

COMMUNITY notes

We're committed to ending homelessness in Brooklyn.

105 Carlton Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11205 • Phone: (718) 625-4545 • Fax: (718) 625-0635 • www.BCHandS.org

Many Friends, Much Joy for the Holidays at BCHS

Thanks to a wonderful community of compassionate volunteers, generous donors and dedicated employees, December was filled with many fun and festive celebrations for the formerly homeless residents at BCHS. Trees were trimmed, carols were sung, toys were delivered, parties were had, Santa visited - so did Spiderman - and there was even a magic show!

Gifts and holiday items were generously donated by Michael and Tess Lewis, and the groups "Men Taking Action/United Transit Employees, Inc." and "Girlfriends: Pathways 2 Empowerment." BCHS was blessed again this year to have Barbara Aziz-Lopez, a former resident, plan a very special holiday celebration for the mothers and children at *Arbor Inn*. She and her colleagues at the FDNY EMS Bureau of Training purchased and wrapped gifts for the residents and even arranged to have Santa deliver them.

The children's happiness and excitement at the sight of Santa and his gifts inspired an abundance of holiday cheer. Some of the gifts he brought included Hot Wheels sets, baby dolls, and toy helicopters.

Thanks to our activities team, Tamara Ramsey and Ajanae Lewis, and the many friends who delivered the holiday spirit at BCHS this winter.



Right: Rahiem, a resident of *Arbor Inn* shows off his new Hot Wheels set

Left: *Arbor Inn* Housing Specialist LaRon Green with "Spiderman," a volunteer from the FDNY's EMS group that delivered gifts for the mothers and children at *Arbor Inn*



BCHS Serves Up Thanksgiving for Residents

In November, BCHS residents were treated to a week full of Thanksgiving events. *Arbor Inn* and the *Navy Green SRO* each held dinners for the women, children and men who live in their buildings. In Downtown Brooklyn, staff of the *Scattered-Site Apartment Program* prepared and served a traditional Thanksgiving meal for their residents, who live in BCHS apartments throughout Brooklyn. Finally, on Thanksgiving Day, residents from all of BCHS' programs were welcomed to *Brooklyn Gardens* for an agency-wide feast and celebration. Thanks to the wonderful volunteers and staff members who gave their time to help make Thanksgiving extra-special for our formerly homeless residents.

Far left: Residents Andrea and Daniella at the *Navy Green SRO* Thanksgiving dinner

Left: Residents Shelly, Glenwood and Hildy enjoy an afternoon of food and fun at *Scattered-Site Apartment Program's* Thanksgiving celebration





Message from Executive Director Jeff Nemetsky

Dear friends,

Katrina was born in 1955 and raised in New York City by two loving parents. When she was in her 20's a serious mental illness surfaced, but Katrina was in denial about her condition and did not receive any treatment. With her parents' consistent involvement she was able to function and hold a steady job as a medical secretary for 17 years.

Unfortunately Katrina's mother and father both passed away in 1994 and Katrina was shattered. Unable to cope without their guidance, she turned to alcohol and drugs, and spent most of the next two decades cycling between the street, shelters, jail, and the hospital.

Then, in 2012, Katrina was referred by a local shelter to BCHS' *Navy Green SRO*. At first Katrina appeared angry all the time, lashing out at staff and her fellow residents. Not used to living with others, everyday issues – no matter how small – made Katrina agitated and distressed, and she often threatened fist-fights with her peers to solve small disputes. However, about a year ago, BCHS began a partnership with the New York Horticultural Society and things began to change. "The Hort" sent a horticultural therapist once a week to work with BCHS residents – they used containers for planting indoors, then moved outside and began beautiful new plantings in the flower-beds in front of the *Navy Green* building.

Katrina fell in love with gardening. With the guidance and support of BCHS' staff, Katrina was able to engage in a nurturing activity for the first time in her life. And she felt a powerful sense of accomplishment and self-worth when she saw something she had planted emerge from the ground and bloom.

