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The NYCHA JOURNAL

THE GIFT OF NYCHA

Assembly Member Latrice Walker Is Giving Back

THE SEEDS for Assembly Member Latrice Walker's service to her community were planted early on when her family was relocated from Prospect Plaza to Glenmore Houses.

"No one from NYCHA spoke to the residents about this relocation in a way they understood about how long they would be away from Prospect Plaza, what their rights were as tenants, whether they really would get to move back. They were just left to worry and wait," Ms. Walker explains. "My mother told me I needed to be sure that future NYCHA residents would not be left in the dark like she had been."

Educated in New York City public schools, Ms. Walker double-majored in sociology and political science at SUNY Purchase College and earned a law degree from Pace University. As Counsel to Congresswoman Yvette Clarke for several years, she focused on facilitating the federal, State, and City governments' community planning and development initiatives and evaluating their economic and civic effect on the community. She was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2014 to represent the 55th District, covering portions of Brownsville, East New York, Bedford Stuyvesant, Ocean Hill, Bushwick, Cypress Hills, Crown Heights, and East Flatbush.

"I am thrilled to be able to serve the community that raised me. Glenmore Houses was one of the warmest, most supportive com- (CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

NYCHA Marks Sandy Anniversary

with Major Progress Underway

NYCHA MARKED THE fourth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy with good news about construction projects and a hiring boom. At this time last year, major construction was underway at Lower East Side Rehab Group 5. Now, the Authority has three additional major recovery projects in process as repairs and upgrades at Lower East Side Rehab V are almost complete.

"On the anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, we're proud to announce NYCHA has made major progress in the recovery effort—moving large-scale, multi-million dollar projects forward with (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Sandy recovery construction at Lower East Side Rehab Group 5.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

THE GIFT OF PROGRESS

IT'S THAT TIME of the year when people go home for the holiday season and gather with family and friends to celebrate all that they're grateful for. At NYCHA, we want your home to be the best that it can be. That's why we're constantly working to find ways to improve the quality of life for our residents, like the new public space feature on MyNYCHA. Residents can now report issues for over 200 common areas, including lobbies, lights, and garbage. Our Sandy Recovery to Resiliency project is moving full speed ahead—we've completely renovated more than 230 first-floor apartments damaged by the storm, 23 projects are in preliminary construction, and major construction work is underway at 18 buildings at four developments, impacting over 3,100 residents.

This is also time to be thankful for the work of our NYCHA community members, like Samuel Apartments RA President Diana Blackwell, who was recently featured on NY1 for her contributions to the Harlem community (page 13). And, several recent graduates of Green City Force, a NYCHA partner that prepares young people for sustainable careers, shared their stories on how they became "green" leaders (page 8).

You can also read about opportunities, including a new program from our partner Urban Upbound that helps residents launch careers in the construction industry (page 7) and hear from a labor-management rep on how to get into the union (page 11). We take extra time to honor our veterans in November; on page 8, you can read about a new affordable housing development that will open in the Bronx and give preference to veterans.

The holidays aren't joyous for everyone, despite our best efforts—many people suffer from the "holiday blues" at this time of year. New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray has launched a free, confidential mental health support program that provides help through phone, chat and text (page 6).

As we take time to think about how we can grow in the New Year, I'm proud of the progress we've made on our long-term strategic plan, *NextGeneration NYCHA*. I'm always happy to share that good news with you, in these pages and through social media. Please follow us on NYCHA's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages, if you haven't already.

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and healthy holiday season,

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

Get Connected—Open a Free Email Account!

NYCHA encourages all residents to take advantage of the many ways to obtain a free personal email account. With email, you can:

- Receive repair, power outage, and bad weather alerts.
- Pay your rent quickly.
- Enroll in MyNYCHA and submit work orders, even on weekends.
- Receive *The NYCHA Journal*, newsletters, job alerts, and more.

Free email addresses are available from Gmail.com, Mail.com, Outlook.com, or Yahoo.com. Need help? Visit the NYCHA Digital Van, go to the library, or ask your property manager for assistance.

Improving Language Access

Residents calling NYCHA's Customer Contact Center (718-707-7771) now hear voice prompts in Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) and Russian, in addition to English and Spanish. Callers are then directed to representatives who speak those languages. The Chinese and Russian prompts were added in April 2016 as part of NYCHA's efforts to better communicate with limited-English proficient residents.

The NYCHA JOURNAL

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NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

NYCHA'S BOARD MEETINGS, open to the public, take place on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the NYCHA 12th floor conference room at 250 Broadway. People who wish to speak during the public comment period must pre-register at least 45 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin and can only comment about items on that meeting's agenda. Each speaker's time is limited to three minutes. The public comment period concludes either when all speakers are finished or after the 30 minutes allotted by law for public comment, whichever comes first.

Copies of the calendar for the upcoming board meeting are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary, 250 Broadway, 12th floor, after 3 p.m. on the Monday before the meeting. Copies of the dispositions of prior meetings are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up from the Office of the Corporate Secretary no earlier than 3 p.m. on the Thursday after the board meeting. Any person requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Office of the Corporate Secretary at **212-306-6088** no later than five business days prior to the meeting. For additional information regarding the calendar of meetings, dispositions, dates, and times, please call **212-306-6088**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

November 23, 2016 **December 21, 2016**

** Note: The November and December board meetings are scheduled for the second-to-last Wednesday.*

The Facts About Gas Outages

WHEN DOES A GAS OUTAGE OCCUR?

Gas outages occur when the gas line that supplies the building has to be shut down. This typically happens because a gas leak is detected through unusual smells, visual signs, or noises (see below). The FDNY or the utility provider (Con Ed or National Grid) is contacted and immediately turns off the gas supply. NYCHA will immediately shut down gas as well if they discover the leak; the utility company will be contacted after the fact to officially lock out the gas. Some gas outages occur as a result of maintenance and repairs to main lines by the utility provider. Unfortunately, NYCHA has no control over these outages.

REPAIRING GAS LEAKS

NYCHA may need to make major repairs before gas service can be restored. Repairs can include removing asbestos in individual apartments and rebuilding pipe lines. The entire process to restore gas service can take four weeks or longer because we need to obtain permits for construction, send samples to laboratories for analysis, purchase materials, replace piping, and access every affected apartment multiple times.

SIGNS OF A GAS LEAK

- **Smelling** a distinctive, strong odor similar to rotten eggs
- **Seeing** a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water, blowing dust, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no reason
- **Hearing** roaring, hissing, or whistling

IF YOU THINK THERE IS A GAS LEAK IN YOUR BUILDING

- **Leave the building** if smoke or a burning odor is present.
- **Open windows** before you leave if the odor is faint. If outdoors, get far away from where you smell the natural gas.
- **Call 911** from a safe area immediately.
- **Inform your property management staff** and the CCC at **718-707-7771**.
- **Do not use spark-producing devices** such as lighters while inside the building.

WHEN A GAS OUTAGE OCCURS

NYCHA immediately notifies residents through phone calls, flyers, and social media, and distributes hot plates to residents for cooking. Seniors are provided with a list of nearby senior centers that provide free lunches within walking distance of their development. NYC's Department for the Aging may deliver lunch to homebound seniors. Residents who receive food stamps can obtain a restaurant allowance from the Human Resources Administration. Weekly meetings with NYCHA staff keep residents informed about the investigation and repairs process.

