



## \$100 Million+ Coming to NYCHA for Post-Sandy Boiler Replacement

*Money Coming From Federal Gov't. Pushed Through by Senator Schumer*

**N**YCHA is receiving major assistance from the federal government to replace mobile boilers used at developments that were affected by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide more than \$100 million for NYCHA to install new, state-of-the-art boilers to replace those damaged by the storm. The funding commitment was secured by United States Senator Charles Schumer. Currently, mobile boilers serve approximately 8,800 families in 110 buildings at 16 developments that had their boilers damaged beyond repair by Sandy.

Since the storm, NYCHA spends \$3 million per month for the mobile boilers, which puts a large burden on the Housing Authority because of ongoing funding decreases. Normally, FEMA will provide funding to repair rather than replace damaged infrastructure and then

negotiate the cost. However, Senator Schumer and Mayor Bill de Blasio announced on March 23 that FEMA agreed not to challenge NYCHA's cost estimates, and will pay for brand new boilers, rather than just repair the damaged ones.

"On behalf of the more than 400,000 New Yorkers that call NYCHA home, I want to thank Senator Schumer and Mayor de Blasio for their tireless commitment and leadership," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye. "NYCHA has been working aggressively for a year to tap the financial resources needed to restore our Sandy-damaged buildings. Thank you to our FEMA colleagues for engaging in negotiations and making the commitment to secure the recovery funding we need to begin the work necessary to bring these buildings – these homes – damaged by Sandy up to a state of repair and resiliency."

Senator Schumer organized a sit-down meeting with top officials from



NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye speaks at a news conference on March 23, 2014, at the Isaacs Houses Neighborhood Center to announce more than \$100 million of federal money to help pay for new boilers at developments affected by Hurricane Sandy. She was joined by, from left to right, NYCHA General Manager Cecil House, Senator Charles Schumer, and Mayor Bill de Blasio.

FEMA and NYCHA, including Chair Olatoye, to hammer out a clear path forward. The meeting resulted in an agreement that cuts through the red tape that had been preventing the funding agreement, and paves the way to expedite the boiler replacement.

"Too often, the wait for relief and recovery has exacerbated the tragedy

of Superstorm Sandy – a reality NYCHA residents know all too well," said Mayor de Blasio. "Now, thanks in large part to the leadership of Senator Schumer, we will much sooner than planned start making the upgrades needed to improve the quality of life for thousands in public housing."

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## NYCHA's Gardeners are Ready for Spring

By Howard Silver

**A**fter all of those winter snowstorms, nobody is more ready for spring than NYCHA's gardeners! But just to be sure, more than 500 budding and experienced cultivators of NYCHA's soil attended the 12th Annual NYCHA Grows with its Gardeners Conference, held at the James Weldon Johnson Community Center in Manhattan on March 14. The annual event kicks off the growing season by providing a wealth of inspiration and information – along with bulbs, seeds, exhibits, and 14 specialized workshops with technical assistance from gardening and environmental experts.

The gardeners attended workshops that covered everything from preparing the soil and sprouting seeds, to designing gardens and canning foods. For gardeners who want the summer never to end, there was a workshop on extending the growing season. And for stewards of NYCHA's trees – which make up a large part of the City's greenbelt – there was a workshop on basic tree care.

Reid Houses Resident Association



NYCHA residents receive information about healthy eating at the 12th Annual NYCHA Grows with its Gardeners Conference Center on March 14, 2014, at the James Weldon Johnson Community Center.

President Leonard Jones, who began gardening last year, was attending his first conference, to bring supplies and information back to residents at his 12 buildings in Brooklyn. "I want to get more residents involved because it brings people outside where they get exercise and meet," he said. Mr. Jones also is motivated by a "friendly rivalry" with the Resident Association President at Pink Houses, who won prizes for flower gardens in NYCHA's last three

Garden and Greening competitions, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

Veteran gardener Deborah Segarra from Soundview Houses in the Bronx also has won awards, but this year she has a different goal. "I want to get children interested in how to eat healthier, and gardening is the best way," she said. This year she plans on building a trellis and

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# NYCHA Board Meetings



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

The Board Meetings in 2014 are scheduled for:

<b>April 30</b>	<b>July 30</b>	<b>November 26</b>
<b>May 28</b>	<b>September 24</b>	<b>December 31</b>
<b>June 25</b>	<b>October 29</b>	

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

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

Copies of the Calendar for an upcoming meeting are available on NYCHA's website at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha), or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary at 250 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, NY, no earlier than 3:00 p.m. on the Monday before the upcoming Wednesday Board Meeting. Copies of the Dispositions of prior meetings are available on NYCHA's website or can be picked up at the Office of the Corporate Secretary no earlier than 3:00 p.m. on the Thursday after the Board Meeting.

