



Message from Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye



I am honored to serve as the New York City Housing Authority's new Chair and Chief Executive Officer. As the country's oldest and largest public housing authority, NYCHA, despite the many challenges it faces, remains an invaluable public asset, an affordable housing resource which is vital to the success of New York City and its citizens. We New Yorkers believe in preserving public housing. New York has and will continue to invest in maintaining and improving ours. We

will continue to develop affirmative and innovative solutions for ensuring public housing's survival and legacy.

Mayor de Blasio affirmed this commitment recently, by announcing that the balance of NYCHA's 2014 payment for police services would be redirected, so that \$52 million will be spent instead on addressing badly needed maintenance and repairs in the homes of NYCHA residents. While this action is limited to this year's budget cycle, it shows that the effort to create more affordable housing in New York will consider the needs of public housing residents and the many people waitlisted for NYCHA apartments.

New Yorkers believe that our city cannot continue to be great unless it has a place for its workers to live. This means investing in a public housing system which provides affordable homes for the teachers, nurses, fire fighters, school custodians, paramedics, police officers, and many others who keep this city running. And New Yorkers recognize the return

on their investment: as an economic engine for the city and the region, NYCHA pumps \$1.70 into our economy for every \$1.00 received, translating into \$6 billion in economic output annually.

And we know that NYCHA residents are the bedrock of our communities. My late grandmother worked as a housekeeper and was a resident of Albany Houses in Brooklyn. Growing up, I often would take a bus with my mother to visit. That home made a huge difference in my grandmother's life and provided peace of mind to my family.

At the announcement of my appointment, I outlined three objectives for our work together. As I embark on my listening tour over the next several weeks, I want to hear from you about how we best can achieve those goals.

First, with your help, we will restore and rebuild NYCHA. We will keep our buildings safe, continue to work on completing repairs in a timely manner, and ensure capital projects keep our buildings

in good shape. We will rebuild trust with residents and employees through open and transparent communication.

Next, we will ensure a green and sustainable NYCHA. More than eight percent of the city's rental apartments are in NYCHA developments. Making our buildings more sustainable has a significant impact on the city. We must work together to develop a plan to green and retrofit existing buildings because it is the right thing to do for the health of our residents and the entire city, and it is the prudent thing to do for our long-term financial health.

Finally, we must create a thoughtful and practical development plan that benefits residents, reconnects our buildings to their communities, and contributes to the Mayor's affordable housing plan through a collaborative and disciplined approach. Mayor de Blasio is committed to preserving and expanding affordable housing throughout New York City, and

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Shola Olatoye Named New NYCHA Chair

Appointed by Mayor de Blasio; Cecil House to remain as General Manager

On February 8, Mayor Bill de Blasio named Shola Olatoye as the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of NYCHA. He made the announcement at Lincoln Houses in Manhattan as part of a news conference where he named the leaders of the City's housing agencies for his administration, including the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Housing Development Corporation. Mayor de Blasio also announced that Cecil House will continue to serve as NYCHA's General Manager.

Mayor de Blasio has committed to changing the city's relationship with its public housing tenants. NYCHA is the nation's largest public housing authority, and its aging buildings are in dire need of health and safety repairs, and upgrades to make them more resilient.

Leading those efforts will be Chair Olatoye, an experienced coalition builder with an extensive background leading community-based development across the five boroughs. Chair Olatoye will focus on strategic goals like expanding employment opportunities for NYCHA residents, developing plans to retrofit buildings, and more fully supporting tenants – including the



NYCHA's new Chair and CEO, Shola Olatoye, is introduced by Mayor Bill de Blasio at a news conference at Lincoln Houses on February 8, 2014.

40 percent of residents older than 62.

"I am honored to be asked by the mayor to run NYCHA. Everything we do will be focused on improving the quality of life for our tenants, especially protecting their safety," said Chair Olatoye, whose grandmother lived in Albany Houses. "This is an enormous opportunity. Public housing helped people in my family. I want it to do the same in the future for others."

