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## Caretakers Honored for Excellence



John DeCarlo Memorial Award winner Augustin Merced and runner-up Carlos Santiago (from right, with certificates) are honored in the Ceremonial Room.

The 10th annual John DeCarlo Memorial Award was presented to Augustin Merced, Caretaker J at Lower East Side Consolidated in Manhattan, on June 26 in the Ceremonial Room.

Established in 1999, the Authority's premier employee prize is awarded annually to a caretaker whose job dedication and service to residents best perpetuate the legacy of the renowned caretaker for whom the award is named.

Chairman John B. Rhea presented Mr. Merced with a check for \$1,000 and runner-up Carlos Santiago, Caretaker J at Highbridge Gardens, with a \$500 prize.

"Today we honor two employees who stand out due to their exemplary job performance," Human Resources Director Dawn Pinnock declared.

"There are 3,200 caretakers throughout the Authority, and with this award we are recognizing two of the best."

In addition to honoring John DeCarlo, who lost his life on the job at Marlboro Houses in 1997, the prize "is intended to inspire and encourage other caretakers to provide outstanding service to the residents that we are here to serve," Ms. Pinnock said.

Chairman Rhea recounted the enduring legacy of John DeCarlo, whose job dedication and compassion have entered Authority lore. He worked 23 years for NYCHA, and 18 years at Marlboro Houses, where co-workers have erected a memorial. A quiet man with perfect time and attendance, he always arrived first at work, and had 250 unused vacation days.

*(continued on page 8)*

## Employee Survey Results

Preparations are underway to share with staff summary results from NYCHA's Employee Opinion Survey.

Not only have the numbers been 'crunched,' but all 7,423 comments that employees cared enough to write have been carefully considered.

Chairman John B. Rhea has held four half-day sessions with his senior management team to discuss survey results and work has begun on an action plan.

*(continued on page 7)*

### Your voices are telling us what we need

- More resources on the front line
- Clearer accountability and promotion criteria
- Open communication channels
- To better meet our own expectations for housing and residential services
- Collaboration, motivation, and celebration
- To refocus on NYCHA's mission and vision
- Act upon an organizational "call to action"

Excerpt from Employee Survey Results brochure being prepared for distribution.

## Bulletin Board

The Bulletin Board posts information about events, policies and programs.

### Where's My Paystub?

NYCHA is introducing a new, environmentally friendly way to view and update comprehensive payroll information online through an Employee Self Service (ESS) system. For this reason, employees enrolled in direct deposit will no longer receive a paper paystub, effective August 27. Instead employees can look up paystubs and W2s in the NYC Automated Personnel System, (NYCAPS) using the Employee Self-Service (ESS) application.

For step-by-step information on how to log into the ESS system, please visit the Human Resources website on the Employee Portal or access NYCAPS/Employee Self-Service on the Employee Portal's *What's New* scroll.

### Ethics Inquiries Phone Number

Employees may obtain confidential information concerning conflicts of interest matters from NYCHA's Law Department. Questions regarding public servants' obligations under the NYC Conflicts of Interest Law may be directed to a NYCHA agency attorney at: (212) 306-3355.

Employees, who may remain anonymous, may inquire about such matters as:

- accepting gifts, favors, meals, etc.
- outside business or financial interests
- outside employment or volunteer work
- relationships between supervisors and subordinates
- use of NYCHA resources
- misuse of public office
- seeking new employment
- post-employment restrictions
- political activities

Information and advice about the NYC Conflicts of Interest Law is also available from the NYC Conflicts of Interest Board at (212) 442-1400.

#### NYCHA Employee Bulletin

Chairman..... John B. Rhea  
 Vice-Chairman..... Earl Andrews, Jr.  
 Member..... Margarita López  
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### Congratulations

Congratulations are extended to the following individuals:

**Colbert G. Narcisse**, MBA, appointed an independent member of NYCHA's Audit Committee, effective August 5, 2009. As an independent Committee member, Mr. Narcisse is not employed by the Authority. He is currently Chief Executive Officer of Gold Bullion International.

**Lynn Godfrey**, appointed Chief Communications Officer, effective August 24, 2009. Ms. Godfrey comes to the Authority with more than 15 years of marketing, promotion and communications planning experience.

### "GO Direct" U.S. Treasury Campaign

"Go Direct" is a national campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Banks, to encourage people who get Social Security payments by check to switch to direct deposit.

For many individuals, direct deposit is the best way to receive Social Security and Supplemental Security Income payments because it eliminates the risk of stolen checks and forgeries and helps protect people from identity theft. It also gives people more control over their money.

For more information about participating in Go Direct, you may call (800) 333-1795 or visit [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org) (English) and [www.DirectoASuCuenta.org](http://www.DirectoASuCuenta.org) (Spanish).

