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ANTONIA PANTOJA: A Heroine of El Barrio

EAST HARLEM'S COLORFUL murals celebrate the vibrant culture of the Latino community and give life to the vivid imaginations of their creators. The latest addition to this community's vibrant landscape is a dazzling mosaic of Dr. Antonia Pantoja at the Corsi Houses Senior Center on East 116th Street created by Manny Vega.

Dr. Pantoja, an activist, educator, and social worker who devoted her life to empowering Puerto Ricans and the larger Latino community, founded a non-profit advocacy organization, ASPIRA, which went on to win a lawsuit that established bilingual education in New York City, and would later become the mandate for bilingual education throughout the United States. In 1996, Dr. Pantoja became the first Puerto Rican woman to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Mr. Vega, who was born and raised in public housing, has created murals that adorn the 110th Street subway station as well as a portrait of the late poet and educator Julia de Burgos as a stunning permanent tribute on East 106th Street. He said that this project is important because it came at the request of the community.

"Public art is something that we don't have enough of. It enriches people's individual lives and the community. This image of Dr. Pantoja came from the memory and passion people had for her," he explained. "She was an activist back in the Sixties, almost like a godmother to the community, and she lived a life of service. With this mosaic, I'm presenting the notion that there's permanence, that her story can be told for another couple of (CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Building Healthy Communities



Green City Force Corps Members at the NYCHA Red Hook Houses Farm. Opened in 2013, this farm was the first large-scale urban farm on NYCHA property and now serves as the model for five new NYCHA urban farms to be built as part of the Building Healthy Communities initiative.

TO THRIVE, PEOPLE need access to more than just doctors and medical services – the recipe for a healthy community includes fresh, healthy foods, public spaces for exercise and play, and a sense of safety. Not every neighborhood in New York City has all the ingredients to promote overall health, but soon residents from 12 neighborhoods that incorporate more than 50 NYCHA developments, will be offered an abundant array of healthy opportunities as part of Mayor Bill de Blasio's new Building Healthy Communities (BHC) program.

Launched in December, BHC is a multi-million dollar initiative that brings together private corporations, nonprofit organizations, and 10 city organizations, including NYCHA. Philanthropic partners include Unilever, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, and the New York State Health Foundation.

A major component of BHC is the creation of five urban farms modeled on NYCHA's Red Hook Houses farm which will provide approximately four tons of local and affordable fresh produce per year, per farm. The next urban farm will be created at Howard Houses in Brownsville.



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

BEAUTIFUL BEGINNINGS



We are incorporating some groundbreaking architectural innovations in our mission to rebuild better, smarter, and stronger from Hurricane Sandy's destruction. Check out the photo spread on pages 12-13 to learn more about the work we're doing at Coney Island Houses in Brooklyn that will improve residents' quality of life and make their buildings more sustainable and resilient for the future.

When thinking about the future of NYCHA, it's a great pleasure to hear about young residents working to better their communities. Jewels Marshall, a 16-year-old resident of Jackson Houses, is the youngest member of Bronx's Community Board 1, which covers Mott Haven, Port Morris, and Melrose. She has lots of terrific ideas and I hope you are as inspired as I was to read her story (page 7). And soon there will be more opportunities for young NYCHA residents to help better the health of their communities. NYCHA is one of 10 city agencies, nonprofits, and private corporations involved in a public-private partnership launched by Mayor de Blasio in December called Building Healthy Communities (BHC) (cover). The goal of BHC is to improve health outcomes for New Yorkers in 12 neighborhoods by increasing access to healthy food, increasing opportunities for physical activity and promoting public safety. NYCHA will help build community farms at NYCHA developments with young residents from Green City Force helping to manage the farms.

This is a unique and important moment in NYCHA's history. We've only just begun our work to transform NYCHA into our vision of safe, clean and connected communities and together we've already made significant progress. Thank you for your continued partnership. I look forward to working with you throughout 2016.

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

WELCOME TO THE New Year. I hope the holidays were a warm and joyous time for you and your family, and offered opportunities for rest, reflection, and rejuvenation.

For NYCHA, 2015 was a year of tremendous change. Many of our NextGeneration NYCHA goals are beginning to come to fruition, as you'll see in some of the articles in this issue of the *Journal*. For instance, we're bringing desperately needed new affordable housing to our city. In November, we cut the ribbon at La Preciosa, the first NYCHA public housing built on private land (page 8). Built on a formerly vacant lot, La Preciosa is a beautiful addition to the Bronx's Morrisania neighborhood. Twenty-one of its 49 apartments are now home to families who were on NYCHA's wait list. A non-profit organization, Services for the Under-Served, provides on-site supportive services, such as counseling and employment assistance, to 10 tenants with special needs, including veterans and formerly homeless individuals. All of the apartments are affordable, limited to those who make no more than 60 percent of the area median income. We're also proud of the sustainable design of this groundbreaking and historic project. Its many green features make it 20 percent more energy efficient than a standard building.

I Am NextGeneration NYCHA: Denise Torres

Meet Denise Torres: Technical Resource Advisor, Maintenance, Repair & Skilled Trades responsible for Healthy Homes (a program with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene), Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

What do you do as a Technical Resource Advisor?

I'm the first Technical Resource Advisor in the Housing Authority, so I'm honored to have this position. I've worked for the Housing Authority for 29 years in several other positions. I was the first woman supervisor of exterminators in history. We maintain all the PSAs throughout the five boroughs, we address all the IPM asthma referral jobs, we also do any emergency that the director requests, and we try to assist developments when they are overwhelmed with a situation and don't have the time or the manpower.

