



NYCHA Hires Residents Post-Sandy, to the Benefit of Many

\$7.1 million federal grant pays for nearly 400 jobs

Additional reporting by Eric Deutsch and Howard Silver

There are many people benefitting from a \$7.1 million federal grant that allowed NYCHA to hire nearly 400 people to work on post-Hurricane Sandy recovery work at developments impacted by the storm. Residents living in impacted areas will have additional staff to clean their buildings and assist them with accessing services; the newly hired employees have jobs; and NYCHA will be able to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time.

"When I found out about this, I thought it was a great opportunity to extend myself to help my neighbors and people in distress," said Benardo Castro from Jefferson Houses in Manhattan.

More than half of the hired workers are NYCHA residents, many of whom lost their jobs as a direct result of Hurricane Sandy. The jobs are funded by a National Emergency Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor that lasts for up to six months. NYCHA was assisted in hiring workers by the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) through its Workforce1 program.

"I'm glad for this opportunity with good pay. It's good to pick people with experience in the neighborhood to help because we know (the people) and what they are going through, so we are sympathetic," said JoJo Adeyemi from Coney Island Houses in Brooklyn.

Some of the new employees will serve as Custodians, keeping grounds and buildings clean. "NYCHA welcomes these new employees who will provide great assistance to our residents in returning their communities and lives to a safe living environment," said NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea.

Other employees will be Community Outreach Workers, knocking on the doors of the 19,000 residents directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy to connect them with any

NYCHA RESTORES



Nearly 2,000 people at five events applied for NYCHA jobs funded with a federal grant, including at the O'Dwyer Community Center in Brooklyn on December 12, 2012, where people started lining up at 5:30 a.m. Photo by Eric Deutsch.

services they may need. The Community Outreach Workers will be working later in the day and on Saturdays to ensure they contact every family. "We hope to ensure that every resident impacted by Hurricane Sandy has the services they need for their families' recovery from the storm's impact," said NYCHA General Manager Cecil House.

As part of the recruitment process for the jobs, NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES), in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor and SBS, hosted five pre-screening events in Coney Island, the Lower East Side, Red Hook and the Rockaways to interview applicants. *continued on page 2*

Deadline To Apply For FEMA Disaster Assistance Extended

- The deadline to apply for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was extended to February 27, 2013.
- All residents who experienced damage to their apartment, lost wages or lost personal items due to Hurricane Sandy should register with FEMA to apply for disaster assistance.
- You can apply online at www.fema.gov/apply-assistance or by calling (800) 621-3362.

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NYCHA Outreach Continues to Assist Residents Post-Hurricane Sandy

Coney Island, Red Hook and Rockaways residents receiving significant resources

By Eric Deutsch

As the City and NYCHA continue to recover from the effects of Hurricane Sandy, public housing residents also are doing their best to get their

lives back to normal. NYCHA remains committed to providing significant resources to assist residents affected by the storm.



NYCHA General Manager Cecil House (far right) meets with residents to discuss ongoing restoration efforts after Hurricane Sandy at the Ocean Bay Community Center in Queens.

One of the more intensive efforts is a door-to-door assessment by NYCHA's Family Services Department of all affected residents in Coney Island, Red Hook and the Rockaways. Employees worked hard to ensure they spoke with someone in every apartment to find out if any residents needed medical care, mental health counseling, homecare services, relocation assistance or other hurricane relief type of services. In addition, Department of Operations staff inspected the conditions of every apartment and cleaned them where it was necessary.

The relocation assistance was particularly vital for many families who lived in first floor apartments. Eighty families in Zone A moved to another NYCHA apartment, either permanently or temporarily, as of January 28, with Authority staff coordinating the entire process. "The most important thing we can do is make sure all residents in the affected

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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 2013 are as follows:

February 13	April 24	July 17	October 9
February 27	May 8	July 31	October 23
March 13	May 22	August 14	November 6
March 28	June 5	August 28	November 20
(Thursday)	June 19	September 11	December 4
April 10	July 3	September 25	December 18

Any changes to the schedule above will be posted here and on NYCHA's website at 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 Corporate Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12th 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 Corporate 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 Corporate 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.

Check out NYCHA's Facebook page!

Got 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.



Residents' Voices



December 10, 2012

(via e-mail)

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Ms. Bernice Allah. Ms. Bernice is an extraordinary person. She goes far and beyond for the residents of Breukelen Houses. She takes that extra step to make the residents very happy, feel safe, and she gets the job done. She's always a joy to be with, she knows her job very well. She will do what no others will. Ms. Bernice takes extra care of the elderly.

She not only knows her job, but she enjoys doing it. You have no choice but to love her.

Bernice helps the young ladies that come here and becomes like another mother to them. She puts them on their feet and steers them in the right direction, by telling them about the different Housing programs that benefit them; she cares.