Any person requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the Board Meeting should contact the Office of the Corporate Secretary at **212-306-6088** no later than five business days before the Board Meeting.

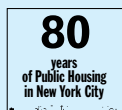
For additional information regarding Board Meeting Calendars, Dispositions, dates and times, please call **212-306-6088**.

## Check out NYCHA's Facebook page!

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

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

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



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## Residents' Voices



March 25, 2014

(posted in building)

Spring is here thank goodness. But it might snow again, and if it does, we know that Atlantic Terminal's walkways will be clear thanks to our Caretakers. Through the numerous days that it snowed in New York City this winter, our Caretakers Mr. Sharif, Ms. Lauren, and Ms. Erica kept Atlantic Terminal's surrounding area free from snow the best they could to keep us safe. They take pride

in their work and we residents benefit from their service. Our Caretakers started cleaning our pathways at 7:00 a.m. and ended mid-morning; after they finished they went back to their daily chores of keeping our building clean. So, we say thank you to Mr. Sharif, Ms. Lauren, and Ms. Erica for their hard work and caring about the surroundings they work in.

**Celeste Staton, Atlantic Terminal**

### Tell us what is on your mind!

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

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

Please limit written submissions to 250 words.

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

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

Send an e-mail to [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov)

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

Send a Tweet on Twitter at [twitter.com/NYCHA\\_Housing](https://twitter.com/NYCHA_Housing)

Post a message on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NYCHA](https://www.facebook.com/NYCHA)

Send a fax to **212-577-1358**

If you have any questions, please send them to [Journal@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:Journal@nycha.nyc.gov).

## NYCHA Gets Major Capital Funding from Federal Government

NYCHA recently was awarded more than \$260 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its capital budget. The money came from HUD's Capital Fund Program, which provides annual funding to public housing authorities to

build, repair, renovate, and/or modernize their buildings. The funds were part of \$1.8 billion in grants awarded to public housing authorities across the country.

"Housing authorities in New York (state) count on this funding to maintain and

improve their public housing stock," said HUD Regional Administrator Holly Leicht. "Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers call public housing their home, so we must do all that we can to preserve and improve this important housing resource."



The money NYCHA received from the federal government will be used for capital improvements, including exterior brick work.

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

# Message from Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye



What a month! My first month at NYCHA was informative, inspiring, and enjoyable. As I traveled around the city, meeting so many residents and employees, it was very clear that we all share a common goal – making NYCHA the very best it can be.

I strongly believe that each of you play a role in NYCHA's success. I want to hear from you! I am visiting developments and making my way through our offices. I am doing this not only to see with my own eyes but to meet and learn from as many of you as possible. I look forward to continuing to do so in the weeks to come.

Key to our success at NYCHA is earning your trust and continuing to strengthen our relationship

with our most important customers – you. I hope to accomplish that with a focus on the FACTS: Focus, Accountability, Customer-forward, Transparency, and Success.

I plan to visit every borough to begin a constructive conversation about the ways we will reset our stakeholder relationships, focus on our core business, and develop a framework to preserve public housing – your homes – for the future.

I want you to know that I am going to be out there working hard for you, and I will be very transparent with what I am doing. That is why I created a Chair's Corner on our website at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha). In the Chair's Corner, you will find information on matters related to my vision and goals for NYCHA, photos from events, and my public schedule. I think it is very important for people to know what I will be doing, whether it is touring a development, giving testimony at a City Council hearing, holding a news conference, or appearing on a panel.

At our March NYCHA Board Meeting, General Manager Cecil House and I introduced a new component of the agenda, the Chair's Report. At the meeting, I called for a more open and accountable approach for NYCHA; a resetting of the relationship with residents and other key stakeholders; focusing on the core business of managing and providing quality affordable housing; supporting the leadership direction established by General Manager House and his team; and harnessing NYCHA's assets for its needs today and being a part of affordable housing solutions for tomorrow.

In addition to residents, I also spent a lot of time in my first month meeting with stakeholders. We've met with the Citywide Council of Presidents, New York Congressional delegation, and members of the New York State Assembly Housing Committee; testified at a City Council hearing; and spoke at the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development's Annual Conference on Community Development. It is vital for NYCHA to have strong relationships with elected officials, other national leaders, and local advocates who can and should be our partners in strengthening NYCHA.