### Did You Know?

*This feature helps readers keep up with NYCHA's changes, challenges and accomplishments.*

- Human Resources has changed the hours of its popular Customer Service Desk to better serve your needs. "ASK HR" hours of operation are now:  
 Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
 Employees, retirees and other customers may obtain information regarding HR policies, procedures and a wide range of job-related issues by calling: (212) 306-8000.
- Resident Employment Services (RES) reports directly to Michelle Pinnock, who is now Senior Advisor, Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability, effective July 13, 2009.
- NYCHA expects to complete nearly 13,000 apartment rentals under the Section 8 program during 2009, breaking the record set in 2008, and to exceed 99,000 apartments under lease by year-end. Moreover, more than 2,000 Section 8 rentals have been made through the Authority's Voluntary Transition Program that converts public housing units to Section 8 in designated City and State developments.

## NYCHA Celebrates its 75th Anniversary at Gracie Mansion



Chairman John B. Rhea, former NBA Knicks star Mel Davis, and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg address guests at Gracie Mansion during NYCHA's 75th anniversary celebration.

NYCHA celebrated its historic 75th anniversary at an outdoor reception hosted by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg on the expansive grounds of Gracie Mansion on August 3. Approximately 1,000 guests including employees and resident leaders joined Chairman John B. Rhea, Member Margarita López, government officials, union representatives and other supporters of public housing in celebrating the success of the nation's first and foremost public housing authority.

NYCHA was created in February 1934 when Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia signed into law a pioneering vision to replace slum tenements with clean, safe and affordable housing for poor and working families.

"Since the completion of NYCHA's First Houses in 1936," Mayor Bloomberg said, "New York City has remained committed to preserving this vital resource for working families and those in need. Public housing has given many New Yorkers a foundation to make their way up the economic ladder and to move on to successful lives. And with new leadership in [Chairman] John Rhea, we will continue to revitalize, reinvigorate and make NYCHA an even more important resource for its residents."

During difficult decades when public housing in major American cities suffered, NYCHA kept the promise of public housing alive by maintaining and modernizing its buildings while delivering social services, recreational and educational programs, and job training initiatives that enrich the lives and livelihoods of residents.

"NYCHA has continued to evolve to meet the challenges of our changing city," Chairman Rhea declared. "This includes our contributions to Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030 initiative to keep our city green and sustainable. Through the leadership of Member Margarita López, residents are fully engaged in the effort to form green committees in each of our developments."

Residents' enthusiasm for the initiative was evident by their response.

"Foremost in our achievements is providing homes and a nurturing environment for so many New Yorkers like those of you here this evening," the Chairman said.

"Today we look back with pride at our accomplishments, and forward with confidence to writing the next chapter of the NYCHA story."

### From Public Housing

Former NBA Knicks player Mel Davis, who was raised in Farragut Houses, described the impact that public housing and a supportive community can have on the life of a young resident.

"Public housing gave me love, gave me sacrifice, and gave me confidence

to develop my skills," said Mr. Davis, who is former Executive Director of the National Basketball Retired Players Association. "A lot of people helped me and I still have lasting relationships to this day. My dream was to play for the Knicks and with the values my mother taught me I got a break to go to St. John's University and from there to the Knicks," he recalled.

"I've walked with kings. I've walked with prime ministers. I've walked with mayors and when they ask where I'm from, with a stern handshake and a look in the eye, I say, 'I'm from public housing in Bedford Stuyvesant.'"

### A Great Feeling

A barbeque buffet was set on the great lawn that reaches from the banks of the East River to the 18th century mansion that is the official residence of the Mayor of New York, and which Mayor Bloomberg described as "technically, public housing."

Guests dined at tables with 75th anniversary centerpieces created by children from Campos Community Center, or strolled the serene grounds enjoying a medley of tunes by the NYCHA's 75th Anniversary Band, the Youth Chorus, and residents.

On display by the speakers podium beneath an enormous tent was a 75th anniversary quilt created by seniors in the Visual Arts Program, depicting milestones in NYCHA's history and events in its enrichment programs.

"It's a great feeling to celebrate NYCHA's anniversary with the kind of people that made it possible beginning 75 years ago," said DEO Deputy Director Alvin Reinstein. **B**



Board Member Margarita López and Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito of Manhattan's 8th District with guests enjoying barbeque and the scenic view.

## Green VISTAs at NYCHA



Board Member Margarita López (with poster); Executive Asst. Migdalia Maldonado (to her left); and, from left rear, Community Coordinator Ray Hooks, DGM for Finance Felix Lam, and Executive Asst. Monique McLeod, with VISTA volunteers (clockwise from top left): Roel Díaz, Michael Gibson, Holly Martin, Dylan Tulic, Maria Moquete, Lee Trotman, Anna Finneran and Julia Mushalko.

The view got even greener at NYCHA with the arrival on August 10 of eight VISTA volunteers, who are among 193 young people from across the country participating in the NYC Civic Corps program. The recent college graduates will work at NYCHA for one year to promote resident participation in the Authority's green agenda by assisting in the formation of development Green Committees.

Under the direction of Board Member Margarita López, NYCHA's Environmental Coordinator, Green Committees have already been formed at 29 developments. The committee members are tasked with teaching other residents about the benefits of adopting behaviors that support energy conservation in their individual apartments as well as their buildings.

