

**Statement of Liz Glazer
Director of Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing
September 16, 2014**

Good morning, Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairperson Torres, Chairperson Gibson, Councilmember Barron and members of the Committee on Public Housing. My name is Liz Glazer and I am the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. I am happy to come before you today to discuss security and safety at NYCHA, and in particular the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, targeted at improving public safety at the fifteen housing developments with some of the highest rates of violent crime in our city. This initiative is a coordinated effort of ten different city agencies, representatives of whom are here with us today and will be available for questions. Before I begin, I'd like to thank you for your focus on improving public safety in NYCHA, and for holding this hearing at the Breukelen Houses. At the core, this initiative is about strengthening neighborhoods, and so it is very fitting that we are discussing it here in one of the City's most storied neighborhoods, Canarsie.

As many of you know, on July 8th of this year, the Mayor announced the launch of a coordinated plan to make NYC's neighborhoods and housing developments safer. It was based on the premise that while law enforcement and police are a critical first response in reducing violent crime, improving safety is also about improving infrastructure, matching effective programs to individuals and families most in need, and strengthening our neighborhoods. In addition, it is about holding ourselves as the city accountable for results, making decisions based on data and evidence, and ensuring that neighborhoods have a voice and a means to be heard. This initiative includes the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the New York Police Department (NYPD), Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), Department For The Aging (DFTA), Department Of Probation (DOP), Center for Economic Opportunity, (CEO), Human Resources Administration (HRA), Parks Department, Mayor's Office of Operations (MOO), as well as the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ). We are also working with a team of researchers who are evaluating our results and outcomes, so that we can ensure that our programs and interventions are effective.

I believe that it is this level of coordination and rigor that has allowed us to deliver results and success in the first two months of the initiative, and will ultimately be a model of how to improve neighborhood safety that we can replicate citywide.

I want to provide several updates about what we have accomplished since the initiative launch. Since July 7th, the city has:

- Dramatically increased police protection at the target developments, deploying 150 additional police officers on the ground each week in the target developments, as well as officers at all 105 community centers across the city that had extended hours during the summer.
- Improved the physical infrastructure of NYCHA developments, starting with 184 light towers at every target development that started going up the day the initiative was launched. We have received substantial positive feedback about these light towers, both from resident leaders who say that they have improved quality of life, and from NYPD which has reported anecdotally that the lighting has disrupted criminal activity in some target locations.
- Started installing more than 1840 security cameras, with construction begun on camera installation at 43 developments and completed at 19. Almost 20,000 feet of shedding have been removed since May; that is 3.7 miles of shedding, longer than the borough of Manhattan at its widest. NYCHA is on track to eliminate all shedding that is not serving a safety or construction related purpose by the spring of 2015, which we know from resident feedback is a critical issue for quality of life. Importantly, these improvements are not limited to the target fifteen developments; they are occurring citywide.
- Conducted more than 6,000 observations of physical conditions as part of a quality of life survey in the target developments. And we did this with the assistance of residents themselves. This survey was conducted by 30 young people from 10 developments, who did this work as part of a summer youth employment program supported by the Mayor's Office of Operations and the Street Conditions Observation Unit (SCOUT). Results will soon be shared with both NYCHA and the Parks Department for incorporation into their maintenance plans.

In addition to deploying more officers on the ground and focusing on improving neighborhood infrastructure, we have also launched a number of programs to strengthen neighborhood and community cohesion. These programs include:

- Over 27,000 youth have participated in Parks Kids in Motion programming near each target development, with some of the largest sites, such as Maria Hernandez Park in Bushwick, serving between 300 and 500 young people weekly.
- Almost 1,000 additional youth from 15 sites working in summer youth employment programs throughout the city, including the 30 mentioned above.
- 105 community centers across the city operated at extended hours over the summer, until 11 pm every single night of the week, with many staying open until 12:30 am on the weekends. Participation at the centers was impressive and it increased every single week since extended hours began. Over this past summer, NYCHA's 24 centers served 5,300 young people and DYCD centers served 18,000. According to a survey of participating youth, 41% of them had not used the community centers before the extended hours began. It was great to see Councilmember Cumbo at Ingersoll on rollerskates when we visited with the Mayor, so I know that she can attest to the impact of these extended hours.

The feedback from all of these efforts has been incredibly positive, and we are pleased with the number of additional young people and families that our efforts have been able to serve.

Of course, we know that the most important indicator of success is what the impacts of these efforts have been on public safety. We can report that we are making good progress in reducing violent crime and making these communities safer for residents. In the ten weeks since the initiative was launched, violent crime has decreased 2% in the fifteen target developments compared to the same time period last year.

We focused on the fifteen developments that comprised 20% of all violent crime within NYCHA and we are encouraged that we are seeing a reduction in violent crime so early in the effort. However, this work is still in its beginning phases, and we intend to continue to target and evaluate in order ensure that we are delivering public safety results to the residents of this city.

In the coming weeks, there are additional programs that will launch, focused on serving the residents of these target developments. These programs include:

- HRA will conduct outreach in the developments to close the benefits gap for individuals who are eligible for cash assistance, SNAP, or public health insurance who are not currently accessing those programs, including holding office hours at community centers to help walk people through the application process.
- DFTA will host trainings for 2,000 grandparents who are acting as primary guardians to young children, providing them with a network of support as well as training on identifying signs of gang involvement and other high risk child behavior, teaching personal safety practices for them and their children, and engaging children in productive activities.
- CEO Works Progress Program will target non-profit providers in the target neighborhoods to provide job opportunities and training to individuals in the 15 developments. One provider, the Red Hook Initiative, has already been identified, and other applications are currently pending.
- The Department of Probation will replicate its highly successful Arches program, targeting 200 young people in the 15 developments to receive intensive mentorship services.
- The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence has established a NYCHA Domestic Violence Response Team, an 8 member team that will conduct extensive outreach throughout the 15 developments and surrounding communities, launch public education campaigns, link victims directly to services provided through the City's Family Justice Centers, and coordinate multi-agency services for high risk cases. This effort is particularly critical because although we see have seen a decrease in violent crime, felony assault in particular has increased 14% in comparison to this same time period last year, a portion of which is domestic and family violence. Moving forward, we will be specifically focusing efforts on the problem of domestic violence.

Agencies that began programming this past summer will continue to provide services this fall.

- Parks will provide Shape Up New York programs at all 15 developments, targeting all ages in fitness activities, as well as continue Kids in Motion through the end of October and from 3-6 pm around school schedules, weather permitting.

This next phase of the initiative will begin to pull together this disparate collection of programs into a concerted effort targeted at the greatest needs and risks in each neighborhood. To do that, we will be working with each neighborhood to understand better key issues faced by residents, and those insights combined with agency information will enable us to build an accountability mechanism -- a "Neighborhood-stat" -- that will bring agencies and neighborhood residents together, to align our goals, to permit us to work together on key issues and to ensure there we continue to make progress.

Finally, and equally critically, we continue to expand our evaluation and analysis of our outcomes, as well as seek out further neighborhood input on our indicators of success. Researchers have begun analyzing both how community centers and lighting deter crime and whether they are a factor in creating social cohesion, and will continue this research, as well as target evaluation of other programs as they come on board.

The Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety is an ambitious undertaking, which we believe is on the right track, by reaching and serving an increasing number of people and by improving public safety. We are just two months into a long term commitment to improving safety at New York's housing developments and neighborhoods, starting with those that have historically been the most plagued by violent crime. As we move ahead, we look forward to continuing to work with the Council to ensure that all residents of our City's developments can enjoy a neighborhood that is secure and safe.

I'll be happy to take your questions.

FOR THE RECORD



Testimony of

Stephanie Gendell, Esq.
Associate Executive Director
For Policy and Government Relations
Citizens' Committee for Children

Before the
New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing

Oversight Hearing:
A Safer NYCHA and the Mayor's Plan to Reduce Violent Crime at Public Housing

September 16, 2014

Good morning. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 71-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

I would first like to thank Chair Torres and the members of the Committee on Public Housing for holding this important hearing and providing us with the opportunity to testify.

Unfortunately, despite the vital importance of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing, decades of federal disinvestment have resulted in heavy operating subsidy cuts and \$6 billion in unmet capital needs.¹ This has led many NYCHA facilities to fall into disrepair: at this point a large capital investment is needed to make repairs, permanently restore onsite services and make public housing what it was once-- a high-quality, affordable housing resource for New York City residents.

Mayor de Blasio has already taken steps to try to address some of these critical issues and CCC appreciates the Mayor's and the City Council's commitment to making NYCHA developments safer and reducing violent crime. We support the city's new safety plan for NYCHA and investment of \$210.5 million for repairs and maintenance, targeted law enforcement, physical improvements to enhance security, additional exterior lighting, and the expansion of onsite programs for youth. With the reported rapid deterioration of living conditions and the increase in crime in public housing developments, we applaud the administration for their response to improving the safety and physical conditions of one of New York City's most vital affordable housing resources.

It has been well-documented that the financial strain caused by federal, state and city funding cuts has led to deteriorating living conditions in NYCHA facilities and long delays in repairs. Over the past ten years, the percent of NYCHA residents reporting three or more deficiencies in their apartment increased from 20 to 34 percent.² In 2002, there were water leaks observed in 1/5 of all NYCHA apartments and by 2011 that number had increased to 1/3 of all apartments. Similarly, the number of units with broken or missing windows increased 945 percent from 2005 to 2011, heating equipment breakdowns increased by almost 73 percent from 2008 to 2011, and plaster and peeling paint increased by 111 percent.³ This deterioration has led to an outcry from residents, advocates and elected officials regarding the poor living conditions and is far from the reputation NYCHA once held as one of the highest performing housing authorities in the country.

At the same time, it has been reported that NYCHA tenants do not feel safe. In fact, the former Policy Commissioner Ray Kelley stated that 20 percent of violent crimes are committed in

¹ Community Service Society, Strengthening New York City's Public Housing, July 2014 at page 2. Available at: http://b3cdn.net/nycss/2c5a651f36299b9dbf_02m6vzhld.pdf.

² *Id.* at 5.

³ Office of the New York City Comptroller Scot Stringer, How New York Lives: An Analysis of the City's Housing Maintenance Conditions, September 2014 at page 1. Available at: http://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/How_New_York_Lives.pdf.

NYCHA developments despite the fact that NYCHA is home to only 5 percent of the city's residents.⁴ Additionally, since the beginning of this year there has been a 31 percent increase in shootings in public housing developments.⁵

The Mayor's safety plan is a good start towards fixing the physical environment and safety concerns at the targeted NYCHA developments and we encourage the administration to expand these efforts citywide to improve the overall quality and safety at all public housing facilities. While we know federal support is limited, an investment from the city and state can help restore NYCHA to what it was established to be: providing safe and affordable housing with a variety of onsite programs and access to social and community services.

Programs and onsite services for residents and members of the community are some of the most valuable elements of NYCHA. However, as NYCHA has faced difficult budget constraints funding for these programs was cut and services have been reduced. NYCHA's community and senior centers provide important recreational, cultural and educational activities to residents at 129 community centers and 120 senior centers throughout the city.⁶ Additionally, employment, health and child care services are offered onsite at some NYCHA buildings to residents and members of the community.⁷ In total, NYCHA operates 334 housing developments throughout the city,⁸ but these services are not available at all NYCHA locations.

The Mayor has taken steps to increase services at NYCHA facilities by increasing the summer hours at 107 NYCHA community centers and through the middle school after school expansion, which increased the capacity of the NYCHA Cornerstone after-school program. Cornerstone is now offered at 70 NYCHA community centers and provides youth with important programs after school including, but not limited to literacy, college prep, computer access, homework help and recreational activities.⁹ It also serves as a location for intergenerational programs benefiting youth and adults at NYCHA developments. Programs such as this demonstrate how NYCHA can be a vital resource for youth and adults and that NYCHA developments are a natural place to offer community services. CCC applauds the Mayor in his investment in this program and we hope to see this program continue to grow and expand citywide.

While CCC was extremely grateful for the expanded summer hours in NYCHA community centers this summer, the community based organizations operating these programs had very little

⁴ Offices of Borough President Stringer, Senator Squadron and Assemblymember Kavanagh, Protecting NYCHA Communities, September 2012 at page 1. Available at: <http://www.nysenate.gov/files/pdfs/Report%20Protecting%20NYCHA%20Communities%20Squadron%20Stringer%20Kavanagh.pdf>.

⁵ Fact Sheet: Making New York City's Neighborhoods and Housing Developments Safer, July 8, 2014. Available at: <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/336-14/fact-sheet-making-new-york-city-s-neighborhoods-housing-developments-safer#0>

⁶ New York City Housing Authority, Community Programs & Services. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/community/community.shtml>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ New York City Housing Authority, About NYCHA. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/about/about.shtml>

⁹ New York City Department of Youth & Community Development, Cornerstone Program. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/cornerstone.shtml>

time to plan and hire staff due to the expedited time frame to begin. We hope that going forward service providers are given sufficient time to roll out programming and implement programs.

Specifically, CCC recommends that the City take the following steps to further enhance safety in NYCHA facilities:

- Increase onsite services at NYCHA housing complexes prioritizing child care, after school, employment and health services.
- Expand year round programming for youth and families and ensure sufficient time and funding is given to providers to create safe dismissal plans for youth and staff.
- Ensure NYCHA buildings are up to code by the time programs are expected to start.
- Fund facility maintenance and upkeep.
- Provide a NYCHA staff person at each development available for troubleshooting during program hours.

NYCHA public housing serves an essential function in New York City, providing much needed affordable housing to city residents. CCC has long advocated for policies that promote the long term strength and stability of New York City's affordable housing resources and we are grateful to see the city investing in NYCHA to correct these problems, despite federal cuts which have resulted in drastic operating losses and much needed capital improvements.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. We appreciate the City Council's interest in this very critical issue.



*Repairs: The Silent Accomplice to Crime in
New York City Housing Authority Developments*

Testimony of Leah Goodridge, Esq.

Staff Attorney of the Safety Net Project of the Urban Justice Center

Before the Committee of Public Housing of the New York City Council

Regarding

Oversight: A Safer NYCHA and the Mayor's Plan to Reduce Violent Crime in
Public Housing

September 16, 2014





Repairs: The Silent Accomplice to Crime in NYCHA

Good morning Chairman Torres and honorable members of the New York City Council. My name is Leah Goodridge and I am a Staff Attorney at the Safety Net Project of the Urban Justice Center. The Safety Net Project, formerly known as the Homelessness Outreach and Prevention Project, combines direct legal services, affirmative litigation, research and policymaking to achieve economic justice for all New Yorkers. For nearly thirty years, the Safety Net Project has worked on behalf of low-income communities. There has been much discussion on the existence of violent crime in NYCHA developments, but little attention paid to how these crimes occur as a result of systemic repairs. I am a part of our NYCHA Dignity campaign, which litigates on behalf of NYCHA residents in all five boroughs to acquire repairs. I am here to speak to you today about the intersection of violent crime and repairs in the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments.

Systemic building repairs are the silent accomplice to violent crimes in NYCHA developments. Without the facilitation and aid of the accomplice, the crime would have less likelihood of success. NYCHA residents know this all too well. For example, take the story of NYCHA resident Mary Green (whose name has been changed to protect her identity).

Although the walk from the subway station to Mary Green's apartment door totals ten minutes, Mary dreads this trek. After work, she picks up her six-year-old son Kevin and the two of them make it home at 9 P.M. As Mary exits the subway, she looks down at Kevin and says, "You know the drill, buddy." He does. Talk-talk time over. Walk fast like Mommy. No stop. They hurry past loiterers under the building's blue scaffolding, which lacks exterior lighting. When Mary and her son reach the building's unlocked entrance door—the result of a broken intercom—they are greeted by a man who Mary does not recognize standing in the lobby. Mary's uncertainty of whether the stranger is a tenant or trespasser is settled when he asks her for a dollar. Thoughts flood her mind: *Will he rob me? How fast can little Kev run upstairs if this man assaults me?* The absence of cameras in the lobby has emboldened criminals. Fortunately, she passes the man, only to see a sign on the elevator which reads, "Out of Order. Ticket #4516". Left with no other choice, Mary and her son climb the nine flights of dimly lit stairs to reach 9J. She clasps tightly onto her son with one hand and lifts up her cell phone as a light with the other, unveiling graffiti and urine-stained walls. They pass shadowy figures in the stairwell, smoking, loitering and hissing. When she finally reaches her door, Mary is relieved that she and Kevin arrived home unharmed.





Those ten minutes of Mary's life are an indelible reality for many NYCHA residents who are more vulnerable to violent crime due to the shoddy conditions of the premises. NYCHA residents do not live in the New York City where major crime increased by only 3.3 percent over the last five years. They live in a bifurcated city in which a 31% increase in major crime permeated their lives. In the city of NYCHA between 2009 and 2013, violent assaults rose by 40 percent, rapes increased by 13 percent, burglaries by 28 percent and grand larcenies by 51 percent. NYCHA residents have discerned that NYCHA's failure to address repairs exposes them to criminal attack. In a 2011 report on the issue of public safety prepared by the offices of Manhattan Borough President and elected officials, residents emphasized repairs as a major problem. Sixty-five percent of surveyed residents said there are not adequate protections to impede trespassers from entering buildings. Over forty percent surveyed said they feel unsafe in their buildings' staircases. Forty-five percent of residents surveyed said their lobby had working locks. "My son was mugged, but when we went to the police, they couldn't get a picture because the camera was off," one respondent said. The residents' concerns were also voiced in NYCHA's own Safety and Security Task Force report in 2011 when forty-eight percent of survey respondents reported broken locks and fifty percent said their building intercoms were inoperative.