You know better than anyone how important NYCHA is to New York City. Every day, more than 400,000 NYCHA residents can breathe a little easier knowing they have a safe, decent, and affordable home. I look forward to working with you as we continue to make strides toward a successful future.

*Shola Olatoye*  
Shola Olatoye



NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye talks to residents at the Middletown Plaza Senior Center on March 3, 2014, her first day at NYCHA.

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## \$100 Million+ Coming to NYCHA for Post-Sandy Boiler Repairs

The agreement is as follows:

- FEMA has agreed to pay for NYCHA's cost estimates for boiler replacement, as long as they are provided by independent licensed engineers.
- FEMA will provide full replacement for the boilers, as opposed to repair, as long as they meet one of the necessary criteria. The criteria include: boilers suffered saltwater inundation; boilers are so old that even if repaired they cannot meet current codes; or cost of repair is above fifty percent of the cost of replacing the boilers.
- FEMA has agreed to reimburse NYCHA for the cost of the temporary boilers so far, relieving NYCHA of additional debt.
- FEMA will seek to have a funding agreement hammered out and signed early this year, allowing boiler replacement to begin sooner than the currently projected start date in 2016.

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## NYCHA's Gardeners are Ready for Spring

teaching children how to grow grapes.

During the Conference's opening ceremony, NYCHA Executive Vice President for Community Programs and Development Margarita López expressed the need to "get more young people involved" in the garden program and challenged each resident "to bring a young person to this event next year."

Keynote speaker Arif Ullah, Director of Programs at the Citizens Committee for New York City, called gardeners natural "community organizers" because they form social bonds by working together and exchanging recipes and seeds.

That's exactly what Mae McCullough from Washington Houses in Manhattan plans to do. "I exchanged numbers with people from different developments so we can share experiences and help each



NYCHA residents learn how to can vegetables and fruit at the 12th Annual NYCHA Grows with its Gardeners Conference Center on March 14, 2014, at the James Weldon Johnson Community Center. The canning workshop is one of the most popular sessions every year.

other," she said.

NYCHA's Garden and Greening Program provides

resources and support for more than 3,000 young and adult gardeners who cultivate almost

750 gardens at more than 200 developments in the five boroughs.

## THE NYCHA NOT WANTED LIST

Below is a partial list of names of individuals who have been excluded permanently from NYCHA's public housing developments. This list keeps residents informed of the Authority's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of its facilities. The full list can be viewed at [on.nyc.gov/nychanotwanted](http://on.nyc.gov/nychanotwanted). The following are the people, with their former addresses, excluded as of October 7-November 4, 2013.