What happens when you get a call through the IPM program?

What I initially do is go out with the Department of Health for an initial inspection. If there's mold in the bathroom or standing water or plaster or painting that needs to be done, I'm writing that down. If the cabinets are roach infested, I will put down on the list to remove the cabinets. I send an email to all the skilled trades involved. We apply gel throughout the apartment, including in bathrooms, closets, and bedrooms. We use the HEPA vacuum to remove all the live and dead roaches and use glue traps as monitors. Within two weeks we try to go back and follow-up and see what kind of situation we have now. I continue to reach out to



the tenants, let them know that in the beginning it seems a little rough but give us the opportunity and you'll see the difference. We've done a lot of good work and I'm proud of our team.

What is the best thing about your job?

I've had so many good turnarounds where people said, "Denise, without you I don't know where I would be. Thank you for the work you're doing." I don't want the tenants to feel ashamed or embarrassed because we're here to serve the people, the public. And when you join this agency, if you have a great heart this is where it's supposed to go.

NYCHA BOARD MEETINGS

NYCHA'S BOARD MEETINGS, open to the public, take place on Wednesdays at 10 am 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 pm 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 pm 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:

January 27, 2016	May 25, 2016	October 26, 2016
February 24, 2016	June 29, 2016	November 23, 2016
March 30, 2016	July 27, 2016	December 21, 2016
April 27, 2016	September 28, 2016	

* Note: There will be no board meeting in August. The November and December board meetings are scheduled for the second-to-last Wednesday.

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Increasing Opportunity: New Workforce1 Career Center Opens for Far Rockaway Residents

ON DECEMBER 1, NYCHA joined with the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), and Citi Community Development to celebrate the opening of the Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center. The new center—part of the Rockaway Economic Advancement Initiative to provide a continuum of services to jobseekers—connects Rockaway residents to high-quality employment by providing comprehensive career services.

“Connecting NYCHA residents to quality employment is an important part of our long-term strategic plan NextGeneration NYCHA,” said NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly. “By working with partners like the Department of Small Business Services, the Center for Economic Opportunity and Citi Community Development, we can ensure our residents have increased access to job training and employment opportunities, and the support they need to achieve economic empowerment.”

The Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center will offer wrap-around career readiness and recruitment services, including:

- Career planning and job search preparatory services
- Recruitment and job matching
- Resume development and interview support
- Group and one-on-one financial counseling
- On-site occupational training for in-demand jobs
- Assistance for Rockaway businesses to find, hire, and train a qualified workforce
- Referrals to Rockaway community-based organizations, workforce development providers, training providers, faith-based organizations, and social service agencies



(BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

“The NYCHA Farm at Red Hook has been a huge success—allowing young residents to help build community connections and promote health while receiving valuable job training,” explains Andrea Mata, NYCHA’s Senior Manager for Community Health Initiatives. “Residents at developments across the City are excited about creating more farms.”

At the Red Hook Farm, Green City Force Corps Members—NYCHA residents 18-24-years-old—build and cultivate the farm and help train volunteers. BHC will allow Green City Force to provide training to approximately 60 young adult NYCHA residents who will join the Urban Farm Corps. In addition to training NYCHA residents and community member volunteers, Corps Members will provide nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, and community-wide events.

“I feel honored and humbled to be a part of a change that so many individuals are going to be able to benefit from,” said Nefratia Coleman, a Corps Member from Walt Whitman Houses. “The building of the farms is a start and a very big one at that. First you start with the food, a healthy eating habit, then there will be a ripple effect on the way of living and thinking that will become different. This is something NYCHA as a community needs, and it will make such a difference.”

“Growing up in these kinds of

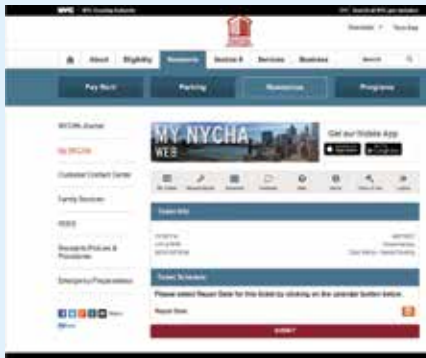


neighborhoods, you pick up a lot of bad habits that are also hard to change, but in that change comes a lot of benefits, and now it is the time for a great change within the city, within the community, and most importantly, within ourselves,” adds Corps Member Chris Guerrero of Samuel Houses. “As a young Hispanic male, I’m glad to be a part of a much-needed, beneficial plan to integrate better living and health conditions to the places in New York City that need it the most.”

In addition to urban farms, the Building Healthy Communities initiative

MyNYCHA Now Available Online

GOOD NEWS NYCHA residents! The popular MyNYCHA app, which allows residents to create, schedule, and manage repair requests on their smartphones or tablets, is now available as a website.



Residents who do not have Android or Apple mobile devices can visit nyc.gov/mynycha to take advantage of all of MyNYCHA’s features from a computer in their homes, the library, or NYCHA’s Digital Vans. Residents can also subscribe to NYCHA Alerts to learn about outages in their development and view inspection appointments.

MyNYCHA is one strategy

of NextGeneration NYCHA, the Authority’s 10-year plan to create safe, clean, and connected communities. The app empowers residents by putting the repair process in their hands, allowing residents to choose times for repairs to be made and to cancel and reschedule as needed.