Again, I want to say GOD BLESS YOU Bernice for all you have done for us here at Breukelen Houses. WE LOVE YOU DEARLY. Keep up the great work and never change.

Laura Pierce, Breukelen Houses



December 26, 2012

(sent via Twitter)

Happy birthday mommy!!!

Chelsea Eve Cordero, 45 Allen Street



December 31, 2012

(sent via Twitter)

Mis delicias: Flan, Cheese Cake, Corn bread, Sweet Potato Pound Cake and Brownie

Noemi Allen, Unity Plaza



December 31, 2012

(sent via Twitter)

Now her gift...

Frances Andrea, Bayview Houses

Tell us what is on your mind!

Residents' Voices accepts letters, photographs, poems, drawings – anything that allows you to express yourself!

Please include your full name, development name, address and phone number. We will print only your name and development on our pages; we need your address and phone number for verification purposes only.

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*:

Send an e-mail to Journal@nycha.nyc.gov

Send a snail mail to: **NYCHA Journal Letters to the Editor** 250 Broadway, 12th floor New York, NY 10007

Send a Tweet on Twitter at twitter.com/NYCHA_Housing

Post a message on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NYCHA

Send a fax to 212-577-1358

If you have any questions, please send them to Journal@nycha.nyc.gov.

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NYCHA Hires Residents Post-Sandy, to the Benefit of Many

Nearly 2,000 people attended the events.

Aaron Dais from Coney Island Houses was one of the residents who braved the cold at the event at the O'Dwyer Community Center in

Brooklyn. "I think everyone is living on a prayer right now. I will do my best no matter what they want me to do," he said. "I'll be grateful to have a job." Mr. Dais ended up being hired as a Community Outreach Worker.



The people hired by NYCHA to knock on every door in Coney Island, Red Hook and the Rockaways can be identified by the bright yellow vests they will wear, with NYCHA written on the back.

35,000+ Residents Affected by Sandy Receive Rent Abatements from NYCHA

NYCHA provided \$5.6 million in rent abatements to residents impacted by Hurricane Sandy. More than 35,000 public housing families received rent credits for any days they were without essential services, such as power, heat, hot water or elevators, as a result of the storm.



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Message from the Chairman

I want to share with you many of the exciting and major initiatives underway at NYCHA in 2013 that will enhance residents' quality of life. All of our efforts are part of Plan NYCHA, our five-year strategic roadmap to ensure the preservation of public housing for generations to come.

We begin our year continuing to work on the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. While we successfully have restored critical electricity, heat and hot water services to all NYCHA

residents in the storm-impacted areas, we know there still is much to do. We are placing the utmost importance on securing FEMA disaster relief funding that will allow us to make permanent repairs to the critical infrastructure of our buildings. This means repairing or replacing equipment in a way that will minimize the risk of damage in future emergencies, and also invests in resilient and sustainable systems. This work will reduce our vulnerability and minimize disruption of critical resident services if other major weather events hit New York City. We also will continue to engage residents in Zone A and B areas in our emergency preparedness programs.

In 2013, we renew our commitment to being more than just a landlord. A \$24 million Mayoral Initiative grant will expand the Jobs-Plus program, currently at two locations, to up to seven more sites, extending new job opportunities and training to hundreds of NYCHA residents. Recruitment and training already has begun for nearly 400 temporary post-Sandy recovery jobs for residents of NYCHA and surrounding communities, made possible through a \$7.1 million National Emergency Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. And the Harlem Children's Zone at St. Nicholas Houses – which is set to open its doors this year to an estimated 1,300 students,

including NYCHA residents – will provide world-class education, livable-wage jobs and access to community resources for residents of NYCHA and surrounding communities.

We continue to expand our efforts to work with residents, law enforcement and community-based organizations to make your homes safer. We are on schedule to finish installing closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras and layered access security enhancements at 86 designated developments that have received city or state funding. And we will keep working to secure additional government funding to expand the layered security enhancement systems at these and other developments.

I have written in previous *Journal* messages about the continuing decrease in funding NYCHA faces, and how we look for new ways to get the money we need to provide you with safe, decent and affordable housing. This year, we will complete a \$500 million bond issue that we will use to continue critical capital improvements such as brick, roof and window rehabilitation at dozens of NYCHA developments. We also will proceed with choosing the locations for our plan to work with developers in building housing on NYCHA property, which will bring in a new source of funds to invest in preserving NYCHA homes and building additional affordable housing. Also, we are proceeding with plans to rebuild Prospect Plaza and Randolph Houses, and to build supportive housing at Van Dyke Houses. You can read more about the Prospect Plaza and Van Dyke projects on page 5 of this issue.