### Week of October 7, 2013

**Londell Brevard** Manhattanville Houses, 545 West 126th Street, Apt. 3L, Manhattan

**Daquan Cannon** Jackson Houses, 3050 Park Avenue, Apt. 3F, Bronx

**Aaron Cromwell** Taft Houses, 1735 Madison Avenue, Apt. 3F, Manhattan

**Matthew Jackson** Cypress Hills Houses, 305 Fountain Avenue, Apt. 6G, Brooklyn

**Davell Lloyd** Soundview Houses, 1725 Randall Avenue, Apt. 2B, Bronx

**Jonathan Naranjo** Albany Houses, 1575 Dean Street, Apt. 3A, Brooklyn

**Keith Stamps** Twin Parks West Consolidated Houses, 365 East 183rd Street, Apt. 4DM, Bronx

### Week of October 14, 2013

**Joyce Bryant** Langston Hughes/Woodson Houses, 315 Sutter Avenue, Apt. 4G, Brooklyn

**Daymon Dollison** Queensbridge South Houses, 41-06 Vernon Boulevard, Apt. 5A, Queens

**Craig Peals** Carver Houses, 60 East 102nd Street, Apt. 5A, Manhattan

**Ruben Rosa, Jr.** Betances I Houses, 520 East 144th Street, Apt. 1A, Bronx

**Demetrius Simmons** Castle Hill Houses, 2125 Randall Avenue, Apt. 3M, Bronx

**Terrick Vaughn** Bayview Houses, 1590 East 102nd Street, Apt. 8E, Brooklyn

**Hassan White** Astoria Houses, 4-03 Astoria Blvd., Apt. 5B, Queens

### Week of October 21, 2013

**Derwin Adams** Walt Whitman Houses, 152 North Elliott Walk, Apt. 1A, Brooklyn

**Shawnkel Bragg** Parkside Houses, 2825 Olinville Avenue, Apt. 5B, Bronx

**Carlos Cabrera** Wise Towers, 74 West 92nd Street, Apt. 9C, Manhattan

**Dornell Harris** Parkside Houses, 2825 Olinville Avenue, Apt. 5B, Bronx

**Pablo Ramos, Jr.** Red Hook West Houses, 80 Bush Street, Apt. 1B, Brooklyn

**Joseph Robinson** Parkside Houses, 2825 Olinville Avenue, Apt. 5B, Bronx

**Victor Santiago** Baruch Houses, 79 Baruch Drive, Apt. 8A, Manhattan

**Betsy Valle** Wise Towers, 74 West 92nd Street, Apt. 9C, Manhattan

### Week of October 28, 2013

**Bruce Anderson** Breukelen Houses, 274 Stanley Avenue, Apt. 3B, Brooklyn

**John Kinred** Parkside Houses, 665 Arnow Avenue, Apt. 7A, Bronx

**Mari Maldonado** Chelsea-Elliott Houses, 428 West 26th Street, Apt. 13K, Manhattan

**Shaun Mickel** Chelsea-Elliott Houses, 428 West 26th Street, Apt. 13K, Manhattan

**Ulysses Roman** Monroe Houses, 1817 Story Avenue, Apt. 7A, Bronx

**Charles Ruff** Breukelen Houses, 274 Stanley Avenue, Apt. 3B, Brooklyn

### Week of November 4, 2013

**Peter Cosme** Red Hook East Houses, 754 Henry Street, Apt. 4D, Brooklyn

**Freddie Jones** Park Rock Consolidated Houses, 1521 Sterling Place, Apt. 4E, Brooklyn

**Heriberto Medina** Castle Hill Houses, 2140 Seward Avenue, Apt. 12G, Bronx

**Raul Morales** Castle Hill Houses, 2140 Seward Avenue, Apt. 12G, Bronx

**Mohamed Saleh** Queensbridge South Houses, 41-14 12th Street, Apt. 1C, Queens

**Darnell Solomon** Glenwood Houses, 5716 Farragut Road, Apt. 3A, Brooklyn

**Cornelius Sullivan** Clinton Houses, 1760 Lexington Avenue, Apt. 14G, Manhattan

**Rafael Castillo** Breukelen Houses, 713 East 108th Street, Apt. 1D, Brooklyn

**Davon Venable** Wald Houses, 691 Roosevelt Drive, Apt. 4F, Manhattan

## The Chief's Corner

On February 28, Police Commissioner William J. Bratton appointed Chief Carlos M. Gomez as Chief of the New York City Police Department's Housing Bureau. Chief Gomez has 30 years of experience in the Department, having served most recently as the Commanding Officer of Patrol Borough Bronx. Chief Gomez began his career on patrol in the 103 Precinct and then served in the 115 Precinct, Street Crime Unit, and Applicant Processing Division. He commanded the Management Information

Systems Division and the 90 and 106 Precincts. He also was the Executive Officer of Patrol Borough Queens North, the 101, 102, and 103 Precincts.

"I am very excited about this new endeavor and look forward to working closely with the residents of public housing and the NYCHA team to address your concerns, as well as provide a safer environment and improve the overall quality of life," Chief Gomez said. "I feel confident that, together, we will accomplish many great things. I also would like to wish Chief Joanne Jaffe continued success in



Housing Bureau Police Chief Carlos M. Gomez

her new role as Chief of the Community Affairs Bureau, she did outstanding work during her tenure in the Housing Bureau."

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911 (NON-EMERGENCY, DIAL 311)

Help us fight terrorism, report suspicious activity to the

**COUNTER TERRORISM HOTLINE:  
1-888-NYC-SAFE (1-888-692-7233)**

## Eye on Housing Fraud

Mark G. Peters, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), took office on February 18. Here, he speaks about DOI's mission as the City's anti-corruption watchdog and its partnership with NYCHA in fighting fraud and waste, and the two organization's zero-tolerance policy for illegal activity by residents, employees, and vendors.



Department of Investigation Commissioner Mark G. Peters

### What is DOI's oversight role with NYCHA?

DOI is the City's watchdog against corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse. We have oversight of approximately 300,000 City employees, 45 City agencies, dozens of boards and commissions, vendors receiving City funds, and other non-mayoral agencies, such as NYCHA. The Inspector General for NYCHA reports to DOI, roots out fraud, and reviews internal controls at NYCHA to safeguard public housing dollars.

### How is DOI safeguarding public housing dollars?

Through tips and proactive measures, DOI investigators work together with NYCHA to enhance internal controls and better protect public housing funds for eligible tenants. For example, DOI monitors large contracts that NYCHA enters into with construction management firms and vendors so NYCHA

can maximize its funding on projects and spot problems early.

