



# Journal

## BAYCHESTER COMMUNITY CENTER GRAND OPENING!

By Allan Leicht

The Baychester Community Center was officially inaugurated on January 14, 2003 as New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Tino Hernandez cut the ribbon at the entrance to a new building that promises to endure as a landmark of the Bronx, indeed of New York. It is a structure of noble simplicity, which also houses the Bay-Eden Senior Center, and which came into being as a result of the persistence of NYCHA's resident leadership and the collaborative financing of NYCHA, the New York City Council and the Department for the Aging.

Joining Mr. Hernandez were former City Council Member Lawrence Warden, who represented Bronx District 12, including Baychester, and who was instrumental in the appropriation of over \$2 million in City Council funds for the project; and current City Council Member for the district, Larry Seabrook. The overall cost of the new 15,500-square-foot facility was \$9.6 million.

Designed in its entirety by the Housing Authority's Department of Design and Capital Improvement, the brick and glass structure is appropriately down-to-earth and well suited to its site on West 239th Street and Schieffelin Avenue; but on the inside it is airy — with sky views capping walls and sunlight pouring in through a canopy of translucent fiberglass above the new gymnasium.

Leading off the dedication program, Baychester Resident Association President Ernestine Russell told the pre-luncheon gathering,



**BRAVING THE COLD** (left to right) NYCHA Board Member JoAnna Aniello, General Manager Douglas Apple, Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr., Chairman Tino Hernandez, State Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie, City Council Member Larry Seabrook, former City Council Member Lawrence Warden, Bronx Borough Management Director Patricia Lawler, and Center Director Barbara Gibson prepare to cut the red ribbon signifying the Baychester Community Center's official opening.

"This is the most beautiful thing we have in this community, and we want to keep it that way."

Much of that beauty began in the imagination of architect Dele

Arowolo, who has been with the NYCHA Design Department for 13 years. Mr. Arowolo wanted to make it "a quiet gymnasium," and so surrounded the enormous space with acoustical panels. The design team headed by Department Director David Burney and Deputy Director Efithia Tsitiridis, worked for a year before the project was ready to be turned over to NYCHA's Construction Department and Director Robert Yauch.

"Month after month, I've driven by, watching this building

(Continued on page 3)

**The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

**PUBLIC HEARING  
COMING SOON!**

**ON THE PUBLIC HOUSING  
ASSESSMENT SYSTEM  
"PHAS"**

**PROPOSED CHANGES IN PHAS RULES  
FOR 2003**

**MANDATORY APARTMENT  
INSPECTIONS BEGIN FEBRUARY 24**

**See Article, Page 5**

### Inside:

- **Celebration at Campos Plaza . . . . . page 2**
- **It's Your Money, Come and Get it! . . . page 2**
- **New Housing Bureau Police Officers . . page 4**
- **MLK, Jr. Towers Celebrates . . . . . page 7**

**FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH!**

Message From The Mayor

Building The Next New York



The diverse communities that make this the world's second home have demonstrated once again that New Yorkers always come together in times of crisis.

The first responsibility of city government is public safety. Even as the crime rate climbed nationally, the NYPD has brought down crime to the lowest levels in 40 years, despite a smaller force and a recession.

The number of New Yorkers receiving public assistance also continued to decline last year. It now stands at some 420,000 people, down from 1.1 million in 1996.

We also achieved accountability in running our public schools. This is the crucial first step in giving all of our 1.1 million school children the education they need and deserve.

We are building on a year of remarkable progress. Today the employment picture has stabilized in crucial sectors of our economy.

We've also begun a five-year, \$3 billion housing initiative that leverages the assets of the Housing Development Corporation to build 65,000 units of new and renovated housing.

In recognizing our accomplishments we cannot ignore our remaining challenges. They are formidable and they will require duty, discipline and sacrifice.

New Yorkers have a long history of overcoming setbacks, and in the wake of each have created a more prosperous, more just, more humane city.

Michael R. Bloomberg

Octavitas Celebration At Campos Plaza Guest Stars Plena Libre, Direct From Puerto Rico



Bomba y Plena Gary Nuñez of the plena pop band Plena Libre teaches young residents how to play various percussion instruments at NYCHA's Octavitas Celebration last month.

