

REBUILDING A LIFE

Approximately thirty-five million Americans will suffer from serious depression in their lifetime. Often they can work through the depression with therapy or medication. But what if those options weren't helping and you found your life and all you'd worked for slipping away. Would you have the strength and determination to rebuild? MM is a graduate of the BCHS Apartment Program and she did just that.

MM graduated college with a degree in Business Administration and started a career in finance before her depression overwhelmed her. It became hard to work or keep a roof over her head and she found herself bouncing between the homes of friends and relatives. Finally in 1999 she was referred to the BCHS Transitional Apartment Program which offers daily contact with a case worker and

rehabilitative services such as medication management, symptom management, community integration, socialization and self advocacy. "It was just the stability and environment I needed." she stated.

MM refused to succumb her illness. Instead of focusing on the difficulties of living with her illness she focused on her goals of getting better and regaining her life. She soon graduated to more independence in the BCHS Supported Apartment Program. She also began taking computer classes and working with the BCHS Working Community program to polish her resume and interview skills.

With her skills, and staff support, MM had the confidence to begin to job hunt and in 2000 she landed a position at a large financial company. With her illness under control through a combination of

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

I am reminded of the saying that the only constant in life is change. Some changes we look forward to, some we don't. But we take something from every experience.

BCHS is going through a time of change. We have said goodbye to retiring Executive Director Doris Clark, and are pleased to announce the hiring of Jeff Nemetsky as our new Executive Director beginning on October 24, 2005.

Mr. Nemetsky comes to BCHS with a wealth of not-for-profit experience including working with children in foster care, homeless adults with mental illness and seniors. Mr. Nemetsky has the experience to lead the agency as we expand our services. I hope you will join me on welcoming Jeff to the BCHS family.

Over the last few weeks the thoughts of BCHS residents and staff have been turned to the Gulf Coast as the nation watches the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and Rita. We are all reminded how life can change in an instant. Becoming homeless, all your possessions in plastic bags, the uncertainty, the fear and depression. Unfortunately, many of our residents can relate.

In times of disaster communities bond together and help those less fortunate. Our residents and staff have donated book bags and school supplies to help children in kindergarten and first grade displaced from New Orleans and held a bake sale to raise money.

It takes great strength and determination to re-build your life. In this issue we share the story of one of our residents who did just that, coming to terms with her mental illness and finding her way home.

Our residents know life can change in an instant. BCHS offers them a safe place to find their way. 

BCHS NAMES NEW E.D.

The Board of Directors of BCHS are proud to announce the appointment of Mr. Jeff Nemetsky as Executive Director. Mr. Nemetsky will begin on October 24, 2005.

The search committee was made up of Board and staff as well as consultants from Community Resource Exchange. Ms. Elizabeth Bailey, a BCHS Board Member who co-chaired the search committee stated "We received dozens of resumes in our search for BCHS's new executive director. The search committee interviewed several impressive and highly qualified candidates. Jeff Nemetsky's commitment to the mission of BCHS, experience in agencies



Mr. Jeff Nemetsky
named BCHS Executive Director

as well as the not-for-profit world and appreciation of the work that the staff has done with our clients makes him the ideal successor to Doris Clark."

For the last seven years, Mr. Nemetsky has worked for New Alternatives for Children, Inc., a highly regarded child welfare agency. Nemetsky served as Associate Executive Director for Policy, Planning and Program Development, and as the Director of Operations, Policy and Planning. Prior to this, Nemetsky served as the Director of Planning and Analysis for the New York City Administration for Children's Services, where he played an

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CELEBRATING STAFF

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services is proud to recognize the fifteen staff members who have been with the agency for ten years or longer. An agency is only as good as it's staff. Our staff have helped to make BCHS a nationally recognized program. We salute them and their commitment to our mission.



Back Row: Helen Rada, 12 years; Marilyn Williams, 10 years. Middle Row: Wendy Junious, 12 years; Jannie Stroman, 12 years; Debra Paul, 13 years; Robin Walker, 13 years. Front Row: Shaikh Siddiqi, 11 years; Albertha Roderick, 13 years; Martha Mortleh, 13 years; Norma Gonzalez, 19 years; Dorian Muller, 11 years; Nelson Zuniga, 17 years. Missing: Lana Hardy-Turner, 13 years; Annie Burris, 13 years; Pauline Pironka, 11 years.

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important role in helping to develop the Neighborhood Based Services initiative. He has also served as the Director of Planning for the New York City Department for the Aging.

When asked about joining BCHS Mr. Nemetsky shared "I am very excited about coming to Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, because they perform such great work helping people in need. While BCHS is recognized within the provider network I would really like to make their efforts more widely known. All those concerned about the homeless should see that it is possible for people in severe crisis to reclaim their lives and live independently and as part of the larger community."

Mr. Nemetsky received his B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and a Masters in Public Administration from Columbia University. 

HELPING OTHERS

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita the nation has been devastated by the destruction along the Gulf Coast States. It is not just the terrible loss of life, but the loss of homes, photos and mementos. An estimated one million people left homeless.