NYC DEPT. OF HOUSING PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Heating Season Is Here

FROM OCTOBER 1 THROUGH MAY 31, New York City building owners must maintain an indoor temperature of at least 68 degrees between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. when it's below 55 degrees outside. From 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., indoor temperature must be at least 55 degrees when it's below 40 degrees outside. Hot water must be kept at a minimum temperature of 120 degrees year-round. If you experience issues with heat or hot water, please call NYCHA's Customer Contact Center at **718-707-7771** or report the issue on the MyNYCHA mobile app or web version.

Hot Off the Press

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer enjoys the July issue of *The NYCHA Journal*.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

NYCHA Marks Sandy Anniversary with Major Reconstruction Projects

shovels in the ground and connecting residents to economic opportunities in the process," said Shola Olatoye, NYCHA Chair and CEO. "As NYCHA builds back stronger and more resilient than ever before, we are committed to seeing the recovery effort through, improving residents' quality of life, and ensuring our developments are protected for this generation and the next. Our residents have waited long enough."

The major Sandy recovery projects underway include an $88 million project at Astoria Houses, a $41 million project at Coney Island Sites 4 and 5, and a $67 million project at Ocean Bay-Oceanside. Work being done includes roof replacements, installing standby generators for back-up power, new electrical systems and flood-protected equipment rooms. Other improvements include measures to prevent flooding, upgraded playgrounds and recreational spaces, and exterior safety lighting.

Over $423 million in other federal disaster assistance and insurance payments have funded initial repair and prep work at 23 developments. This work includes boiler demolition and restoration, asbestos abatement, replacement of electrical wiring, and full renovations of 232 first-floor apartments at 10 developments damaged by the storm.

NYCHA is also strengthening programs for residents that lead to careers and economic opportunities. More than 125 NYCHA residents have been employed through Section 3 on Sandy-related contracts at NYCHA developments. The Authority also plans to launch a pre-apprenticeship training and placement program to connect NYCHA residents to promising careers in the construction industry. Participants will receive job training and direct entry into skilled trades unions working on Sandy construction projects at NYCHA developments.

For more information on NYCHA's Recovery to Resiliency progress, visit **on.nyc.gov/nycha-sandy**.

PROFILE:
Local 3 Apprentice Gaston Acevedo

GASTON ACEVEDO has been a resident of Vladeck Houses on the Lower East Side since birth. Last year, he was accepted into Local Union No. 3 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' apprenticeship program and is working at NYCHA developments on Sandy recovery work. The five-and-a-half year program includes on-the-job training, classroom instruction on electrical theory, and college courses to complete an associate degree.

Acevedo is helping install new lighting at NYCHA developments hard hit by Superstorm Sandy, including Coney Island and Red Hook. About his work he says, "It feels great to work on Sandy recovery for other NYCHA residents. It feels like I'm doing something positive for the community."

He recommends NYCHA residents interested in construction and union jobs to look into apprenticeship programs, such as the new construction Pre-Apprenticeship Program NYCHA is seeking partners for: "It's a great opportunity that's catered to NYCHA residents. The union has a lot of benefits and it gives you steady employment. With a union job, you can actually transform your life; there's a prevailing wage, health insurance. Being in a program like this is very beneficial because it helps you create a plan to better yourself."

NYCHA's Sandy Recovery Program by the Numbers

October 2016

219 NYCHA buildings damaged

$3 BILLION in FEMA funds awarded to NYCHA

$423 MILLION spent to date

127 NYCHA residents hired for recovery work

Current Construction

- Astoria, Coney Island 4/5, LES Rehab V, Oceanside
- More than 3,100 residents
- 18 buildings

232 first floor apartments completely renovated

23 developments in preliminary construction

110,000 flyers delivered to residents about Sandy events and updates

>1,385 meetings related to Sandy recovery

$201 million in major construction underway in 2016

#NYCHAStrong

Cleaning Up Butler Together

AT BUTLER HOUSES in the Bronx, household garbage left in the entranceways and on the sidewalks had become a major problem. Thanks to the joint efforts of two NYPD Officers and Police Service Area (PSA) 7, Butler's resident association, and residents, the development's entrances are now cleaner and more welcoming for residents and their guests.

Butler is one of 15 NYCHA developments taking part in the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, a multi-agency effort to reduce crime in New York City neighborhoods and build stronger neighborhoods by listening to and addressing residents' concerns and providing expanding programming.

For the past year, two NYPD Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO), partners Leandro Payero and Joseph Repetti, along with PSA 7's commanding officer Deputy Inspector Jerry O'Sullivan, have been working on tackling an issue of concern for many of Butler's residents: the trash left outside the development. NCOs are neighborhood-based patrol officers who, in addition to crime-fighting, also schedule time to meet with community members to discuss their concerns and work on solutions.

The officers used a three-step approach to address the garbage issue. First, tenants were mailed an information letter with the procedures for proper disposal of household and bulk garbage and recycling. Second, with Butler's Property Manager Ndukah Chukwuma and Resident Association President Cornell Nolton, the officers held lobby meetings with residents to review proper trash disposal rules and answer questions. The third step was enforcement – the officers estimate that, to date, they've issued six or seven summonses to residents who didn't comply with the rules.

"The front of the buildings look 80 percent better because of everything we're doing to make this development a nicer, safer place," says Officer Payero.

His partner, Officer Repetti, adds, "It's not something that happens overnight, but for approximately the last year that we've been working on this issue, there's been change. Also, people wave to us now, residents and staff know us, and the buildings and grounds are becoming cleaner. Working together, we can make a difference."

The officers are currently doing another round of lobby meetings to inform residents about opportunities and resources. Green City Force has attended to recruit new members, and the Department for the Aging and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence have provided residents with information on programs.

NYPD Neighborhood Coordination Officers Leandro Payero (left) and Joseph Repetti.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The Gift of NYCHA

munities I have ever experienced. Every day that I traveled from Brownsville to SUNY Purchase, my NYCHA neighbors would make me lunches and snacks for the journey," Ms. Walker recounts. "NYCHA, the most affordable source of low-income housing we have, is also a great gift to its residents in that it provides community, continuity, and support that is hard to find anywhere else."

> "I get to represent the neighborhood that raised me."

As the Chair of the Assembly's committee on sustainability and a member of the committees on housing, corrections, and job creation, Ms. Walker views her work on each of these committees as addressing what she feels is the most significant issue facing NYCHA residents: poverty.

"Divestment in NYCHA's buildings and services, the over-criminalization of our youth, a lack of resources for social support programs, the lack of job training and jobs – all of these contribute to the poverty that shapes the quality of life NYCHA residents' experience," Ms. Walker explains. "That NYCHA communities are so strong and supportive despite these factors is a real testament to the resiliency of the residents."

Resident involvement in policy-making and legislation is key to changing the status quo. Every third Saturday of the month, Ms. Walker holds an open community "think tank" session for her constituents. "Politics definitely is not a spectator sport – you need to be involved to make change. Many of the ideas for the legislation I propose and support come from these community meetings," she says.