By Eileen Elliott

On a bitterly cold January 10, 2003, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and staff gathered together at the Pedro Albizu Campos Community Center in Manhattan's East Village to pay tribute to Puerto Rican heritage with a traditional Octavitas Celebration.

Octavitas, which originated in Puerto Rico in 1873, lasts for eight days beginning after Three Kings Day and ending with Lent.

The celebration at Campos began with Plena Libre's bassist and founder, Gary Nuñez, conducting a special Bomba y Plena Educational Workshop with 200 children from Campos and the nearby Jacob Riis, Baruch, Rutgers, Two Bridges and Seward Park Community Centers.

"How many of you know where Puerto Rico is?" Mr. Nuñez asked the children who were seated in a semi-circle in the brightly decorated gymnasium.

Plena Libre's popularity has extended far beyond Puerto Rico, where it was founded in 1994. In fact, Plena Libre has been nominated for a Grammy Award this year in the Traditional Tropical

Latin Album category; its first English language Grammy nomination. But stardom didn't stop these modern day troubadours from making a stop at Campos Plaza to help NYCHA celebrate Octavitas.

After a brief history of plena, which along with bomba music is a traditional genre of Puerto Rican music with West African roots, Mr. Nuñez described the various instruments used, including the panderatas, which are hand-held drums, like tambourines, and the congas.

the audience clapped along. At the same time Mr. Nuñez got everyone on their feet to teach them the basic plena y bomba dance step, "left foot out, left foot in, right foot out, right foot in."

Once the children's workshop ended, NYCHA residents and staff arrived for the Octavitas Celebration.

"NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez and NYCHA staff take pride in honoring the Puerto Rican community with this Octavitas Celebration," NYCHA Senior Policy Advisor Carmen Ambert announced to the audience at the start of the show.

(Continued on page 8)

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### Message From The Chairman

## The Earned Income Tax Credit It's Your Money, Come and Get It



If you earn income from work you may have a significant tax refund coming to you. It is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and I urge all eligible NYCHA residents to apply for it when filing federal and state tax returns this year. I know, the word "taxes" gives most of us a headache, we don't want to think about it if we don't have to; but in this case, it is really worth your while.

As a matter of fact, if you are one of the 31,000 NYCHA

families who could qualify for the EITC you should have received a letter about the EITC in the mail. But just in case you missed it, or missed the article in last month's Journal, I want to strongly recommend that you find out about this refund. As Mayor Bloomberg's citywide campaign says: "EITC: It's Your Money, Come and Get It." Based upon your family size and income, the EITC refund could be as high as several thousand dollars.

The Mayor has gathered the forces of the City Council, the Department of Consumer Affairs and other government agencies, along with corporations and community organizations to spread the word about the EITC, and NYCHA is a full partner in that initiative.

The EITC is available to families earning less than \$34,178 a year with more than one child, families earning less than \$30,201 annually with one child, and individuals 24 years of age and older making less than \$11,060 annually. The amount of credit is determined by the amount of income and family size. The EITC can be worth as much as \$5,278 (combined federal and state), with the average for NYCHA families expected to exceed \$2,500. If all NYCHA families who qualify were to file for the EITC, over \$50 million would flow into the households of our residents. Be sure to apply for your share.

Whether or not you qualify for the EITC, you may want professional help in preparing your taxes. NYCHA residents can get that help — FREE — at many locations throughout the city — including six NYCHA locations. If you earned under \$34,000 last year, you can get free tax filing assistance. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will work with you to prepare basic income tax returns at no charge at VITA sites. VITA sites are staffed by knowledgeable volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service.

I visited one of these sites recently, the Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union. Council Member Margarita Lopez, the Credit Union staff and I joined with IRS Manager Michael J. McCormick to tell the people of that community two things — file for the EITC and get free help with your taxes.

To find the location nearest to you, or for free federal income tax information, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at (800) 829-1040. For a copy of the free IRS Publication 596 about the Earned Income Tax Credit, call 1-800-829-3676 or log onto [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). To get information about New York State and local income taxes, contact the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at (800) CALL-TAX or (800) 225-5829. To find out more about the EITC you can also call the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs' automated hotline at (212) 487-4444 or log onto [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).