Launched in September, the MyNYCHA app has been a big hit with almost 15,000 downloads and over 12,000 logins. More than 10 percent of all work orders are created by MyNYCHA. A Spanish version of the app will soon be released, and NYCHA is working on providing the option for residents to upload photos when requesting repairs.



BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES NEIGHBORHOODS

Bedford-Stuyvesant
Brownsville
Canarsie
Central Harlem

Corona
East Harlem
Flushing
Hunts Point

Mariners Harbor
Morrisania
Mott Haven
Stapleton

includes expanding school gardens, building more pedestrian plazas to encourage walking, running, and biking; providing more outdoor spaces for kids to play; installing outdoor adult exercise equipment; extending community center hours; and improving public safety

by installing lighting and cameras. To learn more about BHC, visit www.nyc.gov/healthycommunities.

Green City Force is currently recruiting young adult NYCHA residents for its next cohort, visit www.greencityforce.org/ for more information.

NEXTGENERATION NYCHA

RESIDENT EDITION

Why Does NYCHA Need a Strategic Plan?

NYCHA OWNS A lot of land and buildings but over the past few decades, our funding from all levels of government to care for our buildings has been cut dramatically. Meanwhile, our buildings, many of which are more than 60 years old, have not had proper maintenance. Now they are in really bad shape, made even worse by Hurricane Sandy. To properly fix all of our buildings would cost \$17 billion. What's more, over the last 15 years, the federal government discontinued annual funding that NYCHA had received; if it had continued at the regular rate, we would have received an additional \$2 billion dollars from HUD since 2001 to cover the cost of daily operations at our developments.

We are broke. If we do not figure out how to change things, we will be taken over by HUD who can force us to sell our properties among other things, like other cities have already done.

Neither Mayor de Blasio nor NYCHA wants that to happen. NYCHA believes it is important to have public housing for today's public housing residents and for the next generation of public housing residents. We want you to have apartments that are in good repair, that are safe, healthy places for you and your families to live. We want you to have safe, clean communities that are connected to the rest of New York City.

So we created a plan, NextGeneration NYCHA, which will help us save the Housing Authority over the next ten years. A major focus of the plan is the Housing Authority's return to our core purpose of being a landlord. To save public housing

for today's residents and the next generation of New Yorkers, NYCHA must return to the basics: making sure that we have money to operate and guaranteeing quality property management and customer service. To guarantee that residents continue to have access to social services programs, we are working with partners across the City who are developing innovative, effective programs for children, teens, adults and seniors.

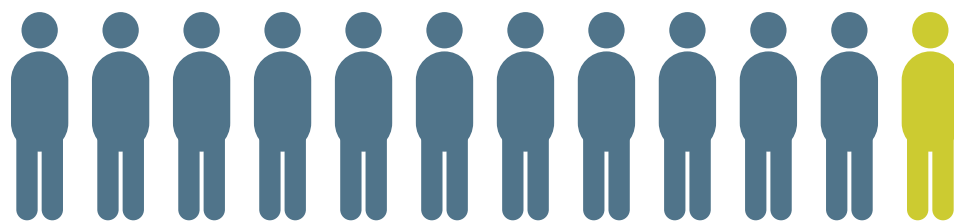
Here is a summary of the NextGeneration work we will be doing to create a NYCHA of safe, clean and connected communities:

GOAL:
NYCHA will have the money it needs to run the Housing Authority and have money to improve its buildings.

NYCHA has developed several strategies to generate funds that will help us pay for operating costs. The City of New York and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development have agreed that NYCHA no longer needs to make annual payments to New York of \$100 million. NYCHA plans to improve our rent collection process, and to rent out ground floor spaces in our developments to businesses that can provide valuable services to residents such as grocery stores and day care centers. We will raise the monthly rate of parking spaces to the local market rate and will rent those that are not used by residents to non-residents. This means residents will pay the local market rate up to a cap of \$150, even if the local market rate is higher than \$150. NYCHA residents will always have first priority for spaces. We will also cut expenses at our central offices by integrating some services with other City agencies.

NYCHA BY THE NUMBERS

1 IN EVERY 12 NEW YORKERS



77,000 SENIORS
 65 YEARS OLD OR OLDER



110,000 CHILDREN
 UNDER 18 YEARS OLD

GOAL:
NYCHA will improve property management and customer service.

To provide better customer service to residents, NYCHA is implementing a number of service improvements. These include: the MyNYCHA app, launched in September 2015 and on the web, that allows residents to place work orders at your convenience without contacting the Customer Care Center; OPMOM, the local property management model launched last January in 18 developments that shows great potential for significant improvements in faster repair times, reduced costs, and enhanced resident satisfaction; new environmental and sustainability programs like the recycling initiative which will improve resident health and safety and reduce NYCHA's carbon footprint; our Sandy repairs program which has secured a \$3 billion FEMA grant and begun work



40%
 OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE 62 YEARS OLD OR OLDER



25%
 OF NYCHA EMPLOYEES ARE RESIDENTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING



NYCHA BY THE NUMBERS



at 17 developments; and new safety enhancements including exterior lighting, cameras, new doors, and layered access to improve safety at NYCHA developments.

GOAL:
NYCHA will repair and rebuild our existing buildings and build new housing.