We have an ambitious agenda ahead of us this year – too many programs and initiatives to list. Working together with all of you to achieve our common goals will make 2013 a year of success for public housing in New York City.

John B. Rhea
John B. Rhea

NYCHA Residents Will Help “Cease the Grease” in City Sewers

Some Baruch Houses residents will be doing their part to prevent gross sewer backups and overflows. Two buildings at the Manhattan development are taking part in a new pilot program that will test the effectiveness of educating residents on the importance of proper disposal of grease. The pilot is being conducted in collaboration with the City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Residents at 296-298 Delancey Street are getting an intensive education on the effects that grease has on the city's sewer system, and the best ways to avoid adding to the problem. At the same time, the residents at 70-72 Baruch Drive only will receive the information card shown at right. After up to six months, the DEP will check to see how much grease has built up in the pipes running from each building, and also will keep track of how many sewer backups each building has. After that, the educational outreach will be tweaked if needed, and then the pipes will be checked again after another six or more months.

Before the pilot began, all of the gunk and sewage was vacuumed out of the buildings' internal sewer lines, and the City sewers connected to each building also were cleaned so the DEP can see if the grease education makes a difference.

Baruch Houses was chosen because of its location near a city sewer line that has a lot of backups. The two specific buildings were chosen based on recommendations by NYCHA plumbers – the buildings have frequent backups and are connected to separate sewer lines, so they can easily be compared.

The Baruch project is part of larger effort by the DEP to “cease the grease” by encouraging New Yorkers not to pour used cooking oil and grease down kitchen or bathroom drains or in toilets. Not only does this clog pipes and cause sewer overflows, but it also leads to backups that go into the city's waterways and negatively impact the environment. People instead should

pour cooled cooking oil and grease into a container, then seal it and throw it out with regular garbage.

“It is very important that we do our part to not only make NYCHA greener and cleaner, but all of New York City,” said NYCHA Board Member Margarita López, who leads the Authority's green agenda. “We all are part of one community – what one person throws away can affect someone else's home.”

Among the outreach the residents who are getting the intensive education will receive are regular meetings, walking tours along sewer routes and visits to a City pump station and wastewater treatment facility.



The grease that fills New York City's sewers can be seen rising up as NYCHA crews cleaned out the pipes near Baruch Houses on January 8, 2013. Photo by Daniel Osgood.

CEASE THE GREASE

PROPER DISPOSAL OF COOKING OIL AND GREASE

- ◆ **Cooking oil poured into a drain clogs pipes in your home and city sewers.**
- ◆ **Clogged sewers cause sewage backups into your home and neighborhood.**
- ◆ **Clogged sewer pipes can release sewage into local waterways, harming the environment.**



DON'T pour cooking oil or grease down the kitchen sink, toilet, or any other drain in your home.



DO pour cooled cooking oil and grease into a container, then seal and discard with your regular garbage.

Before washing pots, pans, and dishes:

- DO** wipe off oil and grease with a dry paper towel.
- DO** scrape leftover food into the trash.



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Carter H. Strickland, Jr., Commissioner

For more information, please visit:
nyc.gov/dep

Rev. 12/12

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 full list can be viewed at on.nyc.gov/nychanotwanted. The following are the people, with their former addresses, excluded as of June 27 through August 8, 2012.

Prohibited as of June 27, 2012

Michael Mills, Glenwood Houses, 5903 Glenwood Road, Apt. 5A, Brooklyn

Prohibited as of July 3, 2012

Adam Benitez, Jefferson Houses, 205 East 112th Street, Apt. 4A, Manhattan

Kasaan McKay, Whitman Houses, 127 North Portland Avenue, Apt. 5B, Brooklyn

Eric McLendon, Redfern House, 15-40 Hassock Street, Apt. 3F, Queens

Allen Ryant, Armstrong Houses, 435 Gates Avenue, Apt. 1A, Brooklyn

Prohibited as of July 11, 2012

Warren Cintron, Wise Towers Houses, 2012 West 93rd Street, Apt. 22C, Manhattan

Prohibited as of July 18, 2012

Anthony Graham, Grant Houses, 75 LaSalle Street, Apt. 12I, Manhattan

Dupree Williams, Brownsville Houses, 294 Osborn Street, Apt. 5A, Brooklyn

Prohibited as of July 25, 2012

Ernest Aiken, Mill Brook Houses, 169 Cypress Avenue, Apt. 12D, Bronx

Anthony Joyner, Farragut Houses, 191 Sands Street, Apt. 13E, Brooklyn

Kendall Mason a/k/a Kendall Bynum, Castle Hill Houses, 2160 Seward Avenue, Apt. 5G, Bronx