Residents' efforts to curtail energy consumption are part of NYCHA's contribution to Mayor Bloomberg's PLANYC 2030 program to reduce greenhouse gasses by 30 percent over the next 30 years. In addition to creating a healthier environment, energy conservation reduces utility costs, saving NYCHA money to invest in resident services and building maintenance.

### Dreamers and Doers

Member López and DGM for Finance Felix Lam welcomed the VISTA volunteers on the first day of their week-long orientation and training. Referring to her own experience as a community organizer, Member López described a key attribute.

"A successful organizer must know how to dream. Only dreamers can organize and develop humanity's greatest ideas. But only the dreamers who dream for a purpose can accomplish great things," she said.

In presenting background on NYCHA's early energy initiatives, DGM Lam showed that dreaming and doing has placed NYCHA in the forefront of the city's conservation efforts. NYCHA utilized pilotless stoves before they were widely available; issued super-efficient refrigerators before the Energy Star Program was in effect; and switched to cleaner burning #2 oil before other city agencies. (NYCHA now uses even cleaner natural gas.)

Despite these advances — followed by a comprehensive, multi-phase energy conservation and building retrofit program being implemented — "We struggle to continue to deliver quality services in the face of rising energy costs and declining funding," DGM Lam said. "Since 2002, energy spending has increased 100 percent to one-half billion dollars annually, while NYCHA's energy consumption has increased by only 5 percent."

In addition to technology solutions, NYCHA's green agenda includes creating training and employment opportunities for residents in green collar jobs, and efforts to engage residents in energy conservation. That's where the green VISTAs come in.

"Civic Corps assigned the workers to projects that fit their interests and skills. We are fortunate to have some

very capable people," said Migdalia Maldonado who, as Executive Assistant (EA) to Member López, supervises the volunteers, along with Monique McLeod, EA in Community Operations.

"It's already clear that these young people have a lot to offer, and we think their enthusiasm will help to inspire residents' interest in helping NYCHA go green," Ms. McLeod added.

### New Era of Service

Chairman John B. Rhea and the NYCHA Board welcomed the VISTA volunteers at its August 19 meeting.

"These young people are part of an array of highly committed volunteers working to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers," the Chairman said. "Thank you for bringing your talents to bear to help NYCHA."

Due to efforts by Member López, NYCHA has the largest allocation of VISTA volunteers of any city agency.

"The idea for a program like this originally came from President Obama who called for a 'new era of service,'" Member López remarked.

In response, Mayor Bloomberg launched Civic Corps. More than 700 individuals applied the first year, from which fewer than 200 were selected. AmeriCorps later trained the volunteers to help others organize community programs and increase outreach.

NYCHA's green VISTAs will extend the theme of volunteerism and public service to residents at developments and help them organize their neighbors to support NYCHA's greening and energy conservation efforts.

Member López identified three areas where the volunteers will work with residents: reducing NYCHA's carbon footprint; increasing the canopy of trees that clean the air and cool buildings; and encouraging residents to take personal responsibility for the efficient operation of their homes.

Accomplishing these tasks will take a lot of energy — the kind that green VISTAs already have — that is low-cost, clean and renewable. **B**

## HomeRuns

HomeRuns is dedicated to the noteworthy accomplishments of employees and retirees. If you have items to share, please contact the *Bulletin* as indicated on page 2.



*Victor Carpio, his wife, Digna, and older son Jhancarlos, hold five-month-old sextuplets.*

*Clockwise, from top left, the two girls and four boys are: Danelia, Genesis, Justin, Jezreel, Joel and Jaden.*

On October 6, 2008, Digna Carpio – wife of Victor Carpio, Caretaker J at Throggs Neck Houses – gave birth to six babies, weighing from 1½ - 2 pounds each. There are fewer than fifty families worldwide with living sextuplets, and just two are in the United States. Born in Ecuador, Victor and Digna are credited with having the nation's first sextuplets born to a Hispanic couple.

The *Bulletin* wanted to speak with Victor soon after the births, but he was a little busy. Then, one day in February, Victor came across his superintendent's note saying that the *Bulletin* had called.

"The doctors said there was only a 25 percent chance that all the babies would survive," said Victor, a 12-year employee of the Authority, when he phoned back. "But my wife wouldn't give up on any of them and now they are all doing fine."

As for Victor and Digna, that was another matter.

"My wife feels tired, and she needs some time to relax," said Victor, who was getting about four hours' sleep a night.

Fortunately, two health care aides came to help change some of the 50 (in case you were wondering) diapers daily, feed six hungry babies and assist in other ways.

"But after 5:00 p.m., it's just Digna, my older son Jhancarlos and me," said Victor. "Every day you learn more what to do. It can be hard, but we enjoy it."

Asked what he would like people to know, Victor responded, "My older son Jhancarlos always asked why he was alone, so my wife and I prayed for another baby. We didn't do anything special to have six. Sometimes I say, maybe we prayed too hard, but I know we have been blessed."