One more thing. The EITC does not count as income in determining your rent, it will not affect other government benefits such as public assistance, nor is it counted as income in calculating entitlement to Medicaid, Food Stamps, and SSI. However, the payment must be spent by the end of the month following the month it is received in order to retain eligibility for these government benefits.

And don't forget, the tax filing deadline is April 15!

Tino Hernandez

## BAYCHESTER COMMUNITY CENTER

(Continued from page 1)

being built." New York State Assemblyman Carl B. Heastie told the gathering, "wondering what it would look like. It's amazing." Turning to Council Member Seabrook and Chairman Hernandez, the assemblyman said, "every time this community reached out to you, you were there. You will always have my support."

Julie Dalton, Vice President of Aging in America, the organization that will operate the senior center, spoke of "bringing the generations together in this beautiful site." The building is designed to accommodate basketball games and senior residents sipping tea at the same time. On this school day morning it was seniors only for the official dedication, but as Mistress of Ceremonies, Bronx Borough Community Operations Director Deidra Gilliard said the generations would be mingling that afternoon and into the future.

Mr. Seabrook paid tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Warden and told the seniors to "teach those young people. This is a place for the young to learn from the old."

Mr. Warden, whose own parents are members of the Bay-Eden Senior Center, responded by describing his goal of bringing seniors and young people together.

That vision of community was enlarged to the whole of NYCHA by Chairman Hernandez. Having visited over 120 developments since being appointed, Mr. Hernandez could not imagine a more appropriate occasion on which to visit Baychester. "The collaboration of elected officials, NYCHA and our residents is what makes things happen," he said, "unbelievable things by exemplary people who have such devotion to public service." Mr. Hernandez, NYCHA General Manager Douglas Apple and Deputy General Manager for Capital Projects and Development Joseph Farro made special mention of the NYCHA inspection staff for the exceptional quality of the work on the new building.

NYCHA Board Members Earl Andrews, Jr. and JoAnna Aniello, along with Bronx Borough Management Director Patricia Lawler shared the dais. Resident Aquila Knight sang "Lift Every Voice" and a chorus of Bay-Eden Senior Center members did exactly that with, of course, "Bless this House."



### Deborah's Diary

By Deborah Williams

**STAR POWER** According to an article in the McGuire Air Force Base's monthly magazine, *The Beacon*, Aquilla Taylor from the Red Hook Houses in Brooklyn "is a rising star." A talented singer, Aquilla's first appearance was at the 514 Air Mobility Wing's Squadron Picnic in August of 2001. That same month, Aquilla performed in a musical entitled, "Let's Go To The Movies" and in August 2002 at the Harlem Jazz Festival. She won first place in the New York City Housing Authority Citywide Talent Search Competition in May 2002. Aquilla has her own unique sound that is sort of a mixture of Alicia Keys and Lauryn Hill and with that sound she has become a successful performer. Only 11 years old, Aquilla has been accepted into the New York City's prestigious

Professional Performing Arts School. Last November, Aquilla returned to the McGuire Air Force base to sing the National Anthem at the Reserve Wing's Military Ball. *I'm impressed! I've heard that the National Anthem is one of the hardest songs to sing, especially in front of a crowd, but obviously not for the daughter of Tech Sgt. Stanley Taylor of the Air Force's 35th Aerial Port Squadron. Aquilla, you sound very confident and that's important. If you believe you will succeed then you will. Keep those vocal cords strong and one day may you achieve STAR status.*



**GOLDEN GLOVES** Even when things looked bleak and hopeless Mickey and Negra Rosario from Wagner Houses in Manhattan didn't despair. Instead they returned to the place called "Casa Rosario," a.k.a. Wagner Houses to help the youth in their community. They don't have a lot of money, but they do have a lot of talent, or should I say "skill." Mr. Rosario is a three-times Golden Glove Champion and currently the Chief Official of the International Amateur Boxing Association for the Northeast. And Ms. Rosario, who has been called "a pioneer in female boxing" is the first female boxing coach certified by the New York State Athletic Commission. Thirty-five years ago, the Rosarios used their skills to develop a neighborhood boxing program from their home in Wagner Houses. In the process, The Gladiators, an amateur boxing team they founded, emerged and developed a formidable reputation. The Gladiators produced many Golden Glove Champs including Hector Camacho. After a search and a lot of temporary housing for the team, the Rosarios finally located a place for the Gladiators to call home. They settled into the Thomas Jefferson Recreation Center, located in a park in Harlem. The Gladiators were content there for many years but, recently, due to an unfortunate turn of events, they had to move. Having no other center or gymnasium to go to, they have come back to the only place Mickey and Negra Rosario say is truly the "Home of the Gladiator — Casa Rosario" in Wagner Houses. *To the Rosarios — I am sorry about your misfortune, however, not many folks would open their homes to youngsters but you did. Although you may be without a gymnasium now, I do believe that when you keep the faith only good things will follow. So keep your chins up, you never know what tomorrow may bring.*

