BCHS’ 40th Anniversary *Feels Like Home* Gala

BCHS celebrated 40 years of service to the community with our *Feels Like Home* Gala on May 15th at Bklyn Studios in Downtown Brooklyn’s City Point.

The event raised more than $500,000 to support BCHS’ life-saving programs, and more than 400 attendees were treated to an intimate guest performance by Grammy award winner Norah Jones. Performing a range of music both new and classic, including her latest hit “Begin Again” and longtime favorite “Don’t Know Why,” Ms. Jones touched and captivated the capacity crowd.

The evening was a vibrant celebration of BCHS’ historic role in the development of the supportive housing field, the groundbreaking work that the agency is currently performing, and innovative new initiatives that are underway. BCHS Founders Rev. Dr. Skip Vilas, Dr. Mary Cox Golden, and Dr. William Nye were recognized, as well as our 2019 Honoree Lamb Insurance Services and CEO/Founder Joshua Lamberg, along with Lamb Account Executive Liam Kemmerley.

BBC World News Anchor Laura Trevelyan graciously hosted the evening, which featured remarks by Executive Director Jeff Nemetsky and Board Chair Peter Hansen, while guests sampled a variety of delicious Brooklyn artisanal foods. A robust silent auction raising money for BCHS’ programs, a beautiful display of artwork by BCHS residents, and a trendy photo booth added to the excitement.

The evening was a terrific success and memorable celebration. A heartfelt thank you – on behalf of the Board, staff and clients of BCHS – to all our generous guests, supporters, sponsors, Honorees, Host Committee members and friends!
Dear friends,

This past May we had a wonderful evening at our 2019 Feels Like Home Gala, as you can read about in this issue of Community Notes. Celebrating our 40th Anniversary, the evening featured the beautiful music of our guest performer, the incomparable Norah Jones.

Most of all, the night was an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary leaders, staff, supporters and friends who have made BCHS’ efforts possible, who have dedicated themselves to helping the Borough’s neediest, and who have helped thousands of people who used to be vulnerable and isolated find a safe place that “Feels Like Home.”

I am so appreciative for all of our generous supporters who helped ensure this year’s gala was our most successful event ever.

Our 40th Anniversary year has been a special time for the agency, and has allowed us to focus on the vision of our founders, one that I believe resonates as powerfully today as it did four decades ago: we all need community, in any walk of life, to help us maximize our well-being, to help us get through difficult times, and celebrate good times.

Thank you for all of your support because without you, BCHS could not accomplish all that we do as we work towards ending homelessness in Brooklyn.

Jeff Nemetsky
Executive Director

“\textit{We all need community, in any walk of life...}”
NY Times best-selling author and Pulitzer prize nominee Pete Earley is a national advocate for mental health issues and a Board member of the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). Mr. Earley recently visited BCHS' Navy Green housing program – here is some of what he had to say (excerpted from an article he wrote about his visit):

“How can we help individuals with serious mental illnesses who are chronically homeless, have co-occuring drug and alcohol problems and have been involved in our criminal justice system?

We have programs that work, we simply need more of them.

Navy Green, part of Brooklyn Community Housing and Services (BCHS), provides permanent supportive housing to 97 men and women who have Axis One diagnoses – people with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and persistent and debilitating depression.

These are reportedly the most difficult to house and keep housed. Yet, ninety-seven percent of individuals living in Navy Green in 2018 either maintained their housing or moved on to greater independence. You read that right. A 97% yearly success rate.

Navy Green is an example of what can be. The question for us and our leaders is why are we not funding more Navy Greens?”

Access the full article at www.bchands.org, or at www.peteearley.com.

BCHS is part of a team that is working to create new housing in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, along with Love Fellowship Church and Alembic Community Development. This new development will include approximately 243 units of affordable housing, with 73 units set aside for formerly homeless families where the head of household has a mental illness. The building is tentatively set to open in 2022.

BCHS will be the service provider at the site, offering case management, mental health counseling, vocational training and employment support, services for domestic violence survivors, clinically appropriate recreational activities, and more. There is currently very little permanent supportive housing in New York City for families coping with mental illness, and BCHS is excited to expand the services and options available for this population.

Brooklyn Gardens is turning 100 this year. Originally built as private tenement housing in 1919, abandoned in the 1970s, and rehabilitated by BCHS in 1991, Brooklyn Gardens was one of the first supportive housing buildings of its kind in the country, housing a diverse mix of at-risk families and single adults.

BCHS is planning the substantial renovation of this historic facility at 105 Carlton Avenue, which is turning 100 this year. It is anticipated that renovation work will begin in 2021. Most residents will remain in the complex during the renovation, which will make maximum energy efficiency and “green” building technologies a priority. Stay tuned!
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Pictured from top, left to right:
2019 Gala MC and BBC World News America Anchor Laura Trevelyan
Alison Brock McGill and Raymond McGill, Jr.
BCHS Board Member and Gala Co-Chair Nadja Pinnavaia with Jessica Brennan
Honorees Liam Kemmarley and Joshua Lamberg of Lamb Insurance Services

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Thank you for your support!

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BCHS’ Arbor Inn – the agency’s program for homeless mothers with children – has seen a significant increase in the number of homeless moms struggling with mental illness in recent years.

To address these circumstances BCHS is excited to announce that it has been awarded a 3-year grant of $225,000 from The van Ameringen Foundation to develop its Fresh Start initiative, a unique effort that is designed to maximize the well-being, stability, and independence of the homeless families we serve.

Through Fresh Start, BCHS will hire an expert Family Clinician to work on the Arbor Inn team. The Family Clinician will provide therapy with mothers coping with mental illness and with their children, establish support groups for domestic violence survivors, and provide trainings and guidance to the Arbor Inn staff regarding mental health issues.

BCHS believes that homeless mothers who have a mental illness face acute challenges as they try and get back on their feet. In response Fresh Start will offer expert support in a compassionate and comforting way, just when it is needed the most.