Shortly after the sextuplets were born, Victor's Council Member, Tony Avella, launched a collection drive for baby items, and New Yorkers have been generous with donations such as baby bottles, diapers, strollers and other supplies.

When asked what he needed most, Victor described his difficulty fitting his family safely into his small car for their frequent medical appointments. Therefore, Victor would most appreciate monetary contributions toward his savings for a minivan.

"God has sent us this miracle because he knows that we can handle it," Victor said...

Six months and two NYCHA chairmen later, the *Bulletin* called Victor again.

"I really wanted to publish your story," said the editor, "but we were a little busy. Could you please bring us up to date?"

As it happened, Victor had just returned from a two-week vacation, if you call staying home to help care for six crawling 10-month-olds a vacation. Victor does.

"It is a big change from before," he said. "My first day home, I saw what a hard job my wife has. Now the babies are more active, and they want to play a lot. They need more room to move around and each has their own crib, not sharing like before. The nights are easier for sleeping, but the days are much more active," said Victor. "I don't know how Digna does it."

Each day has a set routine. Meals are served at the same time with the specified number of ounces of formula for each meal. Digna reads to the babies, and Victor, when he can, sings to them and plays his guitar. Bedtime is 8:00 p.m. and the babies often sleep almost through until 6:00 the next morning.

The NYS Early Intervention Program sends someone twice a week for one half hour for each baby, and to help with Jaden, the smallest child, who still has some respiratory problems. "If he cries for too long, he turns a little blue," said Victor. "But Early Intervention said they can't believe how well all the babies are doing, especially since they were born three months premature," said the proud dad.

"Every day is a surprise. Sometimes with the different sounds they are making, it sounds like *papa* but I don't know if they really understand."

Asked what he most needs now, Victor still mentioned the minivan he is saving for, so his family of nine can ride safely. It doesn't have to be a new van, he says, just something that he can customize to fit about ten seats. Of course, diapers, clothes and other items are always useful. **B**



*Readers may deliver baby supplies for the Carpio family to the office of Council Member Tony Avella located at 38-50 Bell Blvd. Suite C in Bayside, Queens. Victor Carpio may be reached at (347) 724-3797.*

**NYCHA Life**

**On-the-Job Photo Feature**



photo by Heather Ware  
Harborview Arts Consultant

Arts consultant Jennifer Wade works in NYCHA's Visual Arts Program. She has conducted numerous quilting workshops, but this one, at Surfside Gardens, in Brooklyn, was special because she and the seniors were asked to produce a quilt to commemorate NYCHA's 75th anniversary.

"The collaborative nature of quilting felt like the history of NYCHA, where many people took part to create something," said Jennifer. "The experience had a unifying effect on all of us. Quilting sessions usually last a few hours, but as the deadline approached we had day-long sessions. The seniors at Surfside, and also at Frederick Douglass Senior Center in Manhattan, took great pride in the project."

The quilt's 77 segments depict historic events and cultural programs that reflect NYCHA's rich history. It was displayed at NYCHA's 75 Anniversary celebration at Gracie Mansion.

Send photos of co-workers on-the-job to the address on page 2 or by e-mail to: [SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov) by October 9 for the next issue.

**Human Resources Employee Recognition Honorees**



The Human Resources Department held its Employee Recognition Program award ceremony for the 2nd Quarter of 2009 on June 16. Margarita Mojica (left) received the Employee of the Quarter Award. The Customer Service Desk Training Team consisting of Helen Reinstein and Lisa Clavery (right) received the Team of the Quarter Award.

**Off-the-Job Photo Feature**

The Captain of NYCHA's Running Team, Computer Specialist Bob Nordman, ran in the "Grandma's Marathon" in Duluth, MN, this past June. He completed the 26.2-miles run in 3 hours and 49 minutes, coming in 927th out of about 5,983 finishers and 6th out of 104 in the 60- to 64-year-old age group.

"It was a very hot day with the temperature hitting 90 degrees, bright sun and no shade. The course went along Lake Superior on Old Highway 61 with some gently rolling hills, and was very scenic," Bob later reported.

"By the way, that was my 65th marathon, and Minnesota was the 24th state where I ran. I'm trying to run a marathon in every state."



Send off-the-job photos that show your interests, hobbies or travels to the *Bulletin* address on page 2 or by e-mail to: [SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov) by October 9 for the next issue.

**FOP Lodge #997 Family Picnic**



The NYC Housing Police Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge #997 attended a State FOP Family Picnic at Lido Beach Town Park in Lido Beach, Long Island, on July 11. Many FOP Lodge #997 members along with their family members enjoyed the outing. Lodge #997 was formed in 1998 to keep former members of NYCHA's Housing Police in contact with friends and colleagues. The New York City Housing Authority Police Department was merged into the New York City Police Department in 1995. The lodge now has more than 600 members in 20 states. For more information about the lodge, visit [www.fop997.org](http://www.fop997.org). or contact Pat Ciricione at [patcfop997@ol.com](mailto:patcfop997@ol.com).



