Bronxworks: NYC Food Based Community Organization Spotlight

What they do: BronxWorks is a multi-service organization and settlement house that was founded in 1972. Each year BronxWorks assists over 40,000 Bronx residents across 35 locations.
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How they do it: Our decades of experience providing social services in the Bronx has given the organization an informed, nuanced understanding of the communities in which we work, and has allowed us to develop sustainable partnerships with key city and community organizations. This extensive experience has also deeply impressed upon us the importance of approaching issues of social and economic hardship holistically, taking into account the interconnected, systemic challenges our clients face and working towards developing effective community-level solutions.

Mission: BronxWorks helps individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. From toddlers to seniors, we feed, shelter, teach, and support our neighbors to build a stronger community.

Latest (Food-related) projects/campaigns:

• **Healthy and Livable Mott Haven**: BronxWorks is the lead organization in the New York Community Trust-funded Healthy and Livable Mott Haven Partnership. We are working in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx with multi-sectoral partners to collaboratively increase access to and awareness of healthy food, physical activity, and open spaces. Through this initiative BronxWorks working with the City’s Shop Healthy program, City Harvest, FamilyCook Productions and others to increase healthy options at partner food retailers. We are also implementing a series of Community Food Tours which educate Mott Haven residents about farmers markets, grocery stores, community gardens, restaurants, and food assistance sites. Tours aim to raise awareness of healthy food resources and increase knowledge and skills in accessing, purchasing, and preparing healthy foods. Tour participants learn how to select healthy foods available at the site, learn tips for eating well on a budget, and receive incentives such as Health Bucks and gift cards to encourage the purchase of healthy foods.

• **HYphen Project**: BronxWorks’ youth food justice program, funded through the Levitt Foundation, empowers youth to advocate for a better food system. Over the last four years of the program, HYphen participants have worked in community gardens; learned to prepare and educate about healthy food to peers and community members; and had the opportunity to improve their food environment by selling healthy food to the community in farmers markets and in partner bodegas.

• **Los Amigos de Moore** - Los Amigos de Moore are a group of senior volunteers from the BronxWorks E. Robert Moore Senior Center who lead a gardening project in which they grow fresh herbs and produce. Los Amigos engage their peers and community members through hosting workshops and cooking demonstrations that explore their cultural foods while promoting healthy lifestyles. This project is supported by the NYC Department of the Aging, Aging in New York Fund, and the United Neighborhood Houses. Find their cookbook, Sofrito, here: http://bronxworks.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/docs/lam_cookbook.pdf
Farm-to-institution - In 2015, the kitchen at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center, which prepares about half of all the meals served throughout the agency, began a Farm-to-institution project to shift towards more local and sustainable foods. The menu now features more variety in the fresh vegetables served and includes Meatless Monday. Meals are culturally-appropriate for participants and clients of diverse cultural backgrounds including Latin American, African, and South Asian. We use high quality, fresh ingredients and source local/regional produce through GrowNYC's Greenmarket, Co and our own rooftop garden.

Major Funding: Combination of federal, state, city, and private grants. Notable funders include the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, New York State Department of Health, United Way of New York City, the Food Bank for New York City, Aging In New York Fund, New York Community Trust, Levitt Foundation, and the Robin Hood Foundation.

Profit/nonprofit: Nonprofit

Annual budget: $60 million

Interesting fact about how they are working to positively affect the food system:

In addition to providing close to 500,000 meals per year to some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including children, seniors, and people with chronic health conditions, BronxWorks is working with our communities to lead the borough in the fight towards a more equitable food system through our community-level work. Our programs empower community members to educate their neighbors and shift their food environment towards healthier options. One example is our intergenerational project in which youth collected recipes and stories from their elders to be compiled into a recipe book which can be downloaded here: http://bronxworks.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/docs/iam_cookbook.pdf

FACT SHEET

Location: Bronx, New York

Core Programs: BronxWorks has core programs that are aligned with our mission. So that we may help individuals and families improve their economic and social wellbeing BronxWorks has an array of programs that feed, shelter, teach, and support our neighbors so that they may enjoy better lives and better realize their potential. BronxWorks programs include: youth services, housing assistance, workforce development, healthcare education and provision, homeless services, immigration services, and assistance in accessing public benefits, among others.

Number of staff: 850

Number of volunteers: 150-200

Areas served: Bronx

Date started: 1972

Executive Director: Eileen Torres
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