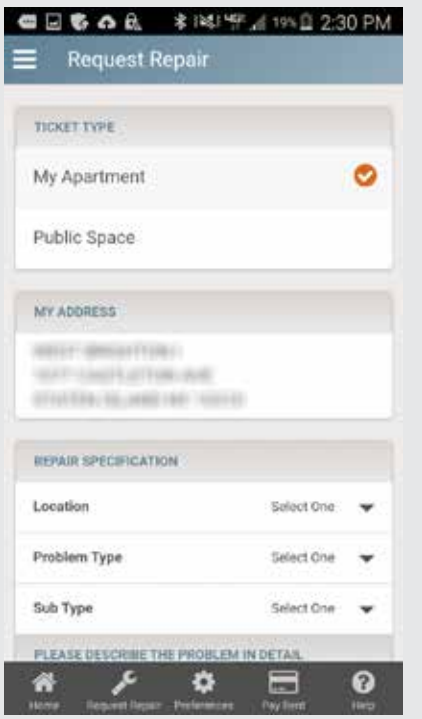
Her message to NYCHA residents: "Realize and appreciate your worth and your place in the NYCHA universe. You are an important member of your community. Your input counts, your efforts count. You are part of the great gift that is NYCHA."

Love Where You Live:

Use the MyNYCHA App to Create Work Orders for Your Building's Common Areas

YOU CAN NOW use MyNYCHA to create work tickets for issues outside your apartment, such as front door entrances, building lights, floors, garbage chutes, intercoms, and more – all from the convenience of your computer or mobile device, any time of day or night.

Visit MyNYCHA on the web at **https://my.nycha.info/MyNYCHA** or download the free app to your smartphone or tablet from Apple's App Store or Google Play.



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GET IT ON Google Play

Jobs-Plus Program to Expand in 2017

THANKS TO U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, NYCHA will receive $2 million in federal U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for HUD's Jobs-Plus Pilot Program. Jobs-Plus supports work readiness and connects public housing residents with employment, education, and financial empowerment services in order to help residents find and keep jobs.

"Jobs-Plus is a valued program that increases economic opportunities for public housing residents through meaningful employment and education programs – and this grant will help us expand the program further," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "We appreciate the continued leadership of Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, and our entire Congressional delegation in their support of HUD and public housing in New York City. Together, we will build more connected NYCHA communities for this generation and the next."

NYCHA is one of six funding recipients selected from across the country; overall, HUD invested over $14 million into the program nationwide. The HUD-funded Jobs-Plus site will be located in Brooklyn at Penn-Wortman Houses and is expected to open in spring 2017. Additionally, the City of New York will expand Jobs-Plus to include three more developments. Zone 1, South Bronx, currently serves residents of Mill Brook Houses, and will expand to include Monroe Houses. Zone 13, East Harlem, currently serves residents of Johnson Houses, and will expand to include Clinton and Johnson Houses. The City Jobs-Plus expansion represents a joint effort of several City agencies: Human Resources Administration, NYCHA, the Center for Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Financial Empowerment.

In total, the Jobs-Plus program will go from serving 23 developments to 27, services to NYCHA residents, and helping to fulfill NextGeneration NYCHA's goal to leverage partnerships and connect residents to quality workforce opportunities.

NYC WELL:

24/7 Free, Confidential Mental Health Support

Using a phone, chat or text, New Yorkers can speak to a counselor, connect to services, and get support for loved ones in 200+ languages

NYC WELL IS a new service offered by the City's Thrive NYC initiative spearheaded by First Lady Chirlane McCray. It provides free, confidential help to people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts, mental health problems like depression and anxiety, and substance misuse. With just one click, one call or one text message, New Yorkers can connect to counseling, crisis intervention, peer support and referrals to ongoing treatment services from mental health professionals in more than 200 languages.

Call 1-888-NYC-WELL, text WELL to 65173, or chat online at nyc.gov/nycwell

NYC Well offers:

- **Crisis Counseling and Suicide Prevention:** Trained counselors will provide crisis and suicide prevention counseling. If someone is in danger of hurting themselves or others, the phone operator helps by counseling them and connects them to appropriate services, including EMS and other crisis intervention services.
- **Referral to Behavioral Health Services:** NYC Well will help New Yorkers connect to a mental health provider who takes their insurance, is in a convenient location and who speaks their language. NYC Well counselors can even stay on the line to help make the first appointment.
- **Mobile Crisis Teams:** When a New Yorker or a loved one can't or won't help themselves, NYC Well will assess whether to send a team of mental health professionals to meet the person in their home so they can be connected to care.
- **Follow-up Services:** NYC Well will offer all users the option for extra support, like receiving reminders for first appointments, contact while waiting for an appointment and follow-ups to help users stay connected to care.
- **Short-term Counseling:** NYC Well will offer brief counseling via phone, text, or chat if needed to provide stabilizing support until an appointment can be scheduled.
- **Peer Support:** Certified Peer Specialists will provide support, crisis diversion, information, and referrals. Talking to someone who has been trained to use his or her own life experiences with mental health and/or substance abuse can help those in need. Peer Specialists will provide appropriate, compassionate, and effective support, as well as crisis diversion.

ENJOY TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN?

GROW YOUR LOVE FOR KIDS INTO A PROFITABLE BUSINESS! On Thursday, December 1, learn about the NYCHA Childcare Business Pathways program, which offers 15 weeks of business training and grants to pay for childcare trainings, certifications, and start-up supplies. RSVP at **www.tinyurl.com/NYCHAChildcare2** or by calling the REES hotline at **718-289-8100**. For more information, visit **www.OpportunityNYCHA.org/childcare**.

WANT TO BECOME A HOME OWNER?

NYCHA RESIDENTS IN JAMAICA, QUEENS, are invited to learn more at the Habitat for Humanity NYC Homeownership Info Session:

Wednesday, November 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
International Tower
90-20 170th Street
Jamaica, NY 11433

Visit **OpportunityNYCHA.org** to RSVP or call **718-289-8100**.

How Do NYCHA's Gardens Grow?

NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS are home to more than 750 gardens and flourishing urban farms. The people who help make NYCHA green, beautiful, and provide healthy fruits and vegetables for residents are all residents. They include NYCHA's resident gardeners, who've been doing this for 53 years, and Urban Farm Corps Members with Green City Force (GCF). On September 23, the two groups joined forces at the new farm at Bay View Houses in Brooklyn to discuss ways they could work together to keep NYCHA green.

"Our resident gardeners were pioneers in New York's green city movement. The program, which launched in 1963, now involves over 3,500 gardeners at 200 developments. Joining forces with another pioneering program, Green City Force, makes perfect sense for NYCHA and for our city. I know you will do great things together," NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye told the group.

Over 50 people attended the event, including resident gardeners from Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island; Bay View Houses residents and resident association members, GCF Urban Farm Corps Members and staff; and staff from East New York Farms!, the community-based organization partner for the Bay View Farm.

Bay View Farm is the newest NYCHA farm, one of four urban farms created by Green City Force as part of Urban Farms at NYCHA. This program is part of the Mayor's Building Healthy Communities Initiative, a city-wide partnership to improve health outcomes in 12 neighborhoods in New York City. GCF Urban Farm Corps Members build and maintain the farms at NYCHA developments with help from local partners. The other three farms are located at Wagner Houses in Manhattan and in Brooklyn at Howard Houses and Red Hook Houses. GCF Urban Farm Corps Members built, cultivated, and operate the farms and helped train volunteers.

