

A MURAL GROWS IN ARBOR INN

Arbor Inn offers temporary short-term housing for 44 mothers with one child up to age eight coming out of the New York City family shelter. The goal of Arbor Inn is to help these families develop the independent living skills necessary to obtain and successfully maintain an apartment of their own.




Arbor Inn artist and her daughter show their design for the mural outside Kiddie Care

including Fisher Price computers.

Recently, Arbor Inn staff asked the residents to help brighten up the space by designing and painting a mural on the wall outside of Kiddie Care.

Arbor Inn resident NH and her daughter created a scene full of bright primary colors and fun, child-friendly characters.

Among the supportive services is Kiddie Care, an on-site daycare where mothers can leave their children while they apartment hunt, attend meetings, or run errands. The daycare offers a warm and caring environment full of age-appropriate books and toys

The mural was right up NH's alley. She has recently been accepted to the Fashion Institute of Technology and hopes to pursue a career in Fashion Design. 



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I can't believe that my first year at BCBS has passed so quickly! What are my impressions? Everyday I see the most dedicated staff in the City, working to help people who are vulnerable reclaim their lives. And I see residents who have endured some of the most awful circumstances imaginable display amazing heroism, by facing their problems directly and seeking a better life. I feel extraordinarily privileged to be a part of these efforts.

I have had the opportunity to participate in a wonderful and warm community. When a resident is ill his or her neighbors display their support and concern, and when there is good news, everyone celebrates together. I spent a wonderful Halloween with the children of Arbor Inn, and was able to enjoy a terrific Thanksgiving dinner prepared by the residents of Oak Hall. I was even able to spend each evening of the heat wave this summer watching the water fights, chess games and ice cream parties occurring in the surprisingly breezy courtyard of Brooklyn Gardens.

While I have spent much of my first year getting to know the agency, I am happy to report that we have successfully implemented a new demonstration program for ex-offenders, called FUSE, while also establishing new geriatric services (read more on page 3). We have launched a new website that we hope will offer clear and concise information about our programs and events (see what you think at www.bchands.org). And how could I forget my first fashion show

Executive Director - continued on page 4

BCBS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

On August 18, 2006 Brooklyn Community Housing and Services launched its newly redesigned website into cyberspace. We believe the new site offers a cleaner look and better information about BCBS and our programs.

Please visit the website to see photos from many of our events, including the 2006 *Fashion on Fulton & Friends* and the 2006 *Uniformed Services Appreciation Day*. We also offer PDF versions of past newsletters, job listings and information on volunteer and donation opportunities.

www.bchands.org



IN MEMORIAM

SALLY YARMOLINSKY

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services is saddened by the loss of our wonderful Board member and former Board Chair, Sarah “Sally” Yarmolinsky, who passed away on July 29, 2006 after a long illness.

Sally joined the board in 1980 and was elected Board Chair in 2003. A passionate and caring board member, Sally was tireless in her efforts to help BCHS, attending meetings and events even during her illness. She stepped down as Board Chair earlier this year.

Current board member Elizabeth Bailey remembers being introduced to BCHS by Sally: “I re-met Sally on the number 4 train to Manhattan around 1994 or 1995. Her beautiful chestnut hair had more red than ever and her eyes were just as wide and as expressive as I remembered them when I had last known her in school in 1968. Within five minutes of our strap-hanging conversation she had told me of her work at BCHS. Since I lived in Brooklyn, she asked, might I want to find out more about the agency? I did. After working with Sally all these years, quite closely last summer in our executive search, I came to appreciate and look forward to her earnestness, honesty, sense of privacy – as well as the smile and giggle I already knew.”

Born in New Haven, Connecticut on September 3, 1949, the daughter of Adam and Harriet Yarmolinsky, granddaughter of noted poet and critic Babette Deutsch and translator Avrahm Yarmolinsky, and of Harold Rypins, M.D. and Senta Rypins, Sally attended the Green Hedges School in Vienna, Virginia, the Madeira School




in Greenway, Virginia and the Commonwealth School in Boston, Massachusetts. She matriculated at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and received her B.A. from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Sally worked as director of development for the Union Settlement in East Harlem from 1980-2001. She subsequently worked as Assistant Executive Director of the Educational Alliance from 2001-2003. An active member of the New York development community, Sally served from 1988-1992 as president of Women in Development, New York. She was also on the program development committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and was a trustee of Citylore. An avid supporter of the arts, Sally sang in several choruses, including the Saint Ann's Chorus and the chorus of the Vertical Repertory Theater.

Sally was also active in her community and served as president of the Warren Place Association. Warren Place, her home for more than ten years, is a mews between Warren and Baltic streets built for working families by Alfred Tredway White in 1878-79. Sally took an interest in Mr. White's philanthropic work in housing for the poor. In May, Sally organized Alfred

Tredway White Day at the Proteus Gowanus gallery and arts center by the Gowanus Canal. On this occasion Sally read her essay on White's work to an enthusiastic audience who had gathered to celebrate White's accomplishments and the history and lore of this Brooklyn neighborhood.

