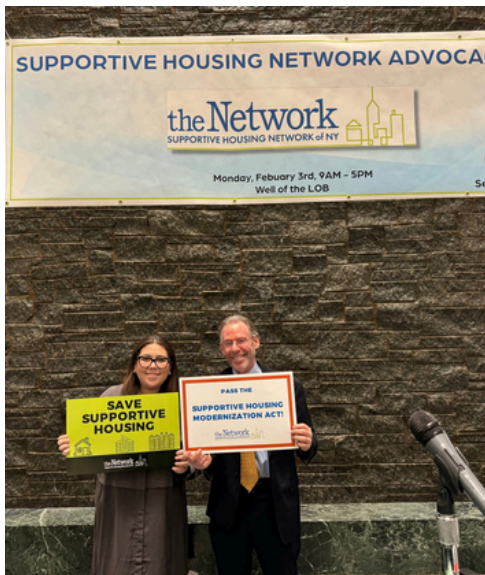




Community Notes

Spring 2025

Fight for Housing Fairness Hits City and State Legislatures



This winter, BCHS rallied alongside the Supportive Housing Network of New York and over 200 advocates and tenants of supportive housing organizations to meet with state legislators regarding critical issues in our industry.

As a coalition, we advocated for funding parity for the NYS Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP) and Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) programs, increased funding for capital projects through the Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP), and initiatives as a part of the Just Pay campaign to ensure human services workers are adequately paid and human services contracts keep up with inflation. BCHS representatives, CEO Jeff Nemetsky and Communications & Policy Associate Vanessa Salman, met with staff from the offices of Senator Simcha Felder, Senator Zellnor Myrie, Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest, and Senator Toby Ann Stavisky to discuss the legislative priorities and how the legislators' support will help thousands of homeless and at-risk individuals and families find housing stability.

To ensure our voices are heard on the local level, BCHS also joined The Network for their 2nd Annual Virtual City Council Lobby Day. The day-long day of advocacy urged the Council to take action on funding for the investment in additional congregate housing units, the addition of peers to the city's B-HEARD



mental health crisis response team, ensuring justice-involved individuals have access to housing by investing in the Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) program, and supporting the financial health of nonprofits by requiring city agencies to reimburse organizations for interest due to late contract payments. BCHS representatives Chief Development Officer Emma Williams and Communications & Policy Associate Vanessa Salman, met with staff from the offices of Council Members Crystal Hudson, Sandy Nurse, and Lynn Schulman to discuss these critical issues facing supportive housing organizations across New York City.

BCHS Leader Finds Her Voice in Mentorship Program

This past December, our Director of Creative Arts, Therapeutic Activities, and Engagement Ajanae Lewis completed the Reading Emerging Leaders in Supportive Housing (RELISH) program. RELISH is a professional development and mentorship program for emerging Black leaders in the homelessness and housing industry created by the Racial Equity in Supportive Housing (RESH) workgroup, comprised of nonprofit leaders in the supportive housing industry created through the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

"RELISH is well worth the experience. It provided me the opportunity and space to sit with other Black emerging leaders in Supportive Housing. It was a safe learning environment for myself and my peers, where we were able to learn valuable skills as we grow in the field. I want to thank Wendy Junious, BCHS' Chief Program Officer) and Jeff (Nemetsky, BCHS' CEO) for the continued support in seeing my strengths and growth within the agency. RELISH has given me the tools to navigate as I strengthen my voice in advocating for our residents," said Ajanae on her experience in the 24-week program.





A message from Chief Executive Officer Jeff Nemetsky

Dear friends,

Teddy is a 63-year-old formerly homeless man who lives at Oak Hall, one of BCHS' permanent supportive housing residences. An abuse survivor who struggled with trauma and schizophrenia for many years, Teddy began to heal and thrive once he had a stable place to live and on-site help. He has also become a well-informed consumer of political news, and we often talk about current events and U.S. and world history.

Usually upbeat and friendly, Teddy approached me a few weeks ago with worry and deep concern. "Jeff," he asked nervously, "what happens if the Federal government cuts BCHS' funding. We'd have to close, right?"