The September event featured a tour of the new farm; a food demonstration and tasting by GCF Corps Members that included nut-free pesto and omelets with greens; and remarks.

William Mendez, GCF Corps Member and resident of Polo Grounds Towers, told everyone at the event, "I thought I had to be famous or a millionaire to help my community," that is until he found Green City Force and began serving as an Urban Farm Corps Member.

Edith Tucker, a 53-year resident of Ingersoll Houses in Brooklyn who attended the event, has been a resident gardener for the past eight years. "I think it's a wonderful idea to get the youth involved and working together. For instance, in our garden, Ingersoll Garden of Eden, it's mostly seniors, so we need younger people in our gardens so that when we are too old to carry on, the legacy will continue."

Green City Force Urban Farm Corps Members lead NYCHA resident gardeners on a tour of the new farm at Bay View Houses.

A Green City Force Urban Farm Corps Member picks fresh greens from the farm for a food demonstration and tasting.

An EPIC Opportunity

URBAN UPBOUND is launching a new program to help Queens NYCHA residents between the ages of 16 to 24 train to enter the construction field, one of New York City's fastest growing sectors.

With a $250,000 Youth Opportunity Fund grant from Citi Foundation and America's Promise Alliance, Urban Upbound has created Exploration in Construction (EPIC) to provide construction skills training, adult-level basic education, wraparound case management support, career and financial counseling, and opportunities to network with construction employer partners so that they can get started in the industry, where most positions pay a living wage.

"Thanks to this partnership, NYCHA and Urban Upbound will be connecting young people with more tools for economic success, including job-training for quality careers and financial planning resources," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "Together, we are lifting up the next generation of young residents and increasing pathways to opportunity for this generation and the next."

Urban Upbound and NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES) office start recruiting for EPIC this month, hoping to benefit up to 350 young NYCHA residents living at Astoria, Ravenswood, Redfern, Queensbridge, and Woodside Houses. Urban Upbound has a strong presence in Queens, as co-founder Bishop Mitchell G. Taylor is a former Queensbridge resident.

"Urban Upbound has been a longstanding partner of NYCHA, and we are excited to work with them on their newest initiative to serve young NYCHA residents" said Shanna Castillo, Director of REES.

Classes will begin in February 2017 at Urban Upbound's Long Island City Youth Pathways Center, Far Rockaway Center, and Astoria Center. Interested residents should contact Danielle Lorenzo, Assistant Director of College Access and Youth Programs, at **danielle@urbanupbound.org** or **718-784-0877 ext. 354.**

New Housing for Adults with Special Needs

Veterans to Receive Preference

CONSTRUCTION STARTED THIS summer on the Melrose Commons Supportive Housing development in the Bronx, which will provide homes to 58 formerly homeless adults with special needs. Residents will be selected from NYCHA's waitlist, with preference given for veterans. The apartments will be available to those earning up to $31,750 a year; because the apartments will be subsidized by project-based Section 8 funding from NYCHA, residents will pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent.

In addition to environmentally friendly elements like a green roof, solar panels, and solar shades (which reduce cooling costs in the summer), the building will feature a community room with kitchen, computer lab, laundry room, outdoor recreational space, and 24/7 front desk coverage. On-site supportive services for residents will be funded by the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The building, which is being developed by the nonprofit organization The Bridge, is expected to be completed by the spring of 2018. Financing for the $25 million project came primarily from the City and the State, as well as settlements from landlords who abused tax incentive programs, per investigations by New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

"The men and women who valiantly protected our nation abroad should never be left without a home," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "Thanks to the good work of Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's ongoing investigations into bad-actor landlords who've gamed the system, we're investing recouped funds from fraudsters and cheats back into affordable housing for the most deserving among us. That's something to be proud of."

MAGNUSSON ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING, PC

MEET THE NEW GREEN CITY FORCE CLEAN ENERGY CORPS GRADUATES

RESIDENTS IN AMSTERDAM Addition, Bushwick, Lafayette, Rutgers, Manhattanville, St. Mary's, and Stapleton may find some of the faces in this story familiar. Maybe one of these Corps Members installed compact fluorescent light-bulbs in your apartment? Or taught you ways to conserve energy and water?

This year, over the course of six months, as Green City Force (GCF) Clean Energy Corps Members, 34 young adult NYCHA residents helped other residents learn to take care of the environment. Through the Love Where You Live Challenge, they educated residents about reducing their energy and water consumption. Working with GrowNYC, they taught residents to recycle and planted a new 350-square-foot garden for residents in Far Rockaway.

GCF is an AmeriCorps program for urban youth ages 18 to 24 to prepare them for clean energy jobs. While participating in full-time service projects, Corps Members receive education on sustainability and green technologies, a stipend, free transportation, help with job and college placement, and more. To learn more about GCF, visit **www.greencityforce.org**.

GCF's 11th class of Clean Energy Corps members graduated on July 28. Meet three graduates, including two who received special awards at the ceremony.

Emonni Cropper, 22
The Sustainability Award
Butler Houses, Bronx

Emonni Cropper didn't know where her life was headed, only that she was traveling down the wrong path – until Cropper's older sister received an email about GCF and passed it on to her. "GCF changed my life and motivated me to be a better person," she explains. "Before I was on a path of self-destruction, but with GCF I really found myself and it made me feel so good about myself that now I feel like I can do anything." Besides the self-esteem boost, Cropper's favorite things about being a Corps Member were learning about farming and agriculture and traveling to New York City neighborhoods she hadn't yet seen. In the future, Cropper would like to work in the green industry as a spokesperson, persuading people to go green.

Kamarky Jimenez, 22
The Leadership Award
Seth Low Houses, Brooklyn

Before GCF, Kamarky Jimenez was cleaning offices – not what he wanted to be doing with his life. He had previously been in school studying sports management, but realized what he really wanted to do was computer programming. His friend, a former GCF Corps Member, told him about the program. Jimenez says it was one of the best steps he's ever taken for his future. "The education I received at GCF is something I didn't learn in school," he says. "They've taught me how to remain professional in work environments and all about the magic of networking." In fact, networking landed him a summer internship in City Council Member Ritchie Torres' office. He's now thinking of joining the Air Force, to combine sustainability, engineering, and computers into a tailor-made career that will prepare him to launch his own business.

Mariah Adamson, 19
Bushwick Houses, Brooklyn

Mariah Adamson wanted to get off her couch. Every job she applied for turned her away because they wanted someone with more experience. Enter GCF: Adamson's mother heard about the program and strongly encouraged her to apply. Adamson enjoyed interacting with residents and teaching them about recycling and how to be more energy efficient. She also loved when residents would see her in her uniform and ask her about the program. Although she plans a career in fashion marketing, Adamson said she gained a lot through the program: "I am taking into my future a pretty solid work ethic, good communication with others, being a good scheduler, and being a team leader. Even though the work didn't have anything to do with my future dreams and career, I felt respect, like I should take this program seriously. I didn't want to let this opportunity go to waste." She plans to attend Kingsborough or City Tech in the spring.