A gregarious and much-loved person, a world traveler, and an insatiable lover of food and wine, books, movies, theater, and conversation, Sally left many friends who will miss her dearly. She is survived by her mother Harriet Yarmolinsky, of Brooklyn Heights; her three brothers, Tobias of Charlestown, Massachusetts, Benjamin of New York City and Matthew of Newton, Massachusetts; her nephews David, Max and Louis, and her niece Hannah. 



Sally at the 2005 Fashion on Fulton & Friends

EXCITING CHANGES AT OAK HALL

For people living on the street, in a shelter, or who are returning to the community after being in prison, Single Room Occupancy (SRO) is often the only affordable housing option available.

Oak Hall, the SRO residence that Brooklyn Community Housing and Services (BCHS) operates in Brooklyn Gardens, is permanent housing for 74 low-income formerly homeless men and women, a great many of whom have a chronic mental illness and/or a history of substance abuse. Like much of Brooklyn Gardens, Oak Hall was designed to encourage the development of community. Rooms in Oak Hall are organized as "suites" of private rooms opening to a common living area and kitchen and the entrance opens into a common courtyard complete with park benches, chess tables, flowerbeds and gardens, and barbeques where residents gather each morning over coffee, to chat and talk, to share information or stories, joke, and just to say hello. Oak Hall offers a safe and attractive living space while a multi-disciplinary team helps residents learn how to manage life events effectively and in a stable manner.

One of BCHS' most exciting new initiatives is a demonstration program called "FUSE" (Frequent Users Services Enhancement), for ten individuals who have cycled in and out of jails and shelters extensively during the last five years. While some organizations were hesitant to participate in this demonstration, BCHS had already been working with a growing number of individuals with a history of incarceration who were trying to adjust to living productively



On nice days you can often find Oak Hall residents playing cards or just chatting around the picnic table in the courtyard.


in the community. According to Robin Walker, the Director of Oak Hall, "We have a great success rate with people who have been incarcerated-almost 100% are still here and still stable in their housing, but many still struggle and need a very intensive kind of support." FUSE seeks to prevent a return to the criminal justice system and to the street by providing permanent housing along with intensive support from a trained forensic case manager, who carries a smaller than average caseload, and enhanced services, such as specialized support groups and one-on-one vocational assistance. "Last year we had a resident who was arrested and we were able to hold his housing for him," describes Walker. "He has a mental health diagnosis and was not able to convey that to the arresting officers. We were able to get him transferred into a facility with appropriate services and to get him legal representation. Had that not happened, he would have gotten lost in the system. Since he returned, he has been doing well." This initiative is funded by the JEHT Foundation and administered through the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and will be evaluated by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The New York City

Department of Homeless Services and the New York City Department of Corrections have already noted Oak Hall's exceptional performance.

Another recent development is the newly created position of Geriatric Case Manager to focus specifically on the physical and emotional needs of the growing proportion of residents who are over the age of 55. This "aging-in-place" is likely to continue.

Currently 52% of residents have lived in Oak Hall for at least 5 years, and over 30% have lived there for at least 10 years.

Jeff Nemetsky, BCHS' Executive Director, sees Oak Hall as a prototype for the direction of homeless services in the future. "I think there is a common need for decent and affordable housing," says Nemetsky, "but because there are different challenges faced by different populations of the homeless-the elderly, ex-offenders, recovering substance abusers, those who are younger and looking for work, the mentally ill-you can't just treat the homeless as one homogenous group. You need a comprehensive continuum-of-care so that each challenge can be addressed in as specific and expert a way as possible." His hope is that with forensic services for ex-offenders, geriatric services, substance abuse and vocational counseling, recreational activities, and accessible medical and mental health care, Oak Hall will be seen as a Model Program for SRO housing in New York City.


"I live in Oak Hall and it's a good place," says a woman who moved in almost five years ago. "I started my life over." 

Executive Director

continued from cover

fundraiser, where over 300 people came to the Brooklyn Museum to celebrate the beautiful and diverse fashions of Brooklyn's most creative designers?

The coming year promises to be an even more active time, as we seek to provide more housing, develop new homelessness prevention programs, upgrade our facilities, and create an even richer continuum-of-care.


It is with great sadness that we experienced the passing of long-time board member and former Board Chair Sally Yarmolinsky this year. Sally was extraordinarily committed to BCHS and to helping people in need. Her selflessness and sense of purpose, her tireless efforts, and her leadership, were an inspiration to those who worked with and knew her. Sally's presence will be deeply missed, but she has left an enduring legacy. It is a legacy we will do our best to honor in the years to come. 

FRIENDS & FAMILY

The weather was perfect for the annual *Friends and Family Day* at Ivy House on August 24, 2006. The residents were encouraged to invite guests to join them in the Brooklyn Gardens courtyard to enjoy food, entertainment, house tours, and to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year.

For residents it is a chance to show family members how much they have grown and what they have learned while living at Ivy House. It is also a chance to have friends visit and enjoy a party.