Chair Olatoye will be joined by Cecil

House, who will continue to serve as NYCHA's General Manager. He will focus on continuing to reduce repair wait times and improving the resiliency of buildings to severe weather. Since joining NYCHA in August 2012, General Manager House designed and implemented a comprehensive plan to reduce the Authority's backlog of repair and maintenance requests. By January 2014, the average time it takes NYCHA

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NYCHA Board Meetings



Notice hereby is given that the New York City Housing Authority's Board Meetings take place as announced on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room on the 12th floor of 250 Broadway, New York, NY (unless otherwise noted).

The Board Meetings in 2014 are scheduled for:

March 26	June 25	October 29
April 30	July 30	November 26
May 28	September 24	December 31

Any changes to the schedule will be posted in the Journal and on NYCHA's website at www.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 for an upcoming meeting are available on NYCHA's website at www.nyc.gov/nycha, or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, NY, no earlier than 3:00 p.m. on the Monday before the upcoming Wednesday Board Meeting. Copies of the Dispositions of prior meetings 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 regarding Board Meeting Calendars, Dispositions, dates and times, please call **212-306-6088**.

Resident's Voices Editor's note: For this issue, Resident's Voices has been moved to page 4.

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.



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Shola Olatoye	Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Cecil R. House.....	General Manager
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Shola Olatoye Named New NYCHA Chair

to respond to maintenance requests had dropped to just 10 days from 134 days in January 2013, and from 249 days to 48 days for skilled repairs.

"I cannot wait to work with Shola and this administration to make New Yorkers proud of their public housing again," said General Manager House. "We've never had a leadership this committed to making that happen, and to treating our NYCHA tenants with the same respect as every other tenant in this city. We are ready to roll up our sleeves, get to work, and change the way we do business."

Mayor de Blasio's administration is working toward a goal of building and preserving 200,000 units of affordable housing over the next decade and addressing longstanding health and safety repair issues affecting NYCHA's more than 400,000 residents.

"We are going to take a new approach to this crisis that holds nothing back," said Mayor de Blasio. "From doing more to protect tenants in troubled buildings, to innovating new partnerships with the private sector, to forging a new relationship with our NYCHA communities, every decision we make will focus on maximizing the affordability of our neighborhoods. These agencies are going to work together as a collective to lift up families and make this one city – where everyone rises together."

About Shola Olatoye

Shola Olatoye comes to the de Blasio administration from an exceptional career in community development finance, housing advocacy, and real estate.

Throughout her entire career, Ms. Olatoye has been an agent of change and manager of complex and large collaborations, effecting urban neighborhood revitalization. She has a wealth of experience in the private and public sectors, and a unique ability to leverage both to create public-private partnerships aimed toward preserving and creating affordable housing and communities. Most recently, Ms. Olatoye was Vice President and New York Market Leader for Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit that has helped build or preserve more than 44,000 affordable homes for lower-income New Yorkers and invested more than \$2.5 billion in and around the city. At Enterprise, she oversaw a cross-functional team that works with community partners, the public sector and private capital sources to build and preserve approximately 3,000 affordable homes per year in New York City.

Ms. Olatoye also oversaw a number of public-private partnership initiatives at Enterprise, including a 2013 project, the East Harlem Center for Living and Learning, in which Enterprise provided more than \$12 million in debt and equity to create a new 151,000-square-foot multi-family, mixed-use development with 88 new affordable apartments, a 58,000-square-foot K-8 charter school, and 6,000 square feet of office space dedicated to not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Olatoye also served as a Vice President and Senior Community Development Manager of HSBC Bank; Director of HR&A Advisors, Inc., an advisory and economic development consulting firm; and Director of Community Outreach at the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc.

Ms. Olatoye is the daughter of a Nigerian immigrant and working class mom, who hails from Bedford Stuyvesant. She lives in Harlem with her husband and two sons.

At the announcement, Mayor de Blasio pledged to expand access to affordable housing and upgrade the city's aging public housing stock. He laid out a range of strategies to reach those goals, including launching inclusive housing programs that serve both

low-income New Yorkers and the middle class, developing innovative strategies to leverage new capital to spur housing production and preservation, and working across city agencies to maximize every opportunity to address the affordability issues facing New Yorkers.