### What is the impact of corruption, fraud, and waste on public housing?

Corruption, fraud, and waste undermine public housing dollars from reaching the individuals who need them the most; these offenses limit the amount of housing available to eligible tenants and drive up costs on projects, which then increases costs to the public.

### How can NYCHA tenants help?

If you see waste, corruption, or fraud, or something that does not appear right, call the NYCHA Inspector General hotline at **212-306-3356**. DOI and NYCHA continue to work together to expose and stop fraud. This ensures that residents have somewhere they can go to report fraud if they experience it, whether it is from residents or employees. It works. For example, recently a NYCHA employee offered to reduce a resident's rent if the resident gave the employee money, which is not NYCHA's policy. DOI's investigation found the tenant already was entitled to a rent reduction. The employee was fired and arrested for two counts each of Bribe Receiving and Receiving an Unlawful Gratuity. DOI and NYCHA do not tolerate that type of behavior.

## Calling NYCHA Now is Easier than Ever



A NYCHA Customer Information Representative at the Customer Call Center speaks with a resident.

Getting through to the correct person when calling NYCHA is getting easier and faster. As part of NYCHA's goal

to provide better customer service, the Housing Authority put in place new automated phone directory assistance for residents and other callers.

Now, when people call NYCHA's main phone number at **212-306-3000**, they will be given four self-help options to route their call to the right department or person as fast as possible.

- Residents should press '1' to be transferred to the Customer Contact Center;
- Applicants for NYCHA and Section 8 voucher holders should press '2' to be transferred to the Customer Contact Center;
- People calling regarding employment or human resources should press '3' to be transferred to NYCHA's human resources department;
- Anyone who needs directory assistance should press '4' and will be able to say the person's name and be connected to them.

More than 900 different people call NYCHA's general information number each day. The new automated service

### Why Do So Many Tenant & Resident Associations at NYCHA Use BOB MANN TOURS?



#### We Offer:

- \* Over 25 Years Experience Working with NYCHA
- \* Professional and Courteous Service
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### Specials for 2014:

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Email: [info@bobmantours.com](mailto:info@bobmantours.com)  
[www.bobmantours.com](http://www.bobmantours.com)

enables NYCHA to respond to more calls faster, reducing wait times and providing a service accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition to saving callers time, the new service also saves NYCHA money.

The automated directory assistance allows NYCHA to have fewer employees working on routing calls. This lets them work instead on processing maintenance, applications, and Section 8 calls.

## Engage with NYCHA on Social Media

Why are more people following NYCHA's social media every day? It is a great way to get information about what is going on at the Housing Authority. NYCHA is on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, and Foursquare. Each of these platforms allows NYCHA to broadcast photos, videos, and all the latest news at NYCHA in real time.

Thanks to the current followers that have taken recent surveys, social media allows NYCHA to deliver specific information to residents, employees, and the community. It also gives NYCHA the opportunity to share a little bit of our residents' lives to the rest of the world.

NYCHA asked residents on social media to explain why they should be mentioned in the *Journal*. Here is the winning response from Gordon Turner.

I have lived in the Dyckman Houses for over 43 years. I have volunteered my time with the Dyckman Resident Association, as well as the City Harvest Mobile Market, where I help residents who need not only food, but also to help those in times of pain. This is why I asked to be in the *Journal*, to give thanks to NYCHA and the community of the Dyckman Houses.

## Why Does it Take so Long for Gas to Come Back on?

When a NYCHA building is hit with a gas outage, Housing Authority employees make it a priority

to get service restored and minimize the inconvenience to residents. However, it takes time to ensure a building is



A NYCHA plumber checks a gas line in a resident's kitchen to ensure there is no gas leak.

safe before gas service can be turned back on.

NYCHA staff must go into every affected apartment to check for gas leaks and other issues. If NYCHA staff cannot enter just one unit, gas cannot be restored to the building because every unit's stove needs to be checked and tested for leaks.

If no leaks are found, then every stove must be reconnected, one-by-one, and gas can be restored. If there is a leak, every unit has to be re-checked until the leak is found. Once the leak is fixed, staff has to go back into every unit and repeat the process all over again before turning gas back on in the building.

## NYCHA Seeks Out the Resident Perspective

As this issue of the *Journal* was going to press, NYCHA met with a group of Resident Association Presidents, with the topic of "How Are We Doing? – The Resident Perspective." The focus was on gaining insight from the resident leaders based on their

knowledge and experience to help NYCHA maintain a high level of customer service, while continually looking at the ways it can do a better job. The residents' opinions and suggestions will be considered as part of NYCHA's approach to enhancing operations and will

make a big difference for the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers it serves.