NYCHA's housing portfolio, which includes buildings and open space, also includes some valuable real estate. Potential new housing on some of the developments could help pay for repairs at our existing buildings, which will dramatically change the lives of our residents. It also has the potential to house thousands of additional New Yorkers.

We have created a new development strategy that combines repairing and renovating our existing buildings with subsidies and funding from the City, State and federal programs; building new affordable housing on our developments that adds to the supply of affordable housing in New York City and provides funds to enable us to renovate and repair developments on the same properties; and preserving existing NYCHA housing through HUD programs.

It's important to note that NYCHA residents **will not** lose their housing in any of these programs. All of these programs are designed

to keep NYCHA residents in their apartments **and** to make money to repair and rebuild their apartments to improve every resident's quality of life.

GOAL:
NYCHA will connect residents to the best social services available.

NYCHA is undertaking a variety of initiatives to improve services and opportunities for our residents.

NYCHA is employing the Zone Model that NYCHA's REES (Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability) program uses to connect residents with social services providers, employment and economic advancement opportunities, health and wellness services, and education and training opportunities. Through the Zone Model, residents can engage with local providers that offer expert services in their own neighborhoods.

We have also transferred the daily management of 24 NYCHA community centers to the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and 17 senior centers to The Department for the Aging. These two agencies have relationships with the best social services providers in the City as well as funding opportunities for programming that offer many new opportunities for NYCHA residents.

In November 2015, NYCHA

NEW YORK'S PUBLIC HOUSING POPULATION IS THE SAME SIZE AS THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS.



THAT CONSIST OF **177,666** APARTMENTS

CONTAINING OVER **175,174,242**

WHICH IS EQUAL TO 58 WORLD TRADE CENTER 1 BUILDINGS

founded the Fund for Public Housing, a not-for-profit organization that will raise \$200 million in its first three years to connect NYCHA residents to organizations which provide job training and social service programs. In addition, our REES program will connect 4,000 residents to new jobs by 2025.

If our plan works—and we think

it will—we will be able to stabilize our finances, reduce our backlog, have money in the bank to run daily operations, and make sure that all residents are living in safe, clean, connected communities. It will take some time—and we will need to do hard work together—but we think that, in the long run, saving public housing is worth it. Let us know what you think.

NYCHA OWNS 74%
OF THE APARTMENTS IN NEW YORK CITY THAT
RENT FOR LESS THAN **\$500/MONTH.**



NYCHA OWNS 51%
OF THE APARTMENTS IN NEW YORK CITY THAT
RENT FOR LESS THAN **\$800/MONTH.**

Free Tax Prep Options in NYCHA Neighborhoods and Beyond

IT'S TAX TIME; for many people that means the anticipation of an income tax refund. To ensure that you get every penny you're entitled to, NYCHA has partnered with the New York City Tax Credit Campaign to promote free tax preparation services available citywide for New Yorkers earning less than \$53,000 a year.

Free tax preparation services are available from late January through mid-April; some services are located in NYCHA neighborhoods. Also, thanks to a partnership with Food Bank for New York City, Citi Community Development, and NYCHA, free tax preparation services will be available at 12 NYCHA community centers and Jobs-Plus sites across the city starting in late January 2016. For a list of NYCHA tax prep locations visit:

www.opportunitynycha.org/taxprep.

NYCHA tax prep sites participate in the Virtual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (Virtual VITA), which reduces the time it takes to complete taxes. With Virtual VITA, filers meet with a trained Intake Coordinator who verifies the taxpayer's identity, obtains their tax-related documents, and



securely transfers the documents to the tax preparer. After the documents are received electronically, an IRS-certified tax preparer interviews the taxpayer by phone and completes the tax return off-site. When the return is completed, the tax preparer contacts the filer within 24 hours to share the anticipated refund amount and obtain consent to finalize submission of the return. It's that simple! During the 2015 tax season, more than 1,000 NYCHA residents took advantage of free tax preparation services and on average, taxpayers who filed their taxes at a Virtual VITA NYCHA site brought home \$1,437 in refunds and tax credits.

For a listing of Virtual VITA NYCHA sites offering free tax preparation, visit www.opportunitynycha.org/taxprep.

For a listing of free tax preparation sites citywide, visit www.nyc.gov/tax-prep or call 311 and ask for tax preparation assistance.



Year Up is currently recruiting young adults ages 18 to 24 for its free, year-long education and job training program.

"ONE YEAR OF YOUR LIFE TO THE CAREER OF YOUR DREAMS"

That's the motto of Year Up—and It Works

YEAR UP SAYS they empower low-income young adults to go from poverty to professional careers in a single year, and given the results of the 79 NYCHA young adults who've already attended their programs, it appears to be true. Year Up offers a free, year-long education and job training program for young adults ages 18 to 24 to bridge the gap between young adults looking for work and companies in need of qualified workers. Young adults who complete the year leave the endowed with the skills, experience, and confidence they need to succeed.

The national nonprofit's beginnings can be traced back to Rutgers Houses, circa 1987. That's when Year Up's founder, Gerald Chertavian, met his "little brother," David, as part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program.

"Through David, I learned the incredible value of a caring, consistent adult in the life of a young person, an adult who believes in their potential. An adult who is willing to challenge them, hold them accountable, while at the same time being supportive," Mr. Chertavian said. He founded Year Up in Boston in 2000.