Many Options at Tax Time for NYCHA Residents

Thanks to a number of City programs, eligible New Yorkers have several options to file their taxes for free and access income-boosting tax credits. The New York City Tax Credit Campaign, which NYCHA is a partner of, helped more than 84,000 New Yorkers file their taxes for free in 2013.

New Yorkers who earn less than \$58,000 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 certified tax preparer to complete their taxes, there are free options. Volunteer Income

Tax Assistance (VITA) sites have certified volunteers who will prepare taxes for free at dozens of locations throughout all five boroughs. To be eligible, residents with children must earn less than \$52,000 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.

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 \$51,567 a year could be eligible for up to \$8,159 from the EITC. Working New Yorkers with no children earning up to \$19,680 a year could be eligible for up to \$487 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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Message from Chair & CEO Shola Olatoye

NYCHA is a central component of his five-year plan to create or preserve 200,000 affordable housing units. This is an extraordinary opportunity for our city and for NYCHA.

This indeed is a promising time for NYCHA. Resident quality of life is improving as a result of reduced maintenance and repair backlogs. Capital infrastructure projects are underway across the city to modernize our buildings and make them more resilient. We clearly are demonstrating that NYCHA's future is one of promise and success – a future that will benefit our residents, employees, neighborhoods, and city. Thank you for helping to make that happen.



Shola Olatoye

City Council Hearing Held at Carey Gardens

Topic is Mobile Boilers Used Since Hurricane Sandy

On February 27, the New York City Council Committees on Public Housing and Recovery and Resiliency held a joint hearing at the Carey Gardens Community Center. The purpose of the hearing was for NYCHA to give an update on the mobile boilers used at developments that were affected by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The Committee on Public Housing is chaired by Council Member Ritchie Torres, who grew up in Throggs Neck Houses in the Bronx.

Currently, mobile boilers serve approximately 8,800 families in 110 buildings at 16 developments that had their boilers damaged beyond repair by Sandy. These mobile boilers are just as effective at producing steam heat as existing boilers and have sufficient capacity to

serve the needs of the developments. By tracking heat and hot water complaints related to the mobile boilers, NYCHA determined that there is a minor difference in the number of complaints received about them as compared to existing boilers. However, NYCHA attributes this slight difference to this winter's extremely cold weather.

NYCHA also has applied lessons learned this winter to make the mobile boilers more effective. During the bitter cold temperatures in January, various boiler components froze. So NYCHA strengthened weatherization by insulating enclosures and all water lines, installing heaters to keep key components from freezing during frigid weather and heat trace lines on all water piping. At all locations that utilize

mobile boilers, NYCHA is replacing oil burning systems with natural gas systems. These new boilers have built-in backups in case an individual boiler must go offline for general maintenance and repairs. Also, natural gas is a cleaner-burning fuel – an important benefit for residents – and more environmentally friendly.

NYCHA has developed plans for an infrastructure that can better withstand a storm like Sandy, and lessen the need to install mobile boilers after such severe weather. For some developments, NYCHA is proposing to raise the boilers and electrical equipment and house them in separate building extensions or stand-alone buildings. For other developments, central boiler plants or combined heat and power plants would provide

backup electricity. At others, options such as insulated façades would reduce heat load and preserve buildings' envelopes. NYCHA will engage residents as part of these proposed plans.

The mobile boilers will be in place for at least two more heating seasons, depending on receiving funding and completing design and construction of replacements. NYCHA needs the necessary funding to put those plans in place. It is pursuing this funding aggressively from numerous sources. Despite these efforts, the Housing Authority remains without sufficient commitments for the funds. Without knowing how much of its resiliency efforts will be funded, NYCHA cannot begin the processes needed to replace the mobile boilers in the best way.