These languishing repairs have proven to be powerful allies to criminals, working in tandem to deteriorate walls built to protect New York's poor. An out of order elevator can aid a rapist who may lurk in the stairwell waiting for the convenient time to strike. Scaffolding can partner with a robber to provide a convenient, dark location to hold an unsuspecting passerby hostage. Non-working intercoms, which result in unsecured entrance doors, can help trespassers enter developments. Broken front door locks can accompany a burglar who breaks into a tenant's apartment. The absence of light in a stairwell may facilitate an assault in a darkened area. Inoperative cameras can assist a murderer who can take a child's life without fear of identification.

We are here today to ask you to hold this silent accomplice accountable in order to reduce violent crimes in NYCHA developments. We believe that the following investments in NYCHA's development would weaken the nexus between systemic repairs and violent crime:

- **Public Area Repair Plan:** NYCHA must develop a plan to repair public areas of developments. The most common public area repairs have already been reported by residents, yet remain a consistent problem. These include broken elevators, non-working intercoms, faulty light in stairwells and scaffolding when work is not being done. Since these conditions remain consistent, NYCHA must devise a strategy to address the source of the problem. For example, an elevator which consistently breaks requires investigation into the causes of its defect and subsequent abatement of those determined factors.





- **Timely repairs:** When an unsafe condition surfaces, a resident's only option—second to commencing a court case for repairs—is to inform NYCHA and receive a “ticket number” for each repair. Unfortunately, many tenants wait months, sometimes years, for NYCHA to address the reported repair. NYCHA's failure to address repairs in a timely manner not only exposes residents to external vulnerabilities, but is also a violation of the New York City Housing Maintenance Code. NYCHA should fulfill its duties as a landlord and hasten its repair of backlog work orders. If repairs cannot be completed within a reasonable time frame, NYCHA should provide rental abatements to its residents.
- **Transparency in repairs:** As of now, NYCHA residents cannot call the “311” Citizens Service Center with complaints about repairs like their fellow New Yorkers and instead must rely on NYCHA's Centralized Complaint Center (the “ticket” system). NYCHA's process to remedy repairs must be more transparent by expanding the “311” system to residents. This change will enable NYCHA residents to receive independent follow-up enforcement services.

Mary and little Kev could not be here today. She is at work and he is learning about octagons in school. They wanted me to tell you that they need your help in creating parity between their lives and the lives of their fellow New Yorkers. The Safety Net Project welcomes the opportunity to meet with NYCHA senior management in the near future to discuss these issues further.





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**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing
Regarding NYC's Plan for Public Safety in NYCHA Developments**

Honorable Ritchie Torres, Chair Committee on Public Housing

**Gregory Brender, Deputy Director for NYC Policy & Advocacy
And Valerie Rosenberg, Policy Analyst**

September 16, 2014

Thank you Chair Torres and the members of the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing. My name is Valerie Rosenberg and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. UNH members have a deep commitment to public housing and to a model of public housing that provides comprehensive community based services. More than half of UNH member agencies operate programs on sites located in NYCHA developments and several are located entirely within NYCHA developments. Settlement Houses provide public housing residents with a broad array of services including early childhood education, after-school, youth development programs, adult literacy education, eviction prevention services and services for older adults.

Mayor de Blasio's plan for increasing public safety in NYCHA developments included:

- Keeping community centers open at night for young people.
- Investing in 850 new Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) jobs for young people living in NYCHA developments.
- Installing nighttime light towers in developments with high crime.
- Removing sidewalk sheds.
- Increasing police presence.

UNH strongly supports the vision of the Mayor's plan for improving public safety in NYCHA developments. This plan, which includes a major role for settlement houses and other community based organizations, is a welcome departure from previous public

safety plans that heavily utilized harmful police practices including stop and frisk. We are very pleased that the plan recognizes the value of youth development programs as a means of providing a safe space for young people and our comments will focus on the youth development programs that are part of the plan.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provides summer job opportunities for young people. These jobs both provide a salary for teenagers but help to instill and reinforce positive behavior. We are thrilled to see that the plan includes an increase in summer jobs as nearly 100,000 applicants are turned away from summer jobs annually. We look forward to working with the City Council to further expand SYEP.

The second and larger engagement with youth development programs was providing funds for community based organizations to stay open at nights and on weekends to provide a safe place for young people to go. Settlement houses recognize the value of an open door, particularly for young people. We are committed to working with the City to ensure that this programs continues and is successful.

First, we want to commend the staff of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) who worked day and night to make this program successful working with providers to help recruit staff and design programming and even securing a donation of air conditioners which was necessary to keep programs open and attractive to young people on the hot summer nights we experienced in July and August.

However, there were significant challenges for providers in ramping up nighttime programs at community centers and we believe that these challenges led to a mix in the quality of the programs available.

The challenges for this ambitious program arose from the speed in which is ramped up. Programs were open just a day after being notified by either NYCHA or DYCD and had little time to prepare. Staffing was a particular challenge as providers needed to depend on trusted staff and, for the most part, trusted staff were already working a full work week during the daytime hours. Staffing was an even greater challenge for those programs that did not already have daytime programming serving older youth as they did not have staff who specialized in serving this population.

In order to improve service that is continuing now and for next summer UNH makes the following suggestions:

- **Provide equal rates to DYCD and NYCHA funded programs.** DYCD funded programs, operating out of Cornerstone Community Centers, were funded at nearly \$100,000 for the summer while NYCHA funded programs operating on other NYCHA sites including DFTA funded senior centers and other DYCD funded programs were only offered approximately \$30,000 per year. This allowed for programs to open but often not to provide many options for recreation.

- **Designate a NYCHA staff member who can be the main point of contact for CBO's working in each development.** Providers often have challenges working with NYCHA on issues like repairs, opening times and other facility problems. UNH urges NYCHA to designate a staff member for each development who can work with the provider to resolve these issues.
- **Provide funding for staff overtime.** Many of the staff operating nighttime programs also work during the day. UNH urges the City to provide funding so that staff can be paid time and half for hours above the normal workweek.
- **Expedite Repairs in Community Facilities.** Many community facilities used by nighttime programs have significant maintenance and infrastructure issues. In some cases, the City Council has already allocated funds for repairs, but NYCHA has not acted to make the needed improvements. UNH urges NYCHA to expedite repairs on community facilities so that providers can offer programs in safe and comfortable spaces.
- **Provide more notice to providers for extensions.** While we understand this program is a work in progress, UNH urges both NYCHA and DYCD to give notice earlier to providers about requested extensions. For example, this labor day weekend, providers were informed on Friday that they were expected to keep programs open throughout the weekend and up until the start of school on Thursday. This forced providers to cancel prep time for after-school programs that were opening and force staff to cancel much needed vacations.

We thank the City Council, NYCHA and DYCD for their work on this issue and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY FROM DENNIS ACEVEDO, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AT GREEN CITY FORCE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING HEARING ON
OVERSIGHT – A SAFER NYCHA AND THE MAYOR’S PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME AT
PUBLIC HOUSING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2014 @ 10 AM
BREUKELN HOUSES COMMUNITY CENTER 715 EAST 105H STREET BROOKLYN, NY 11236

Chairman Ritchie Torres, members of the Committee on Public Housing Council Member Barron, and other distinguished members of the City Council and administration, thank you for allowing me to share my own and Green City Force’s perspective on the needs for a broader stakeholder engagement in the plan to reduce violent crime in public housing. Not only here in Community District 42, but citywide. I am Dennis Acevedo, Senior Director of Programs at Green City Force.

Green City Force (GCF) is a New York City based AmeriCorps program. Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty, preparing urban young adults to succeed in their chosen careers by engaging them in service, training and work experiences related to the clean energy economy. In doing so, GCF encourages them to lead socially and environmentally responsible lives. We are working towards a “green city” built on principles of sustainability, social, economic and environmental justice. Since inception in 2009, GCF has served 300 NYCHA 18-24 year old Opportunity Youth achieving 80% graduation and 80% placement in work and college.

I was born and raised in Marlboro Houses and lived there until I turned 18 and left to attend Stony Brook University. I still came home during summers and holidays but it was my way out of violence that I had seen nearly every day in the streets, stairwells, and parks of Marlboro. One day, just about 12 years old or so, I remember seeing my neighbor stab his own brother to death right before my very eyes. Hearing gun shots in the middle of the night and hoping that it wasn't someone I knew or worse someone in my family.... There are too many stories to share and some I chose to erase from my memory.

One generation later, our Corps Members have similar experiences to mine. In her July 2014 GCF graduation speech, NYCHA resident Krystal Ruiz stated, "Green City Force gave me a purpose and now I see that I was brought here for a reason. To help others make it out the same way I did. I'm a walking, talking, breathing example of someone who was heading right to their grave, almost facing 7 years to life in prison. I am here to tell you that all of it was worth it because eventually I ended up here, in Green City Force with the absolute feeling of not wanting to go back to my old ways...You have to recognize the problem to find a solution and that is what I found with Green City Force, that I don't want to be a problem to my community anymore. I am passionate and proud to be part of the solution and now I know how."

At GCF, we believe in the boundless potential of young adults. We offer concrete positive alternatives to violence and invite young people to be part of the solution. GCF Corps Members are making buildings more energy efficient and expanding access to healthy food in low-income

communities. In the process, they are gaining marketable skills, gaining confidence, finding a positive peer group and getting on a path to careers. In our experience, when offered, young people answer “Yes” to building a positive future for themselves and their communities.

At Green City Force, young NYCHA adults can take action. A quote from GCF Senior Team Leader Lawrence Harris states, “Green City Force has played a major role in coming into these neighborhoods and really showing these youth a better way to success: whether it’s in entering the job market, or going to school...or showing them that they don’t have to take anger out because they live in poverty.”

Without GCF, many of our Corps Members would be engaged in drug trafficking, gang involvement, or using whatever means necessary to get money just to survive another day. Here they learn that to give is to receive and that there is a big difference between doing well in the world and doing good for the world. In that space, there is no tolerance for guns and violence. Thank you for the opportunity to address the need for a greater investment in engaging young adults in NYCHA as a part of the solution to the serious issue of violence prevention, through expanding programming and services for NYCHA residents.



Testimony by The Legal Aid Society

**At the Public Hearing
on NYCHA's Safety Plan**

September 16, 2014

Introduction

The Legal Aid Society (the Society) is the oldest and largest provider of legal assistance to low-income families and individuals in the United States. Operating from 26 locations in New York City with a full-time staff of more than 1,800, the Society handles more than 300,000 individual cases and legal matters each year. The Society operates three major practices: the Civil Practice, which improves the lives of low-income New Yorkers by helping families and individuals obtain and maintain the basic necessities of life - housing, health care, food, and subsistence income or self-sufficiency; the Criminal Practice, which serves as the primary provider of indigent defense services in New York City; and the Juvenile Rights Practice, which represents virtually all of the children who appear in Family Court as victims of abuse or neglect or as young people facing charges of misconduct. The Society is counsel on numerous class-action cases concerning the rights of public housing residents.

The Legal Aid Society also has a recently formed an Anti-Gun Violence Unit. The Unit, funded through the City Council Task Force to Combat Gun Violence, provides legal support to organizations engaged in the Cure Violence model of interrupting violence at its root as a part of the New York City Crisis Management System. As an attorney with the Anti-Gun Violence Unit

working closely with community-based organizations engaged in anti-violence work both inside and outside of NYCHA public housing developments, I appreciate the opportunity to testify at the Public Hearing on NYCHA's Draft Safety Plan.

We thank the Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chairperson Ritchie Torres, Councilmembers Inez Barron and Vanessa Gibson, and the public housing committee for inviting our testimony.

NYCHA Safety Plan

Everyone in New York City has a right to be safe in their homes. This right applies to residents of both public and private housing. Feeling safe in one's home means having working, legal locks to the building and the apartment. It means having a working intercom system. It means that the elevators in the building function regularly. It also means that when conditions such as rodents or plumbing problems need to be addressed or repaired, the landlord is responsive and repairs them without delay. Feeling safe in a home also means that one's friends and relatives can visit without fear that they will face harassment by the police, or suffer the indignity of being stopped, searched, and/or arrested without probable cause, often solely because of the color of their skin. Feeling safe means living in a community where residents feel heard and supported.

Over-Policing is Not the Answer to Safety in NYCHA

Many NYCHA residents live in equal fear of people committing crimes and of the NYPD who have patrolled their buildings. NYCHA residents have told us that they live in fear that family members, friends or visitors will be arrested when they visit. Some have told us that they are more afraid of the police than drug dealers. Indifference and disrespect by the NYPD for the people, families and especially young men and women of color that reside in public housing, have become the norm in the NYCHA community.

The Society is counsel in *Davis et al v. City of New York et al*, which challenges as unconstitutional the NYPD's practice of stopping and arresting residents and legitimate visitors of residents in NYCHA public housing. The case also challenges the racially targeted practice of NYPD that was known as "stop and frisk." If NYCHA and the City do not understand and address the underlying causes of crime and violence, and rely instead on policies that harass and disrespect members of the community, the violation of NYCHA residents' constitutional rights is the inevitable and foreseeable result.

Recently a Legal Aid Society client told us that the NYPD presence in public housing does not make her feel safer. She told us that it is clear to her that the police who patrol the NYCHA development where she lives do not know or understand the community. As a result, there is an inherent distrust. This is not an uncommon refrain from our clients who reside in public housing. NYCHA bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of its residential buildings. The NYPD does not have familiarity with NYCHA buildings and residents and yet has been given free reign by NYCHA to implement police practices that create a pattern and practice of unlawful stops and false arrests, exacerbate on-going conflict with the community, and further burden the criminal justice system.

We can achieve safety in many ways but it does not need to be through the over-policing of NYCHA residents and their guests. Indeed, safety does not have to come at the expense of the residents' constitutional rights. This is why any policy that addresses the safety of NYCHA residents must embrace community-based programs that examine, understand and interrupt the root causes of crime and violence. NYCHA must focus on prevention rather than over-policing a community already living in fear of both crime and police.

Invest in Community-Based Approaches That Focus on Prevention Rather Than Over-Policing and Incarceration

Crime and violence must be addressed at the source. The Legal Aid Society applauds the City Council and its Taskforce to Combat Gun Violence and Mayor De Blasio's Administration for recognizing this and supporting the implementation and expansion of the Cure Violence model of violence interruption, which addresses and stops violence at its root in neighborhoods most affected by gun violence. Further, we commend the City Council's addition of "wrap-around services" such as mental health and trauma services, job readiness, legal services, and after-school programs when it established the New York City Crisis Management System to provide crucial support to those communities most impacted by gun violence. As a part of these "wrap-around services," The Legal Aid Society's Anti-Gun Violence Unit provides legal support to these community-based organizations. Through our community outreach and legal support services, we have the opportunity to see firsthand the incredible impact that these organizations have on improving safety in their communities.

The Cure Violence model is an evidence-based public health approach dedicated to strengthening communities and making them safer. It depends on community members, many of whom have past criminal involvement themselves, to identify the most at-risk individuals and intervene to curb episodes of violence. Vital to this method are the concepts of trust in the first instance and supportive services as the relationship continues. We have seen that when at-risk individuals in the community have this level of commitment and support from people who understand where they come from, they are less likely to commit criminal acts and more likely to focus on turning their lives around. It is through the tireless dedication of our partner community groups such as, Man Up! Inc. in East New York, Brooklyn; L.I.F.E. Camp, Inc. in South Jamaica, Queens; SOS South Bronx and Crown Heights, Brooklyn; Harlem SNUG in Manhattan; and 49 Strong in Staten Island, that the communities are growing safer and stronger.

It is our recommendation that to make NYCHA public housing developments safer, the NYC City Council continue to invest in community-based organizations dedicated to supporting individuals and strengthening the community through preventative measures such as these.

Focus on Repairs to Achieve Safety, Not Just Security Cameras

NYCHA's proposed safety plan includes the installation of security cameras and layered access and new doors. The Society does not believe that security cameras, by themselves, are the answer to NYCHA's safety problems. Security cameras do not necessarily prevent crime, they merely record it as it happens. As a greater priority NYCHA should commit to making timely repairs, upgrading the intercom systems and locks and maintaining up-to-date security records.

NYCHA has spoken publicly and repeatedly about its escalating need for funding to repair and maintain NYCHA's aging 178,000 units of affordable housing. Residents live with chronic disrepairs, frequent elevator outages, heating issues and leaks. Making an apartment habitable, addressing and repairing deficient conditions without delay, ensuring that door locks and intercom systems are in working order, and providing dependable and functioning elevators will make residents safer.

We support NYCHA's goals of improving physical security of its residents. However, NYCHA must ensure that it installs working and dependable door-to-apartment intercommunication systems and that its security records are up-to-date, minute by minute. This way, legitimate guests of NYCHA residents are not prevented from entering a residents apartment as a result of an outdated security system.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted:

Seymour W. James, Jr., Attorney in Chief
Adriene Holder, Attorney in Charge, Civil Practice
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING
PUBLIC HEARING
SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

A SAFER NYCHA AND THE MAYOR'S PLAN TO
REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME AT PUBLIC HOUSING

TESTIMONY OF GREGORY FLOYD, PRESIDENT,
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 237

THANK YOU CHAIRMAN TORRES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING COMMITTEE FOR CONVENING THIS HEARING ON MAYOR DeBLASIO'S PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME AT PUBLIC HOUSING.