**PROMOTED** Congratulations to Ramon Galarza of the New York City Police Department, a former resident of Marcy Houses in Brooklyn. Back in November Mr. Galarza was promoted to Associate Supervisor of School Security along with four other NYPD officers in a ceremony at One Police Plaza. You may have seen his photo in *The Chief-Leader*, with Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly. Though Mr. Galarza hasn't lived in Marcy Houses since 1987, he still has fond memories of growing up there with his brothers Samuel and Christopher. He joined the Police Department in 1987 as a Board of Education School Safety Officer. In 1988 he was promoted to a special TASK Force, then to Sergeant in 1995 and Lieutenant in 1997. In 1998, the School Safety Division merged with the New York City Police Department and Mr. Galarza became a Supervisor. *Ramon I'd like to congratulate you on your recent promotion and wish you continued success in your career. NYCHA residents, past and present, are always moving up.*

## The NYCHA "Not Wanted" List

In this issue we continue our editorial policy of publishing the names of individuals who have been permanently excluded from our public housing developments. Listing the proscribed persons is part of the effort to keep residents informed of NYCHA's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of our facilities. Here follows a list of the people excluded after hearings were held on July 18 and 25, August 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, September 5, 12, 19 and 26, and October 17, 24 and 31, 2001. **REMEMBER, IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE PERSONS ON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR THE POLICE! THIS LIST IS PROVIDED TO ALL POLICE SERVICE AREAS.**

### Prohibited as of July 18, 2001

Darnell Ravenelle	Case 2622/01 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 1440 Bronx River Avenue, Bronx River Houses, the Bronx.
Allen McGraw	Case 2623/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 1451 Washington Avenue, Morris Houses, the Bronx.
Radford Prince Jr.	Case 2656/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 71 Wayne Terrace, West Brighton Houses, Staten Island.
Radford Prince Jr.	Case 2678/01 formerly associated with the tenth floor of 405 East 105th Street, Wilson Houses, Manhattan.

### Prohibited as of July 25, 2001

Charles William	Case 5219/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 2821 Dewey Avenue, Throggs Neck Houses, the Bronx.
Derrek Hanna	Case 2733/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 531 East 143rd Street, Betances Houses, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of August 1, 2001

Leonard Williams	Case 2757/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 2326 West 8th Street, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.
Richard Cruz	Case 2790/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 2715 Third Avenue, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.
Jimmy Mejias	Case 2758/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 300 Cherry Street, La Guardia Houses, Manhattan.

### Prohibited as of August 8, 2001

Kareem Lewin	Case 2819/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 281 East 153rd Street, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.
Frederick Wright	Case 2823/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 325 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.
Walter Potter	Case 2853/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 109-44 160th Street, South Jamaica Houses, Jamaica, New York.
Efrain Vazquez	Case 2854/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 225-227 Willis Avenue, Mitchell Houses, the Bronx.
Victor Maldonado	Case 2850/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 310 East 102nd Street, Metro North Plaza Houses, Manhattan.

### Prohibited as of August 15, 2001

Charles Gregory	Case 2960/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 56-16 Beach Channel Drive, Ocean Bay Apartments (formerly Arverne/Edgemere Houses), Far Rockaway.
Charles Sealey	
Kerri Fleming	Case 2973/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 131 Jersey Street, Richmond Terrace, Staten Island.
Terrance Brown	Case 793/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 21 West 112th Street, King Towers, Manhattan.
David Hall	Case 2903/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 452 East 105th Street, East River Houses, Manhattan.

