



## Message from the Chairman

For the past year and a half, you have heard a lot about Federalization, which was accomplished through the federal stimulus program, also known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The innovative plan that allows NYCHA to fund 21 former City and State developments with federal money was a significant achievement in 2010 that reversed years of the Authority covering the costs of these developments from subsidies allocated to support other NYCHA properties. In 2011, NYCHA received approximately \$60 million in additional operating and capital subsidies to maintain and rehabilitate the homes of nearly 12,000 NYCHA families. These additional funds went a long way in addressing desperately needed maintenance and repair efforts and helping the Authority offset other federal funding cuts.

However, this may change very soon.

Congress currently is writing next year's budget. The House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for funding public housing is proposing to end this arrangement, which would take away these much needed funds. Their bill proposes that any units federalized by ARRA no longer receive any operating, capital or Section 8 assistance – now or in the future.

Federalization brings additional resources to NYCHA, which can be used to bridge the gap between the rents residents pay, and our actual expenses and needs. As government funding continues to be reduced, we also need access to private capital to develop quality housing. As some in Congress would have it, NYCHA would not be allowed to access that private capital.

We have used Federalization money to improve the quality of life for residents. Rehabilitation work at the 21 federalized developments included upgrades in individual apartments, roof replacements, façade repairs and elevator rehabilitations. It also allows us to keep the money we had to divert to cover the costs of the 21 developments for other, much-needed uses, such as the new Work Order Task Force, which has completed more than 10,000 work order tickets in the developments with the highest number of work tickets per apartment since it began this June.

Many members of New York City's Congressional delegation are fighting for us, including Brooklyn Congress member Edolphus Towns, a long-time advocate for public housing. Most recently, Representative Towns led the way with a letter to the Congressional appropriations subcommittee signed by 11 of his New York City colleagues,



NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea and Brooklyn Congress member Edolphus Towns speak at one of Representative Towns' listening sessions for public housing residents.

asking for the provision to be removed.

"What this measure will do is slowly strangle the affected developments by forever barring their access to federal housing assistance," the letter stated. Towns added: "I feel that it is crucial that our community stand up and oppose the drastic cuts to public housing proposed in the current appropriations measure. Chairman Rhea and I agree that action is needed now. If the current bill is signed into law, it will have a devastating impact on families who already are suffering. I pledge to work with NYCHA and my colleagues to make sure these harmful provisions to public housing are removed."

If this bill is enacted, there could be another, long-term impact. Federalization was one of the largest mixed-finance tax credit deals in the nation's history, in partnership with Citi Community Capital, who received tax credit support. That is being placed at risk.

Indeed, this bill could have a chilling effect on future efforts to bring private investment to public housing. By having private funding as a supplement, public housing funds can be used to create opportunities to partner with nonprofit organizations to improve service delivery, foster economic growth and support housing development. Such transactions likely no longer would be regarded as reliable investments – private investors will have second thoughts about investing in public housing.

*continued on page 3* ▶

## NYCHA Domestic Violence Resource Conference Focuses on Teen Dating

By Eric Deutsch

**I**f your boyfriend or girlfriend is not loving you right, then someone else will love you right. Life will go on if you leave someone abusing you." That was the main point driven home by Tamron Hall, the MS-NBC anchor who was the keynote speaker at NYCHA's 10th annual Domestic Violence Awareness Conference and Resource Fair, on October 29. The annual event is run by NYCHA's Social Services Department under the leadership of Director Nora Reissig.

Ms. Hall spoke movingly of her sister, who she says was murdered in an apparent domestic violence incident in 2004, which made her realize that domestic violence can affect anyone. "It does not have to be someone raised in a bad home or who has no friends. My sister was popular and outgoing," she said.

This year's conference theme was "We Stand for... Healthy Teen Dating Relationships," marking the first time the focus was on teen dating. The more than 400 NYCHA youth in attendance rose out of their seats at Ms. Hall's urging and shouted, "I know what love is and I deserve healthy love!"

The attendees also broke into workshops that focused on a number of topics to educate them about various aspects of domestic violence. One workshop focused on the role men play in preventing domestic violence. It is



MSNBC anchor Tamron Hall (left) asked several NYCHA youth to join her on the stage as she spoke at NYCHA's 10th annual Domestic Violence Awareness Conference and Resource Fair on October 29, 2011.

part of an initiative led by Vice-President Joseph Biden, and was presented by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. "It was inspiring, it caught our minds," said Shamel Massie, a teen from Mariners Harbor in Staten Island. "It let us know the consequences so we can keep from making mistakes."