AS THE PRESIDENT OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 237, WHICH REPRESENTS NEARLY 9,000 MEMBERS WORKING AT NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS, I WELCOME AND THANK THE MAYOR FOR PUTTING FORTH THIS INITIATIVE.

POLICE REPORTS TELL US THAT SHOOTINGS AT PUBLIC HOUSING INCREASED BY 31% THIS YEAR ALONE.

FOR ME, THAT IS NOT JUST A STATISTIC WE READ ABOUT.

NO, THIS IS MORE OF A WARNING ABOUT THE DANGERS MY MEMBERS--ONE THIRD OF WHOM ARE ALSO NYCHA RESIDENTS--FACE ON A DAILY BASIS.

UNION PRESIDENTS ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEIR MEMBERS WORK. WORKERS WHO HAVE HAD TO DODGE BULLETS REALLY ACCELERATE THAT CONCERN.

WITH THIS IN MIND, I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER TWO ADDITIONS FOR THE MAYOR'S PLAN WHICH, IN MY OPINION, WOULD NOT ONLY OFFER INCREASED PROTECTION FOR OUR WORKERS, BUT IN SO DOING, ALSO HELP TO FUTHER REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME AT PUBLIC HOUSING.

FIRST, GOVERNOR CUOMO, AT OUR URGING, RECENTLY SIGNED A BILL INTO LAW ELEVATING A MISDEMEANOR ASSAULT IN THE THIRD DEGREE AGAINST A NYCHA WORKER TO A CLASS "D" VIOLENT FELONY OFFENSE, THEREBY UPGRADING PENALTIES FOR OUR WORKERS ON PAR WITH OTHER MUNICIPAL WORKERS SUCH AS THE POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY TECHNICIANS.

OUR MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SHOT, SLASHED AND OTHERWISE ASSAULTED ON THE JOB.

MAYOR DeBLASIO, IN A LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR, PRESSING HIM TO SIGN THE PENDING LEGISLATION, WROTE THAT THIS BILL WOULD COMPLEMENT HIS OWN CRIME REDUCTION PLAN, AND THEREBY SERVED AS A STRONG DETERRENT AGAINST ASSAULTS AND INTIMIDATION OF NYCHA WORKERS.

BUT THIS LAW IS SO MUCH MORE.

IT SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD COUNTERACTING THE CURRENTLY EXISTING ENVIRONMENT OF "ANYTHING GOES" AT PUBLIC HOUSING LARGELY BECAUSE RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE WOULD HAVE TOUGHER CONSEQUENCES.

THE PENALTIES OF THIS LAW SHOULD BE WELL-PUBLICIZED.

THEY NEED TO BE MASS ADVERTISED.

THEY NEED TO PUT FEAR INTO POTENTIAL CRIMINALS. LET THEM THINK: IS IT WORTH THE TIME TO DO THE CRIME?

ALL NYCHA RESIDENTS AND WORKERS WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS.

SECOND, THE MAYOR'S PLAN CALLS FOR SURVEYS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH NYCHA RESIDENTS TO IDENTIFY EXISTING PROBLEMS AND DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES TO FIND SOLUTIONS.

I SUGGEST ALSO TALKING TO LOCAL 237 MEMBERS.

THEY KNOW THE TURF.

THEY KNOW THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES.

THEY KNOW THE STAIRWELLS.

THEY KNOW THE "HOTSPOTS".

THEY WORK IN THEM. THEY LIVE AMONG THEM.

LOCAL 237 NYCHA WORKERS MAY HAVE VALUABLE RECOMMENDATIONS RANGING FROM WHERE BETTER LIGHTING IS NEEDED, TO WHERE BEST TO PLACE SECURITY CAMERAS, TO WHICH AREAS IN THE PLAYGROUND ARE FREQUENTED BY THE DRUG DEALERS.

CLEARLY, OUR MEMBERS ARE AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE THAT NO PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME CAN AFFORD TO EXCLUDE.

IN SUMMARY, ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 237, WE APPLAUD THE EFFORT TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME AT PUBLIC HOUSING BUT BELIEVE THAT OUR MEMBERS, WHO WORK AND LIVE THERE, SHOULD BE INVOLVED AS BOTH A GUIDE AND A DETERRENT FROM WITHIN, WHO WILL SERVE AS A TREMENDOUS ASSET IN HELPING THIS PLAN ULTIMATELY ACHIEVE ITS GOALS.

THANK YOU.

FOR THE RECORD

Groundswell
art • community • change

**Groundswell Testimony to Public Hearing:
NYCHA & The Mayor's Plan to for Safer Public Housing**

"The Value of the Arts as a Tool for Social Change"

*Amy Sananman, Executive Director, Groundswell
540 President St 1A, Brooklyn NY 11215
718.254.9782*

*Tuesday, September 16, 2014
Breukelen Houses Community Center, Brooklyn*

Good morning esteemed panel. Thank you for the honor and privilege to testify on the value of the arts as a cross-sector tool for social change. My name is Amy Sananman, and I am the founder and the Executive Director of Groundswell, NYC's leading community public arts organization. Groundswell's projects are designed to engage artists, underserved, marginalized and economically disadvantaged young people, and community members in creating visible and permanent change in some of New York City's most challenged neighborhoods. Over our 18-year history, Groundswell has employed thousands of artists, youth, and community members, including hundreds of NYCHA residents, in the creation of upwards of 500 works of public art throughout all five boroughs of New York (samples are included in your packets).

We applaud the Mayor's commitment to reduce violent crime in public housing and are thrilled that \$15.6 million is slated to expand key programs to help build stronger individuals, families, and communities.

Arts and culture can provide the inspiration, tools, and capacity needed to unify New York into a more just and equitable city for all. This time of transition and possibility calls for a leap of imagination to realize a vision for the city that cares about our neighborhoods, insists on equality, and embraces our civic energy. We need to dream big, feel connected, propose bold new ideas, and engage the city in inclusive transformation. Because cultural change precedes and embodies political change, arts and culture are an essential part of this progressive agenda. While the past decade has seen the arts as a city strategy for economic development, they have been sorely underutilized as a force for a more progressive city.

As the cultural capital of the world, New York City should be the global leader in using one of our greatest assets—creativity—in engaging youth and communities in both physical and personal transformation.¹

When I was a tenant organizer in the early 90s, I remember—perhaps like many of you— seeing those 'flower pot' decals literally pasted onto the 'broken windows,' masking the physical disrepair. Much research

¹ Policy Brief: Arts & Culture for a More Just & Equitable City, Sananman, Amy & Caron Atlas with over 100 agency signatures. <http://www.groundswellmural.org/sites/default/files/ArtandCultureforaJustandEquitableCity.pdf>

has been done about preventing crime through the environmental design (CPTED²)—generally focusing on how people congregate and increasing ‘eyes on the street.’

This is not the physical transformation I am talking about. Today you are not going to hear a lot about reducing crime, but you are going to hear about youth taking themselves, their futures and therefore school and work more seriously. In short, you’ll hear about how youth become inspired to aspire.

We talk less about broken windows and more about youth inspired by their own potential. About communities creating their own narratives. About youth, residents, local business, community organizations, and government agencies solving complex problems together. About making our neighborhoods more beautiful places to live by revealing their hidden treasures.

Many of the youth we work with come from homes and schools whose windows are metaphorically and often literally broken. To ‘fix’ these windows, we need the collective action of the factors that caused the break—from health professionals to educators; from poets to maintenance crews; from teens to electeds.

By cultivating creative collaboration across stakeholder groups the creative arts can be an effective vehicle for increasing community stewardship and carrying out social change. Research has demonstrated a significant correlation between arts activity and the increase in the desirability, commitment, social integration, and quality of life in a community.³ Groundswell’s collective model provides an effective template for cross-sector, intergenerational social change.

Transformation of Youth

For many youth, negative labels and few opportunities to enjoy civic, school and community activities make the road to adulthood seem remote⁴. However, **cultural activities provide youth with an identity they can be proud of as opposed to a pathology, diagnosis or serial number.**

As then Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation Vincent Schiraldi framed his agency’s engagement with Groundswell:

We’re really trying to offer young people, particularly young people on probation, an opportunity to flip the script and redefine themselves. So that they don’t think of themselves as a thug or a criminal or a probationer, but they think of themselves as a construction worker or a father or a student, or in this case, an artist.

When youth do ‘real life’ projects with adult stakeholders with highly public ‘real life consequences,’ they are inspired to aspire: increasing their sense of self-esteem and raising the bar on their performance and aspirations.

A recent survey of Groundswell youth alum revealed that virtually all felt more inspired about their futures, leading the overwhelming majority of them to take school more seriously resulting in an increase in grades for 82% of them. 100% of our 2014 capstone Portfolio Development’s college-eligible participants were

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime_prevention_through_environmental_design

³ http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411784_magnetizing_neighborhoods.pdf

⁴ “Promoting Citizenship and Activism in Today’s Youth,” Lonnie R. Sherrod, p 293 in *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change: New Democratic*, ed. edited by Pedro Noguera, Julio Cammarota, Shawn Ginwright.

accepted to the program of their choice, including the Fashion Institute of Technology, Pratt Institute, and The University of the Arts, among other prestigious programs. Most received scholarships ranging from financial aid to a full ride.

"I learned that I have an artistic talent that I never knew I had," shared youth participant Ejoro Oghfor. "It has been really encouraging to start learning the skill of painting and then notice that I'm good at it. Now I am hungry to learn more. Not only have I learned to paint better, but I'm also learning to work with people and collaborate to turn many ideas into one cohesive concept."

In a recent project with court involved youth, at the time of enrollment, none of the participants had employment, all had very limited work history and only one participant was in school at the time and was overage and under-credited. By the end of the program, 6 of the 7 out-of-school participants had enrolled in a GED program or obtained full-time employment. Overall, 27% of the Groundswell youth obtained employment by the end of the program, which far exceeded the average of 8% across all NYC Justice Community programs.

Through their engagement, youth **learn about related careers**—with 79% reporting that Groundswell helped them to start to figure out 'what job/career I wanted to pursue,' and 80% sharing they gained skills that helped them in school and helped them be professional. One participant shared:

"I have grown tremendously. I was a victim, then I survived, now I thrive. I have accomplished a lot including getting back into high school, and I am on track to graduate. I am accepted to several art colleges and the rest is up to me."

Projects that engage youth in solving real life challenges through **activism help young people make better long-term choices** because they serve as a social contract. For example upon completion of an anti-gun violence mural a number of teens joined New Yorkers Against Gun Violence as interns on the gun legislation work. American Friends Service Committee used images of the mural in the educational materials they still use today. Another participant shared:

"After doing the anti-gun violence mural, I knew I couldn't really be a hypocrite cause everything that I stood for when I did that mural it would go down the drain and basically would be BS if I went and got a gun or something."

In fact, 80% of participants reported that engaging in activism and community organizing helped them organize their own project or personal goal. 74% saw an impact in being able to think strategically and many reported that they **remained civically engaged as a result of the project**.

Transformation of Community

90% of community partners believe a partnership with Groundswell **supports their outreach efforts and raised awareness of the issue addressed by the artwork**. Similarly, 90% of community partners successfully leveraged our public art making process as a tool to more deeply fulfill their missions. For example, in summer 2014 Bronx-based VIP Community Services leveraged the art making process to engage adult men in recovery and further its mission:

"Through our partnership with Groundswell, VIP Community Services has been delighted to see our clients exploring sober living through the medium of art. This project has been an extension of our commitment to

changing lives and transforming our community," said Debra De Jesus Vizzi, President of VIP Community Services. "We were gratified to see engaged participation, the blossoming of artistic expression, and pure joyful partnering with Groundswell and our community partners."

Collaborative projects help build the connective tissue among youth and between youth and their communities. East Brooklyn Community High School Principal Patrick McGillicuddy transformed his school through murals:

"I'm always outside of the school building in the mornings. Every day I see people walk by the mural, react to it, respond to it. They say, 'Wow! That's beautiful. What's that about?' It connects people to our school and our mission... The mural starts the conversation – and that's amazing."

"We were able to see that we are all connected in some way," shared Staten Island teen artist Tasleem Sheikh. "We told each other stories, related to one another, and supported each other. That was the most important thing about this mural project for me-relating to one another to create family and have valuable shared experiences. I was able to open up and let new people into my life, which I know will help me move forward."

Through another Groundswell initiative, Hunts Point residents came together across racial, economic, and generational divides to prioritize policy change suggestions to NYC DOT.

"The colorful and welcoming public artwork perfectly translates the Vision Zero initiative into an inviting visual story for the general public," said NYC DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg. "As we continue to build momentum for safe streets, partnerships with organizations like Groundswell are critical to our success."

Through Groundswell's "Transform/Restore: Brownsville" initiative, young adult probation clients and community residents created a mural corridor along historic Pitkin Avenue, benefiting Brownsville's entire population of 116,000 through a strengthened business district and quality of life improvements.

"Our partnership with Groundswell and the Pitkin Avenue BID has successfully enabled probation clients to become more deeply connected to their community. Through Transform / Restore our clients have been affirmed as active community participants," said NYC DOP Commissioner Ana Bermúdez. "By having them involved in participatory public art projects, the City of New York is certain we are one step closer to our shared vision of stronger and safer communities."

"The Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District is pleased to see the third mural unveiled through our collaboration with Groundswell and the City of New York, supporting our ongoing effort to create a safe and vibrant environment for local businesses to thrive," said Daniel Murphy, Executive Director of Pitkin Avenue BID. "By encouraging visible change, we look forward to expanding this sense of safety, community ownership, and collective connection to more places in Brownsville."

Moving Forward

As this ambitious initiative gets underway, Groundswell encourages the Mayor's Office to set a gold standard in terms of formalizing best practices and metrics that ensure that NYCHA residents aren't just **being exposed to youth and family programming but leveraging art as a tool for lasting experiences** – physically transforming NYCHA developments to highlight community assets and illustrate a shared vision of a revitalized neighborhood.

Specifically we call for:

- 1) **Valuing and supporting disconnected youth/ community members in becoming vital and creative citizens, enlisting them as leaders in envisioning a new future for NYCHA by forging and support youth/adult partnerships and cross-sector, interagency strategies** that include the arts.
- 2) **Cultivating community capacity and equity** by activating community centers by providing nonprofit providers no/low cost program space. Provide support to small and neighborhood-based cultural organizations to ensure that they have the same access to city resources and technical support that larger institutions enjoy.
- 3) **Inspiring participation** by providing fun, engaging cultural programs that offer youth 21st century skills, job training/employment, mentorship, while expanding their access to sustained quality opportunities, resources, and services with a goal of changing the trajectory of their lives via expanded SYEP and school year partnerships with high quality providers.
- 4) **Spurring community-wide social and civic engagement by producing something beautiful, visible and valuable** that can generate momentum for growth and attract other public/private investments, promoting and publicizing NYCHA resident achievements.
- 5) **Keeping the progressive arts community at the table** by providing participants the highest quality service possible, though partnerships with arts organizations whose values are rooted in asset-based methodologies, and outcomes measurements necessary to ensure excellent programming and long-term accountability. We support establishing formal mechanisms for artist activists and cultural change practitioners through the inclusion in advisory committees and working groups.

Arts and culture engage our humanity in creating the city we deserve. Stories, images, and music speak to and clarify our deepest values, sustain and strengthen community identity, and support critical thinking and problem solving. Creation is inherently liberating, helping us see that something else is possible. It recognizes, affirms, and elevates the lived experiences of those often left out of civic engagement. Through imagination and creative action we can reconfigure our social and economic relationships, shift power, and make change.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any additional questions.

For more information and work samples: <http://www.groundswellmural.org/projects>



540 President Street, Suite 1A, Brooklyn, NY 11215 | 718.254.9782 | www.groundswellmural.org

MISSION

Groundswell is a NYC-based, 501(c)(3) founded in 1996 to bring together youth, professional artists, and communities. We use art as a tool for social change by creating high quality works of public art in under-represented neighborhoods. Youth in our programs have worked with professional artists and community organizations to transform more than 450 public spaces, enhancing the quality of life for thousands of New Yorkers everyday.

CONSTITUENCIES

Youth

Groundswell youth attend New York City public schools and come from low-income and working-class families. Annually, up to 800 14 to 21 year-olds participate. Youth join our programs due to public art-making's connection to graffiti and street culture, to make new friends, express themselves, develop new skills and work collaboratively. Groundswell youth have gone on to work as paid assistants and serve on our board of directors.

Community-Based Organizations

Groundswell is NYC's leading organization dedicated to preserving, teaching, and advancing the study and practice of public art-making. Community based organizations, schools and city agencies contact us to learn how public art can raise awareness about their organization, advance their mission, build community and visually transform public space. We have collaborated with over 300 organizations since our founding.

Artists

Local, established artists are at the helm of every Groundswell project. All have bachelors and/or masters degrees in fine arts and experience working with youth. Giving underserved youth the kinds of experiences that are in short supply in their lives outside of Groundswell, they are dedicated to helping create a new generation of creative, civic-minded spirits.

PROGRAMS

Youth in Groundswell programs develop and hone their skills in four key areas: **Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Decision Making, and Compassion.** They master skills in art making to communicate ideas, work effectively with others, make informed decisions, and to build awareness of and empathy for others.