(Continued on page 5)

## CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ WELCOMES 100 NEW HOUSING BUREAU POLICE OFFICERS



New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Tino Hernandez (far left) and Housing Bureau Assistant Chief Charles Kammerdener (far right), along with Citywide Council Of Presidents (COP) Chair Gerri Lamb (second from right) joined police officers who are NYCHA residents and former NYCHA residents for this photo at the New Officers Orientation, which was held on January 22, 2003 at Police Service Area (PSA) #6 in Upper Manhattan. The 100 officers who attended the orientation will be assigned to PSA #2 in Brooklyn and PSA #7 in the Bronx. As part of "Operation Impact," initiated by Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, they will provide the highest visibility where it is most needed, during the hours when criminal activity is most likely to occur. Mr. Hernandez assured the officers that their presence will be felt and appreciated by NYCHA residents. He expressed pride in the fact that our crime rates went down in 2002, and emphasized NYCHA's commitment to safety through the use of CCTVs in our developments, the work of resident Tenant Patrols, and NYCHA's role in the construction of new state-of-the-art PSA facilities, such as PSA #6. Also attending was Housing Bureau Police Chief Douglas Zeigler.

## Start Your Own Business

If you want to start your own business, please call NYCHA's Business Development Division. We are particularly interested in residents with the following skills: painting, electrical installation and maintenance, plumbing, door and cabinet hanging, building maintenance, general construction, landscaping, welding, and iron work. However, please call, whatever your business idea is.

**718-250-5987, 718-246-6510**

## 11 Digit Dialing Is Here!

If you've had trouble making telephone calls within the same area code beginning on February 1, you've probably already figured out that New York City residents must now



**dial 1+area code+7 digit telephone number** to complete local calls, even within the same area code. These are still considered local calls. Fax machines and modems may also need to be re-programmed.

# PHAS INSPECTION RULES MAY CHANGE HUD To Hold Public Hearing

As part of the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is required by federal law to conduct yearly inspections of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. This is the fifth year of these inspections. The physical inspections are based on a 30 point scale. For fiscal year 2001 (the last inspection performed) NYCHA received a score of 23 for the physical inspection, an improvement of seven points over the initial physical inspection score for fiscal year 1998 of 16 points.

These inspections review conditions of building systems, common areas, grounds and apartment interiors. Special attention is paid to maintenance safety violations which must be corrected within 24 hours.

### Proposed Rule Changes

This year, for the first time HUD is requiring that NYCHA

give the inspectors full and free access to any apartment that the inspectors pick, "whether or not the resident is home or has installed additional locks for which the public housing authority does not possess keys."

Changes in the PHAS rules are being proposed that would result in (1) much less flexibility in the selection of apartments to be inspect-

ed, and (2) compulsory entry into apartments whether or not residents are home or keys are available. The proposed HUD rule will also require that the development be given "0" points if access to apartments is not given to the inspectors. Poor PHAS scores result in serious consequences, such as the denial of certain federal funds.

### Inspections Begin On February 24, 2003

The first PHAS inspections for 2003 will take place from February 24 - 27 at five NYCHA developments: Eastchester, O'Dwyer, Queensbridge, LaGuardia and South Beach. As a part of the new inspection process, if you are to receive an inspection you will be contacted 72 hours in advance of the scheduled inspection. You will be given the option of having the inspection performed in the morning or afternoon. You or a responsible adult must be home to admit the inspectors, or leave keys in the management office. Your lease requires that you provide access to NYCHA when requested. If you fail to provide access on the specified day, NYCHA will be required to immediately commence a tenancy action for a willful violation of your lease.

Selected apartments in all developments citywide will be notified of subsequent PHAS inspections.

### Public Hearing To Come

HUD is expected to hold a public hearing within the next couple of months during which these proposed changes will be discussed. Residents are encouraged to attend. Check subsequent editions of the *NYCHA Journal* for further information.

## The NYCHA "Not Wanted" List

(Continued from previous page)

### Prohibited as of August 22, 2001

Alfred Horsford Case 3006/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 281 East 153rd Street, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.

Efrain Arroyo Case 3072/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 325 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of August 29, 2001

Maurice Jackson Case 3110/01 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 159-38 Harlem River Drive, Ralph Rangel Houses, Manhattan.

Arthur Rutledge, Jr. Case 2048/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 1761 First Avenue, Washington Houses, Manhattan.

Marvin Khan Case 3113/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 426 West 27th Drive, Elliott Chelsea Houses, Manhattan.