Many of our residents know what it is like to cram your life into suitcases or plastic bags. They remember the fear of not knowing where you are going to lay your head that night. They have been homeless and now they are giving back.

Arbor Inn first put out the call for assistance with a collection of school supplies for kindergarten and first grade children from New Orleans now attending school in Monroe, Louisiana. Residents

and staff filled boxes with bookbags, notebooks, pencils, crayons and other supplies. The thirteen boxes were then delivered to a truck sponsored by the Council on Homeless Policies and Services and driven to Louisiana.



Residents helped pack boxes of school supplies donated by residents and staff.

The residents of Oak Hall, the permanent residence for adults with a history of homelessness, held a bake sale. Tables at Brooklyn Gardens and Chapel Street groaned under the weight of all the sweets baked and sold by residents. The group raised almost \$200 to help the people made homeless by the Hurricanes. "This was my first cake sale," admitted resident Lindora, "I was grateful I could help other people. I feel good about it." 

GOODBYE AFTER 23 YEARS

On September 2, 2005 our long-time Executive Director, Doris Clark, will be stepping down. For the past 23 years Doris has helped Brooklyn Community Housing and Services (BCHS) maintain our mission to help individuals with special needs develop maximum independence through the experience of supportive services and community living in Brooklyn.



Doris at the opening of Brooklyn Gardens

In August 1, 1983, Doris came to BCHS as a temporary assistant working on grant proposals for a new housing program. She was quickly promoted to Assistant Executive Director and in 1986 became the Executive Director. In her tenure at BCHS she has been instrumental in the growth of the agency from a 24-bed scatter-site apartment program to eight programs serving over 700 people annually.

In 1992, the temporary assignment that brought Doris to BCHS came to fruition when the agency bought an abandoned derelict building from New York City for \$1.105 million. The building at 105 Carlton Ave. went through extensive renovations to become Brooklyn Gardens, a groundbreaking, nationally recognized housing program offering three very different groups of people temporary and permanent home in a community setting.

"BCHS is poised on the edge of exciting growth...new housing and collaborative programs with local community based organizations. Jeff Nemetsky will bring strong new leadership for these developments." commented Doris, explaining she will provide consulting services in the transition. 

A FLAIR FOR HOUSING AND FASHION

Once upon a time New York fashion style-makers had to travel to Paris to see the latest

hot fashions parade down the catwalk. On May 17th, they came to the Brooklyn Museum for the third annual *Fashion on Fulton & Friends* gala benefiting Brooklyn Community Housing & Services, Inc. (BCHS).

Over three hundred fashion conscious Brooklynites and friends watched as fourteen designers showed their work. Brooklyn fashion designers have gained increased attention both locally and nationally in recent years. BCHS Executive Director Doris Clark commented, "Several years ago Brooklyn Community Housing & Services joined forces with a group of remarkable Brooklyn designers. Fashion on Fulton represents an opportunity to pay homage to this growing industry, while raising support and awareness for BCHS' work in providing affordable housing and special services annually for 700 special needs New Yorkers."

Fashion on Fulton & Friends featured the works of outstanding designers, including the Adewumi Brothers of Nigerian Fabrics and Fashions; Cassandra Broomfield; Brenda Brunson-Bey of Tribal Truths; Yvonne Chu of Kimera

Design Group; Steven Daniels; Roger Gary; Karen La Porte; Moshood; Ngozi Odita of Harriet's Alter Ego; Leza Piazza; Jewel Shannon; and Courtney Washington. Linda Feldman, Chair of the Benefit Committee, stated, "Fashion on Fulton makes a powerful statement about Brooklyn's growing creative community and its compassion and caring people."



Kimera Design Group



Honoree Eric Deutsch (center) with BCHS Board members Marolyn Davenport and Bob Osborne, Jr.

But this event wasn't just about the clothes. The evening honored Eric Deutsch, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The Navy Yard, with hundreds of corporate tenants, is responsible for 4,000 jobs.

BCHS also honored Doris Clark, retiring after 23 years as Executive Director. During those years BCHS grew from a small neighborhood program with 24 residents to a national award winning program providing a mix of permanent and transitional housing to homeless and disabled individuals. 



Harriet's Alter Ego



Nigerian Fabrics and Fashions



Attendees view some of the items donated to the auction



Retiring Executive Director Doris Clark walks the runway in a coat by Tribal Truths

MORE PHOTOS FROM THE 2005 FASHION ON FULTON & FRIENDS

BCHS is in the process of planning the 2006 *Fashion on Fulton & Friends*.

If you are interested in volunteering your time and expertise for this event please call the Development Office at (718) 222-1808 ext. 132.



Moshood Creations



Jewel Shannon



*Courtney Washington
Fashion Studio*



Steven Daniels



Ouvrez La Porte



Roger Gary Designs



Casandra Bromfield



Backstage before the show

All fashion show photos by Randolph Waterman

GETTING A GED

Congratulations to two Arbor Inn residents for receiving their GED's. Carine and Jamila recently passed their GED exam through a program run by a local agency, Project Teen Aid Family Services/Project Chance. "Passing the GED exam felt good. I did it to benefit myself and my daughter, to better improve our lives." shared Jamila.