NYCHA Board Member Margarita López also spoke to the crowd, telling anyone who was raised in a family with abusive relationships to embrace a different way of living. "Love is not dominance or violence," she

said. "When you embrace what it is to be a man, or embrace what it is to be a woman, that is equality."

Candace Keith, a teen living at Tompkins Houses in Brooklyn, felt everything she learned will help her for years to come. "Eventually when I have a relationship that I'm really into, I'll know what to look out for and that I can get away if I have to," she said.

### Assistance for Domestic Violence Victims

NYCHA has partnered with the nonprofit Safe Horizon for more than 20 years to ensure that NYCHA residents who report domestic violence victimization receive the emotional and practical support they need. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Safe Horizon's Domestic Violence Intervention, Education and Prevention (DVIEP) program hotline number, **1-800-621-HOPE**, or call a local Safe Horizon Community Office listed below.

<b>Bronx</b>	<b>718-933-1000</b>
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>718-834-6688</b>
<b>Manhattan</b>	<b>212-316-2100</b>
<b>Queens</b>	<b>718-899-1233</b>
<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>718-720-2591</b>



# NYCHA Board Meetings



Notice hereby is given that the New York City Housing Authority's Board Meetings take place every other Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room on the 12th floor of 250 Broadway, New York, New York (unless otherwise noted). The remaining meetings for Calendar Year 2011 are as follows:

**November 23      December 7      December 21**

Any changes to the schedule above will be posted here and on NYCHA's website at [nyc.gov/nycha](http://nyc.gov/nycha) to the extent practicable at a reasonable time before the meeting.

These meetings are open to the public. Pre-registration at least 45 minutes before the scheduled Board Meeting is required by all speakers. Comments are limited to the items on the Calendar. Speaking time will be limited to three minutes. The public comment period will conclude upon all speakers being heard or at the expiration of 30 minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever occurs first.

Copies of the Calendar are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, New York, no earlier than 3:00 p.m. on the Friday before the upcoming Wednesday Board Meeting. Copies of the Disposition are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Secretary no earlier than 3:00 p.m. on the Thursday after the 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 business days before the Board Meeting. For additional information, please visit NYCHA's website or call **(212) 306-6088**.

## Resident's Voices

**November 1, 2011**

(sent via e-mail)

**To All Residents of Public Housing:** Let Your Voice Be Heard!!!!

We have begun a **CITYWIDE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE PUBLIC HOUSING & OUR HOMES.**

The House of Representatives is proposing to cut the funding for operating, managing and repairing public housing. What this means is that the people in Washington who are responsible for deciding to put through the appropriations bill for funding year 2012 plan to make the conditions in our developments worse. It is time for us to take a stand and fight for our homes.

We are mobilizing to go to Washington, DC, on November 16 to make sure that we stop the budget cuts proposed by the House of Representatives and the Super Committee. Not all of us will be going to Washington, DC, but **YOU CAN STILL HELP!** We need residents to make phone calls, sign postcards, send e-mails and faxes to key elected representatives in Washington, DC, New York State and New York City.

Please contact your Resident Association Executive Board for more information on how YOU can help get the word out, get involved and make the Citywide Campaign to Save NYCHA Public Housing a huge success.

**UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE'RE HOMELESS! LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD IN WASHINGTON & BEYOND!**

Without full federal funding for public housing in New York City, where will **YOU AND YOUR FAMILY** be living in the next few years? **Join The Citywide Campaign To Save Public Housing & Our Homes.**

Yours in Resident Empowerment,  
**Reginald H. Bowman, Chair,**  
**Citywide Council of Presidents**

**October 12, 2011**

(sent via e-mail)

Congratulations to the NYCHA Resident Leadership for leading the way at the National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing (NAR-SAAH) Conference held recently in Florida. Over 140 public housing resident leaders from all five boroughs attended the Conference, and under the leadership of CCOP Chairman, Mr. Reginald H. Bowman, a National Public Housing Residents Caucus was convened. Resident leaders from over 22 public housing authority resident organizations from across the country participated in the Caucus.