NYCHA Removes Sidewalk Sheds at a More Rapid Pace

Efforts Restore Quality of Life to Dozens of Developments

NYCHA created a new process for completing repairs and removing sidewalk sheds at dozens of developments throughout the city. In 2013, NYCHA removed sidewalk sheds at 188 buildings in 52 developments – a total of 15.5 miles of sheds. This represents a 38 percent decrease overall. These efforts are part of NYCHA's overall commitment to improving the quality of life for residents and being responsive to their concerns. NYCHA implemented a new internal strategy, working closely with the City Department of Buildings, to remove sheds more rapidly once work is complete,

and to deconstruct additional sidewalk sheds that have remained in place long after completed work.

"For too long, NYCHA residents have had to live with sidewalk sheds still in place for years after the work that made them necessary was completed," said NYCHA General Manager Cecil House. "Once repairs are completed, they should be removed promptly. NYCHA staff assessed the reasons that these sheds remained in place for so long and developed a new approach, with cooperation from the Department of Buildings, to begin unfettered access to

sidewalks and surrounding areas at developments where the sheds are no longer needed. Future work at NYCHA also will benefit from this new approach."

Sidewalk sheds are installed to protect pedestrians during construction work overhead or when façade conditions present a danger to the public. As a result, these sheds cannot be removed until the construction work is completed, or the conditions are corrected.

The majority of the sidewalk sheds at NYCHA developments were erected in compliance with Local Law 11/1998, which requires owners of properties

seven stories or taller to have exterior walls and attachments inspected every five years and file a technical façade report with the DOB. Under Local Law 11/1998, if defects are found in a building's façade, such as cracked bricks or loose masonry, a sidewalk shed must be installed immediately and remain in place until repairs are completed. NYCHA has 2,698 buildings, of which approximately 2,600 are residential, and about 1,600 of those buildings require inspection under Local Law 11/1998.

As of January 24, 2014, the existing sheds in place at NYCHA total 24.6 miles. Since

undertaking the new approach, NYCHA has removed long-standing sheds at 18 developments in the Bronx; 17 in Brooklyn; 12 in Manhattan; and five in Queens.

"I am so happy, people can finally see," said Lisa Kenner, Resident Association President at Van Dyke Houses in Brooklyn. "I'm glad they're coming down and they can't come down soon enough."

The list of these developments is posted on NYCHA's website at www.nyc.gov/nycha. NYCHA's efforts were supported by Capital funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Progression of sidewalk shed removal at Van Dyke Houses, from left to right – the sheds in place; removal of the sheds; after the sheds have come down.

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.nycha.gov/nychanotwanted. The following are the people, with their former addresses, excluded as of September 23-30, 2013.

Week of September 23, 2013

Brian Newson Ocean Bay Apartments, 440 Beach 54th Street, Apt. 4D, Queens

Jose Oyola Patterson Houses, 320 Morris Avenue, Apt. 11C, Bronx

James Perkins Patterson Houses, 324 East 143rd Street, Apt. 4B, Bronx

Lorraine Pitts Pink Houses, 1167 Stanley Avenue, Apt. 7F, Brooklyn

Michael A. Rock Castle Hill Houses, 2225 Lacombe Avenue, Apt. 2C, Bronx

Odell Scarborough, Jr. St. Mary's Park Houses, 550 Cauldwell Avenue, Apt. 12B, Bronx

Marc Seck Grant Houses, 55 Lasalle Street, Apt. 17A, Manhattan

Shamel Thomas Kingsborough Houses, 320 Kingsborough Third Walk, Apt. 5B, Brooklyn

Breon Thrasher Taft Houses, 1734 Madison Avenue, Apt. 16F, Manhattan

Joseph Vega Gravesend Houses, 2673 West 33 Street, Apt. 1B, Brooklyn

Week of September 30, 2013

Joshua Benson Ravenswood Houses, 35-52 24th Street, Apt. 1F, Queens

Leonardo Brown Richmond Terrace Houses, 476 Richmond Terrace, Apt. 1C, Staten Island

James Campbell Gowanus Houses, 238 Bond Street, Apt. 8B, Brooklyn

Shaqwan Doctor Sumner Houses, 991 Myrtle Avenue, Apt. 4C, Brooklyn

Jeffrey Feggins Sumner Houses, 987 Myrtle Avenue, Apt. 2C, Brooklyn

Antonio Flores Queensbridge North Houses, 40-04 12th Street, Apt. 3D, Queens

Tywan a/k/a Tawan Haynes Manhattanville Houses, 545 West 126th Street, Apt. 15E, Manhattan