Jeremiah Rodriguez, Washington Houses, 1851 Third Avenue, Apt. 9E, Manhattan

Markus Snowden, Castle Hill Houses, 580 Castle Hill Avenue, Apt. 10G, Bronx

Prohibited as of August 1, 2012

Kewanii Yancey, Cypress Hills Houses, 445 Fountain Avenue, Apt. 6F, Brooklyn

Prohibited as of August 8, 2012

Gilbert Colon, Soundview Houses, 1725 Randall Avenue, Apt. 6E, Bronx

Joseph Cornelius, Tilden Houses, 275 Livonia Avenue, Apt. 7B, Brooklyn

Waheed Cornelius, Moore Houses, 674 East 149th Street, Apt. 5J, Bronx

Gregory Jackson, Jr., Wise Towers Houses, 74 West 92nd Street, Apt. 19E, Manhattan

Leonardo Martinez, Patterson Houses, 2645 Third Avenue, Apt. 3A, Bronx

Jason Small, Armstrong II Houses, 360 Lexington Avenue, Apt. 4F, Brooklyn

Carl Whitaker a/k/a Carlo Whitaker, Red Hook East Houses, 754 Henry Street, Apt. 4C, Brooklyn

FREE 15-week job training program for homeless & low-income women

First Step Program

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

GED not required • New class starting soon!

FREE Continental Breakfast & Metrocards Provided

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Eye on Housing Fraud

Through the quarterly feature "Eye on Housing Fraud," the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) provides names of residents, as listed below, who have been convicted and sentenced for defrauding NYCHA. In these cases, restitution is collected through a payment schedule until fully paid, including wage and asset garnishments, if necessary. Anyone with information regarding fraud or wrongdoing should call DOI's NYCHA Inspector General Hotline at (212) 306-3356.

Nataliya Dyakovskaya – pleaded guilty to the federal charge of Theft of Public Money and was sentenced to two months in federal prison for defrauding the government of more than \$77,000 by occupying a subsidized NYCHA apartment for more than 14 years while concealing her ownership of a condominium on Manhattan's upper west side, which she purchased for approximately \$700,000, and a house and property in East Hampton, NY, that she purchased in 1995 for approximately \$1.4 million. Dyakovskaya also fraudulently sublet her NYCHA apartment on Madison Street in Manhattan.

Yanick Desince – pleaded guilty to the federal charge of Theft of Public Money and was sentenced to two months in prison and three years of supervised release, with the first six months under home detention. Between 2000 and 2011, Desince concealed her ownership of the Section 8 property in Brooklyn where she resided and defrauded NYCHA of \$96,674, which she was ordered to repay as part of her sentence.



Department of Investigation Commissioner
Rose Gill Hearn

Thomas Patterson – sentenced to six months in prison and remitted \$10,000 in restitution to NYCHA for defrauding the Housing Authority by concealing the presence of his wife and her income in a Section 8 apartment in the Bronx.

Meon Smith – sentenced to a Conditional Discharge, ordered to perform 30 days of community service, and remitted \$11,050 to NYCHA, the amount she defrauded the Housing Authority between 2008 and 2010 by misrepresenting that she was unemployed, when in fact, she was employed by the New York City Transit Authority.

Justine Williams – sentenced to a Conditional Discharge and ordered to pay \$42,164 in restitution in connection with continuing to receive NYCHA subsidies even though she failed to occupy her NYCHA apartment between 1998 and 2008.

Value-Added Sites: An Overview with NYCHA's VP of Development

By Howard Silver

In the October issue of the *Journal*, NYCHA outlined its plan to make available underdeveloped land on its properties for the development of market rate and affordable housing and, in some cases, commercial, retail and community facilities, with a goal of generating funds for NYCHA to preserve its buildings. In this issue, NYCHA's Executive Vice President for Development, Fred Harris, provides more details.

What is the prospective impact on NYCHA and New York City?

This is a bold, large-scale project that will create market and affordable housing on a scale rarely seen in recent years in this City. We expect more than 4,000 new apartments will be created over two to three years, beginning in 2014. This will make a measurable blip on the City's overall economy, and a gigantic blip on NYCHA's, generating tens of millions of dollars of highly secure cash flow for years beginning in 2014.

What are the positive impacts for public housing residents, in addition to more funds for capital work and repairs?

In general, we want to reduce the sense of difference between NYCHA and the rest of

the City. There will be more income variety, and the new full-service, attractive buildings, with a healthy mix of affordable and market rate rentals, will bring new commerce and job opportunities to neighborhoods. We're also hoping that new housing will bring a safety bonus for NYCHA residents, through such anti-crime measures as outdoor lighting, security cameras, security staff and more eyes on the street. There will be new construction jobs and specific physical improvements tailored to each NYCHA development.

How are the sites to be offered at NYCHA developments being selected?