The severity of government budget cuts to funding for public and assisted housing, not only in NYC but across the country, was one of the major concerns of the Caucus. A letter was drafted at the Conference and distributed to all public housing resident organizations across the country for distribution to every public and assisted housing resident. This letter to support full funding for public housing nationally has taken on a life of its own and has been circulated via e-mail to every county, city, state and federal elected official. The next steps NYCHA residents must take are to bring media attention by raising their voices and take part in a NATIONAL PUBLIC AND ASSISTED HOUSING RESIDENTS MOVEMENT. WE MUST CONTINUE TO "LIFT EVERY VOICE" UNTIL WE ARE HEARD!

To sign an on-line petition in support of full funding that will be sent to Congress, please go to [www.ipetitions.com/petition/fullfundingforpublichousing/](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/fullfundingforpublichousing/).

Yours in Resident Empowerment,  
**Herma Williams, Pelham Parkway Houses**  
**Resident Association President**  
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**of Presidents**



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Comments? Questions? E-mail [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov).



**ESTABLISHED 1970 • CIRCULATION 200,000**

Published monthly by the New York City Housing Authority  
Department of Communications • 250 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007  
Tel (212) 306-3322 • Fax (212) 577-1358 • [nyc.gov/nycha](http://nyc.gov/nycha)

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Please limit written submissions to 250 words.

The *Journal* reserves the right to edit all content for length, clarity, good taste, accuracy, etc. Because of space limitations, we must limit all contributors to one letter per person per issue.

There are many ways to share your thoughts with us at the *Journal*:


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- Send a snail mail to:  
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New York, NY 10007
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- Send a fax to **212-577-1358**
- If you have any questions, please send them to [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov).

## Check out NYCHA's Facebook page!

**G**ot a web-enabled smartphone? Now you can access NYCHA's Facebook page and bonus content in this issue by scanning or taking a snapshot of the QR codes. The QR code for NYCHA's Facebook page is on the right.

**Step 1:** Download a QR code scanner application from your phone's marketplace (many of these "apps" are free to download).

**Step 2:** Point your phone's camera at the QR image.





## 'Planters Grove' Comes to Wald Houses



On hand to unveil the new Planters Grove at Wald Houses in Manhattan on October 3, 2011, were State Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, Planters Senior Brand Manager Scott Marcus, NYCHA Board Member Margarita López, Mr. Peanut, NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea, Congress Member Nydia Velazquez, NYCHA Vice-Chair Emily Youssouf, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Wald Resident Association President Charlotte Miles, Citywide Council of Presidents Member Rose Bergin and NYCHA Board Member Victor Gonzalez.

By Eric Deutsch

**Y**ou never know who you might see when walking through the grounds of NYCHA's developments. On October 3, residents of Lillian Wald Houses saw a walking peanut. The mascot of Planters, Mr. Peanut, was on hand to help unveil Planters Grove, a new green space at the Manhattan development.

"This garden can allow people to know there are things in life other than just sitting around," said Wald Houses Resident Association

President Charlotte Miles. "We all can help keep it alive by planting and cleaning so we can be proud of it. It is so beautiful to see this outside my window."

Planters Grove was designed with input from residents and covers 8,000 square feet of green space. It includes flowers and plants that stay bright and lush all year to attract birds and butterflies, benches made from recycled plastic and many sweet-smelling herbs that can be picked to add to recipes. And there are wood poles to

encourage greenery to grow that are laid out in the shape, of course, of a peanut.

At the event officially opening the grove, a frequent theme focused on the collaboration among groups from many different sectors: government, corporations, community groups and nonprofits. "What's happening today with Planters partnering with us to improve public housing and reinvest and give something back says volumes about what America is about," said NYCHA Chairman John

B. Rhea. "This is an example of what is needed to preserve and sustain public housing."

Members of Green City Force, which provides NYCHA youth with green-collar job training, led the construction efforts and will join with NYCHA residents to care for the grove. Maurice Davis, a resident of Rutgers Houses, gave an emotional speech about what helping to build the grove meant to him. "To my fellow residents, if we learn to not be so selfish, and take in what's going on in our environment, there are greater possibilities at hand," said Mr. Davis, who drew a standing ovation. "Let this garden and this day be a stepping stone to something more."

"Planters is proud to have partnered with NYCHA and Green City Force to build a natural, green space at Lillian Wald Houses – one that promotes community interaction and stewardship," said Planters Senior Brand Manager Scott Marcus. "Our hope is that the residents of Lillian Wald Houses and surrounding NYCHA developments will not only enjoy their new Planters Grove, but will benefit from the many health and environmental benefits open spaces can provide."