### Prohibited as of September 5, 2001

Rahsean Jackson Case 3204/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 41-07 Vernon Blvd., Queens bridge South Houses, Queens.

Bryan Molina Case 3207/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 115 East 122nd Street, Jackie Robinson Houses, Manhattan.

Julio Suero Case 3208/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 125 West 228th Street, Marble Hill Houses, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of September 12, 2001

Rene Delgado Case 3272/01 formerly associated with the eighth floor of 70 Baruch Drive, Baruch Houses, Manhattan.

Jamaal Matthews Andrew Matthews Case 1882/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 40 Amsterdam Avenue, Amsterdam Houses, Manhattan.

Dupree Walker Case 3347/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 845 Avenue, Stuyvesant Gardens, Brooklyn.

### Prohibited as of September 19, 2001

Linden Samuel Case 3284/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 3125 Park Avenue, Morrisania Air Rights Houses, the Bronx.

Norman Sanchez Case 3384/01 formerly associated with the twenty-six floor of 3125 Park Avenue, Morrisania Air Rights Houses, the Bronx.

Danny Delgado Daniel Delgado Case 3386/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 1711 Randall Avenue, Soundview Houses, the Bronx.

Michael Hamilton Case 3389/01 formerly associated with the fifteenth floor of 875 Columbus Avenue, Frederick Douglass Houses, Manhattan.

Bobby Hopson Case 3392/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 254 Ralph Avenue, Howard Houses, Brooklyn.

### Prohibited as of September 26, 2001

Jovan Jenkins Case 3521/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 197 Gordon Street, Stapleton Houses, Staten Island.

### Prohibited as of October 17, 2001

Quaton McKenzie Case 3524/01 formerly associated with the first floor of 435 Gates Avenue, Louis Armstrong Houses, Brooklyn.

### Prohibited as of October 24, 2001

Robert Ragsdale Case 3552/01 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 1695 Madison Avenue, Taft Houses, Manhattan.

Clayton Mills Case 3567/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 215-217 Alexander Avenue, Mitchel Houses, the Bronx.

### Prohibited as of October 31, 2001

Israel Mercado Case 3579/01 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 54-64 Rutgers Street, Rutgers Houses, Manhattan.

## ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS BEGINS

The New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA's) 54-member Resident Advisory Board (RAB) held its first meeting at Central Office on the evening of January 15, 2003. The RAB is the team of residents who work with NYCHA to create NYCHA's Annual Plan, which is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Over the next few months, special RAB committees will discuss topics ranging from social services to pets, to community service, to crime and safety. The outcome of these discussions will form the basis for the draft Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Plan. Remarks made at Town Hall meetings in each borough, scheduled to begin in June, as well as at a Public Hearing in July, will yield the final Plan to be submitted to HUD on October 17, 2003. Keep an eye out for the dates and locations of the Town Hall meetings and the Public Hearing in your Management Office and Community Center, as well as in your monthly *Journal*.

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# Christmas/Kwanzaa Celebration At Van Dyke



Young Isis McIntosh explains what Kwanzaa is and is not to the youth and adults at Van Dyke Houses Community Center.

It was a celebration of family, community and culture — and a time to get presents! More than 300 children and teens from seven New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) community centers in Brooklyn filled the gymnasium at the Van Dyke Community Center on December 18, 2002 to ring in the holidays with the borough's First Annual Christmas/Kwanzaa Celebration. Using dance, drama or song, the groups showcased their talents which were cultivated with the help of Community Operations' Performing Arts Consultants.

Brooklyn Senior Program Manager Lisa Davis and Citywide Performing Arts Coordinator Keir Nelson kept the tone lively as Masters of Ceremony for the event, which focused on Kwanzaa while taking into account other seasonal holidays such as Christmas and Chanukah. "This is an event for children, by children," Ms. Davis said by way of introduction. She emphasized that unity was the prevailing theme of the evening and that many people from different boroughs helped make the occasion possible.

"Kwanzaa is neither a political nor a religious holiday," explained young Isis McIntosh from Van Dyke Houses, "nor is it a substitute for Christmas. It is simply a time for African-American people to gather together and celebrate their culture and heritage." Kwanzaa takes place over seven days, beginning on December 26 and ending on January 1, with each day representing one of seven principles. The principles — unity, self-determination, cooperative economics, creativity, collective work and responsibility, purpose and faith — were elaborated on between performances.