Year Up provides six months of professional training in IT, finance, or customer service, followed by a six-month internship at a top corporation. Participants can earn up to 24 college credits while receiving a weekly stipend and support from mentors. The results

speak for themselves: 85 percent of Year Up graduates are employed or in college full-time within four months of completing the program. Those who are employed earn an average starting salary of \$16 an hour, or \$32,000 a year.



Jennifer Johnson

"There's so much support, because it's a hard program to get through. For those who get through it, there's so much success and life-changing opportunities offered," says Bland Houses resident Jennifer Johnson, a graduate of the program who works as a technology coordinator at Relay Graduate School of Education. "The program's design is impressive, and so are the outcomes, from what I've seen from myself and my peers."

Shanna Castillo, Director of NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability, says that Year Up is especially unique because "the exposure participants get to corporate employers during the internship is quite exceptional. Also, students have to dress professionally, even when they're in training. Having that attire really makes you feel the part, and that's an empowering experience."

Year Up is currently recruiting its next class. Call or text Year Up at **646-634-2022** or visit www.yearup.org for more information.

Making Progress on Emergency Preparedness

AFTER EMERGENCIES, big and small, NYCHA works to figure out how it can better respond to future incidents. Based on lessons from Superstorm Sandy, NYCHA's Office of Emergency Preparedness—created in 2014—is now hard at work strengthening the Authority's emergency response by developing the agency's first-ever overall emergency plan. This comprehensive emergency plan will improve both preparation and response to emergencies to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents in case of another natural disaster or other catastrophe.

Since the storm, NYCHA's Office of Emergency Preparedness has quickly proven its readiness for emergencies by successfully responding to five major emergency and security events: Ebola in New York City; Winter Storm Juno, forecasted to be an historic snowstorm; a small cluster of Legionnaires' Disease in the South Bronx; the Pope's visit, which was the largest security challenge in the City's history; and Hurricane Joaquin, a Category 4 hurricane in the Caribbean that could have impacted the region.

"When tested with potentially devastating natural disasters to health emergencies like Legionella in 2015, NYCHA rose to the challenge and put our new structure and plans into action," NYCHA's General Manager Michael Kelly says. "We've shown considerable progress and plan to build on successes to enhance our preparedness, training, and communications in 2016."

In 2015, 10 parts of the comprehensive emergency master plan were developed, including lists of residents with disabilities and those who may need special assistance during an emergency and procedures for how to handle specific hazards, maintain operations in every NYCHA department, and communicate critical information to employees, residents, and other stakeholders. These plans outline roles and responsibilities of NYCHA staff, other government agencies, and volunteer organizations during an emergency.

NYCHA has taken other steps to increase readiness: last year the Authority led or participated in more than 20 trainings and preparedness exercises with other City agencies and organizations and more than 1,100 NYCHA staff were trained on a system that enables multiple agencies to work together effectively in response to an emergency. For instance, New York City Emergency Management provided emergency preparedness training to NYCHA seniors and residents in hurricane evacuation zones and recruited volunteers to help their neighbors and communities get prepared.



NYCHA's Office of Emergency Preparedness is working on comprehensive agency-wide plan to help strengthen the Authority's response during emergencies.

Never Too Young to Make a Difference

Jewels Marshall: Member, Bronx Community Board 1

"IF YOU SEE something and you have the power to change it, go out and make a difference. Do your best and try to change it; your voice will be heard and it will mean something."

That's Jewels Marshall's advice for other young people seeking to make an impact on their communities. She's a high school junior and, at 16 years old, the youngest member of her local community board. The Jackson Houses resident was appointed this past summer by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. to serve on the Bronx's Community Board 1, representing the neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Port Morris, and Melrose. 2015 was the first year that 16- and 17-year-olds could join New York City community boards; previously, the minimum age was 18. Ms. Marshall is one of five 16- and 17-year-olds serving in the Bronx, and one of 19 serving on community boards citywide.

"I decided to become a community board member because I wanted to take advantage of the fact that young people can be involved, and because I thought that the youth needed a voice," Ms. Marshall said. "When I first heard about the opportunity I wasn't sure about doing it; it seemed like a lot of responsibility. But my mom said that it was something I could do to help the community and make a difference, and I agreed."

Of her first meeting she said, "It was nice to have my opinion valued; I thought



the adults were going to look down at me, but they talked to me like an adult and treated me like a complete equal."

As a community board member, Ms. Marshall would like to install a new hoop at a local basketball court. She believes there should be a curfew for young people so that they can focus on homework and wake up refreshed for school and also wants to provide more after school activities for her peers.

Ms. Marshall wants to earn a medical degree and become a pediatrician, which unites her interests in helping people and working with children. In addition to her community board work, she helps raise funds for her school and volunteers at a special education elementary school.

First Houses 80th Anniversary Celebration

THE NAME SAYS it all – First Houses is the first public housing development in the United States. When it welcomed its first families on December 3, 1935, then-Mayor Fiorello La Guardia proclaimed, "There is sunshine in every window!" Last month at the First Houses 80th anniversary celebration, NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye remembered NYCHA's humble beginnings from its first development to now being the largest public housing authority in the country.

Joining Chair Olatoye at the special event were First Houses residents and leaders, including the youngest resident and the oldest, Mary Hladek, 94, who moved into First Houses with her late husband Andrew in 1946. Also in attendance were New York City Public Advocate Letitia James, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, New York State Senator Daniel Squadron, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and New York City Councilmember Rosie Mendez.



First Houses opened to 122 families in 1935.