The grove advances Mayor

Michael R. Bloomberg's PlaNYC goal of creating more accessible open space city-wide and ensuring every New Yorker lives within a 10-minute walk from a green space. It has many features that focus on environmental sustainability, including the removal of 80 yards of concrete that was replaced with soil, and an area that used to flood that now will collect rainwater and flow into the garden to irrigate the plant life.

NYCHA Commissioner Margarita López, the Authority's Environmental Coordinator, said the project is in line with the philosophy of the development's namesake, Lillian Wald, who was a leader in social reform of public health in the early 20th century and is regarded as the founder of visiting nursing in the United States. "I invite all of you to enjoy this," Commissioner López said. "But also, to protect it, for your children."

To see more photos from the Planters Grove opening, point your smartphone's camera here.



◀ continued from page 1

### Message from the Chairman

With our funding being reduced far below what we need, the ability for NYCHA to utilize the resources and expertise of our partners to provide critical services and programs is vital.

By partnering with Robin Hood, we have been operating the NYCHA Resident Training Academy for more than one year, providing residents with janitorial or construction training programs which has led to jobs with the Authority and our contractors.

In 2014, 90 affordable housing units will open on the grounds of Washington Houses, the result of a partnership with Harlem RBI. In this issue of the *Journal* you can read about Markham Gardens Manor, an affordable housing complex for seniors under construction on NYCHA property by Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation.

A new program with the Children's Museum of Manhattan is bringing a satellite location to Johnson Houses in 2013, complete with interactive exhibits and hands-on educational programs. Hundreds of NYCHA youth living in St. Nicholas Houses will attend the new Harlem Children's Zone charter school when it opens next year on the development's grounds.

Although each of these public/private partnerships is a tremendous boost to supporting NYCHA families, it does not replace the federal government's responsibility to public housing families. As this issue of the *Journal* goes to press, the Citywide Council of Presidents and other resident leaders are mobilizing to go to Washington, DC, with NYCHA's full support. They plan to meet with Congress members to make their voices heard about the devastating effects cutting these federal funds will have.

But the effort should not end there. I urge all of you to be a part of this movement. Contact your Resident Association President to find out what more you can do. Raise your voice. Get your neighbors involved.

Let's work together to save public housing.

*John B. Rhea*

John B. Rhea



### Pomonok Houses Now Sees a Lot More Green

**O**n October 11, Pomonok Houses residents joined with corporate volunteers from Alcoa to plant 145 trees around the Queens development. The event

was part of NYCHA's Green Agenda, and led to a Resident Green Committee (RGC) forming. The RGC held a tree care workshop a couple of weeks after the planting event to train residents how to care for the trees. Residents interested in forming an RGC at their development can call Ramona Lloyd at **212-306-8486**, or go to **greenycha.org**.



## THE NYCHA NOT WANTED LIST

Below is a partial list of names of individuals who have been excluded permanently from NYCHA's public housing developments. This list keeps residents informed of the Authority's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of its facilities. The following are the people, with their former addresses, excluded as of October 20 and October 27, 2010.

### Prohibited as of October 20, 2010

- Ousmane Ag** Riis Houses, 765 FDR Dr., 8th fl., Manhattan
- Daniel Andrews** Farragut Houses, 177 Sands St., 4th fl., Brooklyn
- Antoine Banks** Nostrand Houses, 2356 Bragg St., 4th fl., Brooklyn
- Tyquan Brooks** Todt Hill Houses, 1754 Richmond Rd., 1st fl., Staten Island
- Brendon Cordner** Howard Houses, 1548 E New York Ave., 5th fl., Brooklyn
- Robert Ford** South Jamaica Houses, 109-36 160th St., 3rd fl., Queens
- David Hills** Ocean Bay Apartments (Oceanside), 363 Beach 54th St., 5th fl., Queens
- Keiyn Jackson** Morris Houses, 1451 Washington Ave., 16th fl., Bronx
- Calvin James** Howard Houses, 1550 E New York Ave., 4th fl., Brooklyn
- Jose Maldonado** Bushwick/Hylan Houses, 140 Moore St., 1st fl., Brooklyn
- Kevin McBride** Nostrand/Sheepshead Houses, 3044 Avenue V, 4th fl., Brooklyn
- Michael McNeil** a/k/a Ivan McNeil Van Dyke Houses, 429 Dumont Ave., 3rd fl., Brooklyn
- Jesus Miranda** Cypress Hills Houses, 305 Fountain Ave., 3rd fl., Brooklyn
- Jamaine Mitchell** Adams Houses, 68 Tinton Ave., 1st fl., Bronx
- Don Mottley** Langston Hughes Houses, 301 Sutter Ave., 4th fl., Brooklyn
- Digna Pujols** Riis Houses, 765 FDR Dr., 8th fl., Manhattan
- Matthew Rivera** Jefferson Houses, 228 E 115th St., 7th fl., Manhattan
- Leonard Rivers** Morris Houses, 1451 Washington Ave., 16th fl., Bronx