The evening included many dance numbers, skits, a karate performance and even a horror film parody, à la "The Blair Witch Project" that was written and videotaped by young residents from Williamsburg, with the help of the Students Urban Video Program. In addition to Van Dyke residents, residents from Bayview, Boulevard, Sheepshead/Nstrand, Weeksville, Stuyvesant and Tilden Houses participated. The Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," opened and closed the program.

Special thanks to the many generous sponsors who made contributions, including Verizon, Con Edison, Moshood Inc., Bob Mann Tours, the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Brooklyn Kiwanis Club, the Stuyvesant Tenant Association, the Tilden Houses Advisory Board, the Boulevard Houses Advisory Board, the Weeksville Houses Tenant Association, and the Queens Audio Engineer Youth Program. Thanks also to Garden Program Coordinator Howard Hemmings who donated the Christmas tree, Brooklyn Borough Community Coordinator Sarah Lee McWhite and Bayview Community Coordinator Karl Porter.

### Apologies:

In the "Bringing Toys To Girls And Boys At Farragut" article, which appeared on page 6 of last month's **NYCHA Journal**, we forgot to mention that Toys For Tots, donated over 500 toys.



# Celebration At King Towers For MLK, Jr.

By Allan Leicht

The life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought the generations together in song, dance and story at the development honored by his name on the 74th anniversary of his birth, observed this year on January 20. Dr. King's principles of "pride, respect, unity, religion and family values" were themes of the afternoon, and they were not just words. They were made vital as the practical means by which the young people of Martin Luther King Towers—known as the "King Kids"—must strive to achieve their most cherished goals.

The program opened with a processional in honor of one of NYCHA's elder stateswoman, Mrs. Ruby Kitchen, President of the Martin Luther King Towers Resident Council, prime mover of this celebration and events throughout the year. For this commemoration Mrs. Kitchen fashioned a program that she described as an expression of "the world we live in," with a succession of speakers and entertainment designed mainly to sustain the interest of the children. "The children most of all need to hear. Martin Luther King should be as real to them as he is to those of us who lived in his time."

Councilman William Perkins, Deputy Majority Leader of the New York City Council, saved his address for last, giving the greater part of the program to the Reverend Juanita Pierre-Louis, Mistress of Ceremonies, and presentations spiritual, poetic and dramatic. Dances choreographed by Aisha Hawkins to the drums of Abdul Hawkins, playlets written by Taleshia Woods and performed by the "King Kids," and history brought to life by Community Assistant Sheyvonne Mitchell mingled with Nubla Garcia's reflections on Scripture and speeches

from NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr. and General Manager Douglas Apple.

The Reverend Anthony Mann of the Baptist Temple Church provided the invocation for the capacity-plus attendance of over 150, who were also addressed by NYCHA's Manhattan Borough Management Director Carolyn Jasper, Community Operations Senior Director Michelle-Pinnock Clerk and Community Operations Director Luis Soler. Professor Preston Wilcox, longtime Harlem activist, historian and a legend in the community, shared his personal recollections of Dr. King, who was a fellow alumnus of Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Community leaders Elombe and Nomisa Braith made special mention of the dedicated work by Councilman Perkins. District leaders Keith Lily and Pamela Green-Perkins also contributed to the dynamic afternoon. Mrs. Green-Perkins' bond to Martin Luther King Towers is not only as District Leader or as the wife of the Councilman, but as a former resident, having grown up in the development. Development Manager Paul Lavelle and Superintendent Mathew Jordan were also in attendance, as was Assistant Community Center Director Michael Brown, all of whom were instrumental to the success of the event.

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## Octavitas Celebration

*(Continued from page 2)*

Operations' Willie Nieves followed her remarks by saying, "It is wonderful to see a beautiful tradition continue — especially for the children."

Department of Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh B. Spence expressed his gratitude, in English and Spanish, for the opportunity to celebrate Octavitas, and NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez congratulated Plena Libre on its Grammy nomination. He also thanked the band members for their "terrific work" with the children.

With that, Mr. Nuñez and his troubadours began pounding their panderatas, as they made their way through the crowd to center stage.