Shaun Moody Riis Houses, 1017 FDR Drive, Apt. 2C, Manhattan

Kareem Moore Red Hook West Houses, 70 Bush Street, Apt. 2C, Brooklyn

Rafael Ortiz, Jr Brevoort Houses, 1853 Fulton Street, Apt. 4C, Brooklyn

Sean Phillips Polo Grounds Houses, 2971 8th Avenue, Apt. 5E, Manhattan

Nestor Rodriguez Queensbridge South Houses, 41-08 Vernon Blvd., Apt. 1A, Queens

Tyrell Zanders Ocean Bay Apartments, 309 Beach 54th Street, Apt. 5B, Queens

NYCHA Relieved of NYPD Payment for Rest of Fiscal Year

Since 1995, NYCHA pays the New York City Police Department approximately \$70 million every year for police services at NYCHA. As part of his preliminary budget, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the remaining \$52.5 million that otherwise would be owed to the NYPD in fiscal year 2014 will be re-directed, so more money can be used to service outstanding work orders for repairs

at NYCHA developments. To keep the NYPD budget whole, the preliminary budget also provides the NYPD with an additional \$52.5 million in city funds. With NYCHA's funds no longer going to the NYPD for this city fiscal year, the Housing Authority will focus on further reducing the number of outstanding work orders and further improving response time for resident work requests. NYCHA also

will establish an independent inspection unit that will assess health and safety issues.

As of March 1, NYCHA successfully reduced its backlog to approximately 5,400 open work orders, down from 333,000 at the beginning of 2013. With 90,000 open work orders representing normal work in process, this reduction brings the total number of open work orders at NYCHA down from 423,000 to 95,400.

Residents' Voices

February 9, 2014

(via mail)

On February 3, Cassidy-Lafayette residents woke up to snow and unplowed streets and a flooded boiler, results: no heat or hot water. NYCHA Family Services went door-to-door handing out blankets. Borough, property management, and maintenance staff were there the whole time seeing that the residents were serviced. The center was warm and staffed around the clock.

NYCHA Resident Engagement was on deck giving out blankets and heaters, also serving meals and in general making residents feel secure. NYCHA Community Operations ordered breakfast and lunch and provided residents with take-home food for the evening. NYCHA Family Services called residents individually telling them to come to the center for meals and went door-to-door to aid residents who were homebound. Throughout, the maintenance superintendent and staff maintained a comfort level in the center while having to deal with a second snowfall on Tuesday.

The men and women of NYCHA's Technical Services brought the portable boiler and other equipment and supplies into our unplowed block on Monday, worked all night and had to work on the installation during the snowfall the next day.

The Cassidy-Lafayette Houses residents want to thank those who participated in the effort to make Cassidy-Lafayette residents physically comfortable while minimizing stress during our emergency.

Dr. Brenda L. Harris, Resident Association President, Cassidy-Lafayette Houses

January 22, 2014

(via mail)

My brother Eugene Delaney was an O'Dwyer Gardens tenant. On December 6, 2013, he passed away. For many years his mental illness caused him to be estranged from his family. We worried about his well-being, but were unable to make any meaningful contact with him. One of the things that gave us the greatest relief was the knowledge he was looked after by O'Dwyer Gardens NYC Housing Authority personnel. My brother considered O'Dwyer Gardens as one of his safe havens, a place where people treated him with kindness, respect, and understanding. The front office and maintenance personnel accepted Eugene for whom he was and cared for him as if he was a member of their own families.

On behalf of the Delaney family, I wish to especially commend [Maintenance Worker] Tony [Maneiro] and [Caretaker] Gail Goddard for being exemplary members of your staff. They went above and beyond their job descriptions to bring solace to Eugene and the Delaney family. The omission of any other particular individuals is inadvertent. Words are inadequate to thank those who had the humanity and perseverance to provide protection and comfort to my brother. Our family will be forever indebted to them.