### Prohibited as of October 27, 2010

- David Alexander** Grant Houses, 55 LaSalle St., 17th fl., Manhattan
- Robert Bibbins** Pelham Parkway Houses, 2324 Paulding Ave., 4th fl., Bronx
- Pedro Colon** Saint Mary's Park Houses, 665 Westchester Ave., 14th fl., Bronx
- James Davis** Van Dyke Houses, 429 Dumont Ave., 11th fl., Brooklyn
- Jose Galarza** Saint Mary's Park Houses, 665 Westchester Ave., 8th fl., Bronx
- Shannon James** Van Dyke Houses, 395 Livonia Ave., 6th fl., Brooklyn
- Lynn Johnson** Coney Island Houses, 3028 W 29th St., 11th fl., Brooklyn
- Vondell Nelson** Lafayette Garden Houses, 345 Classon Ave., 16th fl., Brooklyn
- Jaquan Paugh** Ocean Hill Houses, 309 MacDougal St., 7th fl., Brooklyn
- Michael Phillips** Cypress Hills Houses, 1260 Sutter Ave., 7th fl., Brooklyn
- Frajon Thomason** Monroe Houses, 805 Taylor Ave., 1st fl., Bronx

## Board Member Gonzalez Recognized for Contributions to West Side

NYCHA Board Member Victor A. Gonzalez, the first resident to serve on the Board, was honored on October 19 for his contributions to Manhattan's West Side. Board Member Gonzalez received a WESTY, a civic award presented by the publisher Manhattan Media, which stands for 'West Side Spirit Thanks You.' He has lived in Wise Towers since 1972 and is a tireless public housing resident leader and advocate. Board Member Gonzalez serves on several non-profit boards and has worked with advocacy groups to support activities that impact not



only his development, but the entire West Side community.

The phone number for the Brooklyn Borough Resident Watch Coordinator, Deborah Miller, that was provided in the September Journal was incorrect. The correct number is **718-649-6400**.

Comments? Questions? E-mail [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov).

## The Chief's Corner

### HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

With the holiday season upon us, most people are preoccupied with the details of holiday planning and shopping. Unfortunately, the safety precautions we normally take can be forgotten as the excitement of the season causes us to let our guard down. The NYPD wants this to be a safe holiday season for all, so we remind you to follow these simple tips. Enjoy the City and the season!



Housing Bureau Police Chief Joanne Jaffe

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Criminals often target people who are distracted.
- Whether driving, walking or taking public transportation, plan the trip in advance. Know how to get to your destination by the most direct and safest route.
- If possible, stay in designated waiting areas or in view of the station booth clerk while awaiting your train. Never walk or stand near the edge of the subway platform.
- Travel on populated, well-lit streets. If possible, travel with a friend.
- When driving, keep your doors locked and the windows closed. Make sure the gas tank is full. Maintain your car in good working order to avoid breakdowns.
- Always lock your car. Before getting into your car, check the back seat to make sure no one is hiding there.
- Avoid leaving valuables in your car. Whenever possible, place items out of sight in the trunk of your vehicle prior to reaching your destination. Never leave packages in the passenger compartment unattended.
- Plan your purchases in advance and carry only the amount of cash or number of credit cards necessary to make the purchase. If you must carry a large sum of money, divide the cash between your purse, pockets and wallet.
- Carry your purse close to your body. Place one end of the purse in the palm of your hand and the other in the bend of the elbow. Never wrap the strap around your body.
- If you are carrying a wallet, carry it in the breast pocket of your jacket or in your side pants pocket. The rear pants pocket is the easiest to pick.
- When in a restaurant, don't leave your handbag over the back of your chair or on the floor. Don't leave belongings unattended.
- Don't wait until you have reached your front door to look for your keys. Have them ready in your hand. If a stranger is standing near your door, it may be a good idea not to go in until the situation feels safer.
- If you live in an apartment building, don't buzz in someone who rings your bell until you have verified who they are. This will help protect both you and your neighbors.
- If you have elderly family members or neighbors, please remember to check in on them.
- Remind children to be wary of strangers, including those on the internet.
- Be wary of con artists. Con artists use a number of ploys to trick you and steal your property. Some divert your attention while another picks your pocket, some pose as utility workers or tradespersons to gain access to the inside of your home, while others conduct scams that are more elaborate involving several con artists.