The meeting also was part of NYCHA's commitment to open communication. Please be sure to watch for full coverage of the panel discussion in the next issue of the *Journal*.

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YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/NYCHAHousing">www.youtube.com/NYCHAHousing</a>

## Elevator Alarm Response Rises to the Challenge

By Howard Silver

At 1:44 a.m. on March 4, NYCHA Supervising Special Officer Rodney Ruiz received one of the most urgent emergency calls of his career. He was near the end of a double shift in NYCHA's Security Command Center when an alarm went off from an elevator at Bruekelen Houses in Brooklyn.

"The caller sounded young and scared. She said she was drunk and couldn't breathe," Officer Ruiz said. During what became a longer conversation than he ever imagined, he also learned that the young girl was a runaway who was on the streets for four days.

Following protocol, Officer Ruiz called 911. He also stayed in contact with the youth to assure her that help was on the way and to make sure she was safe. But while coordinating the response, Officer Ruiz was told that the paramedics could not find the caller. Their equipment showed the call originating from 757 East 105th Street, a Bruekelen Houses address, but inspection of the building's elevators did not locate the young girl who, becoming more anxious as time passed, continued to press the alarm buzzer.

"I tried to keep the girl calm but she wasn't getting the help she needed," said Officer Ruiz. And applying his training to en-

gage and encourage the caller also was difficult because the emergency phone automatically cuts off after a certain time, which meant she kept having to call back.

Eventually, Officer Ruiz asked the girl to go outside to confirm the address of the building. "Unfortunately, no one would help her that late at night," Officer Ruiz said.

But with his continued encouragement, the girl again went outside and this time located the NYCHA building plaque, as Officer Ruiz suggested, which read "757 East 103rd Street" – two blocks away from where the EMS responders had been directed to go by the electronic system.

Finally, at 3:15 a.m., EMS found the girl, ending a one-and-a-half hour-long period of stress and anxiety for the caller as well as Officer Ruiz, who succeeded in keeping the young girl waiting for help in the relative safety of the elevator instead of returning to the streets.

"When they finally came, she said 'thank you' so much on the phone and I felt good," Officer Ruiz said. "Any time you help someone, going to be happy."



NYCHA Supervising Special Officer Rodney Ruiz helped save the life of a girl over the phone.

### NYCHA Decisions Pay Off

Improved technology in 2009 allowed us to install intercoms in our elevators that directly dial to our Safety and Security office," explained NYCHA Vice-President for

## Get the Best Out of Your Tax Return

A lot of people get help getting ready for tax season and preparing their taxes. But it is not a bad idea to have some tips on what to do after your taxes have been filed, especially if you received a refund.

- Pay off high-interest debt
- Pay off the debt you have with the lowest balance to eliminate it completely
- Negotiate with collection agencies to pay off balances in lump sums; this allows you to negotiate to pay 50 percent of the debt owed
- Re-establish credit by investing in credit-building products such as credit builder loans and secured credit cards. Although major banks offer these services it is recommended to consider credit union options also, because they

tend to be much more affordable.

• Pay off any back rent and pay one month rent in advance to get caught up and stay ahead  
Once debt has been eliminated, consider using your refund to do the following:

- Start or contribute to:
  - an emergency savings fund
  - a retirement savings plan
  - a college savings fund
  - homeownership down-payment
- Invest in starting or growing your own business

For more tips and advice on how to make your refund work for you, consider meeting with a financial advisor who can provide guidance to NYCHA residents. All financial services are free and confidential. To get connected to a free financial advisor, please visit our website at [www.opportunitynycha.org](http://www.opportunitynycha.org).

Operations Brian Clarke. "At that time, the decision was made to include the intercom in all new elevators, and all newly modernized elevators also will have them. It's gratifying to see an instance where this technology enhanced our security response and the safety of residents and the riding public."

"The recommendation

was made to have these calls handled by the trained men and women of the Office of Safety and Security instead of a third party call center," said NYCHA Director of Safety and Security Patrick O'Hagan. "It made sense for people who have situational awareness of our developments to respond to these kinds of situations."

## NYCHA RESIDENTS AND STAFF CELEBRATE MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES



### Lincoln Houses Celebrates 65th Anniversary

Patricia Herman, the Resident Association President (holding plaque) joined NYCHA staff to commemorate the occasion.



### Throggs Neck Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Among the people celebrating the anniversary were Monique Johnson, President of the Throggs Neck Houses Resident Association (center), and NYCHA staff.