Katrina's whole demeanor transformed. She became compliant with treatment and began to volunteer her time to help with building-wide events; she became warm, funny and engaging with her peers; and best of all, for the first time in her adult life, she felt like she had real friends.

At BCHS we feel that everyone who comes through our doors can move from crisis to community just like Katrina. Nowhere is this more evident than during our holiday activities, and you can see many of our wonderful events in this issue of Community Notes. I am also happy to announce that this year's *Talented Brooklyn* gala is set for April 29th, at the beautiful Green Building in Gowanus. Home grown Brooklyn acts will perform for us, while the gala will also feature wonderful art work created by talented BCHS residents. I hope you will be able to come.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who so generously and thoughtfully contributed to our Annual Appeal – your support is what makes our work possible. I hope you have a wonderful Spring and thank you for your commitment to ending homelessness in Brooklyn!

BCHS Travels to Albany to Meet with NY State Legislators

BCHS Executive Director Jeff Nemetsky Among Leaders of "Lobby Day" Team

On February 3rd, BCHS Executive Director Jeff Nemetsky was part of a team of New York City officials and representatives who traveled to Albany to lobby for additional funding to augment programs that provide critical supportive housing and homelessness prevention services. The group's busy and productive day included 38 meetings with legislators and staff, including Senator Velmanette Montgomery of the 25th New York State Senate District in Brooklyn, the home district of BCHS.

Back row (from left): Kate Milkens (Lantern Community Services), Evelyn Rodriguez (BronxWorks), Janet Miller (CAMBA), and Elizabeth Hoffman (Citizens' Committee for Children of NY).

Front row (from left): Edline Jacquet (Supportive Housing Network of NY), Jeff Nemetsky (BCHS), Senator Velmanette Montgomery, and Samelys Lopez and Eric Herman (Common Ground).



The 2015 BCHS Board of Directors' Wine Tasting

On January 29th, Ambriel and Hawes Bostic, along with the BCHS Board of Directors, welcomed guests for an evening of wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres to celebrate the agency's extraordinary work on behalf of its formerly homeless residents. Board Members mingled with supporters and friends, sharing their enthusiasm for BCHS' work and encouraging those interested to become more involved with the organization.

The Wine Tasting also served as a kick-off event for a new initiative Ms. Bostic has launched to provide free books for the children and mothers at *Arbor Inn*, both while they live at BCHS and once they move out to independent housing. The book drive includes a collaboration with Greenlight Bookstore, an independent bookseller in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. The store has established an online registry - greenlightbookstore.com/BCHS - where people can purchase books to donate to BCHS. Look for more information about the book drive on our website and in future newsletters.

Many thanks to Ambriel and Hawes for welcoming everybody into their beautiful home for the 2015 Wine Tasting. Thanks also to Paradis to Go Catering for the night's delicious food.



Top:

BCHS Board Member Ambriel Floyd Bostic (right) with Henrietta Pertuz

Above:

Jessica Stockton Bagnulo, from Greenlight Bookstore, with a selection of titles available to purchase for children at *Arbor Inn*. For more information, visit greenlightbookstore.com/BCHS



Left to right: Garrick Leonard with BCHS Board Members Alexandra Bowie and Leslie Feder



Left to right: BCHS Board Members Anthony Trani, Ben Baxt and Jonathan Jones



Board Member's Mardi Gras Party Benefits BCHS

On Saturday, February 7th, Board Member Sean O'Neal and his wife, Ambereen Sleemi, hosted a festive Mardi Gras party at their beautiful home in Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn. Guests were treated to a delicious array of New Orleans inspired cuisine and cocktails, as well as a rousing performance by Brooklyn's own Sugartone Brass Band.*

Before the evening kicked off, Mr. O'Neal took a moment to tell his guests about BCHS and encourage them to support the agency. Thanks to his advocacy and enthusiasm, his guests and invitees contributed more than \$2,000 to help BCHS end homelessness in Brooklyn.

**The Sugartone Brass Band will be the musical performers at this year's Talented Brooklyn Gala, on April 29, 2015.*

Left: Sean O'Neal and Ambereen Sleemi
Right: Ben and Susan Baxt



\$25,000 to \$49,999

Mary J. Hutchins Foundation, Inc.