**NYCHA Archives**

**Training at Riis Houses, 1954**

Various management department staff attend a training session in what appears to be the basement of Riis Houses. They are studying the floor plans for the cellar of First Houses.

If you recognize anyone, please contact the *Bulletin* as indicated on page 2.



From left are Gerald Alston, Troy May, Kenneth Kelly (an original member) and Blue Lovett of the Manhattans.

Legendary recording artists The Manhattans; Ray, Goodman & Brown; Blue Magic; Me’Lisa Morgan, Millie Jackson, and Chuck Jackson were honored for their contributions to the entertainment industry at a special tribute attended by more than 5,000 fans who filled the plaza of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building in Harlem on August 13.

Produced by NYCHA and the NYS Office of General Services, the Harlem SummerStage has brought first-class, live entertainment to the Harlem community throughout the summer for the past 12 years.

Guest performers included: The Force MD’s, Tony Brooks of Harold Melvin’s Blue Notes, Full Force, The Jones and GQ, among others.



Chairman John B. Rhea (center), Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr. (to his left), DGM for Community Operations Hugh Spence (far right) and DGM for Operations Gloria Finkelman (4th from left), with employees that volunteered to help almost 1,000 NYCHA senior residents enjoy the 37th Annual Senior Citizens Picnic at Sunken Meadow State Park on July 23. The volunteers took tickets, grilled food, prepared and served trays of steak, salad and fruit. The long-standing annual event is sponsored by Assemblyman Vito J. Lopez and the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc. A second senior citizens picnic was held at the park on August 20.

## Employee Survey Results

*(continued from page 1)*

Almost 5,000 employees, or 43 percent of the work force, completed the 40-item survey on computers at home or work, providing an unprecedented view of staff opinions and attitudes regarding NYCHA’s operations, culture, and delivery of services.

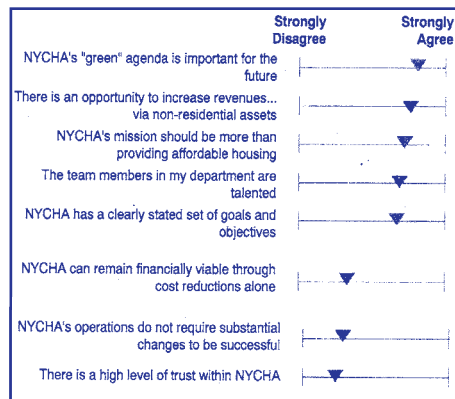
By the end of October, a survey response profile will be accessible on the Employee Portal, distributed in brochures, and posted on bulletin boards at field work locations.

As Chairman Rhea had indicated, the survey’s purpose was not only to obtain staff input but to form the basis for changes that will improve NYCHA.

“Your input has identified opportunities, shed light on critical challenges and helped me begin to formulate a new direction for the Authority,” Chairman Rhea said.

However, the process of communicating with staff is far from over.

Chairman Rhea will hold a number of Town Hall meetings with employees in the fall to discuss the survey findings as well as preliminary aspects of his action plan to move NYCHA forward.



Some of the most positive and negative question responses, from upcoming survey brochure.

Smaller focus groups of employees will also be meeting to delve into specific themes that emerged in the data.

## What Employees Think

Staff provided candid comments about what is working and lacking at NYCHA. Employees understand and support NYCHA’s mission, and respect the professionalism of their peers. However, there was strong consensus that substantial change in NYCHA’s operations is necessary for continued success. There was also an expressed need for more resources on the front line, clearer accountability and promotion criteria, and more trust within the organization.

Employees strongly agreed about the importance of NYCHA’s green agenda, which coordinates efforts to conserve energy and create a cleaner living environment, while saving NYCHA tens of millions of dollars in utility costs each year. However, most employees also feel that NYCHA cannot remain financially viable through cost reductions alone. **B**

## Caretakers Honored

(continued from page 1)

"John DeCarlo was someone who made contributions everyday to his co-workers, to the residents and to the community," Chairman Rhea said.

### Hardest Job

"Since my appointment as Chair, I have had an opportunity to visit a number of developments and met informally with many employees.

"Caretakers are in the position to make a real difference in the quality of life for many residents. I have great respect for the work that they do."

DGM for Operations Gloria Finkelman underscored the daily challenges that caretakers face. "Caretakers have the hardest job in the Authority. They work in difficult conditions and circumstances. They all deserve recognition for their demanding jobs."

DGM Finkelman also noted, "Something good came from the terrible day that John DeCarlo lost his life. With this award, we can now honor caretakers, and inspire others with his service."

Brooklyn Borough Administrator Gilbert Santiago, who was Superintendent at Marlboro Houses when John worked there, showed the emotion his memory still holds.

"It's an honor to speak today about John DeCarlo to show the spirit this award came from. It was created to show the goodness and hard work of an extraordinary person. John was humble and respectful. He cared for his elderly Mom and came to work early each day.