Mary Hladek, 94, has lived in First Houses since 1946.



First Houses today.



The Woodlands offers plenty of outdoor space, including an area for gardening and beautiful landscaped seating areas, for seniors to relax and visit with friends.



The Woodlands is an 11-story building featuring 90 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom apartments for seniors 62 and older.

The Woodlands: New Section 8 Senior Housing in the Bronx

THE WOODLANDS IS a beautiful new development for seniors 62 and older in the Co-Op City section of the Bronx. A project-based Section 8 project-based development, the Woodlands is owned jointly by NYCHA and the Arker Companies, a private developer that builds affordable housing for seniors throughout the five boroughs.

The new development is an eleven-story building with 100 apartments: 90 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom apartments. Apartment features include full kitchens, wood flooring, and air conditioning, and all are fully handicapped accessible. Building amenities include a laundry room, community room, landscaped sitting areas, a computer learning center, electronic surveillance equipment

and security, parking, and an on-site superintendent and porter. The community room will host a variety of activities for seniors, including arts and crafts, exercise classes, and bingo. The Woodlands' lucky new residents were chosen from NYCHA's Section 8 waiting list. NYCHA has also created a waiting list of over 300 senior Section 8 voucher holders to fill future vacancies at The Woodlands.



Sunday Suppers for Seniors at Stanley Isaacs

A NEW TRADITION IS taking root at Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center in Manhattan. Once a month on a Sunday, the Center hosts Sunday Suppers where several dozen lucky seniors are treated to delicious home cooked meals. The Center raised funds for this special event which is staff by talented volunteers who host, cook, and serve meals. Launched in October 2015,



Volunteers treat seniors to home-cooked meals once a month at the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center's Sunday Suppers.

more than 80 seniors were served a juicy roast chicken entrée by volunteers from the Microsoft Store. In November, over 90 seniors were served a savory roasted pork dish by volunteers from the New York Junior League and the

Hilton Garden Inn. Sunday Suppers are a chance for the guests, many of whom live alone, to create new memories with friends. The Isaacs Center serves residents who live in Isaacs Houses and Holmes Towers.

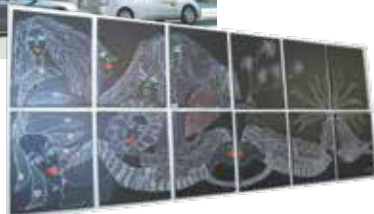
If you are interested in volunteering for future Sunday Suppers please contact the Center at **212.360.7620**. Future Sunday Supper dates in 2016: January 24, February 21, March 13, April 24, and May 15, 2016.

MORRISANIA WELCOMES LA PRECIOSA

First public housing located on private property



La Preciosa's lobby is adorned with art crafted by young people from the community.



Gold certification.

"This building is named La Preciosa, 'The Precious.' Indeed, there is nothing more precious than home. Once a vacant lot, it's now a safe, clean, warm, welcoming, energy-efficient home. 1070 Washington is also notable because of the partnerships that created it. This marks the first time NYCHA has collaborated with public and private partners to couple public housing units with private and supportive housing in one building," said NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye at the opening. "Next-

Generation NYCHA envisions a future where our communities are safe, clean, and connected to one another, where public housing is knit into the fabric of every community. La Preciosa is

the kind of innovative collaboration that can help save public housing and ensure its future."

The partners who brought this project



The numerous partners behind La Preciosa gathered on November 17 for a ribbon-cutting event to introduce the building to the community.

to its completion expressed their excitement and gratitude at the ceremony. Funding for the \$21 million project came from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s Office; Enterprise Community Partners, an affordable housing advocate and developer; and

JPMorgan Chase. Also in attendance at the opening was the building developer, Bronx Pro, Services for the UnderServed, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

A poet from Melrose Houses, Haydil Henriquez, concluded the ribbon-cutting ceremony with a passionate ode to the Bronx: "The Bronx is never silent, never timid, always running, always fierce; the Bronx is heaven."

LA PRECIOSA IS proof that beauty can spring forth from practically nothing. Where there was once a vacant lot in the Morrisania neighborhood of the Bronx, there is now a pristine white building of affordable housing units, including the first NYCHA public housing built on private land.

Located at 1070 Washington Avenue, La Preciosa, celebrated its grand opening on November 17. Its 49 apartments include 21 NYCHA apartments and 10 apartments for veterans. All of the apartments are available for families and individuals earning no more than 60 percent of the area median income, or about \$46,620 for a family of three.

The seven-story building also features cutting-edge green technology making it 20 percent more efficient than a standard building. All landscaping is drought-tolerant, and a vegetable and herb garden covers a portion of the roof. The building meets several energy efficiency standards, including the national standard for "green" affordable housing and the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

(ANTONIA PANTOJA: A HEROINE OF EL BARRIO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) hundred years."

Residents, NYCHA staff, and NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye were joined by City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Mr. Vega, and other members of the community in late November to unveil the mural at the Corsi Senior Center.

"I had the privilege of getting to know Dr. Pantoja," Speaker Mark-Viverito said. "She believed in ethical leadership and that's something that continues to inspire me." The Speaker also credited Dr. Pantoja with teaching her that everyone must work together to move the community forward. She noted that murals are an indelible way to tell the story of a community.