For Youth

- **Summer Leadership Institute (SLI):** A summer job-training program for 75-85 youth. Six teams of youth work with artists and community-based organizations to learn job skills and create public art.
- **Teen Empowerment Mural Apprenticeship (TEMA):** An after-school program, modeled on a traditional apprenticeship, in which teens create public art for community-based organizations.
- **Voices Her'd Visionaries (VHV):** An intensive program where young women who have demonstrated potential for leadership examine issues facing women and girls, and choose a topic upon which to focus a summer public art project.
- **Making His'tory (MH):** An afterschool men's leadership development program, in which young men explore an issue for a large-scale summer public art project.
- **Portfolio Development Program:** Groundswell high-school students interested in attending post-secondary art programs work with artists to develop a complete portfolio for their applications.

For Court-Involved Youth

- **TurnStyle:** In partnership with the Center for Court Innovation and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, youth arrested for minor offences fulfill their community service requirements working with Groundswell artists.
- **Segue:** Youth who have graduated from the TurnStyle program learn the skills that are necessary for participation in Groundswell's after-school and summer public art-making programs.
- **East River Academy:** Incarcerated youth awaiting sentencing collaborate with Groundswell artists to create murals for the Riker's Island jail.

In the Community and Schools

- **Community Commissions.** Schools and community groups contract with Groundswell to develop public art projects that reflect their mission. Commissioned projects often meet at a partner organization's site and are sometimes part of the school day.
- **Arts in Education.** Groundswell partners with local public schools to implement visual arts projects into the academic curriculum.

2013 HIGHLIGHTS

Over 800 youth participated in our programs in 2013. Most are NYC public school students, with over 85% of SLI youth enrolled in or graduates of NYC public schools. School-year programs are over-subscribed.

We worked with upwards of 50 Community Partners in 2013, several with multiple projects. Partners included the Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District, Brownsville Community Justice Center, East River Academy at Rikers Island, LISC New York City, NYC Department of Education, and NYC Department of Transportation.

We worked on highly visible sites including community gardens, public schools, the water splash area of Riverbank State Park, storefronts along historic Pitkin Avenue, and the pedestrian underpass connecting Atlantic Avenue to the beautifully restored Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Our project themes included sustainable industry, healing and recovery in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, environmental conservation, livable streets, the New York City mayoral transition, and restorative justice.

BE AMAZING

Groundswell © 2012

in collaboration with Farragut Houses,
Goodwill Industries, and NYC Department of
Youth and Community Development

Acrylic on Wall, 10 x 150 ft

228 York Street
Vinegar Hill, Brooklyn

Groundswell artists designed a mural honoring volunteerism and community for the Farragut Houses Community Center. The mural was created as part of "Be Amazing: Stand Up and Volunteer" week. Artists Chris Soria and Esteban Del Valle worked with dozens of volunteers to execute this mural during the celebration.

For more on this project: <http://bit.ly/1sXZGB3>





*Yesterday I Was _____. Today I am _____.
Tomorrow I Will Be _____.*

Groundswell © 2012

in collaboration with NYC's Department
of Probation's NeON site, the Brownsville
Community Justice Center,
and Student Farm Project

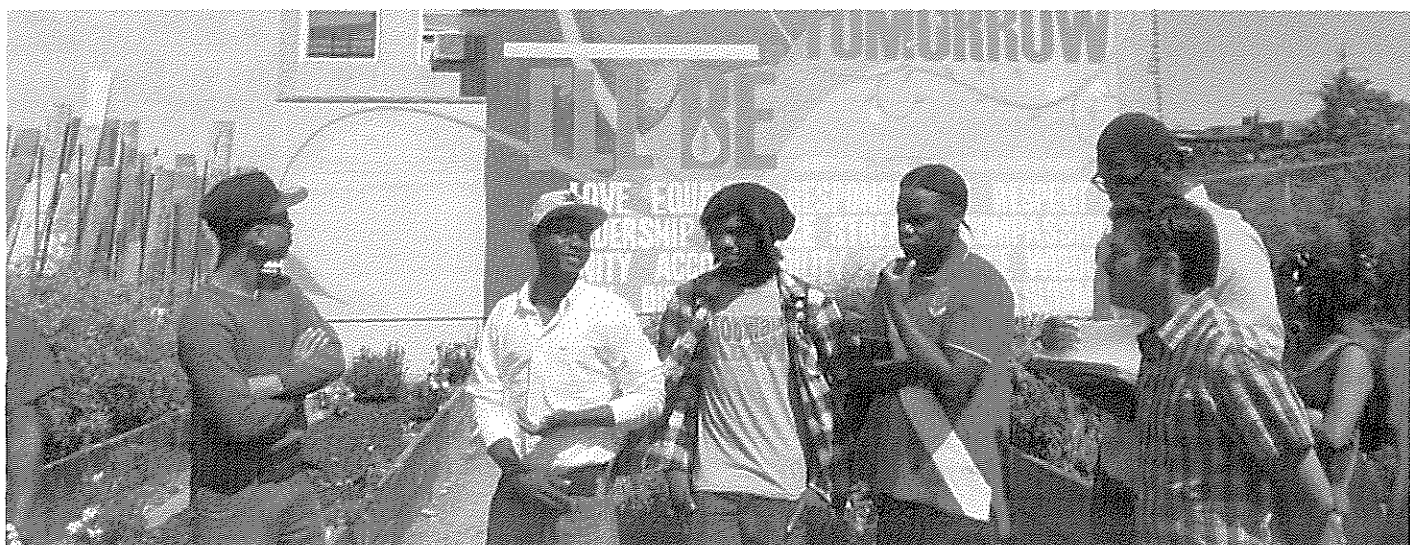
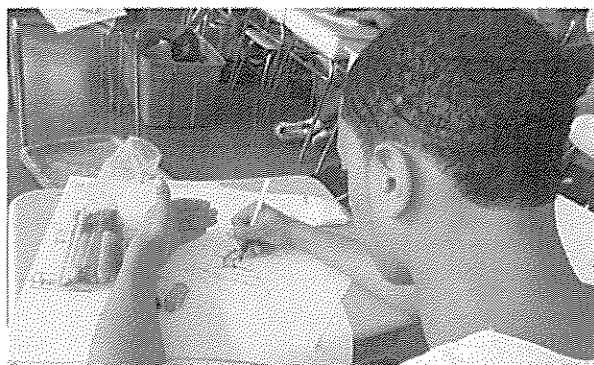
Acrylic on Cement, 32 x 27 ft
514 Rockaway Avenue, Brownsville, Brooklyn

This mural, created by a team of young men
(over half of whom had a history with the
juvenile justice system) invites Brownsville
residents to consider the past, present, and future
of the community's identity. The text-based
mural image reads, "Yesterday I was _____,
today I am _____, tomorrow I'll be _____," a
proclamation that is a statement and a question at
the same time.

View a video on Groundswell's impact:

<http://bit.ly/VQI9Hp>

For more on this project: <http://bit.ly/1o3KGxo>



Intersections Humanized

Groundswell © 2013

in collaboration with NYC's Department of Probation's NeON site, the Brownsville Community Justice Center, Pitkin Avenue BID, and NYC DOT

Acrylic on Wall, 55 x 35 ft

1550 Pitkin Avenue, Brownsville, Brooklyn

"Intersections Humanized," created by young adult probationers, presents a vision of shared streets in Brownsville and supports the neighborhood's economic revitalization. In the mural, a central constellation of individual portraits overlooks Pitkin Avenue, highlighting the strength and diversity present in Brownsville.

For more on this project: <http://bit.ly/JhxZzJ>



The New York Times



Pictured: "Moving Along," a mural by the community group Groundswell, along Atlantic.
Credit: Philip Greenberg for The New York Times

Travel

Along a Stretch in Brooklyn, Moving Beyond the Bars

September 22, 2013

The western end of Atlantic Avenue has long been a challenging location for restaurants and retailers: blighted by traffic entering and exiting the Brooklyn Queens Expressway and far from the subway stops that have made nearby Smith and Court Streets commercial hubs. But the opening of Brooklyn Bridge Park along the East River has created a busy pedestrian path down a stretch of Atlantic Avenue once visited mostly for its bars. Now, stylish boutiques, upscale restaurants and antiques dealers mix with local watering holes on the blocks between Hicks Street and Clinton Street. Visit atlanticavebid.org for a neighborhood guide, or stop by the Atlantic Antic street festival on Sept. 29 to get a sense of the avenue's western revival.

— SUSAN STELLIN

BROOKLYN RAIL

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE



MAILINGLIST

Local

October 3rd, 2013

Walls That Outlast Sandy

by Eleanor J. Bader

Pablo Picasso famously declared that “art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life,” but it wasn’t until Hurricane Sandy that people interpreted his statement literally. And to commemorate the one-year anniversary, four massive artworks honoring the survivors have recently been unveiled.

The works were created by 60 employees of the City’s Summer Youth Employment Program who teamed with the Groundswell Community Mural Project, a 17-year-old Brooklyn-based organization that brings painters, youth, and community activists together to encourage social change through art. Located in Coney Island, Far Rockaway, Staten Island, and eventually Red Hook, areas dubbed the “recovery diaspora,” the murals are intended to celebrate human resilience. At the same time, the works call attention to ongoing problems and structural inequities—poverty, substandard housing, lousy schools, pollution, environmental contamination, and a dearth of healthcare providers, to name a few—that existed in these communities long before the waters rose.

Each mural nonetheless sends a largely positive message—hope for a better future and a more peaceful and sustainable world—that metaphorically washes away the dust. The Rockaway mural was created by 14 men who were part of a Groundswell program called Making His’tory. Lead artist Misha Tyutyunik, a 2006 graduate of Pratt Institute who now lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, explains that he and his team collaborated with the Local Initiative Support Corporation, better known as L.I.S.C. NYC, and the Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation, a group that has worked to revitalize the Rockaway Peninsula since 1999. Together they came up with a design for the front wall of the Challenge Preparatory Charter School, a place that played an important role as a post-storm community hub.

Tyutyunik emphasizes that while he “finalized” the design, taking care to insure that it was aesthetically pleasing, all of the concepts it includes—from the iconic A train that runs through the area, to a picture of the Challenge School as a lighthouse, or beacon—came from the youth. What’s more, while the actual painting took place over the summer, research to determine mural content began months earlier and involved groups of 14 to 21-year-olds trekking to the affected

neighborhoods and speaking to residents.

Jules Joseph, Groundswell's Youth Advocate, told the *Rail* that during several months this spring, approximately 25 teens and young adults surveyed local residents about what they'd like to see in their communities, thus enabling them to discuss the storm's impact on them and their families. "A lot of folks wanted to acknowledge the ongoing struggle," Joseph begins. "But they also wanted us to understand that they are determined to rebuild and believe that things will eventually be better than they were before Sandy." Such optimism is conveyed in the murals' themes, which include: "We Rose Above the Challenge" (the Rockaways), "People Helping People" (Red Hook), and "You Can Take Our Homes But You Can't Take Our Hearts" (Staten Island).

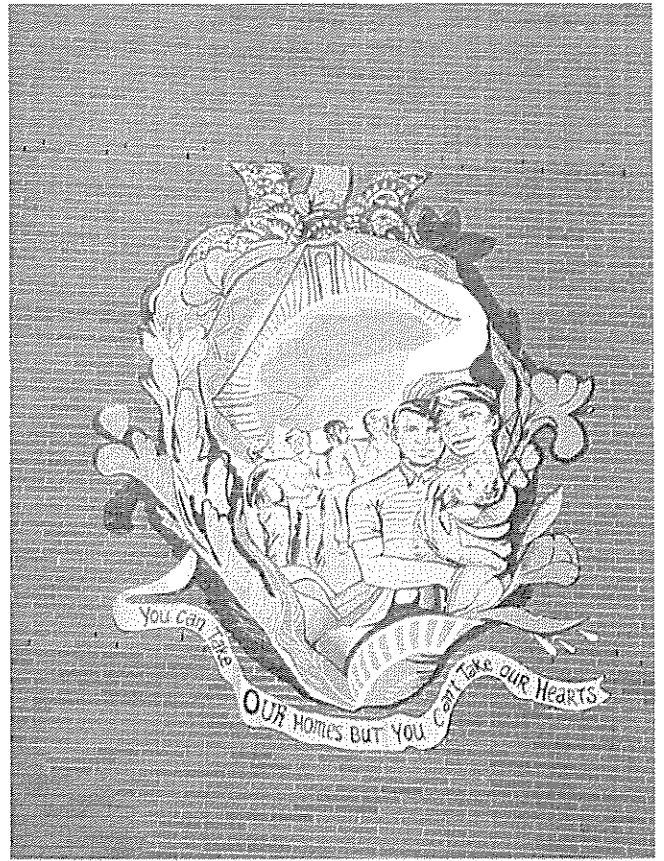


Photo by Sharon Polli

Although some of the muralists were personally impacted by the storm—living in areas without electricity for days or weeks—their involvement with Groundswell helped them make the personal political. It also taught them something about human decency. "The amount of compassion people showed for their neighbors really resonated with everyone," Joseph continues. "We spoke to one man, a contractor, in late May who talked about how his company was opening up houses that had been boarded up since November. He and his co-workers were funding the work themselves, out of pocket, which impressed us all." Joseph notes that while this effort was particularly laudable, it was not anomalous, and interview teams heard countless accounts of spontaneous acts of generosity and kindness, from individuals climbing 15 flights of stairs to deliver food, medicine, and clean clothing to the homebound, to serving as Spanish and Chinese language interpreters for people in need.

"The kids did between 35 and 45 interviews, and afterwards they wanted to be accountable to both the communities they'd visited and to themselves," Joseph continues. "There was a seriousness and a tenacity to respectfully reflect on the struggles these communities were facing in the art they created." In addition, Joseph says that participants walked away from the research with a newfound appreciation for the importance of recording people's experiences and stories.

Sunset Park resident Marcos Diaz, 19, became involved with Groundswell in October 2012 when he was referred to the program by the internship coordinator at South Brooklyn Community High School in Red Hook. He says that he took the stories he heard from community residents—about young students being bused from Coney Island to other neighborhoods, or about how scared folks

were when the power went off—into the design process, putting sketches up on a wall and later working with other artists to come up with a coherent plan for the 35-foot mural that now hangs in the Rockaways.

Although Diaz was not new to mural-making, he says that he learned a lot because this time he was not painting directly on a wall, but was instead using parachute cloth that had been cut into seven five-foot panels. “It’s more time consuming to paint on a wall,” Misha Tyutyunik says. “When you paint on cloth it’s completely smooth, there is no need for scaffolding, and there are no weather constraints. Once you’re done painting, the mural is pasted on the wall and coated with something called Nova Gel to protect it from the elements.”



Photo by Sharon Polli

Both Diaz and Tyutyunik are pleased with the final product—and so are Groundswell’s community partners and folks at the Challenge School. “It did not feel like a job,” Diaz smiles, pointing to the sections of the mural that he created. “I love painting on walls; it gets me excited. I love that so many of the ideas the group pitched are in the mural. What else did I get from it? Leadership skills. How to collaborate.”

As he whips out his phone to show me some of the designs he’s crafted, he explains that he expects the skills he learned over the summer to come in handy when he launches his career as a muralist and illustrator. He also plans to stick around at Groundswell, he says, learning as much as he can before heading to college.

For its part, now that the summer is over and the four community murals are completed, Groundswell will move in new directions. Several Groundswell staff members are collaborating with street artist Swoon on a Sandy-inspired mural to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the storm; it will be located on the corner of the Bowery and Houston Street in Manhattan. Another similarly themed mural will go up in Industry City in Sunset Park, which is also home to a large group show of artists affected by Sandy that opens in mid-October. The show is curated by *Rail* publisher Phong Bui.

Groundswell looks forward to the completion of its 500th mural in 2014. To mark the occasion, staff members are working to formalize the lessons learned since 1996. “We’re taking the knowledge we’ve developed since we began this work and are creating best practice models to share with others,” Amy Sananman, Groundswell’s Executive Director, says. These practices, from mural development to youth empowerment, follow what she calls “scaffolding up,” an organizing strategy that aims to foster creativity and communication. Rather than a follow-the-dots guide to

organizing, the materials will reflect on what worked and did not work, based specifically on Groundswell's experience. The group's post-Sandy efforts surely will be counted among its successes.

Groundswell's 17th Annual Art Auction will take place on Monday, October 7th, 7 – 10 P.M.

The Staten Island mural is located at New Dorp High School, 465 New Dorp Lane. The Coney Island work is in the Santos White Garden/Lighthouse Mission, 2114 Mermaid Avenue, in Brooklyn. The Challenge Preparatory Charter School, site of the Far Rockaway mural, is located at 710 Hartman Lane. Groundswell staff members are continuing to search for a viable wall in Red Hook; thanks to Sandy, several available outdoor walls have proven too unstable for mural installation.

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

Protecting Artists and Galleries in the Wake of Hurricane Sandy: A Checklist for Artist-Gallery Contracts

by Judd Grossman and Michael Straus

Sand in Their Shoes Belle Harbor Families Struggle to Return Home

by Amanda Waldroupe

Wall of Water

by Chloé Rossetti

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Can Murals Change a Neighborhood?

In New York's Brownsville community, a large-scale art project aims to do more than just beautify.

