

# 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](http://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](http://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](http://greenlightbookstore.com/BCHS)



Left to right: Garrikk 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 Shelffo

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 Castelnuevo

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

Stanton Public Relations and Marketing

Starr Security Services

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.

Marilyn Gelber

Joan Glatman

Alan Goldberg and Karen Backus

Janice Goodman

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  
Joe and Karen Sparacio  
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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**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 DEFIORE**

Sandy Abramson

**SYLVIA MAGNUSSON**

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Susan and Kanti Rai

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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](http://www.BCHandS.org) or contact our Development Office at (718) 852-9322 ext. 2140





105 Carlton Ave  
Brooklyn, NY  
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PLEASE JOIN US

*Wednesday, April 29, 2015*

**Brooklyn Community Housing and Services**

Annual Benefit & Gala Celebration

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**TALENTED** BROOKLYN

G A L A 2 0 1 5