"When a resident lost a diamond ring down a compactor, John dug through bags and bags of garbage to finally find it. He would extend himself like that for residents and also co-workers. Today we are honoring that man and also the award winners who are carrying on his tradition."

DeCarlo Award winner Augustin Merced thanked the NYCHA Board members along with the Manhattan Management Department and his co-workers at LES for the honor. He also thanked his family, who were present at the event, for their support.

"This year feels even better than last year," said Mr. Merced, who was honored as runner-up for the award just one year ago.

After the formal ceremony, Mr. Merced further remarked, "It is an honor to receive the award when so many other employees work so hard. I know what residents need," said Mr. Merced, who grew up in Gowanus Houses in the 1950s "and when I see something that needs to be done, it is my nature to help."

In closing, Ms. Pinnock thanked the Award Committee, comprised of representatives from borough management departments, Human Resources, the Department of Equal Opportunity, and the ADGM for Operations.

The Committee's nominations for winner and runner-up were reviewed by the Personnel Board, consisting of the Chairman, General Manager and Secretary to the Authority, which issued final approval.

*Employees in any job title may submit nominations for outstanding caretakers to management offices.*

[Winner: Augustin Merced, Caretaker J](#)  
Lower East Side (LES) II Consolidation  
Manhattan Management Department

## Awardee Profiles

[Winner: Carlos Santiago, Caretaker J](#)  
Highbridge Gardens  
Bronx Management Department

Mr. Merced has served as a dedicated Caretaker J since July 26, 1999. Since 2001, he has worked at LES II, where he is responsible for eight buildings daily. Augustin is known by staff and residents alike as some-



Supt. Lawrence Grater, DeCarlo Award winner Augustin Merced, Housing Manager Tedric Gamble and Supv. of Caretakers Nathaniel Williams, Jr.

one who frequently goes above and beyond the call of duty.

He has been seen picking up branches in the middle of the night during a storm, to remove a hazard to residents. When elderly or disabled residents need assistance, Augustin helps them with their bags or directs deliveries to the

right address. He also doesn't hesitate to pull out a screwdriver to tighten a screw that might cut passersby.

Before being honored with the DeCarlo prize, Mr. Merced was runner-up the previous year.

Mr. Santiago has worked at Highbridge Gardens since his appointment as Caretaker on November 28, 1994. He has been commended for the superior quality of his work and the excellent condition of the buildings assigned to his care.



Housing Manager Ricardo Rodriguez, runner-up Carlos Santiago, Eileen Santiago (his daughter), and Supv. of Caretakers Felix Vazquez.

Conscientious about his duties, Mr. Santiago is cooperative and takes great pride in his work. He is further described by Felix Vazquez, his supervisor, as dependable, diligent and "a supervisor's dream."

These qualities, among others, have led to his recognition by the

Highbridge Gardens Resident Association for his devotion to duty and concern for residents.

"I am happy and proud to be honored," said Carlos. "I always try to do my best. Making residents happy makes my job important." **B**



With then-GM Doug Apple (center) are CAA Board Members and officers Larry Cheng, Jane Tsai, Yuet Sim Cheung, Yuen Fong Lee, Bonnie Chan, Linda Zhang, Eileen Cheng, CAA President Nance Lam, Lin Fong, Na Na Sun, Larry Sit, Yeung Wong, and Shak Yau.

By Ashley Grosso, Graduate Intern

NYCHA's Chinese-American Association (CAA) added a colorful holiday to its calendar by hosting its first Dragon Boat Festival celebration on July 16 in the Ceremonial Room. As it happens, the holiday focuses on a government employee.

As CAA Secretary Linda Zhang explained, the festival recalls a government official, Qu Yuan, in ancient China. When his state of Chu was invaded by the state of Qin, Qu Yuan drowned himself in a fit of despair.

In broader terms, Ms. Zhang explained, the Dragon Boat Festival is about patriotism and taking courage during difficulties, "a theme that seems especially timely this year."

Then-GM Doug Apple, who attended many CAA events, remarked: "The strength of NYCHA's staff is in its diversity" and ability to appreciate other cultures.

CAA Vice President Larry Sit gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the festival that included pictures of the annual Dragon Boat races in Queens, where he participates.

Dragon boat races also take place in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada.

Each boat typically has a drummer that sets the tempo for the paddling team, giving the festival a distinct rhythmic sound. Dragon boats are brightly painted canoes, 40-100 feet long, with heads shaped like dragons and 20-80 rowers per boat.

Why dragon boats?

When the common people saw Qu Yuan drowning, they rushed out in fishing boats, scattering rice to feed the fish in order to prevent the fish from eating him. This part of the story is the origin not only of the brightly painted canoes, but of "zongzi," an

angular rice ball wrapped in bamboo leaves, a festival food that was served at the CAA event.

Beneath a brightly colored dragon decoration, Mike Steinfeld, an administrator in the Research and Management Analysis Department, said: "Everyone should take the opportunity to experience the celebration of different cultures with their coworkers. I try to attend and support these events whenever possible."