SARAH GOODYEAR | [@buttermilk1](#) | Jul 2, 2014 | 10 Comments



"Brownsville Moving Forward" is at one of the neighborhood's central intersections, where Pitkin Avenue crosses Mother Gaston Boulevard. (Sarah Goodyear)

The B14 bus sighed to a stop on Mother Gaston Boulevard in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Inside, a teenage girl turned in her seat to gaze idly out of the window. Then her eye fell on something worth looking at: the new mural painted on the side of a building at the corner of Mother Gaston and Pitkin Avenue. "Brownsville Moving Forward," it reads in tall, bold letters, woven through with images of the neighborhood's heroes and its aspirations.

From the sidewalk, Patrick Dougher watched the girl as she studied the painting, which looked so fresh it might still have been wet. Dougher is the program director of [Groundswell](#), a nonprofit organization that creates murals all around New York City with teams of artists and young apprentices. “That’s what I love about where this one is,” says Dougher. “It’s a bus stop. Think how many hundreds of people are going to see it every day.”

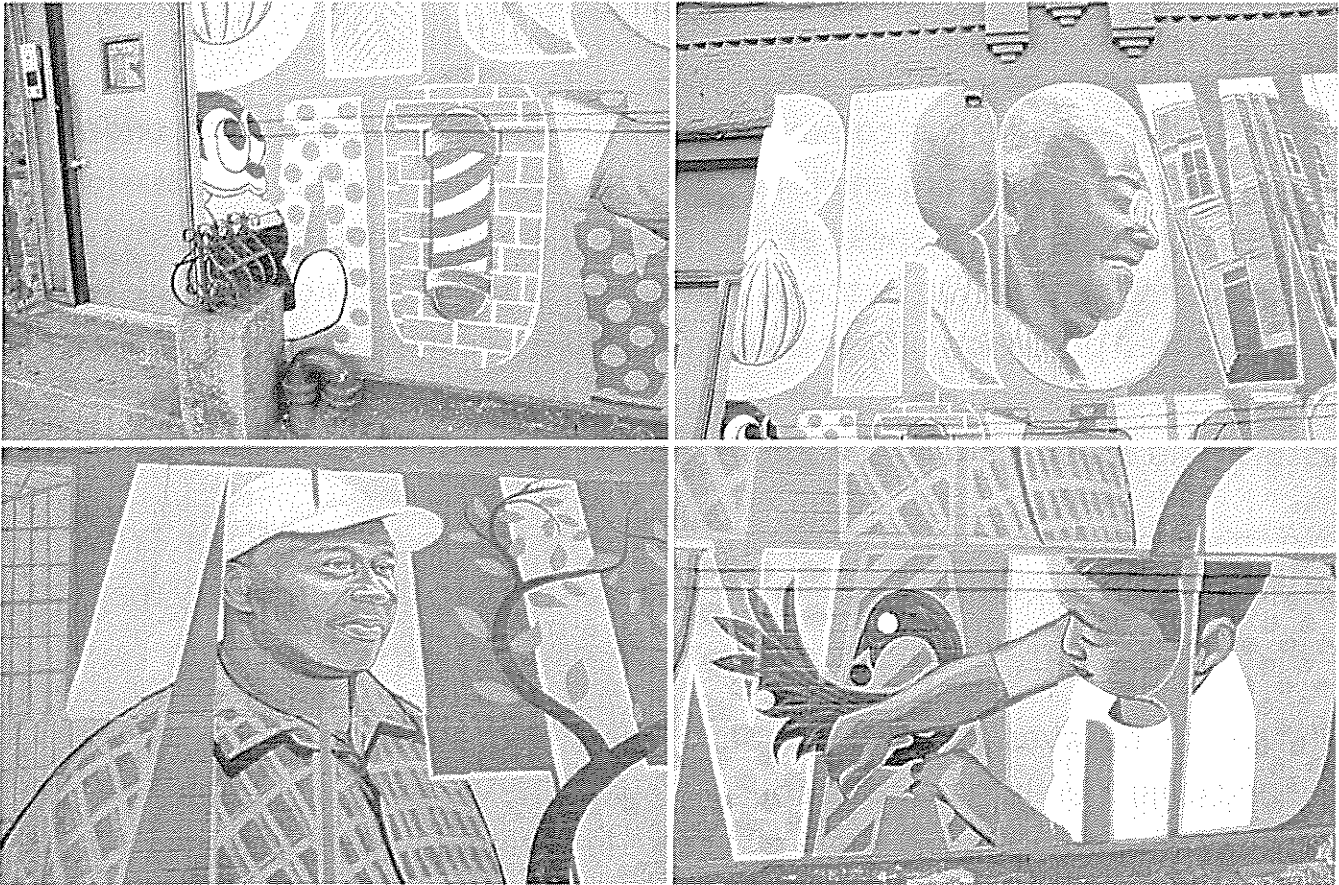
Visibility is key for Groundswell’s projects, and its work in Brownsville—a neighborhood most often tagged with words such as “tough” and “troubled”—is no exception. The vivid image on the wall on that corner is the most outward expression of the positive effect that Groundswell hopes to have on this perennially underserved community, home to more public housing projects than any other New York neighborhood and plagued by a persistently high crime rate. One in 12 young Brownsville men between the ages of 16 and 24 is in prison.

“Now that businessman doesn’t just see them as a scary person in a North Face jacket. Maybe he’ll hire them.”

The work began last year when Groundswell, in partnership with the NYC Department of Probation and the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District, won a National Endowment for the Arts grant of \$100,000 for “Transform/Restore: Brownsville.” The two-year project will ultimately create five new murals in Brownsville, enlisting crews of young people to come up with the concepts for the art, design the murals to fit the allotted spaces, and then make them a reality. Some of the youth, who work under the supervision of Groundswell artists, are on probation, while others are Groundswell veterans who were originally referred to the program by teachers or community organizations. About 40 probationers will be involved by project’s end.

The goal: to beautify the neighborhood with art that has meaning for the

community, while at the same time employing and engaging young New Yorkers and giving them a constructive environment in which to express themselves.



Clockwise from top left: 1. A tribute to the work of Max Fleischer, a seminal cartoonist of the early 20th century and the creator of Betty Boop, who grew up in Brownsville; the barbershop has always been an important gathering place for the neighborhood. 2. Mother Gaston was a Brownsville community organizer and educator who founded Heritage House, a place where the neighborhood's young people could go to learn about their ethnic heritage. 3. The Sankofa bird is a symbol drawn from the African tradition, symbolizing the importance of looking back to and learning from the past. 4. Greg "Jocko" Jackson was for many years director of the Brownsville Recreation Center and was considered the unofficial mayor of Brownsville before his sudden death from a heart attack in 2012. (Sarah Goodyear)

Groundswell was founded in 1996 with the goal of using collaborative public art projects to improve neighborhoods and the lives of the city's young people. Since then, it has created more than 450 murals in 75 neighborhoods around the city. Some 800 youth, mostly between 14 and 21, now work on Groundswell projects each year.

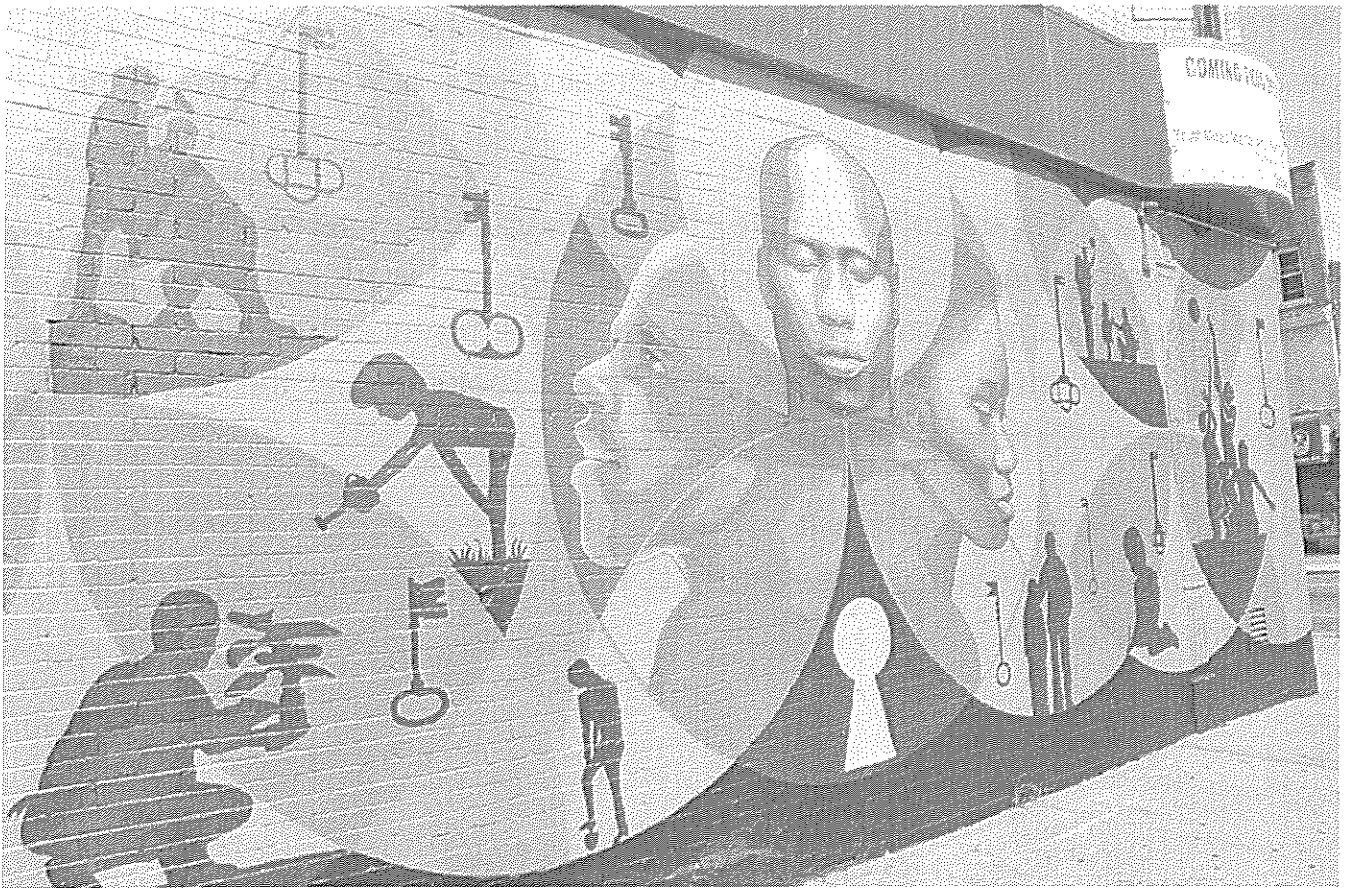
Most are students in the city's public school system, and come from working-

class or low-income families. Some are referred for community service from the criminal justice system. "We've been working with court-involved youth for at least eight years now," says Amy Sananman, Groundswell's executive director. "It's a continuum. We work with kids before they get in trouble, kids at risk, kids who are sentenced to us."

Vincent Schiraldi, who was commissioner of the probation department under Mayor Michael Bloomberg and is now senior adviser to Mayor Bill de Blasio's office of criminal justice, spoke enthusiastically about probation's involvement with Groundswell last fall as the project got underway. Schiraldi, who decentralized probation offices during his tenure as commissioner to increase local involvement and decision-making, said his goal was to "bolster people's assets" and engage with probationers in a positive rather than punitive way.

"You always know what you want to achieve," he told me last October. "You want people to turn their lives around and give back to the community they damaged with their crime."

The arts, he believes, can be a great avenue for that, and projects like the Groundswell murals can have a special power. The walls are all donated by local businesses that have a very real stake in seeing the young people who work on them succeed. "We try to re-engage our clients with the natural community controls that are going to be out there the rest of their lives," said Schiraldi. "Now that businessman doesn't just see them as a scary person in a North Face jacket. Maybe he'll hire them."



One of the new Brownsville murals by Groundswell, representing the neighborhood's "hidden treasures." (Sarah Goodyear)

The first two murals in the Brownsville project were conceived during the winter by groups of 10 to 15 youth working with lead artist Chris Soria. One has the theme "Hidden Treasures," and is painted in rich earth tones. It contains images of people planting and watering trees and caring for family members. "It's about the talents that people don't realize that they have until they do it," says Soria.

The "Brownsville Moving Forward" piece is a riff on an old-fashioned "Welcome to Brownsville" postcard theme, and it has transformed a wall that was dull and lifeless before. The mural prominently features the faces of neighborhood heroes Mother Gaston, a community organizer and educator, and Greg "Jocko" Johnson, a pillar of the community whose premature death from a heart attack in 2012 is still spoken of with deep sadness on Brownsville's streets.

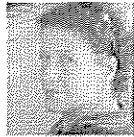
Sean Turner, an experienced Groundswell youth leader who lives just a couple of blocks from here, has served as a mentor on the project. "When we were putting it up, people were getting off the bus and saying it was amazing," says

the 26-year-old . He points to the barbershop across the street, which has a perfect view of the mural. "It's something great to look at when they're in the barber's chair," he says.

As with any large-scale collaborative effort, creating the murals has hit some bumps along the way. The logistics of finding adequate work space over the winter were tough, and there were some creative differences as well. That's all part of it. "It's an intense process," says Dougher, looking up at the finished piece. "An entirely rewarding process."

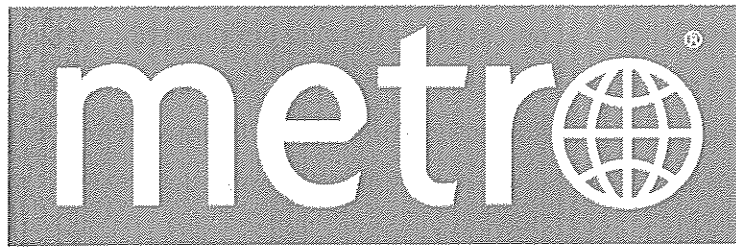
"To be able to come together with a couple of artists and create is great," says Turner, with a huge smile. "I love art, so to me, it's fun. It's enjoyable. To me, it's life. Art is life for me."

About the Author



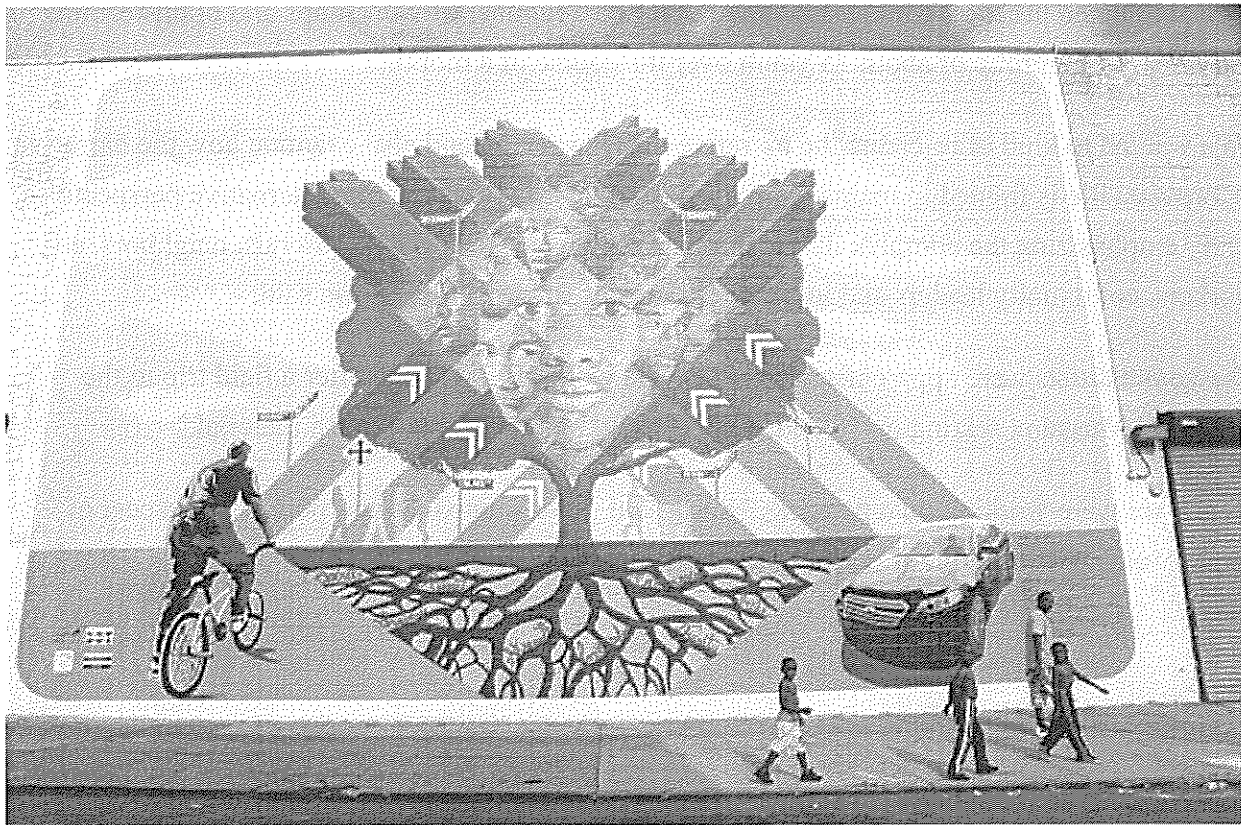
Sarah Goodyear has written about cities for a variety of publications, including Grist and Streetsblog. She lives in Brooklyn.