Charles Delaney, former Marlboro Houses resident



SENIOR NEWS



It's Never Too Late to Quit Smoking

When you quit smoking, you will live a healthier, longer life and improve the health of your family, friends, and neighbors. People who quit smoking save money, look better, and significantly decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer.

When you stop smoking your body begins to repair itself immediately:

- Senses of smell and taste improve in two days
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The New York State Smokers Quit Line provides free one-on-one coaching for all, and free starter kits of nicotine patches or gum for those who qualify. Call 866-697-8487 or go to www.NYsmokefree.com for more information.

You also may go to one of New York City's Quit Smoking Clinics where help is provided for free or at low cost. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-ins are accepted. Call 311 for the location of a Quit Smoking Clinic near you.

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.

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

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NYCHA Youth Nominated for Scholarships for Public Housing Residents

NYCHA is committed to helping public housing residents achieve their goals of higher learning and actively seeks and promotes opportunities for residents to afford a college education. The Scholarship Committee at NYCHA nominated three outstanding high school seniors for consideration of college scholarships offered by the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA) and the New York State chapter of the organization (NYSPHADA). The awards range in value from \$2,500 to \$7,000 and honor academic excellence and community responsibility among high school students.

Curlene Chambers, who lives in South Beach Houses in Staten Island and attends Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School in Staten Island, and Ilham Moumou,

who lives in Queensbridge South Houses in Queens and attends LaGuardia High School in Manhattan, both are nominated for the NYSPHADA scholarship. Zarin Islam, who lives in Queensbridge South Houses and attends Academy of American Studies High School, received a nomination for the PHADA program. They were chosen based on academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and an essay focused on a real person or fictional character who had a significant influence on them.

Curlene and Ilham will compete against other public housing graduating seniors throughout New York State for the NYSPHADA scholarship. In the case of the PHADA scholarship, Zarin will face nationwide competition. NYCHA wishes Curlene, Ilham, and Zarin the best of luck, and considers them all to be fine representatives of the hard-working spirit of public housing families.

Here is Ilham Moumou's nominated essay:

Can you imagine living in a world without someone you can trust whole-heartedly? Having grown up in a large city where one learns to keep eye contact to a minimum, I have cultivated some meaningful relationships. None, though, compare to the one I share with my mother. Can you imagine a world without a mother?



My mother is the person who has been a significant influence in my life. I was born in a subsidized housing apartment, colloquially known as the "projects," which made life challenging for our family. My mother, however, was aware of this battle and worked hard against every deterrent to get me to the place I am today.

My mother faced more impediments than the average working woman, but none of these stood in her way to ensure a good life for me. Even though my mother does not speak English, continues to fight her illness with diabetes, and is recovering from her gallbladder surgery, she always remains strong for the family and taught me the power of strength and resilience. Every day, my mother puts on a strong face and supports me tremendously. She told us that one day, with hard work, I will be able to have kids of my own and support them like she did.

My mother is the power that keeps me going; the flashlight that lights my path to a better future. When my sister and I needed assistance with our homework, we watched

her tear up because she did not know how to help, for she had not been well educated. She quickly made us get dressed and took us to the park with our notebooks and pencils. We watched her stand there in the park asking a teenager to help us with our homework; we were only in elementary school at the time. I watched her hesitate,

for she did not speak English, but her attempts paid off. All of the begging and pleading resulted in me becoming an honors student who will soon enter college and help others.

Instead of saying, "I have nothing," she made me understand that I should take advantage of whatever I have to become better. As I write this, I remember a particularly moving quote that she once told me. She said, "Don't wait for the stars to align, reach up and rearrange them the way you want them to be. Create your own constellation." This was just one of the many words of wisdom my mother imparted to me. As a child, I never understood or appreciated her style of parenting, but as I grow older, I finally understand her words. My mother is a courageous leader who is full of grace and courage.

My hero, the backbone of my family, and my momentarily significant figure; my mother is a strong woman who has cultivated me into a strong, independent young lady. I hope to become a strong woman like my mother and help students that grew up in similar circumstances.