Right on the Money

By John Edward Dallas

Question: Is it true that NYCHA residents only have to pay 89 percent of their rent each month?

Answer: That's definitely not true. Rent for the entire month is due the first day of the month and must be paid in full, unless it's paid through eRent, which allows for automatic weekly, bimonthly (twice a month), or monthly rent payments. Visit NYCHA's website (**www.nyc.gov/nycha**) for more information about eRent.

Timely rent payment benefits residents in ways that may not be so obvious. If a resident seeks to move out of public housing and wants to qualify for other types of affordable housing or a home mortgage, she or he will need a record of on-time bill payments and perhaps also a certain minimum credit score. NYCHA is exploring ways to implement rent reporting for interested residents, which can build good credit.

Of course, rent revenue directly funds NYCHA's operations. During a recent *Hot 97* radio interview, NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye summed up the concept of timely rent payment in a nutshell: "When you pay your rent, that allows us to fix the issues in your apartment."

> "When you pay your rent, that allows us to fix the issues in your apartment."
>
> *NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye*

Residents who are having trouble paying their rent on time can meet with a financial counselor to develop a budget and find ways to reduce expenses. To make a free appointment with a financial counselor, visit "Opportunity Connect" on NYCHA's Self-Service Portal (**https://selfserve.nycha.info**) or ask your housing assistant for a referral.

There are also resources and services available through *www.opportunityNYCHA.org* for residents looking to increase their income and assets.

John Edward Dallas is an award-winning coordinator of financial services at the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Jobs-Plus site in Brooklyn. Jobs-Plus is a national program with nine sites in New York City that help public housing residents become economically empowered. Mr. Dallas grew up in Baruch Houses and is proud to serve the NYCHA community.

Residents, if you have a financial question you'd like Mr. Dallas to answer, please send it to journal@nycha.nyc.gov.

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NYPD PSA 4

BOWLED OVER BY FUN

THIS SEPTEMBER, La Guardia Houses' resident association and the NYPD's Police Service Area (PSA) 4 treated 30 youth, ages 5 through 16, to an afternoon of bowling at Chelsea Piers. "The kids loved it, I loved it, and everyone got along and had a great time," said La Guardia's Resident Association President Jessica Thomas. "I organized the event with the PSA because I think it's important for communities to come together with the police. And PSA 4 has the nicest, most outgoing police officers. The five officers who came out played with everybody, including the parents. It was a wonderful experience. The kids didn't want to go home!"

Brooklyn Nets Visit Miccio Cornerstone

KIDS FROM THE Miccio Cornerstone at Red Hook Houses were excited when they received free book bags from the Barclays Center — but they were in for an even bigger treat when two Brooklyn Nets players made a follow-up visit to meet the children who had received the book bags. On September 22, Brooklyn Nets forward Anthony Bennett and shooting guard Caris LeVert joined 70 children, ages 5 to 12, for a day of fun at the community center operated by Good Shepherd Services. In addition to giving the kids stylish Brooklyn Nets t-shirts and signing autographs, the players helped them with some of their regularly scheduled activities, including homework, art, and gym.

Edenwald Shapes Up

A New YMCA Is Coming to the Neighborhood

THE YMCA OF Greater New York is building a 50,000-square-foot recreation center next to the Bronx's Edenwald Houses. It will feature two swimming pools, a wellness center, a full-length basketball court, an indoor track, and a gym. And it will host a wide range of programming, such as afterschool educational activities, youth day camps, swim lessons, health and exercise classes, civics classes for new Americans, and programs tailored for seniors and teens.

"This new, state-of-the-art facility will benefit thousands of families from nearby NYCHA developments, connecting them to quality programs and activities all year round," said NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye. "Thanks to the support of Mayor de Blasio, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and the YMCA of Greater New York, we are helping create safe, clean, and connected communities for our residents."

Construction, which will generate about 100 jobs, is expected to begin in 2018 and be completed in early 2020. The Edenwald YMCA will also create 100 good-paying, permanent jobs. Membership dues will be determined by the area's economics and will be made affordable to residents at different income levels through the YMCA's Financial Assistance Program; no one will be turned away due to inability to pay.

"The YMCA is dedicated to building a stronger, healthier, and more connected New York City by creating centers of community that support personal achievement and a sense of belonging," remarked Sharon Greenberger, the president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York. "We look forward to working hand in hand with the Edenwald community to develop a new, state-of-the-art YMCA."

NEW YORK CITY'S YMCA

MOTT HAVEN SECOND SATURDAYS

More Than Just a Walk in the Park

RESIDENTS OF THE BRONX'S Mott Haven neighborhood were in for a real treat if they visited St. Mary's Park on the second Saturday of the month from May through October. "Second Saturdays in St. Mary's Park" provided a day of free and fun activities, from arts and cultural programs to health, fitness, and environmental conservation events. Second Saturdays is part of the *Healthy and Livable Mott Haven Partnership*, a BronxWorks-led collaboration of community-based organizations and City agencies that strives to foster a healthier community. Pictured here are several youth from Betances Houses who planted daffodil bulbs at the Second Saturdays event in October. One participant, Moral Taylor, said, "We got to experience how it feels to plant soon-to-be flowers. I had a fun time, and if I could I would do it all over again."

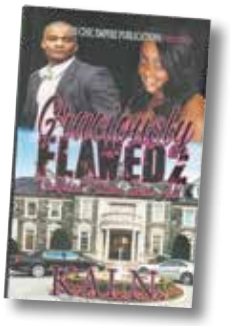
BRONXWORKS

NYCHA Joins the Pokémon Go Craze

ONE OF NYCHA'S Digital Vans visited La Guardia Houses on September 21 to connect residents and Pokémon Go fans (called "trainers") with all the services the van has to offer. The mushroom sculpture at the development doubles as a Pokéstop where trainers can lure Pokémon to catch them. NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye got a private lesson in luring Pokémon from a few of the trainers. The van's free Wi-Fi helped with that task. Trainers also had the opportunity to use the van's laptops and printers on-site for homework and games with assistance from Digital Van Instructor Kim Maxwell. NYCHA's three Digital Vans provide residents throughout the five boroughs with access to technology to search for jobs, check email, browse the internet, and more. More than 8,000 residents have used the award-winning vans to date. See the Digital Van schedule at **http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/digital-vans-queens.page**.

Writing the Truth

19-year-old Wise Rehab Resident Publishes Her Second Book



MOST TEENS SPEND their spare time posting on Twitter or lost in video games. Kai Nedd wrote two novels instead. The 19-year-old LaGuardia Community College freshman published her first book, *Graciously Flawed*, at age 17; she recently published *Graciously Flawed 2*. Both are available on Amazon. The *Journal* chatted with Kai about writing the truth, getting support when you need it, and the right mindset for success.

What got you started on writing?

In my junior year of high school, I was reading so much on Wattpad, which is a free app for writers to share their work online. The girls in the stories were always fair-skinned or skinny. There was never anything I could relate to. I thought, you know what, I should write my own novel. So I came up with something that would make a good story. *Graciously Flawed* is basically about a young, plus-size-figure teen who finds love and self-esteem. I took my experiences – my shyness in high school and the way people treated me because of my weight – and formed my character.

