

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, Inc. (BCHS) mourns the passing of long-time Executive Director Doris L. Clark. As many were aware, Doris lived bravely and fully with a serious illness for many years, and her strength and resilience are a part of her remarkable legacy. Doris' vision, of creating a community of supportive peers for formerly homeless individuals, remains a unique and groundbreaking one, and her extraordinary work will continue to have a lasting impact, both here at the agency and in the supportive housing field, for decades to come.

Doris joined BCHS in 1983, working on proposals to expand its Scattered-Site Apartment Program as well as to develop an innovative housing program called "Brooklyn Gardens." Doris became Executive Director in 1986, and through determination and tremendous effort made the vision of Brooklyn Gardens a reality for 180 formerly homeless people, as it opened in 1991. To this day, the blended populations housed at "BG" – mothers with children, the severely and persistently mentally ill, working individuals with a low income, and those with a history of chronic homelessness – represent a diversity rarely seen in one location. BCHS currently serves over 600 residents a year.

Doris' commitment to helping those in need in Brooklyn was unwavering and longstanding. In 1974 she co-founded the Fifth Avenue Committee, a local group dedicated to

## REMEMBERING DORIS CLARK



positions, including as a reporter with Radio Free Europe, an English teacher in the New York City public school system, and as an assistant to Mayor John Lindsay.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church. The Board, Staff, and Residents of BCHS will miss Doris greatly, and extend our deepest sympathies to her daughter Erika, and her many friends, colleagues and admirers.



economic revitalization and residential development in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn. She stayed with the organization for five years, during which time it developed 40 new houses for low-income to moderate-income families.

Doris was extremely active with local Brooklyn organizations, including serving as a Board member for the historic YWCA of Brooklyn and as a member of the Park Slope Civic Council Trustees. Doris was a member of the Steering Committee of the statewide Supportive Housing Network of New York, providing an important voice that helped bring about the expansion of resources for supportive housing programs citywide.

Doris received her Bachelor of Science degree from the Northwestern University School of Speech. Shortly afterwards she moved to New York where she worked in various communications, education and community service

# Community Notes

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HOUSING AND SERVICES



## NAVY GREEN

BCHS is extremely excited to be participating in the creation of a 434 unit mixed-use, mixed-income housing development just outside the Brooklyn Navy Yard, called *Navy Green*. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development recently announced the award to a team consisting of BCHS, the Pratt Area Community Council (PACC), Dunn Development, and L&M Equities. On the site of the former Navy Brig, most of the units will go to low and moderate income residents, and combine homeownership (both townhouses and cooperatives), rental housing, and 96 units of supportive housing that BCHS and PACC will work on together--PACC will be the property manager and BCHS the service provider.

The project will be centered around a common courtyard and will include a visual arts center, retail space, and a day care center. The project will be "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) - Silver Certified, ensuring

that it will be very energy efficient. The \$127.6 million project is slated to start construction in late spring or early summer of next year.

The 434 housing units are part of Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to build a total of 165,000 units of affordable housing through his 10 year New Housing Marketplace Plan. The city hopes to preserve the economic diversity of neighborhoods through housing developed under this plan.

On a site originally constructed in the 1940s as a jail for the U.S. Navy, the *Navy Green* development offers a well thought out and exciting anchor to a long ignored neighborhood, and gives BCHS a tremendous opportunity to broaden its reach in the community. The supportive housing program will be home to 96 formerly homeless women and men with a mental illness and low-incomes, and provide a range of expert, specialized services to prevent a return to the street.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Everyone from the BCHS family was very saddened to learn of the passing of Doris Clark, BCHS' longtime Executive Director this past August. As the article on page 6 demonstrates, Doris was a true visionary whose work helped save the lives of thousands during the last twenty years. Doris' resilience and strength, and her commitment to creating a sense of community for all the residents who come to BCHS, are part of a rich and enduring legacy that will continue to have a lasting impact for many years to come. We will miss Doris greatly, and we extend our deepest sympathies to her family, friends, and colleagues.

In this issue of Community Notes, I am happy to say that you will get to know a little bit more about one of our dedicated staff people, Employment Specialist Ruth Mitchell. Ruth helps so many BCHS and Brooklyn residents find and keep stable jobs, and we are truly fortunate to have her.

In this issue you will also learn more about the amazing Fashion on Fulton gala, our new supportive housing initiative - Navy Green - which will open just outside the Brooklyn Navy Yards, and our second annual Staff Picnic, held in Prospect Park. And you will learn about the wonderful help provided by 30 volunteers from Goldman Sachs, who worked to revitalize the flower beds and garden areas at Brooklyn Gardens.

But of course there are so many great things that happened that we didn't have room to write about. For example, we were able to invest over \$100,000 in improving our residential facilities and offices; and, this past year, we were able to ensure that 29 older residents and individuals returning from incarceration were able to successfully maintain their housing through a demonstration program at our Oak Hall SRO.

For the year ahead, we have some very exciting plans, having developed a groundbreaking homelessness prevention model while looking at additional possibilities for operating new supportive housing. Thank you for your support of BCHS, and for helping us as we work to end homelessness in Brooklyn.