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KIPP NYC acepta aplicaciones de todos los estudiantes incluyendo los estudiantes con necesidades especiales y estudiantes aprendiendo el ingles.



Green City Force Graduates are a Force for Change

By Howard Silver

NYCHA's newest Green City Force (GCF) graduates will keep working to preserve the environment, sustain their communities, and build self-sufficient lives. The enthusiasm and spirit of the seventh graduating class filled GCF's most recent graduation ceremony on January 24, 2014, as 46 diplomas were awarded to the cheers and applause of graduates and their families. The six-month GCF program prepares NYCHA residents, ages 18–24, to succeed in their chosen careers by engaging in community service, academics, and work experiences related to the energy economy.

"This program built my confidence and gave me a chance for a better future," said Kyle Colquhoun, 24, from Douglass Houses in Manhattan. Mr. Colquhoun was looking forward to his interview at the Community Environmental Center, which works to reduce energy consumption in homes and buildings. Thirty of the 46 graduates had interviews for internships or job opportunities lined up in the coming week.

The demanding program – which accepts one out of four applicants – includes 900 hours of community service and training for job placement. There also is academic work in English and math



Green City Force graduates with some of the people who help make the program possible.

geared toward passing the City University of New York college entrance exam or getting a job in the clean energy sector. Completion of the program earns the corps members a \$2,000 scholarship through AmeriCorps for higher education or vocational training.

"I joined the program to prove that I could make a difference and my experiences opened my eyes to what I can do," said Darlene Zeigler, 24, from Ocean Bay Apartments in Queens. Ms. Zeigler's many hours helping at a soup kitchen, in addition to repairing Hurricane Sandy-damaged houses in Rockaway, gardening at NYCHA's Planter's Grove, and composting at Red Hook Farm, earned her a special service award.

Outreach for GCF is handled by NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and

Sustainability Department (REES). "Green City Force understands that young people should have the opportunity to acquire skills necessary to compete in the job market," NYCHA Executive Vice President for Community Programs and Development Margarita López told the graduates. "The only way NYCHA families can move forward is to increase their economic power."

Graduating Corps Representative Layza Velasquez, 21, who lives in Mill Brook Houses in the Bronx, told her fellow graduates, "We are going forth into the world without our [GCF] uniforms. Now we wear professional suits, ready to take this program forward. We have a great responsibility to GCF and the community but also to ourselves."

Super Bowl Benefits Hammel Houses Community Center



Additional reporting by Zodet Negrón

The Seattle Seahawks weren't the only winners of Super Bowl XLVIII. A number of venues throughout the five boroughs that suffered major damage as a result of Hurricane Sandy, many of which serve City youth, received funding from the National Football League Super Bowl Host Committee and The New York/New Jersey Snowflake Youth Foundation. The gym at the Hammel Houses Community Center in Queens was one of the locations chosen to be revitalized.

Prior to Hurricane Sandy, the gym served as a hub of activity for Hammel Houses and the

surrounding community. In the photo at top, the building's glass wall can be seen shattered inside the gym after the storm. The funding was used to replace the gym floor; install a new scoreboard, a set of new glass walls for the North and South sections of the gym, and safety padding for the rest of the walls; and provide new gym mats. The rehabilitated gym was unveiled on January 28, and featured athletic programs for Hammel Houses and community children, shown at bottom.

"This is great," said Hammel Houses Resident Association President Peggy Thomas. "We'll have all kinds of activities for our residents to keep them off the streets."



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Know How to Confirm Someone is a NYCHA Employee

There is a very simple way to confirm if someone asking to gain access to an apartment or building is a NYCHA employee. All NYCHA employees are required to carry photo identification. Residents should feel free to ask for proof of identification before allowing anyone into their apartment, as all NYCHA employees must have their ID visible. The ID cards should have a purple sticker on the front that reads "2014-2015" with NYCHA's logo in the middle; this identifies someone as a current employee. Residents can contact their management office if they have any questions.



A sample valid and current NYCHA photo identification card.

NYCHA Turns 80

On February 20, NYCHA turned 80 years old. Here are some photos that showcase what life at NYCHA was like in days gone by.