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Ben and Susan Baxt

Sean O'Neal and Ambereen Sleemi

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Anonymous (2)

Clifford and Leslie Cohen

The Dammann Fund, Inc.

\$2,000 - \$4,999

Anonymous (1)

Hawes and Ambriel Bostic

Jens Peter Hansen and Elena Feliciano

Tim and Stephanie Ingrassia

The John A. Hartford Foundation
Discretionary Grants Program

Lexy Mayers and David Lesser

Laura Schnell and Mitch Pacelle

\$1,000 - \$1,999

Anonymous

Alexandra Bowie and Daniel Richman

Robert Buckholz and Lizanne Fontaine

Ron and Sue Ellen Carr

Jane B. DeBevoise

The DeLaCour Family Foundation

Carolyn Ellis and H. Lake Wise

Margie Hanssens and Kevin McGrath

Doug Jaffe and Kristin Heavy

\$1,000 - \$1,999 (continued)

Stephen and Jeanne McGrath

Stephen McGrath, Jr. and Janine Shellfo

Sheryl Parker and James Grayer

Nellie Perera/Joan H. Perera Charitable
Lead Annuity Trust

SMR Craftworks, Inc./Andrew Fishman

Ward & Company Works of Art

Stark and Michael Ward

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous (2)

Carol Berkvist

Thomas and Carolyn Castelnovo

Ellen and Casey Cogut

Barry Cohen

Mary Cox Golden

David Greene and Roberta Robbins

Robert and Kathleen Helenius

Sandy Krieger and Andrew Dash

Ken and Simona Peterson

Vivien and Michael Shelanski

Susan Sommer and Stephen A. Warnke

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Robert Stephens

Laura and Anthony Trani

Liza Velazquez and Timothy Milford

Mark and Lois Wingerson

\$250 - \$499

Anonymous (3)

Bill and Mary Baker

Ida Barak and Thomas Sauermilch

Kim Bingham

Jennie and Jake Blair

Emily Bravo and Billy Clareman

Anne Clark and Tom Hyland

Steve Coe

Bill and Barbara Everdell

Joseph Finnerty, III

Thomas P. Gallagher, Inc.

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Alan Goldberg and Karen Backus

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Sally Greenspan

Interior Alterations, Inc.

Eoin and Farah Killeen/Kleen Construction LLC

Joseph C. Maffucci

The Honorable Marty Markowitz and
Jamie Markowitz

Elizabeth and Michael Mayers

Matthew Mayers and Bryce Jacobs

Lauren McCarthy

Newt and Polly Merrill

Walter and Mary Theresa Nelson

Krista Olson and Tom Middleton

Special thanks to the many wonderful friends who gave in-kind donations of gifts, toys, food and entertainment for BCHS residents this holiday season.

Eric Blackwell, David Banks (aka DJ Disciple) and DJs Against Hunger

Girlfriends: Pathways 2 Empowerment

Michael and Tess Lewis

Barbara Lopez and the Staff of the FDNY EMS Bureau of Training

Men Taking Action/United Transit Employees, Inc.

Nadja Pinnavaia



Volunteers from Men Taking Action/ United Transit Employees, Inc. collected and donated toys for the kids at Arbor Inn.



Arbor Inn staff with the volunteers and staff from Girlfriends: Pathways 2 Empowerment, who donated toys and gifts for the children and mothers at BCHS



The Staff of the FDNY EMS Bureau of Training brought Santa, Spider Man and a magician. Among the group was the family of former FDNY firefighter Walter Nelson, who passed away in May of 2014. His wife, pictured in a green and red hat, and son, carry on Mr. Nelson's tradition of going to shelters with toys and a magic show during the holidays.