Among the almost 130 employees in attendance were representatives from the Russian Speaking Association, Hispanic Society, and Italian American Association.

NYCHA's 150-member Chinese-American Association was established in 1991. The CAA also sponsors the popular Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festivals. **B**

## There's a New Blog in Town ...Coming Soon



Look for this item on the Employee Portal and communicate with NYCHA through the Chairman's Blog. It's easy.

There's a new, informal way to communicate with Chairman Rhea and your fellow employees. NYCHA has ventured into the social networking scene with the introduction of a **blog** on the Employee Portal.

Chairman Rhea will post messages on the blog and invites you to share your comments. Blog topics will address NYCHA's priorities, accomplishments and challenges. Employees will have the option of being identified or remaining anonymous.

Let's keep the information and the energy flowing. Check out the new blog on the Employee Portal and see what NYCHA is talking about. *Details to follow.*

## NYCHA Nuggets

To congratulate staff on their accomplishments, please e-mail the *Bulletin* at: [SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:SilverH@nycha.nyc.gov).

Bronx Management Department Housing Managers, Superintendents, Asst. Managers, Asst. Superintendents, Housing Assistants, Clericals, Administrators, Deputy Directors and Borough Director

**Kudos for steep reductions in rent delinquency resulting from your ongoing efforts. The rent delinquency rate for Bronx developments is now 30 percent lower than three years ago. Congratulations on your accomplishment.**

Gloria Finkelman, DGM  
Operations

Resident Employment Services (RES) Contract Management Team

**Congratulations for successfully obtaining approval from the NYCHA Board for the FY 2007 ROSS Family and Ownership Grant from HUD in the amount of \$426,000. This grant will enable RES, in partnership with the CUNY Research Foundation, to provide 75 NYCHA residents with technical and professional job training, college course work, and certifications in job titles including Teacher's Assistant, Construction Management, Bookkeeping and Accounting, and Medical Administrative Assistance, along with multiple levels of support over a three-year period.**

Sonia Torruella  
Director, RES

Design Team: Anthony Piscopia, Deputy Director, RA; Keith Marshall, RLA; Tom Sneeringer, RA; Kaisar Sattar, PE; Nitin Saraiya, PE; Darius Basseri, PE, MBE; Anthony Chiagoro, George Soukas; Manhattan Program Unit: Kenneth Petrocca, RLA

**Congratulations on designing specifications for the Authority's first "Green Roof," which will provide economic and environmental benefits such as: absorbing excess rain water and reducing sewer run-off; producing cooling and heating building insulation; and extending the life span of the roof. The NYCHA Board authorized a contract to produce this roof, the first of its kind, as a pilot project at Corsi Houses in Manhattan. The roof will be planted with sedum, a succulent species that absorbs water and survives drought.**

Yianna Pavlakos, DGM  
Capital Projects

Community Operations Staff: Ukah Busgith, Deputy Director; Juan Santiago, Manager; Robert Bennaton and Howard Hemmings, Community Coordinators, Garden and Greening Program; Department of Administration-Citywide Programs

Management Borough Staff: Management Teams from Bronx River, Johnson, Sumner, South Jamaica, and Stapleton Houses

**Congratulations on the tremendous success of the "Summer of Service" Projects! Your invaluable assistance contributed to increased greening and beautification of NYCHA developments.**

Gloria Finkelman, DGM for Management  
Hugh Spence, DGM for Community Operations  
Deidra Gilliard, ADGM for Community Operations

Community Operations Staff:  
Ukah Busgith, Deputy Director  
D'Andra Van Heusen, Manager, Dept. of Administration-Citywide Programs

Program and Policy Development Department:  
Robin Jackson, Director; Shirley Brown, Deputy Director,  
Tom Duncan, Manager; Robert Volpe, Assoc. Staff Analyst

Department of Budget and Financial Planning:  
David Wong, Deputy Director

**Congratulations on being awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant from the New York State Education Department to operate community-based programs at Bronxdale Community Center.**

Hugh Spence, DGM  
Deidra Gilliard, ADGM  
Community Operations

Celeste Morgan Glenn Managing Director  
for Research, Policy and Planning Support

## Employees Honored by Residents at Family Day Celebration



TA Pres. Solomon Lieser, Elevator Mechanic Jimmy D'Acunti, Caretaker April Simmons, Chairman John B. Rhea, Elevator Mechanic Carl Licht, TA Pres. Michael Babad, and DGM for Operations Gloria Finkelman with a member of the community, rear right. At left rear, Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd (right) speaks with Councilman David Yasskey.

The 12th Annual Family Day celebration for Independence Towers, Williams Plaza and Taylor Wythe Consolidated on August 16 showed how close the NYCHA family of residents, employees and community partners can be.

Chairman John B. Rhea along with executive, borough and development staff, joined local elected officials, tenant association leaders and residents in the leafy courtyard of Independence Towers in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, as residents honored five employees.