"Music is an important part of our soul," said Mr. Nuñez earlier in the evening. "Plena is the rhythm of Puerto Rico. We take this rhythm from Puerto Rico to the world." To the delight of NYCHA and its residents, on the evening of January 10, Plena Libre focused on just one small corner of the world — Campos Plaza.

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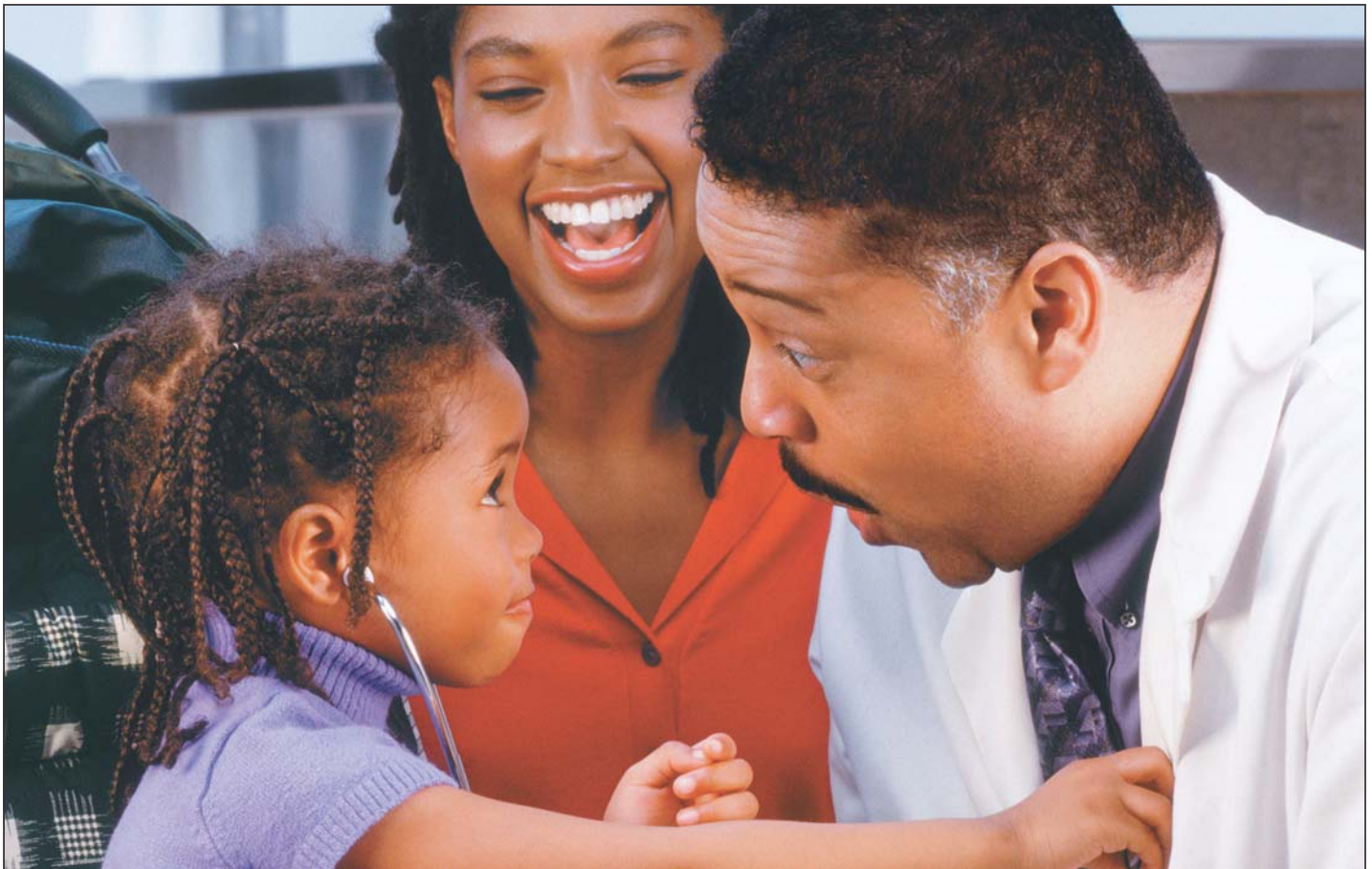
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