ALL POSTS | [@buttermilk1](#)



By Danielle TeholakianPublished: September 15, 2013

Brownsville youth showcase the beauty of their neighborhood



A good deal of attention has been paid to the Brownsville neighborhood in Brooklyn over the last few weeks, after a 16-month-old baby boy was shot in the head as his father pushed him in his stroller across Livonia Avenue. They were on their way to visit the toddler's great-grandmother.

Brownsville is known as one of the city's toughest areas when it comes to gun violence, but there are many in the neighborhood who are trying to change that. Just two days before 16-month-old Antiq Hennis was fatally shot, a group of young Brownsville residents were proudly unveiling a pristine mural they had spent the summer painting.

The mural, on the corner of Straus Street and Pitkin Avenue, is the result of a collaboration between several parties: a community mural organization called Groundswell; the Department of Transportation; the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District; Brownsville Community Justice Center; and an artist named Chris Soria and his assistant artist DonChristian Jones.

RELATED ARTICLES

- [Two indicted in shooting death of 1-year-old Antiq Hennis](#)
- [Antiq Hennis' dad tries to sell interviews to media outlets](#)

Soria explained the idea, which came about through a number of workshops and brainstorming activities with a group of about 15 youth over the course of a month.

“We wanted to kind of re-create the narrative of Brownsville and also examine how the narrative of Brownsville is framed in mainstream media and take a look at it from alternative perspectives, really emphasizing the complex nature of relationships between family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, community leaders and just the residents of Brownsville,” Soria said.

The young artists were apparently inspired by the work of El Anatsui after a field trip to the Brooklyn Museum, seizing on “the idea of creating a fabric of interwoven material.”

“Since we were working on a painting,” Soria said. “We wanted to incorporate that aspect of things weaving in and out of one another in the design.”



Most of the youth came to the project through the Brownsville Community Justice Center.

“They have some kind of criminal justice involvement, but part of this program is to start to change their own personal narrative, as well as change the narrative of the neighborhood,” explained James Brodick, the project director at the organization.

Dashawn Hayes, one of the young people who worked on the mural, said the experience was “an awesome adventure.”

“I had fun throughout the whole thing,” Hayes said. “My co-workers, everybody was outstanding, everybody had a certain energy that they brought to the table.”

“We were just a family,” he added. “I’m gonna remember these people for the rest of my life and I really appreciate that.”

Hayes proudly noted that he has already earned eight certificates for achievements through Brownsville Community Justice Center projects this year alone.

“People actually acknowledge me for my efforts,” he said.

Sean Turner, another young Brownsville resident who worked on the project, is a visual artist himself. Turner noted that this is his second Brownsville mural: He started last year with the one that now sits on Rockaway and Sutter just a few blocks away. He said he's "hoping we can get a third one soon."

"May not with Groundswell, maybe just for us, like something that we want to do for the community," he mused.

Hayes, on the other hand, is a musical artist. This was his first time working with visual arts.

"I never thought that I could ... express my feelings through art like this," he said. "I felt like it was a good technique and something that we should explore — everybody should explore."

Turner acknowledged Brownsville "is a rough neighborhood," but said he really believes in the ability of projects like the mural to have a positive affect on the neighborhood and its residents.

"You have to go against everything that is negative and think about positive things," he insisted. "I think to see something nice produced in the neighborhood — it will help change it. The small things that we do will make it get better eventually."

"Rome wasn't built in a day so we can't expect Brownsville to change in a day," Turner added.

Hayes agreed that projects like the mural can "of course" help young people in the neighborhood make better decisions and stay away from gun violence.

"I think if they actually stay and participate and see the experience they're going to be getting, they'll actually want to stay," he said. "Because that's how it was for me."

Follow Danielle Tcholakian on Twitter @danielleiat

- See more at: <http://www.metro.us/newyork/news/local/2013/09/15/brownsville-youth-showcase-the-beauty-of-their-neighborhood/#sthash.ioLnQZTt.dpuf>



Council for Unity

History

The Council for Unity was born out of racial violence in 1975 when its founder, Robert J. De Sena, recruited six contending gang leaders to make peace in their school and community. From that tenuous beginning, an innovative model was forged that reduces violence and discrimination in schools, integrates communities, promotes community policing and public safety and converts correctional institutions into community assets that prevent crime.

Today the Council model is vetted in the NYC Public School System as an empowerment program in elementary, middle and senior high schools. The success of that initiative has led to the migration of the Council paradigm throughout New York State and to other parts of the country. Often the subject of media coverage and documentaries, the Council's reputation has resulted in its flag being planted on three continents with programs in The Republic of Moldova and Nigeria.

The linchpin to this expansion is the Council's innovative curriculum, its continuity of membership support and its ability to meet the deepest needs of both children and adults.

Council's four diverse models:

The School Based Initiative

The Council's unique model incorporates academics, service curriculum, and character education. Participants are culled from the diverse constituencies within a school with a focus on uniting the student body to promote unity, safety and achievement. The CFU model focuses on participants' strength as they design and implement projects that serve the school and community resulting in youth who are prepared to become participating citizens.

The Adult and Family Partnership (AFP)

The AFP was initiated by parents and alumni who desired the same support systems and unifying experiences as Council for Unity students. These adults witnessed the transforming experiences of youth who used the Council model and were inspired to develop a paradigm of their own. The AFP provides support services for adults and parents, advocates for services that will benefit the community and brings about unity between and among all culture. The AFP works to enhance the personal abilities of young people to use non-violent means to social problems by providing self-help workshops, social events and resource information.

The Correctional Facility Model

This initiative creates a unity model within a correctional facility that promotes safety, increases communication and cooperation between and among diverse cultures and factions and leads to greater participation in the programs that are offered to inmates. Participants are engaged for six months at a time; and mentors who have completed the curriculum would act as facilitators. Recruitment for each class reflects the demographics of the facility in order to insure that the "unity" component within the Council culture be met.

Council for Unity Public Safety Curriculum

In order to strengthen school and community partnerships, the Council has created a unique public safety initiative and curriculum that integrates local police stations into these operations. Police officers participate with Council students in a class with a focus on promoting public safety and improved relationships between kids and police.

This conjoining of schools, communities, police departments and prisons seriously impedes the ability of gangs or other organized criminal elements to function.



THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dominick A. D'Angelo, Principal

Scott Herman, Assistant Principal

Eric Ierardi, Assistant Principal

Joyce Sigona, Assistant Principal

DAVID A. BOODY

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 228 FOR MAGNET STUDIES

"EYES ON EXCELLENCE"

(718) 375-7635

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March 20, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the Principal of IS 228 -David A. Boody, I have found the "Council for Unity" to be invaluable to our school community. IS 228 is a multi-cultural school of 930 students. Council has helped students of different ethnic backgrounds connect with each other. Council has helped students grow in so many different dimensions. Students have learned the importance of character and community. Many Council students have embarked on community drives for coats, toys and canned foods. Council for Unity has changed many students' lives and "Council Students" are improving the lives of people in need.

Council for Unity is a major force behind the success of the IS 228 community. We continue to challenge our students to slay their own personal dragons and look forward to a continued partnership with the Council for Unity.

Sincerely,

Dominick A. D'Angelo
Principal, IS 228



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

Phil Cardinale, Town Supervisor

Town Hall, 200 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, NY 11901
Tel: (631) 727-3200 / fax 631-727-6712

December 29, 2009

To Whom It May Concern,

A town can be best judged by the opportunities it makes available to it's youth. Hostile or unsettled relationships between different ethnic groups within a town reduce hope and diminish the possibilities for the future of our children.

Several years ago Riverhead began an initiative to partner with it's school, police, community, and local correctional facility to ensure that our youth were given the necessary support to form themselves into good citizens. This initiative was "Council for Unity".

By establishing a town wide theme of accepting only civility, mutual respect and hard work, we built bridges not walls.

Understanding the cycle of negative behavior allowed us to stop the cycle and create new windows of opportunity for individuals from the local correctional facility.

Council for Unity guided our police into forming a closer connection with our school children and our community. Police Officers worked alongside teachers, and parents to produce transformative change. Our teenagers gained new respect for our police officers who they now refer to as "friends". We saw a drop in drug-related arrests, reduction of violent gang activity, and a virtual elimination of bias attacks in a community made up of over a dozen different ethnic groups.

Council for Unity provided us a way to preserve what we value most, our children. With pride and hopefulness and without reservation I recommend the Council for Unity initiative to those in other towns, cities, counties, and states, ready to make a critical change for the better.

Regards,


Phil Cardinale
Supervisor

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

VINCENT F. DEMARCO
SHERIFF

November 9, 2009

Robert DeSena, President/Founder
Council for Unity
45 East 20th Street – 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10003

To Whom It May Concern:

As Sheriff of Suffolk County I contacted the Council for Unity in 2007 to address gang conflict in the Suffolk county Correction Facility. To say I was skeptical of the outcomes purported by this agency would have been an understatement.

Two years later, I am a believer, what I have witnessed is as follows:

- A decrease in violence with the facility, enhanced safety has been the result.
- Communications between inmates and correction officers have improved.
- Inmates have learned to respect diversity. They learn to respect other cultures, ethnic groups, religious preferences and rival gang members.
- Members replace violence with mediation to solve problems.
- Members find positive uses for free time. They now read, tutor each other, write in their journals and do homework.
- Members are motivated to participate in programs that help to empower them and raise their self esteem. They participate in anger management, vocational programs, educational programs, substance abuse meetings and religious services.
- Group on group violence in the facility has been greatly reduced.
- Mentoring between older inmates and minors increased significantly since the inception of the program.
- At the onset of the Council for Unity Program only 2 participants were enrolled in GED programs. Now, the inmates themselves require that all CFU members must enroll and receive their GEDs.
- The first female facility Council for Unity Chapter has been inaugurated at the SCCF, a historic milestone for the program.
- Several members have found gainful employment after discharge as a result of the program.

RIVERHEAD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dr. Diane B. Scricca
Superintendent of Schools
(631) 369-6717



David M. Densieski
Principal
(631) 369-6794

Alison D. Conroy
Assistant Principal
(631) 369-6793

January 28, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been familiar with the mission of Council for Unity for the past several years. Before learning about the mission of CFU, I was a little concerned that its mission would not compliment my goals for Pulaski Street School. As I became more familiar with Council for Unity, I have discovered that its mission not only fit my goals but has enhanced our educational objectives for all of our students.

The training has been very comprehensive for our faculty leaders and the staff associated with the program has been awesome and a resource for me and my support staff. Additionally, in my fifth and sixth grade school, I believe the training and education provided for our students has helped our students make positive choices and consider the directions of their futures as they begin to enter adolescence.

In turn, I fully endorse the goals and objectives of the Council for Unity program. I welcome the program here at Pulaski Street School and hope that we will be able to continue our partnership for many more years to come.

If I can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

David M. Densieski
Principal



Educational Services That Transform Lives

Gary D. Bixhorn
Chief Operating Officer

Barry Rosen
Administrative Coordinator

To Whom it may Concern,

By 2003 it became clear that gangs were migrating from New York City across Nassau County into Suffolk County. As a K through 12 Violence Prevention Specialist for Eastern Suffolk BOCES, I became aware of what was happening to schools and communities all over the county. With my superior and colleagues in tow we visited a program in gang infested Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx, New York that was to change not only our lives but literally those 1,000's of kids and adults as well. What we witnessed during our visit drove home the axiom that the Council for Unity is "The Program of Miracles."

In a class made up of opposing gang members from the Crips, Bloods, Latin Kings, Dominicans Don't Play (DDP) and Albanian Boys Incorporated (ABI), the students were teaching the Council curriculum. They were united as a family and changed the dynamic of that school to this day.

Looking back it's hard to imagine what ensued next. We offered chapter status to Riverhead High School in the North Fork of Long Island. We recruited kids who were gang involved, students from the various cultures in the school right up to student government members. I had the founder of Council for Unity (CFU), Bob De Sena, present the model knowing full well the kids were under no mandate to join. There were 29 kids in the room, and when the presentation was over, the group was asked how many wanted to join. All hands went up. When I explained that the first phase of the program would be as a club after school and they had to attend 2 days a week, I requested a second vote. That too was unanimous. What followed became our history.

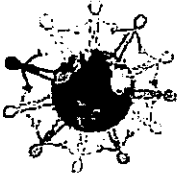
The Council's customized curriculum is utilized as an elective in Social Studies and English. This was the second phase of the program where kids get academic credit for their participation. Immediately negative relationships in the school changed. Kids from cultures previously in conflict or engaging in discriminatory practices were now united in a new family. The same held true for gang members. I personally witnessed members of MS-13 and the Bloods shake hands and join CFU. The same was witnessed across the board from other groups in conflict in the school until there were no more conflicts.

With the Riverhead Schools under the Council's umbrella, our community became the first chapter in the nation to adopt the Council's Adult and Family Partnership model. Riverhead was a segregated community from as far back as anyone could remember. Like the school, that changed over night as well. Soon our community based organizations were on board as well as our clergy. Then the police department became a chapter and finally the inmates in the Suffolk County Jail based in Riverhead also became part of our family. We became a different town that discovered a paradigm that is a model for communities all over the country.



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Riverhead Council For Unity - Riverhead Adult / Family / Parent Partnership

To Whom it May Concern:

When Council for Unity came to Riverhead High School on 2003, my son Nick was a troubled youth. He was failing in school and constantly getting into fights. As a mother I was distraught as nothing seemed to reach or help my son. It was suggested that I put him in the Council for Unity class in the high school. My son became transformed from that moment on. He passed all his classes and is now enrolled in college. More than that he actually works for the Council for Unity as a site coordinator, doing for other kids what was so warmly extended to him.

As a parent I had to become part of this if for no other reason than to share my son's journey. We were now members of a larger family when both he and I joined the Council's Adult and Family Partnership (AFP) upon his graduation. I witnessed the transformation of an entire town. For as long as I can remember we were segregated. Through the AFP that all changed. Blacks, Whites, Latinos and Asians came together under the Council's banner. Then members of the clergy joined. They were followed by members from the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotarians and merchant associations. The Riverhead Police Department joined as well as countless parents of kids from our school system.

When the Suffolk County Jail joined we became a different community where no organized criminal activity can function. We have all the components to prevent that. Also realizing that re-entry into society is critical to break cycles of despair and drug dealing, our AFP has integrated CFU ex offenders back into our community. We have gotten them jobs and give them support. They are off our streets and supporting their families.

When Liz Stokes stepped down as Chair of the AFP, I was asked to take her place. How could I refuse after what this program did for my son? Our activities address all the needs of our community only instead of pursuing this piecemeal, we do it together. Even the CFU inmates in the jail participate by making signs marketing activities that range from food and clothing drives for those in need to unity projects that keep us together. Every year the Council has an induction dinner uniting our kids and adults who join as members. Our entire community contributes to this event so the 100's of kids who come go free. As a result our kids feel loved and supported. They don't join gangs. They don't have to. They have Council.

I believe the AFP is an essential part of the CFU network. Any community that follows our lead will transform their world. With unity, as we have witnessed, all things are possible.

Sincerely,

Chris Hopkins

Chair, Riverhead Adult and Family Partnership



**TOWN OF RIVERHEAD
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

210 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York 11901

David J. Hegermiller
Chief of Police

Emergency Dial 911
Administration (631) 727-4500
Fax (631) 727-8630

My name is Richard Freeborn and I am a Police Officer with the Riverhead Police Department. The Town of Riverhead is located on the East End of Long Island, New York.

The Council for Unity Public Safety model came to Riverhead in 2007. It represented the final component to a comprehensive strategy employed by the Town to bring our schools, community, Police Department and Correctional Facility together. The mission was to make Riverhead safer and more united. To complete the cycle, members of the Department's COPE (Community Oriented Police Enforcement) Unit were trained in the Council's public safety curriculum. My partners, Police Officer Chris Parkin and Police Officer Jill Kubetz, and I were assigned to the Council for Unity class in Riverhead High School where we met with students who were suspicious and skeptical. Many of the participants held a lot of hatred towards the police and some would even spit at us when we walked by. They were reluctant to interact with us, even in the classroom setting. Our impression of many of them was similarly estranged.

All of this changed through the Council model. It did not happen overnight but in time, along with patience, understanding, communication and most importantly trust between the students, teachers and the three of us, we were accepted by the students. These same students carried this new relationship back to their parents, siblings, friends and other members and leaders of the community, including clergy. The familiarity that has been bred in the classroom amongst the students, School District and the Police Department has, in many instances, now been transferred to the families of Council for Unity students and their surrounding communities. As a result, we witnessed changes in the way we were viewed, not just within the school classroom setting but within the community as a whole. Students, as well as other community members, now find police officers in general more accessible and approachable because of the strides taken by the students, school representatives, parents, clergy, members of the Adult Family Partnership and the Police Department, all within the Council for Unity Program. Our perception of these students has changed and equally important, their perception of us as Police Officers, adults and community members has changed as well. Because of their familiarity, trust and subsequent acceptance of me, Officer Parkin and Officer Kubetz, the students in the Council program will now seek us out when we respond to incidents that occur in our community. As a result, our community is safer, less anonymous and more united than ever before.

Page 2

We whole heartedly recommend that other communities follow Riverhead's lead in this powerful strategy to bring our children, schools systems, families, community organizations, the Police Department and the local correctional facilities together in a common purpose known as the Four Pillars: Family, Unity, Self-Esteem and Empowerment, and to add two more – Trust and Acceptance.

Sincerely,

POLICE OFFICER Richard Freeborn

P.O. Richard Freeborn

To Whom It May Concern:

The Riverhead Adult and Family Partnership (AFP) has brought the Council for Unity Model full circle within our town. In our schools we have worked together as a family to bring peaceful solutions to negative relations between and among different cultures.