We are guided by four criteria. First, the sites must have no negative impact on residents' quality of life and will not displace a single existing apartment. Actually, we believe the impact overall will be quite positive. Second, we want areas where the long-term land leases will generate the most income. Third, the building sites must be near enough to the sidewalk so they are capable of having their own street address. We don't want to build another "tower in the park" without direct street access. And fourth, the sites must be "as of right," so there is no need for rezoning or waivers or special permits.

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NYCHA Outreach Continues to Assist Residents Post-Hurricane Sandy

developments know we are here for them, ready to help in any way we can," said Nora Reissig, Director of the Family Services Department. "This especially was true for families on the first floor, where conditions after the storm in some cases just did not allow for them to stay."

Recognizing the importance of speaking with residents in person on a regular basis, NYCHA has been holding community meetings in the three affected areas. Residents have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about the recovery process. NYCHA includes other organizations in the meetings so residents can get updates on other items, such as public transit and phone service. "These meetings are critical to maintaining an open dialogue between residents and NYCHA, and both sides have found them to be beneficial," said Melba Butler, Director for Resident Engagement. "That is why we will continue to have them."

Another way NYCHA maintains frequent and open communications is the NYCHA Restores newsletter. Coney Island, Red Hook and the Rockaways each

NYCHA has scheduled more NYCHA Restores resident meetings in February:

Red Hook

February 13, 6:30 p.m.
Joseph A. Miccio
Community Center,
110 West 9th Street

Coney Island

February 19, 6:30 p.m.
O'Dwyer Community Center,
2945 West 33rd Street

Far Rockaway

February 25, 6:30 p.m.
Ocean Bay
Community Center,
57-10 Beach Channel Drive

have their own version, providing updates on clean-up and repairs, building services, social services assistance, information about the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and more. The newsletter is delivered to every apartment. To see the NYCHA Restores newsletters, go to on.nyc.gov/nychasandy and scroll down to "Restoration Efforts."

Tragedy Averted: Bushwick Houses Caretakers Honored for Heroism

By Howard Silver

Twenty stories up, on the roof of a building at Bushwick Houses, NYCHA Caretaker Rodney Golden had a firm grip from behind around the waist of a resident. Between them was a thin metal fence that the man had climbed to stand on the ledge of the roof, ready to jump. Mr. Golden held his lifesaving grip tight for what he said was the longest 10 seconds of his life.

Recounting the events with fellow Caretaker Dwane Simmons prior to the Brooklyn development's Resident Association meeting on January 10, where they were honored for their heroism, Mr. Golden pointed to the top of the tall building he rushed to on November 29, 2012. While patrolling the grounds, Mr. Simmons had felt a few pebbles hit his hardhat and when he looked up, saw the man hovering near the edge of the roof. He immediately radioed in the report that Mr. Golden responded to.



NYCHA Caretakers Rodney Golden and Dwane Simmons are honored for saving a resident's life by Bushwick Houses Resident Association members Lohoma Shipman, President; Janice Tucker, Treasurer; Lillian Velazquez, Sergeant-at-Arms; Evelyn Alcaide, Vice President; and Valerie Hill, Secretary; on January 10, 2013.

"I was just being human and wanted to see what was happening," said Mr. Golden, who found the elevator ready on the ground floor when he arrived. Without hesitation, he took it to the top of the building and ventured out onto the roof.

Guided only by what he had seen on television police shows, Mr. Golden began to speak calmly with the man. Eventually,

Redevelopment of Prospect Plaza Moving Forward Developer chosen to build community revitalization project



A rendering of the proposed residential buildings that will be built on Prospect Place as part of the Prospect Plaza redevelopment.

NYCHA and the City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) chose the developer to oversee the redevelopment of Prospect Plaza that will result in a mixed-use facility, including 284 affordable housing units, with an additional 80 public housing units. Blue Sea Development Company, Pennrose Properties, Duvernay + Brooks, and Rosenberg Housing Group (collectively referred to as Blue Sea & Partners) will have the task of creating the \$140 million, 200,000 square foot project.

Former Prospect Plaza residents will have a preference

for the public housing units. In addition to the housing units, Prospect Plaza will include retail space – including a supermarket – and a community facility. The project meets Plan NYCHA's goal to develop new mixed-use, mixed-income housing and resources. "Through partnership with HPD, we can leverage NYCHA resources to provide housing opportunities for more low-income New Yorkers," said NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea. "We look forward to the successful revitalization of Prospect Plaza as a model for future

redevelopment."

Built originally in 1974 by a private developer, Prospect Plaza consisted of four high-rise towers with 365 units situated on three sites. In 2003, the towers were vacated, with one tower demolished, and plans to rehabilitate the other three; however, eventually the original plan was found to be financially infeasible. NYCHA engaged former residents and community members to create the new plan for Prospect Plaza, which includes demolition of the remaining towers.