In opening remarks, Independence Towers TA President Solomon Lieser first recalled how residents and NYCHA joined together in a different way.

"These three developments have been front and center trying to get funding for housing during its fiscal crisis. We traveled to Washington and to Albany. Anytime we can contribute to NYCHA's needs," he told NYCHA's administrators, "just give us a call."

Chairman John B. Rhea acknowledged the importance of residents' support, and also thanked Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd "for locking arms and working with us to let Washington know our needs, including building maintenance and upkeep of elevators. The work we need only happens because of the many dedicated professionals, community advocates and elected officials," he said.

"It's a pleasure to be here not just as Chairman but to represent almost 12,000 employees who work hard each and every day. It's the frontline employees that really make a difference for each of you. Our focus now is to ensure better delivery of services."

Chairman Rhea acknowledged the approaching one-year anniversary of a tragic elevator incident at Taylor Wythe Houses by requesting a moment of silence.

TA Association President Lieser began the awards program by recognizing the dedication of Borough Deputy Director Philip Calandrillo, in whose absence Borough Administrator Stephanie Davis accepted a plaque from the TA Associations of the three developments, citing his "outstanding dedication and service to residents."

Mr. Lieser next honored Elevator Mechanic Carl Licht "in recognition of dedicated service to residents."

Elevator Mechanic Jimmy D'Acunti was presented with a plaque for dedicated service by Williams Plaza TA Association President Michael Babad.

The final awards for two Caretakers at Independence Towers came directly from the residents themselves. Taylor Wythe Supt. Kelvin Darby accepted a plaque for Edna Negron, and April Simmons was honored by resident Sonia Roman Morales who said, "April, you are part of my family." **B**

## Citywide Procurement Fair



Staffing NYCHA's information table (clockwise, from left) are: Maxine Brown and Gloria Guillo from Capital Projects; Dolores Peters Caldwell from Technical Services; RES Director Sonia Torruella; DEO Director Fredrika Wilson, and Assistant to the DEO Director Paul Sawyer. Not in photo is Assistant Director Johnson Chu from Supply Chain Operations.

NYCHA participated in the third annual Citywide Procurement Fair sponsored by the NYC Department of Small Business Services at the Museum of Jewish Heritage on July 21.

The fair is designed to help local minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES) increase the amount of business they do with the City. Outreach to the business community increases competition for goods and services and ensures the best value for public funds.

The fair brought representatives from more than 500 MWBES together with buyers from the public and private sectors for information sessions, workshops and networking.

Gloria Guillo, Procurement Administrator in Capital Projects, conducted a workshop for construction contractors on NYCHA's upcoming business opportunities and the bidding process. Last year, NYCHA contracted for more than a half billion dollars of construction work, and the stimulus program will increase that amount substantially. Approximately 20 percent of NYCHA's contracts were awarded to MWBES.

## Letters



Dear Editor:

I have received the *Bulletin's* February 2009 issue in which you requested "memories" from retirees. Enclosed is a photograph, which I cherish, of an Association of Black Housing Officials (ABHO) scholarship fund raising trip to Gambia and Senegal, West Africa, in October, 1988. Over 40 members, family and friends took part in this event.

The photograph is taken outside of Goree Island in Gambia, which was the fort from which millions of slaves were sent to the Americas. As a result of this trip, ABHO raised over \$4000 in scholarships. We were able to introduce NYCHA employees to many unsung heroes of the African-American Community, whose sacrifices and passion for freedom, as well as inventions and scholarship, have helped us achieve the success of today.

I was very proud to have been a member of this organization and served in several positions, finally as president from 1992 through 1994.

Sincerely,  
Shirley J. Mallory  
Director, Manhattan North  
Management Department, Retired

Dear Editor:

I started working for NYCHA as a caretaker at Smith Houses in 1975. I remember when the housing manager first encouraged me by saying, "I can see you as a superintendent, someday." Back then, I couldn't believe that I would have the opportunity to rise even further.

Approximately six months later, I began studying to become a fireman. Shortly after, I was promoted as a fireman and was given a position at the Lillian Wald Houses. Two years later, I passed the maintenance examination. Thereafter, I worked at the Grant Houses as a maintenance worker for approximately five years.



I went on to take the assistant superintendent position. I worked as assistant superintendent at Tomkins Houses in Brooklyn for approximately six years. At the time, Mr. Luis Diaz and Jim Giocartro were both superintendents. I decided to take the superintendent examination which I passed, and started working at Saint Nicholas Houses. During this time, I had the

honor of working with Mr. Russo, Chief Superintendent.

I decided to retire a year and a half later and move to my homeland, Puerto Rico, where I currently reside with my wife of 54 years and the mother of my five children, Catalina Arroyo.

NYCHA opened many doors for me and I have many fond memories of my experiences. I would especially like to send my regards to Vincent Row, Luis Diaz, Jim Giocartro, Hector Nevares, and Jaime Velasquez.

Sincerely,  
Isidro Arroyo

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