Jamila got her GED for herself and for her daughter.

According to the US Department of Education the median annual household income for a person without a high school diploma or GED is \$17,696. With a high school degree that income jumps to \$33,779. That \$16,000 can often mean the difference between a home and the streets, especially for a family. In addition, a recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics linked children's performance in reading, mathematics and general knowledge to their mother's education level.

From July 2004 to August 2005 Arbor Inn, a transitional shelter for mothers and their children, served 135 families. Of those mothers only 44% had at least a high school diploma or GED. Arbor Inn family managers and vocational counselors work with the residents to assess goals and find educational or vocational programs that fit. Charles Staton, Arbor Inn Family

Manager, stated "Our goal is to assist the mothers in our program to obtain permanent housing and to develop the necessary skills to maintain a household. It is our mission to achieve this by preparing out client's for employment. In this day and age, finding employment that provides a livable income requires, at the very least, a high school diploma or GED." 

Income Information Source: US Department of Education - www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acfa/edlite-figure1.html

National Center for Education Statistics - <http://nces.ed.gov/>

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medication and therapy, MM enjoyed her return to the work force.

In 2004, MM found a new job with a top financial operation and decided she was ready to leave BCHS. "With proper medication management, exercise and stress management I feel I can live a successful life." she recently shared.

MM's success shows that living with a debilitating disease does not mean losing the life you want. Chronic mental illness is treatable in a supportive environment, allowing a full and independent life. Congratulations to MM. 

BCHS is seeking volunteers to help paint a mural for the childcare play yard at Brooklyn Gardens.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Development and Marketing Office at (718) 222-1808 ext. 132 or e-mail erikac@bchands.org



APPRECIATING THE FINEST & THE BRAVEST

The flowers in the Brooklyn Gardens courtyard were in full bloom for Uniformed Services Appreciation Day. This is the fifth year BCHS has held an open house to celebrate and thank members of the NYPD, FDNY and EMS who work to keep us safe.

On Wednesday, June 8, 2005 residents and staff welcomed firefighters from Engine Company 210 and police officers from the 78, 84 and 88 Precincts. We were



Men and women of the Uniformed Services fill the courtyard

Doris Clark, BCHS Executive Director, explained "The goal of BCHS is to help individuals find a home and to participate in community life. With this event we acknowledge the key role played by our uniformed services in safe and healthy communities." 



L to R: Wendy Juniors, BCHS Assistant Director for Administration; Deputy Inspector Thomas Harris, 78 Precinct Commanding Officer; Deputy Commissioner Joyce Stephen, NYPD Community Affairs; and Doris Clark, BCHS Executive Director

also pleased to welcome Deputy Inspector Thomas Harris, Commanding Officer of the 78 Precinct; Captain John Cosgrave, Commanding Officer of the 88 Precinct; and Ms. Joyce Stephen, NYPD Deputy Commissioner for Community Affairs; representatives from Borough President Marty Markowitz's office; representatives from Brooklyn District Attorney Joe Hynes' office.

The guests and BCHS residents and staff enjoyed food, activities and the opportunity to get to know one another.



One of our youngest residents welcomes the NYPD

ARBOR INN RECOGNIZED

In 2003 the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) introduced the Performance Investment Programs (PIP) to rate shelter providers in moving residents into permanent housing. This past spring DHS released the 2004 results to the public.

Arbor Inn, the family shelter in Brooklyn Gardens, received a 9.7 (out of a possible 10.0) placing the agency third out of 134 programs in New York City.

"The Performance Investment Program is an actual indicator that our staff have accomplished the agency's mission, to help each family develop maximum independence by bringing them from crisis to a safe community," shared Marie Degraff-Myal, Program Director of Arbor Inn.

THANK YOU TO EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

One of the key elements in overcoming homelessness is finding employment. Unfortunately, many of the women who come to Arbor Inn have never held a steady job. Enter the women of Emmanuel Baptist Church.

Nineteen mothers listened as the women from Emmanuel Baptist spoke about resume writing and interviewing skills. In addition, a representative from Kiehl's gave a presentation on basic skin care. After the presentations, the women were offered one interview outfit, including shoes and accessories, donated by members of the Emmanuel Baptist congregation. They also received a gift bag of Kiehl's products.

The residents appreciated both the information and the clothes. One resident said "I learned how to talk to the



interviewer, what to say and what not to say, and how to dress appropriately. To always be confident in answering questions and also asking them and to win over the confidence of the interviewer in placing me in the position."

In the past, Emmanuel Baptist volunteers have worked with the Arbor Inn

women on parenting classes and budgeting.

*Left - A selection of clothes donated by Emmanuel Baptist
Below - The women of Arbor Inn learn about job readiness.*



Brooklyn Community Housing & Services

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