New Supportive Housing Coming to Van Dyke Houses NYCHA names CAMBA Housing Ventures and CAMBA, Inc. as developer

The plan to build a new supportive housing building with 100 units took a big step forward as NYCHA selected Brooklyn-based nonprofit CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc. as the project's developer. CAMBA (CAMBA Housing Ventures' parent organization) will provide on-site social services and employment training for residents of the building, and the greater Brownsville community will be linked and referred to relevant CAMBA services and other community-based services. The development site is in a parking lot at Van Dyke Houses.

CAMBA will work with NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) staff to prepare NYCHA residents for construction job opportunities during development of the project. CAMBA Housing Ventures pro-

poses to build a 12-story building with 44 one-bedroom units and 56 two-bedroom units, as well as a community space and a mental health clinic staffed with a certified psychologist and social workers.

"As we stated in our roadmap to preserve public housing, Plan NYCHA, we are committed to ensuring seniors, disabled



A rendering of the proposed supportive housing building to be built at Van Dyke Houses.

populations, and other targeted special-needs populations have the supports they need," said NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea. "We're also committed to using NYCHA land to create new housing opportunities for New Yorkers and NYCHA residents."

The Brownsville section of Brooklyn where Van Dyke is located has one of the highest rates of homelessness in New York City and maintains a large demand for affordable housing. Once the building is complete, a minimum of 30 percent of the units will be reserved for homeless families and families at risk of homelessness. The remaining units will be made available to low-income households – 25 percent of the low-income units will be set aside for NYCHA residents. Based on input from Van Dyke Houses residents, the new housing will be permanent housing, adding increased stability to the neighborhood.

The Van Dyke Supportive Housing Project is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2015.

he was able to grab onto him. Within 10 seconds, while Mr. Golden strained to hold his grip, Emergency Medical Services staff arrived and helped him pull the man over the fence to safety.

"I felt good that a life was

saved and a family didn't have to spend Christmas without a loved one," Mr. Golden said.

Mr. Simmons was glad that he had carefully investigated the source of the falling pebbles.

At the heartfelt plaque

presentation, Bushwick Houses Resident Association president Lohoma Shipman expressed the sentiments of many when she said, "We should take time and pride to acknowledge what these employees have done."

Residents Thanks NYCHA Staff for Sandy Efforts

Residents at three Manhattan developments took the time to show their appreciation for the NYCHA staff who were very helpful during and after Hurricane Sandy. Staff at Rutgers, Strauss and Vladeck Houses were honored with special citations for outstanding service at appreciation luncheons held on December 21. The citations were presented to staff by City Council Member Rosie Mendez.

"This was long overdue and well deserved," said Vladeck Houses Resident Association President Nancy Ortiz, who organized the events. "[It] was the best gift I could have received when I witnessed the smiles, gratitude and surprise of the staff."

"Our staff was really excited and pleased," said Vladeck Houses Property Manager Patricia Reid, who praised Ms. Ortiz for organizing the event. "It is really great when residents show their appreciation because it means so much to staff, especially for their outstanding efforts during Hurricane Sandy."



NYCHA Board Member Victor Gonzalez and City Councilmember Rosie Mendez join staff at Rutgers (top), Strauss (middle) and Vladeck Houses (bottom) on December 21, 2012, as they were honored by residents for their dedication during and after Hurricane Sandy. Photos by Nancy Ortiz.

Many Options at Tax Time for NYCHA Residents

Thanks to several City programs, eligible New Yorkers have several options to file their taxes for free or at a very low cost, and can get help to access tax credits.

New Yorkers who earn less than \$57,000 a year can file their taxes online for free through the City's tax-prep website at www.nyc.gov/taxprep. For people who want a professional to prepare their taxes, there are free and low-cost options. Volunteer Income Tax Assis-

tance (VITA) sites have certified volunteers who will prepare taxes for free. To be eligible, residents with children must earn less than \$50,000 a year and those without children must earn less than \$18,000 a year. Visit www.nyc.gov/taxprep for a listing of free tax preparation sites citywide. In addition, H&R Block will prepare taxes for \$29 for residents with children who earn less than \$41,000 a year and those without children who earn less than \$31,000 a year. To take advan-



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tage of the H&R Block offer, go to www.nyc.gov/taxprep and follow the instructions to print a coupon which can be turned in at participating sites.

New Yorkers also can find out if they qualify for important tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the New York City Child Care Tax

Credit. Working New Yorkers with children earning up to \$49,078 a year could be eligible for up to \$7,658 from the EITC. Working New Yorkers with no children earning up to \$18,740 a year could be eligible for up to \$618 from the EITC. A working family earning up to \$30,000 a year who pays child care costs for children

up to age four could be eligible for up to \$1,733 from the New York City Child Care Tax Credit.