### Lehman Village Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Celebrating the anniversary were Resident Association President Patricia Burns, Resident Association Secretary Nereida Martinez, and NYCHA staff.



## Polo Grounds Resident Learns Banking is About More than Money

By Eric Deutsch

Capital One Bank runs several bank branches in high schools that are led by students. And one NYCHA resident has gained many benefits from her participation. Sasha Huff, who lives at Polo Grounds Towers in Manhattan, was a teller and relationship banker when she was a senior at Thurgood Marshall Academy last year, spending a half-day at the bank every Wednesday helping other students. "We had a game to teach our classmates about financial literacy," she said. "After the game, some of them would come open a bank account and ask questions."

Like all other participants in the program, Ms. Huff was trained at a Capital One Bank branch before starting to work

and completed financial education classes. Now a freshman at SUNY-Oswego, she applies her experiences to help manage her life. "The program taught me how to budget. I save a lot now," Ms. Huff said. "I also learned how to manage my time better and how to balance work and school."

Offering a limited number of services designed primarily for student savers, the Capital One student-run banks are operated three days a week by about a dozen students, and are managed by Capital One Bank associates. Branch services are available to students, administrators, and teachers. In addition to Thurgood Marshall Academy in Manhattan, there are branches at Theodore Roosevelt Educational Campus in the Bronx, plus one each in New Jersey and Maryland.



Sasha Huff, a Polo Grounds Towers resident, spent her senior year helping to run a bank branch in her high school.

Ms. Huff is majoring in adolescent education, and plans to teach financial literacy to her students once she becomes a teacher. "This was the best first job I could ever have. It prepares you for any other job, because in many other jobs, you're going to work with money," she said.

## SENIOR NEWS

### It's Never Too Late to Quit Smoking

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

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

- Senses of smell and taste improve in two days
- Blood circulation and lung function improves in two-three weeks
- Coughing and shortness of breath decrease in one month
- Risk of heart disease is cut in half in one year

The New York State Smokers Quit Line provides free one-on-one coaching for all, and free starter kits of nicotine patches or gum for those who qualify. **Call 866-697-8487** or go to [www.NYsmokefree.com](http://www.NYsmokefree.com) for more information.

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

## Apply to Join Green City Force

NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) is continuing its partnership with Green City Force to recruit NYCHA residents ages 18 to 24, who have a High School Diploma or GED, for its paid vocational training program. Up to 41 qualified NYCHA residents will be selected for the next Green City Force AmeriCorps cohort which will begin in June. Green City Force provides training,

education, and leadership opportunities in preparation for careers in the energy economy. To date, approximately 180 young NYCHA residents have graduated from this competitive program; 85 percent of graduates are employed or enrolled in college. To apply, register for an information session by calling **718-280-8100** or going online at [Opportunitynycha.org](http://Opportunitynycha.org). The application period is from March 25 to mid-May.



Members of the Green City Force stand with the monocled-one himself, Mr. Peanut, in Planters Grove at Wald Houses.

## NYCHA Youth Benefit from Some "Good Deeds"

Children living at Baruch Houses in Manhattan got to have some fun thanks to a bunch of do-gooders. "Good Deeds Day," an annual global event that urges everyone to do good deeds, no matter how big or small, is led by philanthropist Shari Arison. On March 5, volunteers from the ABC/Disney Television Group spent some time reading to kids at the Baruch Community Center. The nonprofit First Book donated free books to the center.



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Group Leaders call for our 2014 Brochure or visit our website: [www.sgstravelscope.com](http://www.sgstravelscope.com)

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

# NYCHA: 80 Years Old and Going Strong

In the March issue of the *Journal*, we showed photos of NYCHA from the past. In this issue, we are pleased to show you more snapshots of how life was back in the day.



Adams Senior Center, year undetermined



Resident baseball team, Harlem River Community Center, year undetermined



Elliott Houses, 1946



Laying the cornerstone, Williamsburg Houses, 1936



Vladeck Houses, 1940s



Vandalia Houses, 1983



Boston Road (2440) Senior Center, 1974





Mayor Ed Koch visits the Breukelen Community Center, 1980



First Houses, 1937



Brevoort Houses, 1979



Harlem River Community Center, year undetermined



Edgemere Houses, 1960, the first family to move in



Throggs Neck Houses, 1970



Boston Secor Houses, 1983

## A Message from the Civilian Complaint Review Board

The Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) is the New York City agency that investigates complaints from the public about police misconduct. We are an independent agency and not a part of the police department. The CCRB investigates complaints about unnecessary or excessive force; abuse of authority; discourtesy; and offensive language.