Sounds like you had a mission.

I want readers to know that no matter your style or your image, you are beautiful. No matter what people say about you, don't let that affect how you feel about yourself. I want girls to know that they can achieve whatever they want – just take the risk, work hard, love yourself, be very confident, and put your mind to it.

Was your family supportive?

Yes! We are a close-knit family and they were very excited when I announced my plans to become an author. My mom's support in helping me finish the book meant more than words can express. I hope I can inspire others like my family has inspired me to embrace who I am.

You had a great book signing party for your new novel.

We just planned a small party in our apartment, but the RA President found out about it and said, "No, everyone needs to come!" She decorated the room and brought snacks and invited the Manhattan Borough President. I felt so overwhelmed with emotion to see my neighbors come out to support me. They came up and said, "We're so proud of you, we're so proud to have an author in the building." When people want you to succeed, it makes you want to succeed even more.

What are your plans now that you have two books completed?

I am planning to get a bachelor's in psychology. I really want to make writing my career, but there needs to be a plan B in case that doesn't work, which would be social work or opening up my own practice as a therapist.

What's your philosophy for success?

A lot of the times there's a stigma about living in the projects. I want all of the young people who live in public housing to not be discouraged. I live in the projects, and look what I've done, and I'm only 19. Never let your situation define who you are. If you see something you want to do, just go for it.

OFFICE OF MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT GALE BREWER

Kai Nedd (with book), surrounded by family, friends, neighbors, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer (far right) and Deputy Borough President Aldrin Bonilla (far left) at a book signing for her second novel.

Talking Shop

A Union Rep Explains the Many Benefits of Membership

LAVON CHAMBERS

LAVON CHAMBERS IS the Assistant Director of the Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (GNY LECET), which represents several unions, including the members of Local 78 (asbestos, lead, and hazardous waste handlers) and Local 79 (construction and general building laborers). Members of both of these unions work on NYCHA construction projects. By representing union members and their employers, GNY LECET seeks to make a positive impact on the construction industry in New York City. Mr. Chambers took some time out of his busy day to discuss his background and the benefits of union membership with the *Journal*.

How did you get into the union?

I started out as a non-union laborer in 1990. I was fortunate enough to be sponsored by a union company in 1993. At that time there was no apprenticeship program, and that was one of the few ways in. In 1996, I was hired by Local 79 as an organizer, where I learned a lot about the labor movement and the members we represent and gained a passion for workers' rights. Since I was hired at GNY LECET in 1998, I've held positions such as Field Representative, Community Affairs Officer, and Assistant Director. I've learned a lot about our union contractors and the public agencies they work for. I've enjoyed establishing a working relationship with many of the agencies, but none more than NYCHA.

How has being in the union benefited you?

I'm fortunate to be one of those people who look forward to going to their job. We have a saying here at the laborers: "Put in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." Being a union laborer means you will work hard. But it also means you will be paid fairly enough that you and your family can have an opportunity to obtain the American dream. When our children get sick, we have benefits. When we retire, we have our pension and annuity. Unions also enable members to refine their skills with training courses.

How does one get into the union?

The most common way is through our apprenticeship. There are also direct entry opportunities for specific populations like veterans, women, low income, and NYCHA residents. Currently, we've been able to bring in nearly 400 NYCHA residents as members.

What advice do you have for someone just starting out in the construction industry?

I think of all the qualities one could have, discipline is the most important in this business. One must have discipline to show up on time every day and follow instructions, discipline to train your body to get used to the physical work, and discipline to carry yourself professionally and take advantage of the free classes to make yourself as employable as possible.

Can you speak about the partnership between NYCHA and GNY LECET?

Both parties truly want to create good, safe jobs. Through our partnership with NYCHA, we have the ability to positively affect our city by changing residents' lives for the better. There is nothing better than the feeling of interviewing a candidate who is desperately seeking an opportunity to improve his/her life, and then playing some part in making that happen. I've watched over the years how these opportunities have changed the way a person feels about themselves as they're given the chance to provide better for themselves and their family. We've watched people transform from someone who knows very little about the construction industry to someone who is knowledgeable and takes newcomers under their wing. None of this would be possible without a NYCHA partnership, the vision of our affiliated unions, and the dedication of our union contractors to Section 3 [a federal requirement to hire public housing residents for certain projects].

Residents, visit the State Department of Labor's website (http://labor.ny.gov/pressreleases/apprenticeshiparchive.shtm) and scroll down to "New York City" for union apprenticeship opportunities.

These Are Our Beautiful Stories:
Photographer Destiny Mata Portrays Life at Wald Houses

WALD HOUSES RESIDENT Destiny Mata is a professional freelance photographer who's capturing the lives and stories of her neighbors through her camera's lens. She spoke with the *Journal* about her path to becoming a photographer and what inspires her as a documentarian and artist.

Why did you decide to take portraits of your neighbors?
Growing up in Wald Houses, I developed an extended family with my neighbors. Watching the neighborhood change and gentrify reminded me of the importance of documenting and capturing the community I live in. I began taking portraits of my neighbors in their homes, then started using NYCHA's symbolic brick buildings as the backdrop to my portraits. This photography project has been in the making for the past five years, and as long as I'm alive, I will continue shooting and preserving the stories of the people who make up Wald. Residents who want to participate can email me at **destiny.mata@gmail.com**; in return, I'll give them a print of their photo.

What motivated you to become a photographer?
I come from a family of photographers. My grandpa is a wedding photographer. My biggest influence was my aunt, fashion photographer Chayo Mata. I grew up in studios watching her at work. And now it's my turn. I've been taking photos since high school but didn't take it seriously until I went to LaGuardia Community College and majored in photography.

What inspires you?
My life experiences. My photography is a product of the environment I grew up in, New York City. Finding my voice as a photographer was clear: I knew I wanted to tell stories through my photographs, stories of culture, struggle, strength, and community.

Where has your photography been published or exhibited?
My work has been published in *The Source* magazine, *Vice*, the *Daily News*, *Frank151*, and as an album cover for DJ AraabMuzik. The Museum of the City of New York exhibited photos I took of the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. My photography was recently exhibited by the City of San Antonio as well as the Mexic-Arte Museum there.

DESTINY MATA

Keith Baker with his son Kayden.

Tatiana Akram with her son Jeremiah J. Matos.

You were recently selected to be a community organizer for the Design Trust for Public Space's "Opening the Edge" project, which will work with residents to reimagine the development's green space to encourage socializing and promote public health [more on this in a future issue of the *Journal*]. How will you help accomplish this?
As a community organizer, I will engage with residents and do outreach with the help of the other Design Trust Fellows to find out what residents would like to see in a potential green space, whether it's a small park, a series of temporary public art, or seating. I'll also photograph the process. Wald residents who want to participate can email **openingtheedge@designtrust.org** or visit **www.designtrust.org/projects/opening-edge** for more information.

Howard Houses Resident Turns 100!

NYCHA STAFF AT Howard Houses are thrilled to acknowledge Mr. Theodore Pironneau, a resident who celebrated his 100th birthday on October 17, 2016. Mr. Pironneau attributes his longevity to eating vegetables and plantains every morning. He said that he stopped smoking many years ago and doesn't drink alcohol. He encourages young people to not smoke or drink so that they can live a long, healthy life as well. Mr. Pironneau arrived in the United States in 1971 from Haiti and worked as a carpenter for 22 years. He continues to enjoy carpentry today. Here's to many more birthdays, Mr. Pironneau!