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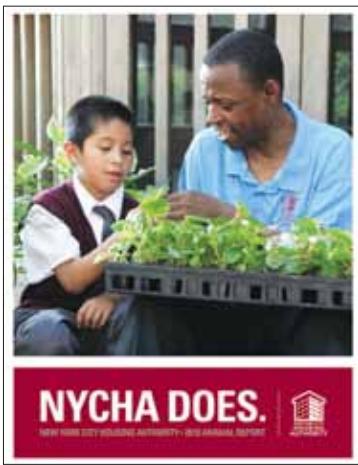


## NYCHA 2010 Annual Report Focuses on Theme of "NYCHA DOES."

NYCHA's 2010 Annual Report provides information on the Authority's accomplishments in 2010 and about the work NYCHA performs for approximately 630,000 New Yorkers every day. The Annual Report's theme is "NYCHA DOES." The concept focuses on how NYCHA fulfills its mission to provide, preserve and protect public housing.

The Annual Report marks the first time NYCHA has captured the photographic images of residents inside the apartments they call home. A special feature on NYCHA's website includes profiles of these residents and a peek into why NYCHA is important to them.

The Annual Report also issues a clear call to action that acknowledges the current assault on public housing and the urgent need for the collective



NYCHA's 2010 Annual Report cover features Sean Coraizaca from Drew Hamilton Houses in Manhattan, and John Reddick, who has been working with NYCHA's Garden and Greening program for more than 30 years.

support, resources and commitment of partners – including residents – to help sustain this vital resource.

To see the Annual Report and the on-line profiles, go to <http://on.nyc.gov/ARNYCHA>.

## Section 8 Resident Earns Her Own Graduation Present

By Howard Silver

When Ebony Hood graduated from NYCHA's Family Self Sufficiency program (FSS) this year, she had a hard-earned graduation "present" of more than \$8,500 waiting for her. FSS, enacted by Congress in 1990 for Section 8 voucher holders, enables participants to deposit into an account the increased rental charges they pay as their earn-



ings rise. When FSS participants graduate from the program, they gain access to the account.

So, as Ms. Hood's income rose, so did her savings. "That money was very important. It came just in time to help me reach my goals," she said.

Those goals include expanding her home-based business as a beauty and wellness professional, as well as plans to further develop a not-for-profit collaborative network called Full Circle Women's Coalition.

Joining the FSS program as a single parent, Ms. Hood already held a part-time job to supplement her income from public assistance. She worked with her FSS case manager to plan a course of action with specific objectives that could lead her to self-sufficiency. First Ms. Hood earned her Associate of Science degree at Touro College in 2006, and then a Bachelor of Science degree in 2008. Beginning this spring, she will resume course work toward her Master of Science degree to become a licensed mental health counselor.

Without FSS, Ms. Hood said, most of that might not have happened. "I wanted to be proud of myself and take things in my own hands, but I didn't have the resources," she said. "Now I am off both Public Assistance and food stamps."

FSS participants also receive assistance, support, and referrals for education, training and employment placement. Currently there are 50 NYCHA Section 8 voucher holders enrolled in FSS, which is seeking to enroll more. Participants sign a five-year Contract of Participation to work toward becoming economically self-sufficient. Section 8 voucher holders who want to learn more can call **718-218-1528**.

## NYCHA's Woman in Blue

By Heidi Morales

"I go out of my way to service the tenants and keep a smile on my face," said NYCHA Caretaker J Lateste Thompson, who works at Sheepshead Bay/Nostrand Houses in Brooklyn. It is that attitude that helped Ms. Thompson to be named the Best of Brooklyn 2011 Building Service Worker of the Year by the Service Employees International Union 32BJ.