We offer these tips if you are stopped by the NYPD, which may help to de-escalate the encounter:

- Do not run.
- Stay calm and keep your hands visible and still.
- Provide ID if asked.
- Do not argue with the officer.

If you think a police officer's behavior was inappropriate, the safest and most effective way for you to respond is by filing a complaint with the CCRB. Once you contact us, we start an investigation.

The success of our investigation will hinge in part on the information that you provide. Write down the officer's name and shield number if you can see it. You also have the right to ask an officer for his or her name and badge number and he/she is required to give it to you, though some may not. Write down the officer's physical appearance, including height, weight, hair and eye color, as well as distinguishing marks such as birthmarks, tattoos,

or scars. Also note the date and time of the incident, and if there is a patrol car, write down the car number. If there are witnesses, get their names and contact information. If you are injured, seek medical attention immediately and take pictures of your injuries.

To file a complaint with the CCRB:

- File online through our website at [www.nyc.gov/ccrb](http://www.nyc.gov/ccrb) and click on File a Complaint on the left hand side of the page.
- Come to our office at 100 Church Street, 10th floor, New York, NY, 10007, from Monday–Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- Send a letter to the address above.

Call 311 anytime and they will direct your call to us.

If the CCRB determines that an officer has acted improperly, then the case is substantiated and sent to the police commissioner with a disciplinary recommendation. When the board recommends the most serious form of discipline – administrative charges – CCRB attorneys will prosecute the police officer at an administrative trial.

If you would like a speaker from the CCRB to come to your community center or any other group, please contact Carlmais Johnson, the CCRB's Manager of Community Partnership and Engagement at [cjohnson@ccrb.nyc.gov](mailto:cjohnson@ccrb.nyc.gov) or 212-912-2061.

## NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY FAIR HOUSING NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the New York City Housing Authority to provide equal housing opportunities for all qualified residents and applicants. In the selection of families and in the provision of NYCHA programs, services or activities, there shall be no discrimination against any person on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, familial status, marital status, partnership status, lawful occupation, lawful source of income, military status, alienage or citizenship status, or on the grounds that a person is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking. This policy also prohibits retaliation.

This policy is in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and the New York State and New York City Human Rights Laws.

NYCHA will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified residents and applicants with disabilities so they can participate equally in NYCHA programs, services, or activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, or other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

NYCHA will make reasonable modifications to its policies and programs to afford qualified residents and applicants with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in its programs, services, or activities.

Persons who require an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a NYCHA program, service, or activity may contact their development management office during regular business hours, NYCHA's Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, or the Department of Equal Opportunity, Services for People With Disabilities Unit, 250 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY, 10007, telephone number, 212-306-4468, TTY: 212-306-4845 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Any resident or applicant who wishes to report housing discrimination or retaliation may file a discrimination complaint (NYCHA 036.024) by contacting the Department of Equal Opportunity from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at:

### New York City Housing Authority Department of Equal Opportunity

250 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10007

Telephone: 212-306-4468, Fax: 212-306-4439, TTY: 212-306-4845

Any resident or applicant may also contact any of the following federal, state or city human rights agencies listed below to report housing discrimination or retaliation:

<p>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development New York Regional Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity 26 Federal Plaza, Room 3532 212-542-7519 800-496-4294 TTY: 212-264-0927</p>	<p>New York State Division of Human Rights One Fordham Plaza, 4th Floor Bronx, NY 10458 718-741-8400 TTY: 718-741-8300</p>	<p>New York City Commission on Human Rights 40 Rector Street, 10th floor New York, NY 10006 212-306-7500</p>
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### **FREE 15-week job training program for homeless & low-income women**

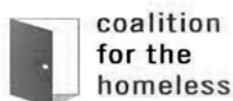
#### First Step Program

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

GED not required • New class starting soon!

#### FREE Continental Breakfast & Metrocards Provided

For more information, please call (212) 776-2074



## One-Stop Shopping for Public Housing & Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Applications

People applying for public housing now can apply at the same time for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the program formerly known as food stamps). Integrating the SNAP application into NYCHA's process is an effort to increase SNAP access for

New Yorkers who qualify. As of 2010, more than two million people in New York City qualified for SNAP, but nearly 25 percent of them do not use the program.

NYCHA worked with New York State Senator Daniel Squadron to link the two applications together, because

many applicants are eligible for both. Now once New Yorkers complete filling out a public housing application, they then will be prompted to apply for SNAP benefits. The integrated applications are available on NYCHA's website at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha).