

**NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN B. RHEA
SUPPORTING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: NYCHA IN THE NEW PARADIGM
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NETWORK OF NEW YORK 2011 CONFERENCE
THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2011 – 1:30 – 3:00 PM
THE NEW YORK MARIOTT MARQUIS, 1535 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY**

TITLE SLIDE/ INTRODUCTION:

I am very excited to be with you today to discuss the work the New York City Housing Authority is doing to support our fellow New Yorkers to build stronger, richer and fuller lives for themselves and their families.

It's great to share this stage with Rosanne Haggerty, Founder of Common Ground and President of Community Solutions; and Jerilyn Perine, Executive Director for the Citizens Housing & Planning Council. And my thanks to our esteemed moderator—Denise Scott, Managing Director of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. LISC has been truly outstanding in transforming distressed communities and, in their words, helping neighbors to build communities.

The photo you see is illustrative of how NYCHA is doing just that. As I'll discuss this afternoon, one of the principal barriers to developing new Supportive Housing, or indeed affordable housing of any kind, is land. As every New Yorker knows, land is an extremely valuable resource. So when we were looking to build the first ever housing development designed specifically for grandparents raising their grandchildren—the Bronx's Grandparent Family Apartments—NYCHA was able to provide land, as well as public housing subsidy to ensure that rents remained affordable, with additional funding provided by New York State and private sources.

We did this in partnership with two not-for-profit organizations—Presbyterian Senior Services (PSS), which provides on-site support services; and West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, Inc. (WSFSSH), which owns and manages the 51-unit building.

It's important to note that the funding that made the Grandparent Family Apartments possible is being threatened. Last November, Presbyterian Senior Services lost \$70,000 of funding from the Supportive Housing for Youth and Adults program. In addition, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services cut \$135,000 from PSS's budget. And the West Side Federation lost \$130,000 in government support. Taken together, these funding losses mean that as of July 1, Grandparent Family Apartments is at risk of not being able to continue these services.

And it's not just NYCHA's Grandparent Family Apartments that are under threat. Originally, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services funded a total of 21 Kin Care programs, at a cost of \$2.8 million annually. This year, only \$380,000 of that total was restored, leaving just eight funded programs.

NYCHA wants to be a partner in working with the Supportive Housing Network to protect these vital funding streams. Nearly 3 million children in the U.S. are raised by a grandparent, up 16 percent from 2000. Developments like the Grandparent Family Apartments keep families together by providing support for families caring for young relatives, many of whom might otherwise end up in foster care. (Pictured is Janice

Flood, a 69-year old widow who is raising four of her grandchildren in the Grandparent Family Apartments)

SLIDE 2:

As you probably know, NYCHA is not new to being a good neighbor to our fellow New Yorkers. For more than 75 years, we've been an anchor to communities throughout the five boroughs, in good times and bad. Yes, we provide safe, affordable homes to more than 600-thousand New Yorkers through our public housing and Section 8 programs—13 percent of the City's rental apartments. But NYCHA is more than a landlord.

NYCHA is the only public housing authority that has an in-house Social Services Department—150 staff strong. We also have a series of Community Partnerships and Programs that we work closely with and make referrals to (50 to 60 Community-based and City agencies).

We have a longstanding history of working to support our residents, including those who are: Formerly homeless—73,858 NYCHA residents (18.3 percent) are formerly homeless—young adults aging-out-of-foster care, seniors aging-in-place—more than 30 percent of our heads of households are seniors—hard-to-engage individuals, as well as former-offenders. A year ago, spurred by the Mayor's citywide Fatherhood Initiative, NYCHA undertook an effort to reduce recidivism and ensure improved outcomes for former offenders. NYCHA, in partnership with the Vera Institute for Justice, the Corporation for Supportive Housing and operating partners including the Fortune Society is exploring how we can create the supportive services like job training and

substance abuse and mental health counseling to allow former-offenders to successfully reunite with their families in NYCHA housing.

With our experience comes a wealth of institutional knowledge. NYCHA provides critical support to New Yorkers in need, including:

- Stable Affordable Housing in conjunction with VA Case Management Services for homeless veterans;
- Crisis Intervention services—each month NYCHA’s Social Services Department receives an average of 700 referrals regarding Families in Crisis, including Victims of Domestic Violence;
- Case Management services; and
- Social Services Referrals—85,086, or 21 percent, of our residents self-report one or more disabilities.

NYCHA’s central challenge to serving these populations is one that is no doubt familiar to you: the vast majority of NYCHA’s social services activities are self-funded in that we don’t receive dedicated funding for these critically important services.