For more information, including tax preparation locations, eligibility for tax credits and which documents are required, call **311** and ask for tax preparation assistance or visit www.nyc.gov/taxprep.

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NYCHA Deploys Digital Vans to Help Residents Apply for FEMA Aid

By Eric Deutsch

Zoraida Cruz stepped into the NYCHA Digital Van. The Red Hook West Houses resident had arrived early that day to apply for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, NYCHA deployed its two Digital Vans and teamed up with FEMA volunteers to help residents who do not have access to a computer apply for aid to offset losses from the storm.

Ms. Cruz sat down with Michele Williamson, a FEMA volunteer from Nebraska, to assess what she might be eligible for. After helping Ms. Cruz enter basic information on FEMA's website, Ms. Williamson asked her a series of questions, such as:

"Did you lose any essential services from the storm?"

"Yes, for five and a half days."

"Did you have any medical, dental or funeral expenses as a result of the storm?"

"No."

Ms. Cruz was pleased with the assistance she received applying for aid. "I'll take anything they can give," she said. "They were very helpful, I know you have to go through a process."

At a total of six Digital Van/FEMA assistance events, 179 residents received help to apply for disaster assistance; another



From within NYCHA's Digital Van, Red Hook West Houses resident Zoraida Cruz receives help from a FEMA volunteer to apply for disaster assistance on December 5, 2012.

112 residents were assisted with checking on the status of a previously filed application or got answers from FEMA on other questions.

She Fen Rong, a Red Hook West resident, applied for money to recover his family's losses from all of their food spoiling after they lost power. "We also had no hot water," he said through a translator. "My wife and I had to take cold showers and hand wash our clothes."

Mr. Rong was one of the

residents who received help in applying for the FEMA aid by making use of NYCHA's Language Services Unit, which had staff on site and available by phone. Mr. Rong and the FEMA volunteer assisting him patiently passed a phone back and forth between them while a NYCHA Chinese interpreter translated everything they said to each other. "I am very satisfied with the process. They were very helpful. I am very appreciative," he said.

Internet Free Fulton Houses

Residents at Fulton Houses in Manhattan are benefiting from being near Internet giant Google's new offices. The Internet search engine company, whose offices are near the development, recently began providing free public wireless (WiFi) Internet access in the neighborhood. It is a joint venture with the non-profit Chelsea Improvement Co., which allows anyone with a computer in the area to access the Internet for free.

"Expanding affordable broadband access in NYCHA communities helps to close the digital divide and also supports NYCHA's efforts to bring more services online, including the ability to apply for public housing, electronic application for NYCHA-supported jobs, and other enhancements," said NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea.

Federal Benefits Go Completely Electronic On March 1

Beginning this March, currently if you receive your Social Security or other federal benefits by paper check, then you will receive a Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card instead. Your benefit money will be loaded onto your Direct Express Card each month. This card may be used to pay bills or to get cash at Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) or locations that accept credit/debit cards.

You also have the option to have your benefits sent electronically to a bank account or a credit union account that is in your name. This is called the Direct Deposit option. Call the number below before March 1 to get Direct Deposit if you prefer it over the debit card option. You may also sign up for Direct Deposit at your bank or credit union. People who have Direct Deposit may switch to the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card option at any time.

For more information about your options or to make a change, call the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at (800) 333-1795 or go to www.GoDirect.org or visit your local federal benefit agency. Have a copy of your most recent federal benefit check available for fast service.

New Hours for Social Security Field Offices

Social Security field offices across the country now close to the public 30 minutes earlier than they used to. For example, a field office that was open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. last year now closes at 3:00 p.m. Also, on Wednesdays offices now close at 12:00 p.m. Call (800) 772-1213 to find out when your local Social Security Office is open. Say "agent" to speak to a live person.