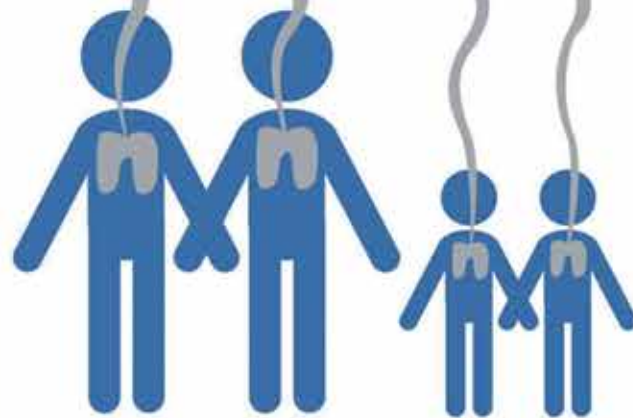
NYCHA Chair and CEO Olatoye said, "Public art is important to all neighborhoods. Not only does it add beauty, but it helps establish a sense of belonging and togetherness in communities. At NYCHA, we want residents to be proud of where they come from and where they live. Our strategic plan, NextGeneration NYCHA, envisions communities that are safe, clean, and connected. Public art is a meaningful and expressive way to create those connections."

In the mural, Dr. Pantoja wears her Presidential Medal of Freedom and is surrounded by icons of her life, legacy, and culture. The inscription in gold reads: I am me and my community, all that has come before me, and all that will be after me.



WHEN ONE PERSON SMOKES, THE WHOLE BUILDING SMOKES

SECONDHAND SMOKE CAN
NEVER BE ISOLATED.



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EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE

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TO SECONDHAND SMOKE AT HOME

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NYC SMOKE-FREE



Public Health Solutions

Stay Fit! At-Home Exercise for Seniors

KEEPING FIT AND active is important for everyone. Moderate exercise can help improve health and keep us strong and healthy as we age. The *NYCHA Journal* visited the Move and Groove Chair Fitness class held on Mondays at St. Nicholas Senior Center in Harlem to learn some simple, yet fun exercises seniors can do from the comfort of their homes. The class is free and is provided by Shape Up NYC, sponsored by Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, and taught by Miledys Pons. Below are three exercises that may be done seated or standing, with or without props; repetitions may be increased as you get stronger. See more of the exercises in action here: <http://on.nyc.gov/senior-fitness-vids>.

Stretch It Out

Stand or sit with feet hip distance apart. Stretch both arms up above your head. Open arms wide and look up. Swing both arms left, repeat on the right side. Bring one hand up and touch your shoulder. Use your other hand to gently lift your elbow up, repeat on the other side. Repeat four times.



Pick It Up

Grab two 6-8 oz. cans or two small bottles of water (can also be done using only your hands). Sit or stand with feet hip distance apart. Hold cans or bottles up to your chest. Extend arms to the front. Bring arms back to chest, and then lift one arm up, repeat on the other side. Hold cans at your side and then lift arms up. Repeat two times.



Sweep It Out

Stand up straight and hold a broom (or mop) close to your chest. Bend your back and push the broom away from your body. Bring the broom back to center. Hold the broom in your left arm and push the broom away from your body to the side. Repeat on other side. Lift the broom up to chest level and hold horizontally at your chest. Turn your body to the right and to the left. Repeat four times.





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REBUILDING



Stronger and Smarter at Coney Island Houses



New playgrounds will be built for the development. Backup generators will be installed on the roof of each building on top of new, waterproof, liquid-applied roofing membranes. The generators will receive service from raised ancillary buildings (the shorter building behind the playground in this picture). Having the generators and ancillary buildings elevated above the anticipated flood level will help ensure that the development has power in the event of a storm or blackout.



Residents selected the location of this new boiler building, which will be elevated above the anticipated flood level (raising the boilers in this way will help prevent the interruption of hot water service in the event of a storm). Boilers will be on the second level, and there will be a multi-purpose room on the lower level. The building will connect to an existing boiler flue (chimney) in an adjacent building, so a new flue will not need to be built.

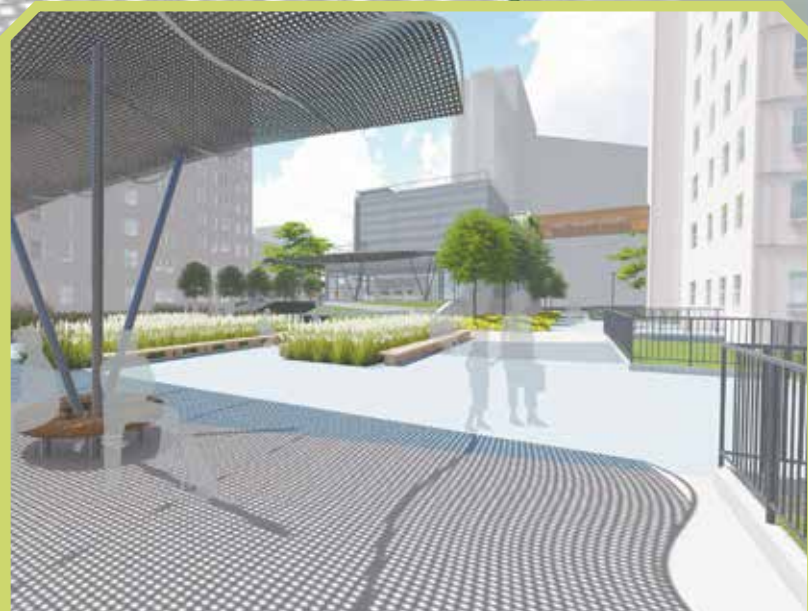
Hurricane Sandy inflicted incredible damage on New York City, including many NYCHA developments. However, the silver lining to the catastrophe is that it provides NYCHA the opportunity to not only repair its buildings, but to rebuild smarter and stronger. With the “Recovery to Resiliency” program, NYCHA is using Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to ensure that its infrastructure is more resilient—and residents are better protected—against whatever the future brings. Here are some of the improvements coming to Coney Islands Houses in Brooklyn as part of that program. Not pictured are new flood panels that will be stored on-site and deployed in case of a storm or anticipated flooding; they will flood-proof each building by covering windows, doors, doorways, and any other exterior openings. The development will also receive new underground electrical conduits, energy-efficient lighting, security cameras and layered security, and mailbox upgrades.