The AFP has provided a mechanism of understanding between school administration and the community. We have helped to pass budgets; we have volunteered where there has been a need for adult supervision for CFU kids working on community projects. We have brought college students from different countries to share their heritage with our families and our students. We have shared in the pride of increased graduation rates, the elimination of gang activity within the school, and the decrease of negative press that was prevalent prior to council. Our school district has become an incubator of community minded students who partner with the AFP in all of our community events.

The AFP has brought a brotherhood between and among the Riverhead Police Department, and the community. We have broken through the "blue wall" of separation. Our police are active participants at our meetings and community projects. The AFP worked with the police to find a solution to our town being vandalized by outsiders with graffiti. We formed a family of volunteers to rid our town of this blight. The AFP with local business members spent a weekend painting over our vandalism. Our police worked alongside our children, our parents, town officials, clergy and business owners. We worked as one family; we ate as one family with food provided by senior citizen groups and other organizations. We painted our town with love.

The AFP joins hands with town government by providing dialogue between and among neighborhoods. We address these issues in open forum with our elected officials. We coordinate a town wide food drive to fill our food pantries so that no family shall go without food. We provide volunteers for many of our town sponsored events, such as our mosaic street painting. The AFP provides volunteers to work bicycle safety events and relay events for cancer research. The AFP partners with our town's Chamber of Commerce to help our local businesses and to encourage our youth to become our local business people of the future.

The AFP acts as outreach for our re-entry initiative. We provide support to our CFU correctional facility chapter by including them in some of our projects. We proudly display their hand painted signs promoting our events. They too are part of our town family as they re-enter our community. We provide outreach services such as job referrals, GED guidance, 24 hour help-line and business clothing to offenders upon release. The AFP provides community service projects for re-entry individuals who are taught to give back to the community. We offer them a seat at our community table as a family member.

The AFP has pulled together seven faith-based organizations to work with us as one voice. For the past three years the AFP has sponsored the Riverhead annual CFU student induction and has funded every child's dinner plate. This was made possible through community sponsorship. Our clergy pray as one family as our youth listen. We have broken down the brick walls of prejudice, hatred and bigotry that have stood for 100 or more years in our town. The AFP uses those brick walls for stepping-stones for our future.

I would recommend the Council for Unity initiative to any community. I also offer my assistance in beginning your AFP. Please feel free to contact me at:

- (631) 727-3228 ext. 123
- Cell (631) 655-3263

Liz Stokes

Riverhead Council for Unity Adult and Family Partnership



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MISSION

Council for Unity (CFU) is a not-for-profit organization that specializes in reducing violence in schools and communities. Our mission is to empower young people, individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities. By engaging youth to take ownership of the problems of violence and bias that confront them, they themselves can play a major role in developing non-violent solutions to improve the environments in which they function. For thirty-five years, CFU has reclaimed some of our most violent and disenfranchised youth.

OPERATIONS

CFU provides customized curriculum, training and technical assistance to schools and community organizations. CFU's service model helps provide at-risk youth the critical foundations they often lack: family, safety, self-esteem and responsibility – needs they often seek through anti-social peer groups. CFU students successfully take ownership of problems affecting them and their communities. The CFU model teaches essential interpersonal and life skills such as: leadership, self-expression, mediation, conflict resolution, and advocacy skills to resolve and reduce gang fights, personal conflicts, racial insults and even students' problems with the school administration.

The results have led to significant reductions in violent incidents, academic improvement within student populations prone to failure, a reduction in cutting and truancy and greater ownership of problem solving strategies from all partners affected by the challenges confronting our communities today. These unity and asset based strategies inherent in the CFU model also create an atmosphere of tolerance that reduces bullying and acts of bias.

LOCATION

In New York State, the CFU curriculum is taught as a high school elective five days a week under the authority of the Department of Education in New York City, Long Island and Albany. The elementary and junior high school curriculum functions as a club or co-curricular activity in which participants meet one to three days a week. CFU members who are now in college have begun to establish chapters on their college campuses where the same issues need to be addressed.

SUCCESS

Pre- and post- attitudinal surveys on all programs and participants, and reviews of school and teacher data on all participating students are conducted. Recent evaluations found participants have a 90% high school graduation rate and 80% showed improved attendance. There is a 50% to 70% reduction in violence and gang related incidents in schools, communities and correctional facilities. College placement among CFU program participants remains at 83%, surpassing the 2008 national average of 68.6%.

Wherever the Council has established a program, it has been welcomed by school and community center administrators and students, but the true result of the program's efforts take on a life of their own when students, parents, educators, school administrators, local law enforcement and community members see living proof in the positive changes and increased civic participation of our youth.

To Find Out More, Contact: Lisa Wright, Director of Programs
(212) 701-9440, lwright@councilforunity.org

When everybody is together there is nobody left to fight.

PROGRAMMING FOR Gang-Involved Youth

Implementing the Council for Unity Curriculum in Boys & Girls Clubs



Forward

Youth gang activity continues to have a profound negative impact on families and communities – damaging family relationships, instilling fear and intimidation in citizens and depleting neighborhood resources. Involvement in gangs robs youth of their full potential and causes adults to view them as a liability to the community. Interventions in the lives of gang-involved youths can reverse the potential damage by creating hope and opportunity for young people and helping adults view youth as an asset rather than liability.

The Council for Unity Program

In 1999, BGCA and the Council for Unity (CFU) developed a partnership to provide Clubs with a program designed to serve gang-involved youth. CFU is a national nonprofit organization that specializes in reducing violence in schools and other youth communities. Through its customized curriculum, CFU helps groups meet the needs of high-risk youth for family, safety, self-esteem and responsibility – needs they often seek through anti-social peer groups. CFU's mission is to "empower, young people, individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities." In partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, CFU has offered its curriculum to local Clubs for use as one of the programming and mainstreaming options in their gang intervention initiatives. Much more than a content-and-skills curriculum, the CFU program gives youth the opportunity to develop strengths gradually and naturally as they participate in the program. When they become part of a CFU chapter, all youth agree to take an oath that guides their behavior; are assigned equal dignity within the group; are empowered to act and make decisions; take on specific functions within the group; and apply leadership skills to run the chapter. In short, participants in the CFU program are empowered to take responsibility for running the chapter – it is out of this experience that they learn essential interpersonal and life skills. The CFU curriculum is designed to develop in youth the following skills and abilities:

- Leadership abilities
- A sense of empowerment
- Self-esteem and self confidence
- A sense of family and unity
- Interpersonal skills
- Goal-setting capabilities
- Effective communication skills
- The ability to resist peer pressure and media influence
- Organizational and problem-solving skills
- Networking
- Community outreach
- Self-reflection
- Project implementation and evaluation
- Conflict resolution skills
- Tolerance of diversity
- An awareness of racism, prejudice and violence and character, values and ethics

For Clubs implementing the CFU curriculum, resources and support offered by CFU included:

- Comprehensive training, including a two-day, on-site training on the CFU program and technical assistance at BGCA's Symposium, technical assistance meetings and follow-up visits
- Program manuals
- Ongoing technical assistance via phone or e-mail
- A group network, allowing CFU members all over the country to keep in touch
- A pen-pal initiative, helping members reach out to each other
- Matching of advisors nationwide with New York City advisors
- Advisors' conferences, offering group technical assistance
- A yearly induction ceremony

Although this guide is about using the CFU program with gang-involved youth, Clubs may choose to use it with other Club youth as well. If a Club is interested in starting a CFU program, NCFU can provide training and resources. For more information, contact The National Council for Unity to discuss start-up activities, costs of putting a program in place, implementation strategies and ideas for integrating the CFU curriculum with existing initiatives.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roxanne Spillet".

Roxanne Spillet
President



Program Summary for Boys and Girls Club of America: Programming for Gang-Involved Youth Implementing the Council for Unity Curriculum, a publication of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

This recent study of the CFU program by the U.S. Department of Justice over a three year period showed the program had unparalleled success in aiding youth and families in effected communities throughout the United States.

Outcomes and Successes of the programs:

- Drastic increases in school attendance among members have been noted at the following sites: Garden Grove, Ca., Greater San Diego, Ca., Kenosha, Wisconsin, Maine, Las Vegas, Arkansas, and Rockford, Ill.
- Improvement in Grades and more at-risk youth moving on to college were noted at: Galveston County, Texas, Kenosha, Wisconsin, Maine, Arkansas, Rockford, Ill., and San Francisco, Ca.
- Decreases in violent behavior and gang involvement were made at: Georgia, Texas, Garden Grove, Ca., Greater San Diego, Ca., Maine, Arkansas, Ill., and San Francisco, Ca.
- An increase in communication skills was noted at all listed sites.
- Youth gained and demonstrated skills to empower themselves and become leaders within their chapters and communities at all sites.
- An increase in positive communication between youth and their families and communities were noted at all sites.
- Increased tolerance and understanding of the differences of others was noted at the Garden Groves, Ca., Maine, Wisconsin, Illinois, and San Francisco sites.
- Increase in social skills and self-confidence were noted at all sites.

Sites Reported:

Boys and Girls Clubs of Albany, Georgia	Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas, Nevada
Boys and Girls Club of Galveston County, Texas	North Little Rock Boys and Girls Club, Arkansas
Boys and Girls Clubs of Garden Grove, California	Boys and Girls Club Association of Rockford, Illinois
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, California	Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco, California
Boys and Girls Clubs of Kenosha, Wisconsin	Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Waterville Area Boys and Girls Club, Maine	

A copy of this study is available upon request.

DAILY NEWS

The gang's all here
By JOSH MAX
Tuesday, June 27th, 2006



Leibowitz for NEWS

You might expect a man who arranges sitdowns between the toughest of tough street gangs to look like a combination of "The Godfather's" Luca Brasi and Conan the Barbarian. But Bob DeSena, founder and president of the Council for Unity, resembles more a glad-handing mayor with an easy manner and a man-of-the-people demeanor.

Tonight, the 64-year-old Muttontown, L.I., resident is helping his organization's 31st annual induction dinner in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where prospects who have made it through the required year-long probation become official Council for Unity members. More than 1,000 teens and kids, some as young as 6, are bopping to the hip-hop sounds blaring from huge speakers. Plenty of food at the room-long buffet tables awaits them after they work up their appetites.

There's much to celebrate: Since its founding in 1975, the council has grown to 48 chapters in more than 40 schools with more than 5,000 students enrolled. The nonprofit's network comprises 60 schools and community centers in New York City and Long Island as well as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America in Texas and California.

DeSena, who was born and bred in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, says, "I don't believe there is [such a bad thing as] a 'bad kid.' 'Most of society regards kids in gangs as innately evil, sinister and unreachable and they want to just incarcerate them. But in my 30 years of doing this, when I go to a school with gang involvement and we present the Council for Unity, they come over every time. Every time. It tells me these kids are reachable, and if you give them an option that has meaning to them, they'll take it."

Coming from a good home doesn't have anything to do with whether or not a kid joins a gang, either, DeSena says. "A guy in my program did 15 years in prison, now he's out two years. He had two parents, came from an upscale home — and he still got caught up in the life."

DeSena, a former gang member himself who got out of that life early, started his professional career teaching English literature at John Dewey High School in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. "My background was in mythology," he says. "That helped me tremendously, because once you know that cultures are defined by their mythologies, you know how a culture works."

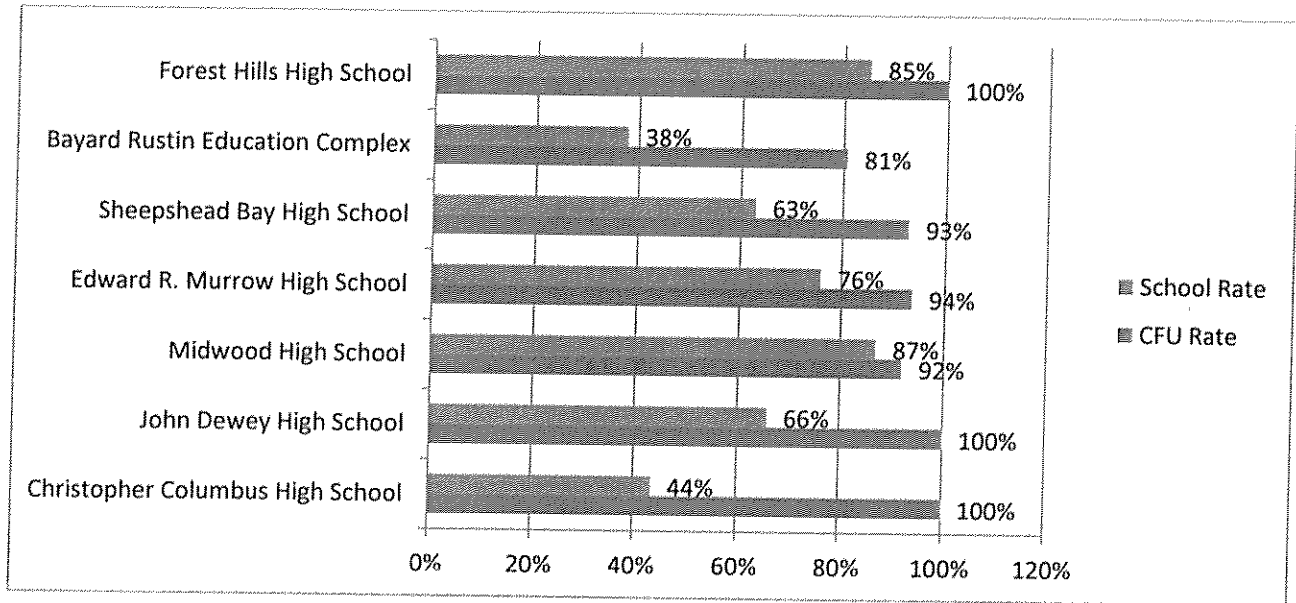
In the early 1970s, the high school was racked by violence between blacks and Italians, DeSena says. "It got very bad and something had to be done to stop it," he says. "I was recruited to try and help. I got six gang leaders to commit to an entire year of halting the violence to see if we could come up with an alternative."

"These were enemies and racists, but they ended up embracing unity. They saw that when they got together, there was nobody left to fight and no one to make fun of, either." In the wake of that triumph, DeSena founded the Council for Unity in 1975.

DeSena's smile is quick and his demeanor friendly, but his success in defusing gangs through three decades doesn't mean he doesn't consider his own safety on the job. "I've gone into mediation with some very hard-core characters," he says. "I do have a healthy fear. Without it, you're dead. But the basic emotion I feel when I deal with gangs is compassion and empathy. I'm looking to give them a choice, a second chance. So I'm not thinking of fear, I'm thinking of assistance."

In addition to its work in schools, the council also reaches out to communities and correctional facilities.

The following chart illustrates the graduation rate for CFU High Schools that have seniors. The chart lists CFU's graduation rate as well as the graduation rate listed for the schools on the New York City Department of Education Website. The NYC graduation rate data is from 2010- 2011 the 2011- 2012 graduation rate data is not available yet.



As is clear from this chart, CFU has higher graduation data even for schools with a high graduation rate. The lowest rate for CFU is still above 80%. The total average graduation rate for CFU is 94%.

Source of data: NYC DOE

THE
INDEPENDENT

East Hampton • Southampton • Riverhead • Southold • Shelter Island

September 05, 2007

New Beginnings For Gang Members

By Lisa Finn

They've spent their lives bustin' guns, robbing banks, and beating their enemies bloody. They have been charged with an array of horrific crimes ranging from murder to career drug dealing. By their own accounts, they have grown up on poverty-stricken streets, been schooled in shattering lives, inflicting beatings and bringing despair upon the families of those they've brutally killed.

On the streets, each of the young men, members of some of the deadliest gangs in the country, would admittedly have faced one another with hatred and violence. Bloods against Crips. Latin Kings against White Supremacists. But at the Suffolk County Correctional Facility in Riverhead, there is a program that has knocked down the walls, a program that is striving for new solutions to the gang problems that have rocked society in recent years. The program is called Council for Unity, and SCCF is being touted as a model, the first county facility to feature the program.

Council for Unity, founded by Bob DeSena in 1975, is a national non-profit organization with a history of successfully promoting inter-group relations and reducing violence in schools and communities. The idea is that by implementing school-based and after-school programs in leadership development, mentoring, career, college guidance and gang prevention, the Council fulfills a mission of empowering individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement.

Riverhead has been proactive in tackling gang issues, implementing Council for Unity in schools, the police department, the community, and most recently, in the correctional facility, where the program is in its first year. Last week, officials from Nassau County who are considering instituting the program in their own municipalities visited the facility to view a weekly meeting of the Council for Unity. And, based on the outpouring of emotion and heartfelt testimonials they witnessed, it is evident that, in the words of Sheriff Vincent F. DeMarco, "The program is working."



Before entering the jail, a visitor might harbor the belief that inside, one will find dark, dreary cells and an air of abject hopelessness. But last Thursday, as this reporter was buzzed through the gates and into the facility's chapel where Council for Unity meetings are held, the room was filled with artwork and poetry created by CFU members. And, as they entered the chapel in identical green uniforms, the prisoners greeted one another not with hostility or rage, but with handshakes and hugs, calling one another "Brother."

Brian Joseph, 17, is considered the "baby" of the group. He proudly displays a piece of artwork he created. "It took jail time to help me find God," he said. Gregory Roosa, who spent the entire night before the meeting drawing a depiction meant to represent the group's mantra, "Slaying the Dragon," created a piece of artwork so noteworthy that it may be used in the future with CFU materials.