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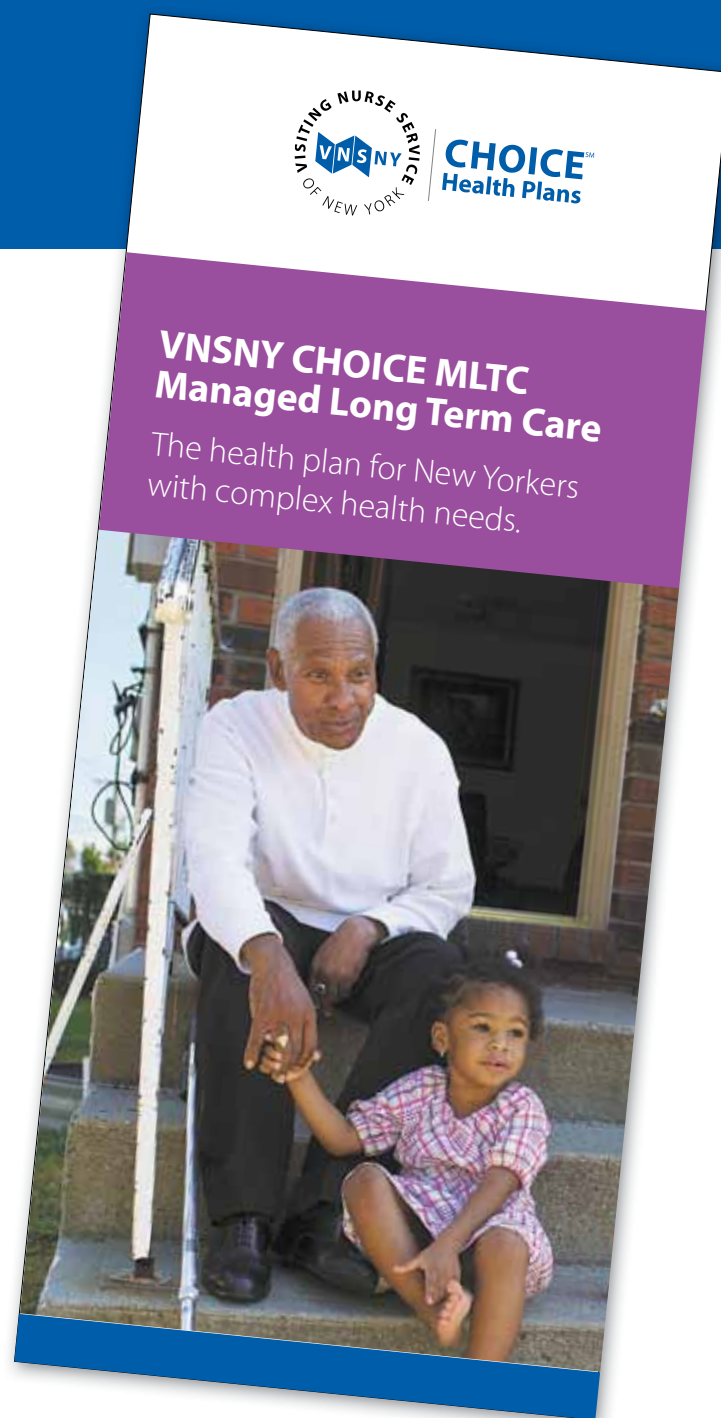
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*January 2012 VNSNY CHOICE membership data

NYCHA Residents Receive New Furniture Thanks To Generous Donations



Mary Dávila relaxes on her new chair in her Johnson Houses apartment, courtesy of donations secured through NYCHA's Office of Public-Private Partnerships and Family Services Department for residents affected by Hurricane Sandy.

By Zodet Negrón

"When NYCHA gave me the key to my new apartment, it was entirely furnished (with new beds, a dining room set, sheets, towels, plates, kitchen utensils and other household appliances)," said Mercedes Duran from Pomonok Houses in Queens.

"I was so happy; it was a wonderful surprise."

After Hurricane Sandy hit, many NYCHA residents lost all of their belongings because their apartments were flooded. Some have relocated to other developments, but they have not had to do it alone. NYCHA's

Family Services Department coordinates the relocation of these families (see "NYCHA Outreach Continues to Assist Residents Post-Hurricane Sandy" on page 1), and provides assistance with securing furniture and other household items by working with its partners and donors.

Ms. Duran and her family benefitted from a \$55,000 grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, secured through the Family Services Department's partnership with Community Solutions. She evacuated from Redfern Houses in the Rockaways before the storm with her two children and stayed with some friends until it was considered safe to go back. She returned to

find all of her belongings damaged by the flooding and moldy conditions in her apartment. Ms. Duran was transferred to Pomonok Houses.

For Mary Dávila from Ocean Bay Apartments in Queens, getting a helping hand from NYCHA has been an uplifting experience. When she returned to her apartment two weeks after Hurricane Sandy passed, she was devastated by the water damage and moldy conditions. NYCHA located a new apartment for Ms. Dávila at Johnson Houses in Manhattan and provided beds for her and her two children, a dining room set, a sofa and a dresser. "I am so appreciative of everything NYCHA has done for me," said Ms. Dávila. "They've made everything so easy-going."

In addition, Loews Regency Hotel donated more than 2,500 pieces of furniture through The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. NYCHA's Office of Public-Private Partnerships also secured donations from Sleepy's, Rent-A-Center and Gothic Cabinets. Sleepy's donated more than \$43,000 worth of beds and Rent-A-Center donated more than \$10,000 worth of furniture, including full living room sets and bedroom sets. Gothic Cabinet donated more than \$6,000 worth of furniture, including beds, mattresses, box spring, frames, headboards, cribs, cradles, dining tables, nightstands and mirrors.

Comments? Questions? E-mail Journal@nycha.nyc.gov.

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