For example, between 2002 and 2008 NYCHA operated a successful program called H.A.R.T.S. (Housing Assistance Relocation and Transitional Services) H.A.R.T.S. provided early intervention, intensive case management, and comprehensive preventive services to relocated families in transition, most of which were formerly homeless and youth aging-out-of-foster care. H.A.R.T.S. was highly successful at meeting its objectives in terms of helping families live independently. H.A.R.T.S. was originally

slated to receive funding through TANF (the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program). That funding never materialized, and when NYCHA was no longer able to support H.A.R.T.S. from our general operating subsidy, the program had to be discontinued.

We need to work together to bring the Departments of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development to the table to develop strategies to merge funding streams for housing and health services at the federal level.

SLIDE 3:

NYCHA is investing in our residents and communities. We work every day to create opportunity through services and programs for our residents and members of their surrounding neighborhoods.

Working with the Bloomberg Administration's Center for Economic Opportunity, CUNY, and the Human Resources Administration NYCHA launched Jobs-Plus at Jefferson Houses to provide wrap-around services to support job training and placement, as well as community support to ensure that families get the benefits they're entitled to.

Similarly, we're working with not-for-profit partners like the East River Development Alliance and United Way New York to implement the Jobs-Plus model in Queens, including the establishment of the first federal credit union in Queens in 30 years dedicated to serving low-income New Yorkers.

We are working to foster economic opportunities for residents by partnering with high-quality service providers, sister agencies, and residents to create job training and career enhancement programs. (Pictured is Tyler Cranston of Soundview Houses, a graduate of the Resident Training Academy) NYCHA spent 2010 redesigning the ways in which the Authority can support residents to achieve their career and financial goals. NYCHA has already launched several cornerstone initiatives as part of our new model, including the NYCHA Resident Training Academy, the Financial Independence Today Initiative, and the planning and launch of the third Jobs-Plus site, which will be in the South Bronx.

Working with the Robin Hood Foundation, we're preparing residents for good jobs with livable wages. In the first year, we've trained approximately 200 residents, of which about half are currently working—two times as successful as industry benchmarks. Going forward, NYCHA and Robin Hood are committed to expanding the program.

I know that many of you may be in need of experienced construction workers, janitorial support staff, or exterminators. NYCHA hopes that you will look to hire from among our program graduates.

SLIDE 4:

NYCHA has nearly 10,000 (9,921) units that are reserved for seniors. But, as I mentioned, 30 percent of NYCHA's heads of households are 60 years of age and older, and many live in mixed communities.

Every month, NYCHA's Social Services Department alone serves an average of approximately 2,600 residents through its Senior Resident Advisor, Elderly Safe at Home, and Service Coordinator Programs.

Additionally, NYCHA's Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Program addresses the needs of our seniors who are aging-in-place. The NORC program is designed to provide comprehensive support and health care services for well and frail elderly residents who continue to live independently in their apartments.

The NORC program provides services that include on-site assessment; case management; counseling; education/ prevention/ and wellness programs; recreational and socialization programs; and opportunities for seniors to volunteer. One of the key components is the assistance to access needed health care services, which includes nursing care, health screenings, in-home assessments, medication management and home visits by doctors when needed.

NYCHA wants to do more. We're working with partners to explore opportunities to provide home health care to residents as well as create Federally Qualified Health Centers within NYCHA properties. Keeping residents in their homes and providing these services is a much more cost-effective way of serving our seniors.

And going forward, we need to work with our elected leaders so that New York State will allow agencies to access Medicaid funding for seniors.

SLIDE 5:

Underlying all our efforts is a focus on improving the quality of life for our residents and fostering the strong, stable communities every New Yorker deserves. We can measure our impact with the triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social value created for NYCHA and NYCHA neighborhoods. Making these goals work together, not against each other, will be a key measure of our success.

But we can only do this work together. Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan is our city's blueprint for fostering diversity rich and economically secure communities and promoting a better, healthier quality of life in our neighborhoods. And NYCHA is working with our partners throughout the city, as well as forming new partnerships to support us in this effort.

As the chart illustrates, NYCHA is actively pursuing new development opportunities, including housing for communities the Supportive Housing Network cares so deeply about. This commitment is not new. Our development at Stanton Street included 13 public housing units for persons with immunological deficiencies, such as HIV/ AIDS and Lupus. And Markham Gardens Manor, which will be constructed this year for completion by 2013, is an 80 unit Section 202 funded senior development with a 25 percent preference for NYCHA seniors.

As NYCHA looks at our portfolio, we are working to identify additional properties where we can invest in communities who depend on supportive housing. As one example, supportive housing may be appropriate for NYCHA properties where zoning restricts

new unit development but allow the development of “community facilities.” Given that supportive housing falls under the definition of community facility, this is potentially a way for us to work together within existing zoning constraints.