I didn't hesitate. "No," I said, "absolutely not. No matter what, we'll find a way, I promise." We shook hands and Teddy smiled, then made his way back to his apartment.

Just as Teddy identified, these are extremely uncertain times. Proposed budget cuts and sudden policy shifts are putting lifesaving programs at risk, leaving families and individuals feeling vulnerable and scared.

But at BCHS, we feel privileged to stand with so many compassionate friends and supporters like you, whose goodwill, generosity, and thoughtfulness is a bulwark that makes it possible for us to sustain the agency's lifesaving work, every day.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the Great Recession, 9/11 – no matter the circumstances, our BCHS team has never wavered in its work, empowering thousands of people in need to move from crisis to community each year.

As we consider the days and months ahead, the one thing I know for sure is that **we will continue to do what we have always done**: roll up our sleeves with resilience and resolve, while deepening our commitment to safeguarding the dignity, rights, and independence of our residents, colleagues, and neighbors.

Together, we will continue the fight to end homelessness – once and for all.

With appreciation,

Jeff Nemetsky
Chief Executive Officer

Join Us for the Pathways to Home Gala!



BCHS
BROOKLYN COMMUNITY
HOUSING & SERVICES
GALA
— Pathways to Home —
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025



Sean O'Neal
BCHS Board Member &
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Dr. Ambereen Sleemi
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To purchase tickets or
sponsorships, visit
bchands.org/2025gala



What's New at BCHS?

Home for the Holidays

Residents and staff across the agency spread joy this past holiday season. To get in the holiday spirit, staff at Chapel Street offices hosted a tree trimming holiday party for scattered site residents. At the event, everyone customized their own ornament to place on the tree.

At our Brooklyn Gardens location, staff and residents from Oak Hall, Ivy House, and Arbor Inn housing programs came together to decorate Christmas trees in the community room and courtyard. From stringing ornaments and lights, to sipping hot cocoa and singing carols, there was something for everyone to enjoy a festive evening!

The community spread holiday cheer to our family shelter, Arbor Inn, this season! Retired NBA player and Brooklyn native Albert King and his family generously fulfilled wish lists of toys and items, and provided \$100 worth of gift cards and presents for each family. For the expecting mothers, the Kings gifted diapers, wipes, and other newborn supplies. A group of employees from Monadnock crocheted blankets, hats, and gloves for all the moms and children of the shelter. This year, they made extra packages to ensure there would be additional ones for families who might arrive later in the winter months.



Teen Volunteers Spread the Love for Valentine's Day



A group of teen volunteers joined the Arbor Inn families and staff for a fun afternoon of crafts and cupcakes on the eve of Valentine's Day. The teens are a part of a larger volunteer group, The Service Collective, which connects youths with service opportunities throughout Brooklyn. The volunteers teamed up with our activities team to set up a craft buffet of stickers, gemstones, paint, and more for the moms and kids to decorate picture frames, while other volunteers snapped photos of the residents to put in their frames. By the end of the evening, the room was bursting with laughter, smiles, and fun dance moves! Thank you to The Service Collective for spending the afternoon with us! We hope to see you all soon!





Brooklyn Community
Housing & Services
105 Carlton Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11205

Expanding Our Impact

BCHS is expanding into East New York! With a completion date estimated for Spring 2026, 2435 Pacific Street will soon open its doors with 240+ new units of affordable and supportive housing. This development will include 71 units for formerly homeless families where the head of household has a mental illness.

The project team, which includes co-developer Alembic Community Development along with Love Fellowship Tabernacle Church, has prioritized energy efficiency in the development and will use geothermal heat pumps as a sustainable energy source for the building, ensuring long-term cost savings. This cutting-edge clean energy technology leverages the stable below-ground temperature of the earth to cool and heat the building, which will significantly lower electricity consumption.

Last Spring, Love Fellowship Tabernacle hosted a groundbreaking for the project, which was widely attended by city officials and members of the community in support of the project's progress. Stay tuned!



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