\$250 - \$499 (continued)

Ann and Ray Peterson
Elise Pettus
Bill and Susan Rifkin
James and Patricia Rohan
Milton Rubin
Marcia Stevenson
Emily Sweet and David Drits
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Turbee, Sr.
Stephanie Wilchfort
\$100 - \$249
Sandy Abramson
Mark and June Alpert
Anonymous (3)
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Max Benjamin and Valerie Michaud
Alice Benston
Brownstone Real Estate
John and Meg Chamberlin
Marty Cohen and Rabbi Randy Sheinberg
Philip Cramer
Kathryn Croft
Herbert Eisenberg and
The Honorable Lois Bloom
Steve and Martha Ellman
Marcia Ely and Andy McKey
Joan Erskine
Camilla and Peter Flemming
William Waring Fox
Manny and Pat Fuchs
Ludmilla Goldberg
Amy Jo Goldman and Joel Brill
David and Lorna Goodrich
Robin Griffiths
Elizabeth Hannan and Christopher Mellon
Jon Hochman and
Elizabeth Dabney Hochman
Phillip Hogue and Jeannette E. King
Harry Huggins
Richard and Anita Inz
George Kan and Doris Kan
Florann Kessell
Mark and Connie Kolber
Bennette Kramer and Eliot Long
Kum Kau Chinese Kitchen, Inc.

\$100 - \$249 (continued)

Wendy Schaetzel Lesko
Richard and Sally Mann
James and Amanda Moffat
Ryan Moser
Ali Muney and Elise Keppler
Marion and Joshua Panas
Andrea Pfeiffer and Julian Birnbaum
Susan and Kanti Rai
Peter and Susan Restler
Rita Rivest
Phyllis and Paul Schlesinger Family Fund
Susan E. Shepard
Erica Spadaro and Christopher Cuttita
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Stanley Lewis Plumbing and Heating
Carmen Suardy and James Wasserman
Susan and Robert Teich
Irene Tichenor and Bob Craft
Guy Walker and Jeffrey Peabody
Laurel and Joseph Whitaker
Ben Yarmolinsky
Matthew Yarmolinsky
Tobias Yarmolinsky and
Phyllis Fine Menken
Up to \$99
Anonymous (4)
Ted and Gloria Bajo
Marcia DaCosta
Katie Dominguez
Sarah Ames Ellis
Suellen Epstein
Linda Haley
Catherine Hanssens
Richard and Nelly Isaacson
Peter Lesser and Veronika Denes
David and Karen Liu
Minkowitz Charitable Foundation/
Carol Ziegler
Robert and Bonnie Nelson
Joanna Parson
Eric Sachsenmaier
Michael Taeckens and Linwood Hart
Gladys Valdez and Neftali Martinez
David and Suzanne Ward
Diane and Brian Wittling

BEN BAXT

Anonymous
Jane B. DeBevoise
Richard and Anita Inz
Ward & Company Works of Art/
Michael Ward

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JEANNE, JOHN AND ADDISON BENNETT

Anonymous

AMBRIEL FLOYD BOSTIC

John and Meg Chamberlin

MARGIE HANSENS

Elizabeth Hannan and Christopher Mellon

GEOFF KESSELL

Anonymous

NATALIE AND MAEVE MCGRATH

Catherine Hanssens

SEAN O'NEAL

David and Suzanne Ward

ANN SCHAEZEL

Wendy Schaetzel Lesko

LAURA SCHNELL

Anonymous

JANET AND DON WEHNER

Robert Stephens

IN MEMORY OF

DORIS CLARK

Marilyn Gelber

TERRY DEFIORÉ

Sandy Abramson

SYLVIA MAGNUSON

Carol Berkvist

MICHAEL ROTHENBERG

Susan and Kanti Rai

SALLY YARMOLINSKY

Mary Cox Golden
Ben Yarmolinsky
Tobias Yarmolinsky and Phyllis Fine Menken

We're committed to ending homelessness in Brooklyn.

Each year, BCHS provides safe and clean supportive housing for more than 1,000 formerly homeless women, children and men. We help them learn how to live productively and independently, with dignity, and with hope.

To donate, or to learn how you can help, visit www.BCHandS.org or contact our Development Office at (718) 852-9322 ext. 2140



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Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services

Annual Benefit & Gala Celebration

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