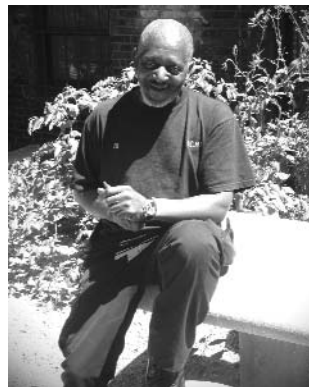
Ivy House, located at Brooklyn Gardens, offers long-term housing and support services to formerly homeless men and women with histories of psychiatric illness. 



BCHS EMPLOYEE PROFILE: ELI ROBINSON


Recently having celebrated his tenth anniversary at BCHS, Eli Robinson is one of the many people who keep Brooklyn Gardens a clean, safe, and welcoming place to live. He joined the maintenance staff in 1996, working first in the Arbor Inn Shelter for women with children; after three years, he moved to his current position at Oak Hall.

Born in Mineola, Eli grew up in Freeport, Long Island. As a teenager, he did a lot of boating and fishing-activities he still enjoys. He has extensive building maintenance experience for social service agencies. He came to BCHS after many years at AHRC-NYC, an agency that provides services to children with developmental disabilities.



In all aspects of his life, he has a long history of helping others. When he was Director of the Elsmere Tenants Council in the Bronx, he started a purchasing cooperative to provide discounted prices on groceries. "We could get milk for families at 25 cents a gallon, beef at 79 cents a pound, a chicken for a dollar."

Eli starts his workday by checking through the building and seeing if there is anything that needs immediate attention. He tries to look ahead, to prevent problems before they happen. "I keep a list of repairs that are needed," he says. "I use it to see what has to get done and to make sure that we have a schedule and the right equipment."

Eli takes the mission of BCHS very seriously and he likes to see residents take on responsibility and learn new skills. "Lots of people thank me for what I do for them, and we have a good relationship," he says. "That's why I'm here-for the residents." He tries always to think first of what people need in order to live independently, "BCHS teaches people how to live together." 

CELEBRATING A CREATIVE COMMUNITY

The place to be on Tuesday, May 9, 2006 was the Brooklyn Museum for the *Fashion on Fulton & Friends* gala benefit. Thirteen of the hottest designers in Brooklyn showed their fashions to help raise support and awareness for BCBS.



Left to right: Honoree Stuart Leffler; Peter Meloro, Consolidated Edison; Honoree Leslie Harding; and Honoree Alan Harding

Held in the magnificent Beaux Arts Court of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, *Fashion on Fulton & Friends* opened with stunning period costumes from the 17th and 18th centuries donated for the event by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts New York. The show also included the newest creative designs from Akini Collection, Steven Daniel, Michael Gillings, Kimera, MyrJan Bridal, Nakimuli Designs, Osun Designs, Ouvrez La Porte, Signature M, Soft Lines, TBA, Vaine Fashions, and Courtney Washington.

In addition to the beautiful clothes on the catwalk, Brooklyn Community Housing and Services was proud to honor Mr. Stuart Leffler, Manager of Economic Development for Consolidated Edison, and Mr. & Mrs. Alan and Leslie Harding, co-owners of Patois, The Zombie Hut, Schnäck,



Courtney Washington Fashion Studio

and Pacifico, for their commitment to the economic, social and cultural vitality of Brooklyn.



Akini Couture Collection

For more photos from *Fashion on Fulton & Friends*, please visit our website at www.bchands.org and click on the events link. 



Steven Daniel Designs



Kimera Design Group



TBA Clothing Company

BCBS is in the process of planning the 2007 *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. 140.



Ouvrez La Porte

MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services is deeply grateful to our friends and supporters. The list below reflects contributions made during the fiscal year from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. Without the assistance of our donors we would not fulfill our mission of bringing people from crisis to community.

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APPRECIATING THE UNIFORMED SERVICES

The heat and threat of rain didn't dampen the Sixth Annual *Uniformed Services Appreciation Day* on Thursday, June 22, 2006. The event celebrates members of the FDNY, NYPD and EMS who do so much to help New Yorkers in trouble.


Joining in this year's festivities were members of FDNY Ladder Company 119 and Engine Company 210 as well as NYPD officers from the 70, 78, 84 and 88 Precincts. Also attending were Robert Hess, the new Commissioner at the New York City Department of Homeless Services, and Charles



Left to right: Tara Martin, Brooklyn Borough President's Office; Jeff Nemetsky, BCHS Executive Director; Charles Hynes, Brooklyn District Attorney; Marie Degraff-Myal, Arbor Inn Program Director; Dafina Wong-Chong, Arbor Inn Housing Specialist; Robert Hess, NYC Department of Homeless Services Commissioner; and Wendy Junious, BCHS Assistant Executive Director for Programs.

Hynes, the Brooklyn District Attorney, as well as representatives from the Brooklyn Borough Presidents Office, the FDNY Office of Community Affairs, the Brooklyn Mental Health Court, and the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

The guests and BCHS residents and staff

enjoyed food, activities and the opportunity to get to know one another. As Jeff Nemetsky, BCHS Executive Director, says "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." 



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