A Surfside Gardens (Brooklyn) resident for 17 years and NYCHA employee for nine years, Ms. Thompson said she is grateful for her job and the relationships she has developed with residents throughout the years. "The work that I do is hard, but I thank God every day for getting me through the day," she said. "I focus on what I have to do. It's hard but you have to be persistent."

Ms. Thompson was one of 26 building service workers who were nominated by their co-workers, employers or in Ms. Thompson's case, building residents, as the best of the best among the tens of thousands of building service workers in the City.

"The thousands of men and women who keep New York City running, and make our buildings safer and comfortable for millions of people should be recognized for their professional service and hard work," said Mike

Fishman, President of 32BJ, the largest property services union in the country, which represents 70,000 building service workers in New York.

Ms. Thompson was nominated by Monica Perez, the sister of a long-time resident of Sheepshead Bay Houses. "I was so pleased because no one deserves it more.

Lateste works very hard," said Ms. Perez. "She has such a friendly and warm personality."

Ms. Thompson's genuine goodwill and excitement for her job readily is evident. Despite her full schedule as an employee and as a single parent of five children, she always has something kind and warm to share with her residents. "This really feels like somebody appreciates what I've done," she said.



### Can You Sing? The NYCHA Youth Chorus Wants You!

The NYCHA Youth Chorus is looking to audition new members during its recruitment drive. NYCHA youth between 12 and 19 years old who enjoy singing, performing and would like to develop their music skills should call the Department of Community Operations at **212-427-6648** or **212-427-8603**. The NYCHA Youth Chorus is based out of Taft Houses in Manhattan.

Comments? Questions? E-mail [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov).



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### New Affordable Housing for Seniors in Staten Island

NYCHA and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) joined developing partner the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation on November 3 to celebrate the start of construction for Markham Gardens Manor, an affordable housing development for seniors in Staten Island.



The new five-story development, scheduled for completion in October 2012, will provide 79 affordable housing units for the elderly, a landscaped rear yard, a community room for social and recreational activities, an outdoor recreational area, a computer and library room, an arts and crafts area, an onsite laundry and 28 parking spaces. Residents also will have access to a full-time social services coordinator to help them receive entitlements and assistance from Staten Island-based service providers. Eligible seniors must be 62 or older at the time of their application and have income of \$28,650 or less for one person and \$32,750 or less for a couple. A total of 19 units will be reserved for eligible NYCHA residents. Shown from left, NYCHA Board Members Margarita López and Víctor Gonzalez joined Eric Feldmann (center), Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation, in laying symbolic bricks to top off the test wall constructed to show the brick pattern for the new building.

### 2011 NYCHA Garden and Greening Competition Awards

Below is a list of all First Prize winners in each category. For the full list that includes Second Prize, Third Prize and Honorable Mention winners, please go to NYCHA's website at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha).

#### CITYWIDE FLOWER

Garden of Zodiac, South Jamaica Houses

#### CITYWIDE VEGETABLE

God is Love Garden, Marlboro Houses

#### CITYWIDE VEGETABLE

Green Thumb Garden, Pink Houses

#### CITYWIDE CHILDREN'S/THEME

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Stars Garden, Union Avenue Consolidation

#### BRONX FLOWER

Liberty Garden, Throggs Neck Houses

#### BRONX VEGETABLE

El Bohio Garden, Union Avenue Consolidation

#### BRONX CHILDREN'S/THEME

Murphy Community Center Children's Flower Garden, Murphy Consolidation

#### MANHATTAN FLOWER

The Wild Garden, Isaacs Houses

#### MANHATTAN VEGETABLE

Morning Glory Garden, Polo Grounds Houses

#### MANHATTAN CHILDREN'S/THEME

Mrs. Potts' Garden, Isaacs Houses

#### BROOKLYN SOUTH FLOWER

Rays of Hope Garden, Carey Gardens

#### BROOKLYN SOUTH VEGETABLE

Green House Garden #5, Marlboro Houses

#### BROOKLYN SOUTH CHILDREN'S/THEME

Love Garden, Carey Gardens

#### BROOKLYN WEST VEGETABLE

The Cabbage Patch Garden, Walt Whitman Houses

#### BROOKLYN WEST FLOWER

Memory Land/Purpose: Honoring Our Family and Friends Who Have Passed Away, Marcy Houses