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RA President Diana Blackwell is surrounded by admirers at the Frederick Samuel Community Center.

The "Mayor of Harlem" catches a spirited and spontaneous basketball game at the community center.

Meet the "Mayor of Harlem"

RA President Spends Her Days and Nights Boosting Neighbors' Quality of Life

IT'S NOT SURPRISING that NY1 featured Diana Blackwell in its 'One City, Many Mayors' series in October. An unstoppable force of nature, Blackwell is driven by her desire to make her neighbors' lives and her neighborhood the best they can be.

The Resident Association President of Samuel Apartments since 2009, Blackwell rises well before dawn to start her day at the RA's office, often working until midnight. She takes care of emails and phone calls in the morning, works in the development's garden she created, jets off to numerous meetings, speaks with local senior police officers and new recruits alike in her role as a Community Partner, discusses issues with her development's property manager and superintendent, checks in at the community center for updates, and does research and answers emails in the evening. Her "open door" policy guarantees frequent interruptions from anyone seeking her assistance or advice.

"My parents raised us to be an extension of wherever we are," Blackwell says, so being a neighborhood advocate is a natural fit. She credits her parents for teaching her the value of hard work. "This is a job with fringe benefits," she explains, "like seeing a person get a job or enroll in a GED program and get their diploma or attending custody hearings with a single parent and seeing the judge find favor because the parent has a support system in place."

Sometimes her own interests inspire Blackwell's work. She involved herself in youth programming at the community center because "as a grandparent and community leader, I am looking at ways to ensure a safe place for youth." After getting diagnosed with diabetes, Blackwell created a program that encourages healthy eating and cooking habits. The vegetable garden she established also educates people about the "benefits of healthy eating and provides an awakening to the taste buds when experiencing its produce firsthand."

Blackwell believes that fostering better police/community relations is about "breaking bread, bringing people together so that relationship building will continue to grow and return to the old way of the police knowing us not only by face but by name too."

Prior to her life in "retirement," Blackwell worked for the phone company, was an administrative assistant and event coordinator at the Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo, and served in the Air Force Reserve.

Having her service to the community highlighted on NY1 was humbling, Blackwell reports. The real reason she does what she does is simple: She wants to meet needs that are not being addressed. Blackwell feels that the biggest way she helps her neighbors is by providing information. "Contrary to most people's belief, I don't know everything," she explains, "but I know where to find the resources they need." Watch the NY1 piece on Ms. Blackwell here: **http://ny1ne.ws/PrELQ1**.

NY1

Ms. Blackwell in the garden that she created to promote healthy eating habits.

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ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-844-708-5883 (TTY 711). ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-844-708-5883 (TTY 711).

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Lincoln Center Boro-Linc Calendar

Free, Family-Friendly World-Class Arts Programming in Your Neighborhood

Lincoln Center's Boro-Linc provides greater access to its diverse arts and cultural offerings for all audiences and ages by breaking down geographic barriers. By partnering with arts organizations throughout the City, Boro-Linc provides free performances, workshops, and programs to neighborhoods across New York. Here's a list of upcoming programs over the next few months. For a complete list, visit

lincolncenter.org/borolinc

QUEENS: Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3:
2:00–3:00 Community Artist Workshop
3:00–4:00 Performance Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
Chamber Music Beginnings–Making Melodies
Struggling composer Wolfgang Amadeus Schmutzinberry learns that all it takes to make a beautiful melody is a few steps, skips, and leaps—along the musical scale that is! The music of composers such as Beethoven and Brahms—as well as CMS artists—are the guides in this fun-filled musical journey.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17
2:00–3:00 Community Artist Workshop
3:00–4:00 Performance
Film Society of Lincoln Center Community Screenings
In the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Community Screenings program, children and families will watch a series of award-winning short films from around the world! Together we will discuss the journey that each film traveled and the cinematic choices that these filmmakers made to bring their stories to the screen.

STATEN ISLAND: Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10
1:00–2:00 Community Artist Workshop
2:00–3:00 Performance
The Mayhem Poets
The Mayhem Poets' unique approach to spoken word seamlessly blends the raw elements of hip-hop, theater, improvisation, and stand-up comedy to tell gut-wrenching truths that leave audiences forever changed.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
1:00–2:00 Community Artist Workshop
2:00–3:00 Performance
Los Pleneros de la 21
Los Pleneros de la 21 (LP21) fuses the "down home" Afro-Puerto Rican traditions with contemporary and urban sounds to showcase the versatility and complexities of the Latino experience in the United States.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18
1:00–2:00 Community Artist Workshop
2:00–3:00 Performance
Opera Ebony
Opera Ebony enriches the lives of people throughout the world with thrilling operatic and concert performances. The company has served as a professional platform for thousands of American artists, administrators, and technical staff, helping them to refine their talent and perfect their craft.

MANHATTAN: Manny Cantor Center

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15
2:00–3:00 Community Artist Workshop
3:00–4:00 Performance
Jazz and Lincoln Center: WeBop "ABC's of Jazz"
Swing to your favorite nursery rhymes, stomp the blues away, solo like Satchmo, and jam with a live quartet as you and your child explore jazz.
Recommended for ages 8 months to 5 years; all children must be accompanied by an adult.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26
2:00–3:00 Community Artist Workshop
3:00–4:00 Performance
Lincoln Center Education: Elena Moon Park
Elena Moon Park & Friends celebrate folk and children's music from all over East Asia, reinterpreted to mix various musical traditions, languages, styles, and stories. These tunes range from northern Japanese sea shanties to Tibetan jump rope rhymes, joyous Korean harvest sing-a-longs, and Taiwanese train songs, all captured on her premiere album Rabbit Days and Dumplings.

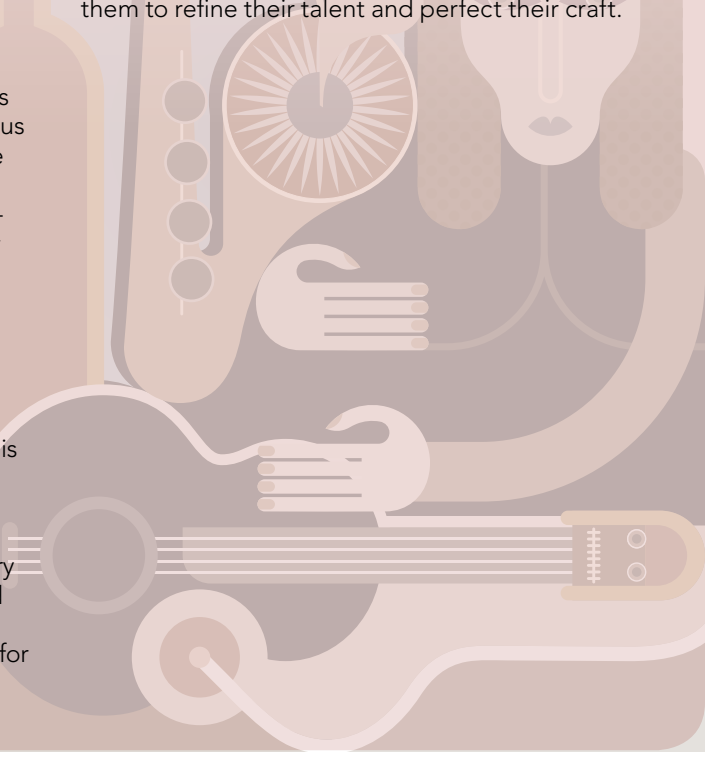
New York Library for the Performing Arts EXHIBITION
FEBRUARY 1–MAY 30
NYPL–The Genius of Geoffrey Holder
Born and raised in Trinidad, Geoffrey Holder revealed his genius in his long career in dance, theater, film, music, and art. As a choreographer, designer, director, and actor, Holder is well represented in all of the research and circulating collections of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. In this exhibition, he is honored for his performing career in dance and theater, his Tony Award-winning work as director and costume designer for *The Wiz*, and contributions to the repertory of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company and Dance Theater of Harlem.