Similarly, the City’s Inclusionary Housing Program promotes economic integration in areas of the City undergoing substantial new residential development by offering an optional floor area bonus in exchange for the creation or preservation of affordable housing. NYCHA has properties within close proximity to many Inclusionary Housing designated zones that could support additional new construction.

Finally, NYCHA is considering the transfer of “surplus” development rights to adjacent properties to facilitate development of additional supportive housing.

NYCHA and the members of the Network should work together to engage City Planning in amending zoning statutes to allow development rights to be transferred to some larger catchment areas to sites for supportive housing development.

SLIDE 6:

As I mentioned, securing land is a central challenge to creating new supportive housing. According to a survey of 52 Network Members conducted at last year’s Supportive Housing Network Conference, finding a suitable site was the number one challenge (**95 percent** of respondents).

- 29 percent of respondents identified finding tax credit investors as a development barrier.
- Zoning Regulations were listed by 50 percent.
- 60 percent highlighted the difficulty in coordinating funding streams.

And we know that, despite the evidence that supportive housing increases the value of surrounding properties (Furman Center Study) sometimes communities can be initially resistant to new supportive housing. **More than 80 percent** of Network participants who responded to the survey identified obtaining community approval and notifying residents of the surrounding neighborhood as a challenge to developing new supportive housing.

SLIDE 7:

I've discussed NYCHA's wealth of experience. It's that experience, as well as several important assets, that make us an important partner in driving innovation in new supportive housing development.

NYCHA owns approximately 2,500 acres of land—nearly three times the size of Central Park.

- We have relationships with leaders in government, including HUD, as well as City, State and Federal officials. Our 600,000 constituents matter to elected leaders, giving NYCHA advocacy leverage at the State level.
- We have relationships with Developers.
- We have relationships with Operators.

- And, most important, we have a permanent, longstanding relationship with our residents. NYCHA has an open, on-going dialogue with our residents on almost every area that affects their lives.

And our relationship with residents is growing stronger. In April, we joined with Mayor Bloomberg, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Geoffrey Canada of the Harlem Children's Zone, resident leaders and several partners including Goldman Sachs, and the New York City Departments of Education, Transportation and Planning to break ground on a new charter school and community facility at the St. Nicholas Houses in Harlem. Planning this exciting new project was a true team effort and would not have been possible without the close involvement of our residents and their elected Association leaders.

And just last month, NYCHA concluded a 10-meeting series of Community Conversations with public housing residents and Section 8 participants all across the City. In NYCHA community centers in every borough, we talked to more than 800 New Yorkers to get their feedback on how we can best work together to address NYCHA's central challenges through the Plan to Preserve Public Housing.

SLIDE 8:

So, how are we putting these resources to work:

In addition to providing supportive services to our seniors, NYCHA is actively pursuing development opportunities to create new affordable housing, such as Council Towers VI at Pomonock Houses that will give preference to NYCHA's existing seniors so that we

can provide families currently living in overcrowded apartments or on the Public Housing Wait List the opportunity to move into those units.

This senior housing project, done in partnership with the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty who will provide supportive services to residents, will be an eight-story building with 77 one-bedroom units. Transforming what was a 97 space parking lot, this new residence is scheduled for completion by 2012.

SLIDE 9:

Scheduled for completion in 2014, Highbridge Overlook at Highbridge Gardens in the Bronx will include 40 units, in a planned 155 unit development, that will be operated with supportive services for 40 formerly homeless individuals coping with a mental illness. Funding will be provided from the Office of Mental Health under New York/New York III. Funding sources for this project include tax exempt bonds and subsidy from the New York City Housing Development Corporation; loans from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development; and tax credits from HPD and the New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal.

Highbridge Gardens will also include additional benefits to the community, including a four-story public school that will house a reading resource room, medical suite, and a gymnasium that will be available for use by residents of Highbridge Gardens.

SLIDE 10:

Brooklyn's Van Dyke Houses will be the site for a pilot RFP that we're very excited about, and that I hope will be a model for future supportive housing development. NYCHA issued the RFP in November of last year and four proposals have been received.

The planned site can accommodate up to 100 units. 30 percent of the units will be supportive housing and the balance will be for low income residents. We expect to select a developer shortly.

CLOSING SLIDE:

Let me conclude by saying that based on the Network's own definition NYCHA is, and always has been, a form of supportive housing. The challenge for us collectively is to articulate that reality and continue to strengthen community programs and supportive services that help integrate people with special needs into their neighborhoods.

So many New Yorkers are counting on us. I know we won't let them down.