#### BROOKLYN WEST CHILDREN'S/THEME

Ebony's Garden, Marcy Houses

#### BROOKLYN EAST FLOWER

Hope Gardens Community Center-El Jardin de las Mariposas, Hope Gardens

#### BROOKLYN EAST VEGETABLE

God Bless Garden, Pink Houses

#### QUEENS FLOWER

Happy Acres Garden, Conlon-Life Tower

#### QUEENS VEGETABLE

Park Jong Won's Vegetable Garden, Beach 41st Street Houses

#### STATEN ISLAND FLOWER

Shore Garden, New Lane Shores

#### STATEN ISLAND VEGETABLE

Pacific Lane Garden, New Lane Shores

#### STATEN ISLAND CHILDREN'S/THEME

Peace and Harmony Garden, Berry Houses



The Garden of Zodiac at South Jamaica Houses in Queens won the citywide flower competition.

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<b>Parkside Senior Center</b> 644 Adeo Avenue Nov. 18 at 10 am	<b>Park Plaza Restaurant</b> 220 Cadman Plaza West Nov. 22 at 3 pm	<b>Carver Senior Center</b> 55 East 102nd Street Nov. 10 at 10:30 am	<b>5th Ave Diner</b> 432 5th Ave Nov. 16 at 10 am	<b>SNAP Senior Center</b> 80-45 Winchester Blvd. Nov. 18 at 10 am

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Dates	Days	Times
October 15, 2011 to February 14, 2012	7 days a week	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
February 15, 2012 to October 14, 2012	Monday through Friday	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
October 15, 2012 to December 31, 2012	7 days a week	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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## Who Will Be the Next America's Got Talent Winner? It Might Be Your NYCHA Neighbor!

By Heidi Morales

Some talented NYCHA residents got the chance of a lifetime when they auditioned for one of the number one shows on television – NBC's *America's Got Talent*. The show features singers, dancers, magicians, comedians and other performers of all ages competing for a top prize of \$1 million and headlining in a show in Las Vegas.

*America's Got Talent* is currently auditioning acts in several cities across the country for season seven. The New York City casting call was held on October 9 and 10 at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan. The residents' participation was a bit of a surprise to many, including themselves, since none of them even knew the

TV show was holding auditions in New York City. An *America's Got Talent* producer asked for talented NYCHA residents to try out for the show after viewing performances on NYCHA's YouTube channel.

Venus Sharpe, 35, a former NYCHA Talent Show third place winner from Morrisania Air Rights in the Bronx, delivered a rendition of Whitney Houston's "One Moment in Time" before the judges. "Every day after work, I would get home and practice," said Ms. Sharpe. "I think I did well, it was a fun experience. There were other acts and the AGT staff had us hype each other up."

Keziah Anderson won the Adults division in the NYCHA Talent Show in 2010. She had a great time at the audition and said that although it was overwhelming at times, the audition process was a beautiful experience. "It was crazy because I've never seen so many people auditioning at

### City Website Provides Resources for Residents without Health Insurance

The Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access (OCHIA), part of the City Human Resources Administration (HRA), has updated its website, [www.NYCGov/hilink](http://www.NYCGov/hilink), with the latest information on the Federal Affordable Care Act. The site, launched by Mayor Bloomberg in September 2009, is an easy-to-use search tool that lets users compare the costs and benefits of different health insurance plans with extensive, unbiased and up-to-date information. The tool is targeted to unemployed or independent workers, freelancers and small busi-

ness owners who do not have health insurance coverage or are shopping for more affordable coverage.

The site, called "NYC Hi Link," explains the terms of the new federal law in clear language and offers separate portals for individuals and families, the self-employed and small businesses to learn about the changes that are starting now and those that will take effect in 2014.

For more information about the website, contact Ana Juarbe, Senior Program Manager at OCHIA, at **212-331-4202** or [juarbea@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:juarbea@hra.nyc.gov).



Keziah Anderson, shown here during the 2010 NYCHA Talent Show, was one of the residents who auditioned recently for the hit television show "America's Got Talent."

once," said the 39-year old King Towers (Manhattan) resident. "If I don't get picked, I'll be back for the next season. I really love to sing, so even if I don't get in at least I have the exposure."

Call backs for the next round of auditions will take place between January and April 2012.

To see footage of the 2011

NYCHA Talent Show on the Authority's YouTube channel, which features some of the residents who auditioned, point your smartphone's camera here,

or go to [www.youtube.com/nychahousing](http://www.youtube.com/nychahousing).



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