Brooklyn Community Housing & Services

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# A Celebration at St. Ann's

On June 7, 2007 Brooklyn Community Housing and Services held its Fashion on Fulton gala designed to help support our goal of ending homelessness in Brooklyn. BCHS was proud to honor Charles J. Hynes, Danny Simmons, and BFC Partners (Donald Capoccia, Joseph Ferrara, and Brandon Baron) for their deep commitment to all the people of Brooklyn. Charles J. Hynes, District Attorney of Kings County, has long been recognized as one of the most brilliant and innovative law enforcement officials in the country. Nationally



District Attorney of Kings County, Charles J. Hynes



Tony and Peabody Award Winner/ Author, Danny Simmons

Marty Markowitz, the Brooklyn Borough President, and City Council Member Letitia James each thanked BCHS for the work that they do so well, and a short video featured residents of BCHS' programs describing their own experiences.



BFC Partners, from left: Brandon Baron, Joseph Ferrara and Donald Capoccia

Paula Ingram and Robert Hebron of Brooklyn's own Ingram & Hebron Realty were the Co-Chairs of a very active Honorary Committee, and helped attract several hundred enthusiastic attendees. BCHS Board Member Linda Feldman again led the amazing Benefit Committee which handled all aspects of the evening, from choosing designers, to, in a few cases, even modeling some of the clothes that were available in the silent auction. While Brooklyn has experienced



economic and cultural renewal in recent years, BCHS has, for nearly thirty years now, continued to provide affordable and special needs housing to our most vulnerable, homeless population. The work of outstanding design leaders from Brooklyn's growing fashion industry -- Tribal Truths, Kimera, Courtney Washington, Kiini Ibura Jewelry, Simply Mia, Di Willis Designs, Magdalena Marcenaro, Mandate of Heaven, Qristyl Frazier Designs, Habana Outpost and Malchijah Hats -- was on display at St. Ann's Warehouse, in the fashionable DUMBO section of Brooklyn. The fashion show was built around each designer's concept of "community", as reflected in their fashions.



The gala fashion show was quite successful. The fashions were varied, colorful, and glamorous. The proceeds from the event will allow BCHS to continue providing critical services and housing to our community.

For more photos from Fashion on Fulton and Friends, please visit our website at [www.bchands.org](http://www.bchands.org) and click on the events link.



## GARDEN PARTY



On May 12, 2007 an enthusiastic group of volunteers from Goldman Sachs' Community TeamWorks visited Brooklyn Gardens and devoted the day to beautifying the grounds. Altogether almost 30 volunteers worked to pull weeds, plant flowers and bushes, and significantly enhance the appearance of the courtyard. Together with some of our residents and staff, the concerted effort resulted in a colorful and revitalized courtyard which now has a great variety of plants and colors to brighten the residents' days, as well as to greet visitors. The picnic area, sitting and meeting areas, and playgrounds all benefited from the hard work of the volunteers. Yellow, pink and red roses, lilies, echinacea, evergreens, and a wide variety of perennials and annuals were planted; damaged fences were repaired; and our beautiful array of lush trees and bushes were trimmed. Goldman Sachs has a long history of partnering with nonprofits, and we greatly appreciate their efforts on this year's BCHS Garden Day. All in all, it was a fine day to take pride in our "new" gardens, and to make BCHS an even better place to live.



## HELPING OTHERS

BCHS and local Brooklyn residents have a valuable 'resource' in Ruth Mitchell. Low-income individuals who are working but want help so that they can advance to better paying positions, and people who are outside of the workforce but seeking employment, come to see Ruth at BCHS' Career Resource Center at 25 Chapel Street.

Ruth, who supervises the Career Resource Center, has found that participants face many challenges and unique situations that can create barriers to employment, and that these need to be addressed before success can be achieved. Some of these circumstances include learning about childcare options, searching for stable housing, and getting chronic health conditions taken care of. Of course, Ruth will also provide one-on-one assistance to help participants create a resume, research job openings, prepare for the GED exam, or perhaps, learn how to read or type.

Ruth Mitchell enjoys helping. She feels that each person who enters the Resource Center provides her with an opportunity to "make a difference in someone's life." Ruth advised that some participants initially come with a measure of anger or frustration at their circumstances, and her goal is to first help them develop a positive outlook, and then to determine which skills and capabilities need to be enhanced. Ruth has put together a robust Career Library that includes many examples of resumes, cover letters, and literature about interview techniques for participants to review, along with information about available classes and financial aid information. A Career Bulletin Board with current job openings and internship opportunities is also kept.

The Resource Center was recently painted and provided with lovely new carpeting, and has 10 brand new computers with Internet access and up-to-date Microsoft software. Ruth provides assistance at whatever level participants need -- teaching them computer basics, helping them learn how to create a spreadsheet or open up free e-mail accounts, or, just providing them with



Ruth Mitchell

access to the Resource Center's tools and materials. Nearly 400 people utilize the Center each year.

In addition to her responsibilities at BCHS, Ruth is a Vice-President at the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID). BCID tries to direct eligible, disabled individuals in Brooklyn to entitlements they qualify for, as well as to housing opportunities. Advocacy and outreach activities on behalf of the disabled are also conducted by BCID.

The devotion and dedication that Ruth Mitchell brings to her responsibilities at BCHS may well be based on difficulties that she has experienced in the past. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from New York City Technical College, she had great difficulty finding a position in her chosen field. After numerous, unsuccessful interviews, she concluded that a perceived disability (Ruth is legally blind) might be a reason for her lack of success. She was hired as an intern by BCHS in 2003. She quickly demonstrated her capabilities and was hired as a full-time employee after 6 weeks as an intern. Ruth has been in her current supervisory position for over one year, after coming over from the agency's Brooklyn Gardens site. Perhaps based on her own experiences, Ruth wants each person who comes to the Resource Center to receive all the possible help they can, and to know that they can make it in the world of work, and that they can eventually achieve their goals, no matter how ambitious.