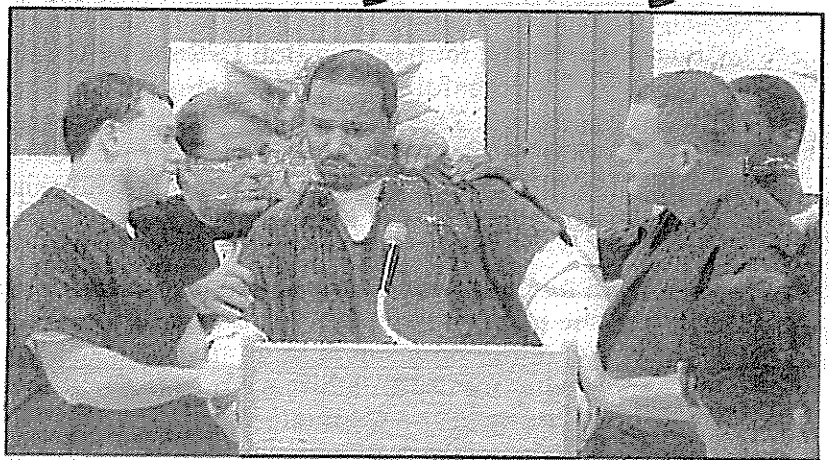
Despite the goodwill in the room, the prisoners make it clear that they've come from disparate places and lived on dangerous streets. LeQuarn "Lucky" Wade began the meeting by describing his life as a gang member. "A few years ago you could have caught me in your neighborhood selling drugs, or causing mischief. I watched businesses disappear, men and women lose their children, and I was a part of that because I sold them the drugs."

Then came DeSena, and an introduction to CFU. "I can't see myself doing that anymore," he said. "I believed that it was money, cars or women that would make me a man. What made me a man is what I'm doing today, what I'm fighting for." Sometimes, Wade can't believe the transformation himself. "You actually had to see me before, and then, see me here now. This is me, for real." At first, Wade admitted he had doubts about the program. "I didn't think it would work. No way could I see Bloods, Crips and Latin Kings all sitting in one room and talking, and then becoming something positive. But here we are, and it's so amazing."

Together, he said, the new family the gang members have forged "stands for something great. What we have done here is inspirational and touches my soul." Wade, who has been incarcerated for 14 months, said despite the jail time, "This is the most free I've ever been."

Roosa read a poem about his life in the streets. Today, he said, "Anger and hatred is no longer the food that feeds me." Another inmate known as "Mr. T" was picked up in the recent bust on the Shinnecock Reservation. As he stood up to speak, he began to cry, and his CFU "brothers" surrounded him, offering support and words of encouragement. "Nobody gave me a chance," he said, adding that if programs such as CFU had been in place when he was growing up, things may have been different. "Kids need an opportunity."

Run by corrections officer Alex Bryant and Sergeant Noreen Fisher, CFU classes focus on serious discussions about racism, watching films that deal with gangs, writing in journals, and about learning the concepts upon which CFU is built. Fisher said when the prisoners first came to CFU, they thought it was a GED class, and, unhappy to be there, slouched in, pants hanging low, and slumped in their seats. But when given a choice all returned to the program.



Members from some of the most menacing and deadly gangs in the United States today, including the Bloods, Crips and Latin Kings, have found a new "family" through the Council for Unity program.

Independent / Lisa Finn

Jason Diadema, 22, had a mother who was a "crackhead and a prostitute. I'd see her on the streets with a pipe, hustling – selling her body for crack." Growing up, he said, "I thought I was all alone. I never had a mother and a father." Disenfranchised, he ran away from a group home and sought family ties with his gang, The Bloods, for over nine years. At one point, he went to live with grandparents on Long Island, where Diadema said the abuse continued. "I felt as though I had no place on this earth." When he first attended a CFU meeting, he had doubts. "I thought, 'I'm not going to sit with Crips and MS13.'" Today, however, Diadema considers rival gang members family and said Fisher "is a mom to me, the mother I never had." Diadema has two children. In the past, he didn't want them to know him, didn't want them to look at him "the way I looked at my mother." After CFU, said Diadema, "Now, I can't wait to go home."

All CFU members credit DeSena, as well as Butch Langhorne, assistant to DeMarco, and DeMarco, who were instrumental in bringing the program to Riverhead. They've bonded with Bryant, who's also the jail barber, and Fisher. And because DeMarco is on board, said Bryant, the program flourishes. If the mindset at the top does not change, old attitudes prevail, where "the perception is that inmates are garbage, and are treated as if they deserve nothing." Bryant acknowledges the high recidivism rate. According to United States Bureau of Justice statistics, 67.5 percent of prisoners released in 1994 were rearrested within three years, an increase over the 62.5 percent found for those released in 1983. But, he said, "If you can change one," that's a positive step.

And to work toward reducing recidivism rates, the goal is to implement CFU programs not only in jails, where the population is transient, but in prisons and in the community, so those who are released have a support network. Slaying the dragon, said Fisher, "seems to be working well. They are very optimistic, not as hopeless." Fisher adds that not all gang members are "mean-spirited." Gangs, she said, offer a "sense of family, of belonging. At first, they take care of you, and then payday comes and it means killing someone or burning down a house." Gang members, she said, wonder how getting "fancy sneakers ends up with them in jail. They wonder, "Where did it all go wrong?"

But, despite apprehension when she began running the program, today, Fisher is confident that she has "absolutely nothing to fear. Our group is a new family, where there is trust, love, encouragement and support." Fisher is adamant about working to effect change in the jail: "If you're really a correctional facility, you have to start thinking of ways to correct." Fighting in the jail has "calmed down," due to CFU.

DeSena, a champion for his program, greets all the inmates with hugs and support. "Gang violence," he said, "is stopping here." DeMarco agreed: "This is a bright light in a jail. The program is working, proving that some good can come out of the jail, perhaps for the first time in history."



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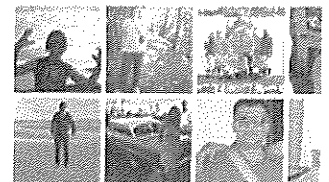
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HD

Fostering a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence

JENNIFER BONCY [JAN 15, 2014](#) [HELPERS](#) [LEADERS](#) [COMMENTS \(0\)](#) [7/13/14](#)

Decades ago, before much of Brooklyn, New York was transformed into a hipster enclave, the borough was a different place. In several neighborhoods, racial tensions regularly unfolded like a scene from *West Side Story*—but with real bloodshed. In response, a real-life hero took the stage to thwart impending tragedy, with resounding success.

Roberto DeSena knew all about mean streets. He grew up in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge and spent much of his youth in gangs in the 1950s. Many of his friends were lost to violence, drugs, or prison, and it took the death of an older peer and mentor to save him from the same fate.

JANUARY 2014

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"He let me see what my future would look like if I kept doing what I was doing, and it was pretty dismal," Robert says. "When he died—and I think he knew he was going to die—that was a turning point in my life."

Instead of dealing drugs, Robert became an English teacher at John Dewey High School in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in the mid-1970s, when problems between blacks, whites, and Hispanics rattled the neighborhood. In response, he formed the Council for Unity (CFU), a club designed to unite the student body and prevent what at the time seemed to be an inevitable escalation of violence between the warring ethnic groups.

Robert's instincts for conflict resolution—which had been put to good use a few years earlier under dire circumstances in another Brooklyn neighborhood—was a boon for the community and the school. CFU restored the peace, making the school and its immediate surroundings a safe haven.



Robert DeSena

Still, Robert was savvy enough to expect more than this one club's short-term success. Instead, he hoped to develop a long-term solution to the violence and racial discord then overflowing in New York City schools. He knew how easy it was to get seduced by gang life. "Making the peace was easier than creating something that never existed before," he recalls.

Over the next few years, Robert molded CFU into a program designed to empower students and establish long-lasting harmony in their schools and communities, and he was soon asked to replicate that success at other schools facing similar challenges. At the time, no one could have predicted that his natural competency for fostering good will among high schools students would evolve into a program that would just as effectively turn the hearts of career gang members, providing them with the support and tools they would need to atone for past deeds and abandon crime as a way of life.

"It started as a club. Then, it became a program, then a course, then a culture," he says. "Now, it has become a movement."

Since its inception, CFU has grown into a nonprofit organization with chapters in schools, communities, and even prisons, mostly in and around New York City. Working out of the organization's office in John Dewey, Robert has been CFU's full-time president since he retired from teaching in 1996.

While members often refer to CFU as a family, it is a structured program, backed by a curriculum Robert developed and that was funded by the NYC Board of Education in the late 1980s. The curriculum reflected the progressive educational values expounded by John Dewey High School's namesake—an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer who believed, among other things, that learning should be interactive, social, and dynamic. Building on that foundation, Robert centered the program around what he refers to as the four pillars: Family, unity, self-esteem, and empowerment.

In schools, CFU is an accredited course taught by a staff teacher, just like any other class, but the similarities end there. Members of CFU are required to go through an initiation process—a teacher- and peer-monitored journey of introspection and interaction in which students are challenged to abandon destructive behaviors and instead adopt relationship-building skills that will stay with them

after graduation. At the end of the year, successful candidates for membership are officially inducted into CFU during an often tearful and heartfelt ceremony. It's a joyous affair attended annually by nearly one thousand people.

CFU can now be found in more than 30 public primary and secondary schools in New York City as well as several others in Long Island and Buffalo, New York. Many of these schools face a range of challenges, including local gang or drug violence, yet the organization boasts a graduation rate of about 93 percent for its students.

"If 93 percent of them are graduating, that tells you one thing: The street is not winning, we are," Robert says.

One of the program's more remarkable characteristics is its adaptability. For some, it provides a safe oasis for a socially awkward high schooler or an at-risk middle schooler. For others, it becomes a lifesaving vehicle of change for criminals once thought to be beyond redemption. CFU has chapters in Sing Sing Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison in Ossining, New York, and in the Suffolk County Correctional Facility, located in Riverhead, New York. Often, CFU's transformative powers are manifested most dramatically in these prisons, as rival gang members find common ground.

"The founders of CFU in the Suffolk County jail were members and leaders of the Crips, the Bloods, MS-13, the Latin Kings, and the Aryan Brotherhood," Robert says. "That is an impossibility. That had never occurred before."

The program turns gang culture on its head by offering members many of the rewards of being in a gang—safety, security, a sense of belonging, and a family-like structure—without the violent downsides. It also gives them the support they need to turn their lives around. Robert says CFU is a Godsend, particularly for kids as well as adults who are wilting under the oppressively macho culture of the streets, where showing compassion or sensitivity is a sign of weakness.

"You've got a lot of young men and women who are zipped up and suffering in silence because they know they can't take that mask off," he says. "Enter the Council for Unity; our value system is the reverse. We say it's heroic to be open, vulnerable, compassionate, and supportive, and kids have been starving for this their whole life."

Membership brings a cathartic metamorphosis. "If you go to prison with me, you will see grown men—some of whom will never get out of prison—break down and cry," Robert explains. "CFU allows them to be human and to get support, and it also allows them to be powerful by giving support."

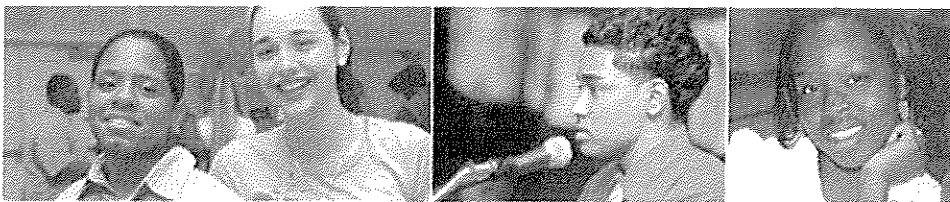
"I hang around with gangsters all the time," he adds. "I'm not going to go in to a prison and show my sensitive side the first time I meet with them. I'm coming in there as an ex-thug, with the same bravado they have."

Many of CFU's members—both kids and adults—also have to be able to operate outside of the organization's supportive cocoon and survive the culture of their home environment. But this doesn't diminish the value of their newly developed skills. "The minute they are out of the environment they are in, they can expand on the inheritance they received from Council for Unity," Robert says.

Still, as a nonprofit organization dependent on grants and donations, survival has been challenging. Over the years, local and federal governments have noted the CFU's success, particularly as there were chapters in schools and communities in nine states at one point. But a lack of funding eventually shuttered most of those chapters and squashed several well-intended expansion plans.

Robert's ultimate goal is to be able to establish chapters in school districts and communities for free. "Some of these districts have no money and all of the problems," he says. "When you look at communities that are wracked by gang violence and drugs, and they have no money, that's where you got to go." He remains hopeful that, over time, people with the power to allocate desperately needed resources will recognize CFU's potential to make changes that are widespread and effective.

"I'm in a war," Robert says. "I'm trying to get people to see that with very little, you can do so much."



Want to get involved?

Council for Unity (CFU) is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that specializes in reducing violence in schools and communities. For over 30 years, CFU has been resolving issues of safety, bias, bullying and gang violence in schools and communities. Council for Unity has reclaimed some of our most violent and disenfranchised youth. By engaging youth to take ownership of the problems of violence and bias they themselves play a major role in developing non-violent solutions and thereby improve the environments in which they live.



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Founder/Executive Director, Wellness
In The Schools, New York, NY

Next

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with Aid in Syria

JENNIFER BONCY



Jennifer Boncy is a New York City based writer and producer who has been a part of many
experiences in consumer and arts journalism. She has written on a wide range of
topics including politics, food and drink, community news, and health care
coverage. When Jennifer isn't writing or producing anything, she enjoys to use
her platform in order to shine a light on other people, create dialogue and help

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POLO BUDDIES



SLENDER BUT STRONG
REEDS OF HOPE



HSCV: FOR CHILDREN IN
VIETNAM

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/16/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patricia Brown

Address: _____

I represent: Black Belt Karate Club

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bob Duera

Address: _____

I represent: Council for Unity

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis Acevedo

Address: 331.5 Pavia Ave 07302

I represent: Green City Force

Address: 630 Flushing Ave, Brooklyn 01026

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Date: 9/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leah Goodridge (Attorney)
Address: 123 William St, NYC 10014

I represent: Urban Justice Center

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HEIDI CAIN

Address: _____

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mother Klashington

Address: 821 Van Sicken Ave

I represent: Man Up! Inc

Address: 821 Van Sicken Ave

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Amy Cananman

Address: Groundswell

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Carlos Gomez

Address: _____

I represent: Chief of Housing N.Y.C.D City Housing Authority

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Jessica Hulse

Address: _____

I represent: General Manager, New York City Housing Authority

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-9/6/44

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Valdez Hernandez

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Youth Community Development

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liz Glazer

Address: _____

I represent: Director, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tracy Weber

Address: _____

I represent: Mayor's office to combat domestic violence

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Michael Hines (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 50 Ave X

I represent: Council for Unity

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Pat Brown (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 760 E 105 ST

I represent: Brooklyn

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Audrey Smith (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 926 Williams Ave

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Phyllis Brockett

Address: 300 Wortman Ave

I represent: Linden Houses

Address: 914 Vansiclen Ave

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Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MR. DUMAS

Address: 106-09 Glenwood Rd

I represent: Canarsie Tenants Grievance Pres.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/12/2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shirley Aikens

Address: 2946 West 23 Street Bklyn NY 11224 #10A

I represent: Carey Gardens Tenant Association

Address: SAME AS ABOVE

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: _____
(PLEASE PRINT) Vice President

Name: ROBERT S. GREEN

Address: 100 OLBORNS AVE

I represent: PINK HOUSES

Address: 100 OLBORNS AVE

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CLARA WOODS

Address: 363 WORTMAN AVE

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MADE BOONE

Address: 315 LIVONIA AVE

I represent: TILDEN HOUSES

Address: 315 LIVONIA AVE

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Remilia FERGUSON
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: TEAMSTERS LOCAL 237

Address: 216 W 14 STREET

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/16/14

Name: Valerie Rosenberg
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: 70 W 36th St #503, NY 10018

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: C. Aaron Hinton
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Seth-Low Houses

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

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Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Betsy Colon (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 756 Stanley Ave.

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Thora Lashley (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 104-06 Coney Island Rd

I represent: 104-06 - #28-15

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Sep 16, 14

Name: Dolores Laguerre (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 716 E 105 St Apt 7B

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

admin

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Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allegra Blackburn ~~Ed Dwyer~~

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Kenner

Address: Van Dyke Houses

I represent: Van Dyke Houses

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. ✓

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy McCLARIA

Address: 10612 FARRAGUT Rd

I represent: All my neighbors

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EDWARD TYRRE

Address: 241 Hout Street

I represent: GOLIATHS Resident Council

Address: 244 Bond Street (Basement)

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Loe Ann Brown

Address: 572 Warren St 57

I represent: NYCHA Committee Under

Address: 572 Warren St

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beverly Corbin

Address: 130 Third Ave 10D

I represent: 7th Floor

Address: Common Hall

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-16-2014

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Inez Rodriguez

Address: 359 W 11th Ave

I represent: Boulevard Houses TA President

Address: 359 W 11th Ave

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Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dwayne FALSON

Address: _____

I represent: Edith Whitty

Address: Cynthia Whitaker

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cynthia M. Whitaker

Address: 580 BLAKE AVE

I represent: Unity Plaza Housing Development

Address: _____

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