FEBRUARY 18–APRIL 15
New York Library for the Performing Arts EXHIBITION
Swing
Discover how swing developed from the black and Afro-Caribbean dance orchestras of the 1920s into the iconic big band sound in this fascinating exhibit from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

BROOKLYN: Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20
6:30–7:30 Community Artist Workshop
7:30–8:30 Performance
Lincoln Center Education: Elena Moon Park & Sonia De Los Santos
Elena Moon Park & Friends celebrate folk and children's music from all over East Asia, reinterpreted to mix various musical traditions, languages, styles, and stories. Sonia De Los Santos has toured the world, singing in English and Spanish, playing guitar, mandolin, and jarana, and lighting up the stage with Grammy Award-winning group Dan Zanes and Friends since 2007.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10
6:30–7:30 Community Artist workshop
7:30–8:30 Performance
Opera Ebony
Opera Ebony enriches the lives of people throughout the world with thrilling operatic and concert performances. The company has served as a professional platform for thousands of American artists, administrators, and technical staff, helping them to refine their talent and perfect their craft.



Healthy Holiday Treats

IT'S THE TIME to gather with family and friends and eat amazing food. Here are two delicious desserts with seasonal fruits and vegetables, courtesy of SCAN (Supportive Children's Advocacy Network) New York, a youth and family service non-profit that serves the highest risk children and families of East Harlem and the South Bronx and launched the *Get Healthy East Harlem* program to help residents make better nutrition choices.

Baked Apple Sorbet

Makes 1 quart

1 1/2 cups unfiltered apple cider
6 medium tart apples (about 1 1/2 lbs.) baked and frozen
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3 to 4 whole cloves
1 whole star anise (optional)
1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped out, seeds and bean reserved

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Combine all the ingredients, including vanilla pod, in a large baking dish, toss to combine. Cover the dish loosely with foil and bake for 20 minutes to one hour, or until the apples are tender. Remove from the oven. Remove the vanilla bean, cloves, and star anise. Freeze mixture. Pour the frozen apple mixture into a food processor or blender until completely smooth (you may need to do this in two batches). Force through a sieve into a medium bowl, to make mixture smooth. Fill a large bowl with ice and water. Set bowl of apple mixture in the ice water bath to cool, 20 minutes, whisking occasionally. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Refreeze. Scrape until the sorbet reaches the consistency of a barely pourable mixture.

Healthy Pumpkin Bread Pudding

Makes 6 servings

12 slices light multi-grain bread
1/4 cup light whipped butter or light buttery spread
2 lbs sugar pumpkin
1 cup egg whites
3/4 cup light vanilla soymilk
1 tsp. anise
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt
1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. brown sugar (not packed)

If using fresh pumpkin, roast pumpkin, cut sides down, on a rimmed baking sheet until soft, 50 to 60 minutes. Let cool completely. Roasted pumpkin can be refrigerated in an airtight container overnight. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray an 8" X 8" baking pan with nonstick spray. Lightly toast bread, and cut into bite-sized pieces. In a large microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter for 30 seconds, or until melted. Add bread pieces to the bowl, and toss to coat. In another large bowl, combine pumpkin, egg whites/substitute, soymilk, and seasonings. Add 1/4 cup brown sugar, and whisk until uniform. Transfer mixture to the baking pan. Evenly top with remaining 2 tbsp. brown sugar. Bake until firm and set, 40 - 45 minutes. Let cool slightly, about 10 minutes. Enjoy!

Stay Safe This Holiday Season!

Tips to make your holidays happy and healthy from NYCHA's Office of Safety and Security

Cooking

- Keep flammable items away from the stove.
- Never use the oven to heat your apartment.
- Unplug appliances when you aren't using them.
- Don't leave the kitchen when you're cooking.
- Never cook when sleepy or after drinking alcohol.
- Use a timer to check on food that's cooking.

Smoke Detectors

- Replace the batteries if your smoke detector "chirps."
- If it continues to chirp, call the CCC (**718-707-7771**) to request a service visit.
- In the event of a fire, follow the instructions on the sticker located behind your apartment entrance door.
- If a smoke alarm is set off by bathroom steam or cooking vapors, open the windows and turn on vent fans to clear the air (or quiet the alarm by pushing the "hush" button).
- Make sure everyone in your home knows what the smoke alarm sounds like.

Decorating

- Fire-resistant artificial trees are the safest option.
- Fresh green trees are safer than dry trees.
- Place the tree away from radiators and other heat sources.
- Keep non-artificial trees in a stand that is always filled with water.
- Use only indoor lights on an indoor tree.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree.
- Never use electric lights on an artificial tree.
- Artificial snow sprays can cause lung injuries if inhaled.
- Make sure doors and passageways are clear.
- Make sure wiring for light displays is not damaged or frayed.

Be A Smart Shopper

- Be alert for charity donation scams. Always confirm the charity is legitimate; if you receive a phone call from them, ask them to mail you material. **NEVER GIVE OUT YOUR CREDIT CARD NUMBER OVER THE PHONE!**
- Social media offers a wealth of information to thieves who might commit a crime against you. Be mindful of sharing information about what charities you support, if you are out of town, or any large purchases you've made.
- Request a free annual report from each of the three major credit ranking agencies to make sure no one has opened a line of credit in your name.
- Avoid ATMs on the street. Instead, use one that is indoors and has a door that locks behind you. Place your cash and card immediately in your pocket or bag.
- Keep your receipts and compare them to the charges on your credit card statement to protect yourself from fraudulent charges.
- Whether driving, walking, or taking public transportation, know how to get to your destination by the most direct and safest route.
- Be alert in crowded places. Among pickpockets' favorites are revolving doors, jammed aisles, elevators, and public transportation stops and vehicles, especially at rush hour.

Extension Cords

- Never use 3-pronged plugs in outlets with two slots.
- Do not alter plugs to make them fit outlets.
- Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.
- Don't use a cord with a wattage rating lower than the appliance plugged into it.
- Unplug any extension cord that feels hot.
- Use only one appliance per extension cord.
- Do not connect multiple extension cords together.
- Use only lights and extension cords that have the "UL" mark.
- Do not put extension cords under rugs or other paths of travel.