A view of the proposed upgraded lobby for each building.



An aerial view of the area behind the boiler building that will be restored.



There's an additional seating area further behind the boiler building.



A wheelchair ramp leads to the multi-purpose room and its seating area.

The view from the boiler building's multi-purpose room is of the ocean and boardwalk.

UPCOMING REES EVENTS

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR

Brooklyn NYCHA residents: Get answers to your questions about buying a home at this FREE seminar sponsored by Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union. Qualify for the HomeFirst Down Payment Assistance program with a First-time Homebuyers Certificate (attendance on both days is required). Refreshments provided!

Saturdays, January 23 and 30 at 10:00 a.m.

Macon Library, 316 Lewis Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11233

<http://opportunitynycha.org/events/first-time-homebuyer-seminar-3>

FREE PERSONAL FINANCE CLASS

Sponsored by University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), the workshop's classes meet for two hours each week for five consecutive weeks. Residents who complete all five can access services from Neighborhood Trust's network of community partners.

Call **718-933-2539** to RSVP!

Starting Thursday, January 28 at 6:00 p.m.

UNHP, 2751 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468

<http://unhp.org/calendar>

IT TRAINING FOR YOUNG ADULTS

NPower is recruiting for its intensive, 22-week IT training program for underserved young adults who've earned a high school diploma or equivalency. Morning or afternoon classes are offered at multiple locations.

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Scholarships Help Students Aim High



Brenda Brumaire



Deyuan Zeng



Justin Concepcion



Sabiha Khawja

FOUR NYCHA RESIDENTS received Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 to help them pursue their higher education goals. Awarded in partnership with the National Leased Housing Association's Education Fund, these scholarships are based on financial need, scholastic merit, community leadership, and volunteerism, and can be used for tuition, books, and education-related activities.

Branda Brumaire and Sabiha Khawja, both of Breukelen Houses, are using their scholarships to study criminal justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Deyuan Zeng, of Ingersoll Houses, is studying pharmacy at Long Island University Brooklyn. Justin Concepcion, of Adams Houses, is following his dream of becoming a minister through his studies at Nyack College.

Ms. Brumaire intends to finish her first year as a first-generation college student "strong," and said her drive

derives from her belief that "giving up is not an option." She ultimately wants to earn a PhD in forensic psychology. About her ambitions in life, Ms. Khawja said, "I want to become a person who improves the world instead of waiting for it to improve on its own." Mr. Concepcion is extremely grateful for the scholarship, saying that it puts him a step closer to achieving his goal of helping others achieve their goals. He believes his "desire to persevere" was partly the reason for winning the scholarship.

"Aimco is proud to help students across the country realize their dream of a college education," says Patti Shwayder, Aimco's Senior Vice President of Government Relations

and Communications. "Education is a critical tool for success, and we are so pleased to be able to provide financial assistance to promising students in New York. We look forward to hearing of their accomplishments."

Since 2010, the Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships have helped more than 150 students living in federally subsidized housing nationwide attend college, including 27 this year. Aimco Cares is the philanthropic arm of Aimco, which owns and manages apartment communities throughout the United States, including subsidized, affordable housing. Students interested in applying for the 2016 Aimco Cares Opportunity Scholarships can visit <https://nlhascholars.communityforce.com>.

When times got tough and we couldn't afford healthy food, **SNAP HELPED.**

- KARIMA, GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Brooklyn

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Call 311 for more information

NYC Human Resources Administration Department of Social Services
Bill de Blasio Mayor
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NYPD SCHOOL SAFETY AGENTS

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NYPD is recognized by industry experts as the nation's leader in crime reduction. Build your career with us and learn law enforcement from the best in the industry. The mission of the School Safety Division is to provide a safe environment, conducive to learning, where students and faculty can be free from hostility and disruptions which can negatively impact the educational process. If you are a US Citizen with a HS Diploma (or GED) and are at least 21 years old, you might want to consider a career with the NYPD as a School Safety Agent.

School Safety Agents earn over \$31,000 to start, enjoy a competitive benefits package including optional pension plans, and have the opportunity for advancement.

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Play a vital role in keeping the streets of New York City safe and moving.

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Traffic Enforcement Agents earn over \$33,000 after 2 years, enjoy a competitive benefits package including a retirement plan, and have the opportunity for advancement.

ONE NYPD MANY WAYS TO SERVE

For detailed information on these opportunities to join the New York City Police the first step is to take the exam for your position of interest at one of the New York City Computerized Testing Centers in Lower Manhattan or in Downtown Brooklyn.

For more information, visit NYPDCivilianJobs.com

NYCHA POLICE DEPARTMENT CITY OF NEW YORK

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