Elliott Houses, 1960



Woodside Houses, 1950



Bronx River Houses, 1950, the first family to move in to that development



First Houses, 1936



Patterson Houses, 1950s



Adams Houses, 1985



East River Houses, 1947



Albany Houses, 1951



First Houses, 1936



Claremont Village (Butler, Morris I, Morris II, Morrisania, and Webster Houses), 1964



Cypress Hills Houses, late 1960s



Clason Point Gardens, 1941



Parkside Houses, 1950, the 50,000th family to move in to NYCHA



Woodside Houses, 1949

Anyone for Tennis?

NYCHA's Education Through Sports Unit worked with 100 children in late 2013 to introduce them to tennis. Through NYCHA's Tennis Initiative, the youth from the community centers at Fort Independence in the Bronx, Manhattanville and Rutgers in Manhattan, Red Hook in Brooklyn, and West Brighton in Staten Island learned how to lob, serve, and volley. A second course started in March. NYCHA uses funds it was awarded from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Serves, USTA Eastern Foundation and USTA Junior Foundation.

The students, ages seven to 12, take part in two classes per week for eight weeks and are taught by USTA recommended instructors. "For virtually all of the children, this is the first time that they have held a tennis racket. The players are eager

and enthused to run and hit the ball," said NYCHA Sports Manager Curtis Williams.

In addition to introducing the sport, the Tennis Initiative encourages the children to be active physically and helps them learn the skills of discipline and hard work needed to succeed in school and life.



Contact NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability to Learn about Economic Opportunities

The December issue of the *Journal* included information about NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) Zone Model, which connects public housing residents to local, community-based Zone Partner organizations that offer economic opportunity programs and services. Information on how to contact REES for residents who want to learn more about the Zone Model was not included. Residents interested in accessing economy opportunity services should visit **OpportunityNYCHA.org** or contact REES at **718-289-8100**.

Get Your Art on Display!

It is almost time to submit artwork for NYCHA's 24th Annual Resident Art Show. Artwork will be accepted from Tuesday, April 1, through Friday, April 4, between 12:00 and 5:00 p.m. Submissions must be brought to the Harborview Visual Arts Center at 536 West 56th Street in Manhattan, between 10th and 11th Avenues. The art show is open to all NYCHA residents. For more information, please call **212-306-2920** or **212-306-5165**.

Summer Jobs for NYCHA Youth

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provides employment opportunities to New York City youth who are 14 or 15 years old. Participants can gain valuable employment experience working at NYCHA developments or central office locations, and at private sector organizations.

Interested youth can apply on-line or download an application from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's (DYCD) website at **www.nyc.gov/dycd**. Applications also are available at NYCHA Development Management Offices.

DYCD sponsors the 2014 program which will run from July 1 through August 15. Participants will work a maximum of 20 hours a week, Monday through Thursday, and earn \$8 per hour. NYCHA residency is not required to apply.

SYEP is a lottery-based program, and DYCD randomly will select from completed applications for enrollment in the program. Only youth selected through this process will be considered for a SYEP position.

For more information about SYEP, contact NYCHA's Human Resources Department at **212-306-8000** or **NYCHASYEP@nycha.nyc.gov**.

Earned Income Disallowance Helps Residents Have Lower Rents

NYCHA residents who recently started working may not have to have their rents increased. Residents who qualify for the Earned Income Disallowance (EID) will not have their increase in the first year after employment. In the second year, their rent will not increase to the full amount. This allows residents to get used to an increase in rent gradually, rather than having it happen immediately, and save extra money.

Residents may qualify if:

- A new job or increased earnings are due to partici-

pation in an economic self-sufficiency program; or

- Currently working, but were unemployed before for 12 months or more, or made less than \$3,625 per year; or
- Participated in a TANF-funded program, received cash payment or services and now are newly employed or have increased earnings.

Residents interested in applying for the Earned Income Disallowance should contact their Housing Assistant at their Management Office to find out if they qualify.

ENROLL NOW TO START YOUR CHILD ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE. Application Deadline: April 4, 2014 by 5pm

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