s crazy,” he said. “To people it’s just crazy that a guy who looks like me plays Ping Pong, and that’s been my thing ever since.”

Nowadays, the name Wally Green resonates with a slowly-emerging secret table tennis society that is becoming more and more famous. He is a “hip hop, rapping” professional player who has represented the United States in over 30 international competitions to win several awards and titles including the one he currently holds—“Elite Status over 2200”

—a table tennis category that means super good.

Mr. Green has a Bachelor’s Degree in Graphic Arts from the School of Visual Arts and a 12 year old son. He is currently training for the table tennis try-outs for the 2012 Olympics.



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