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The BronxWorks November/December 2018 Newsletter

Year-End Appeal: Supporting Children, Families and Seniors of the Bronx

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Fourth Annual BronxWorks #GivingTuesday Event a Success!

BronxWorks celebrated our fourth annual #GivingTuesday Event on November 27 with friends, Board Members, staff, and supporters at Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium! Guests enjoyed dinner and drinks, networking, and live music from local guitarist and vocalist John James. #GivingTuesday also featured an exciting raffle, which included prizes such as passes to Wave Hill, a gift basket from Metro Optics, and an American Express gift card. If you missed the event, be sure to check out the Why I Give to the Bronx video, which highlights some of our Board Members, donors, and partners.

The event was also attended by several members of the BronxWorks Leadership Council, including Founding Members Kate Machan and Joseph Kao, as well as new members Joseph Macaluso and Evan Wagowski. The Leadership Council is a recently formed group of committed individuals who bring knowledge, connections, and skills to support BronxWorks outreach and fundraising efforts. Members enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other as well as other BronxWorks supporters.

"I was grateful for the opportunity to meet new people with like-minded cares and values in a relaxed setting," said Evan Wagowski. "I'm already looking forward to next year!"

Many thanks to our sponsors and all who donated and joined us at the event - our most successful #GivingTuesday yet!

MORE PICTURES

The BronxWorks 2018 Year-End Appeal

#GivingTuesday officially kicked off the BronxWorks Year-End Appeal! This year the campaign and all proceeds will support children, families, and seniors of the Bronx. As 2018 draws to a close, please consider giving to BronxWorks, which serves over 45,000 community members each year. Read more about two of our program participants who want to share their successes!

George Q. Overcomes Adversity and Builds a Career
George Q., a 57-year-old resident of public housing, struggled with addiction for many years before achieving sobriety in 1998. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Boricua College, he decided to help others overcome substance abuse issues and obtained a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) certification. George left the workforce to care for an ailing family member, and he struggled to find a job in the following years. George was referred to the BronxWorks Jobs Plus program by a friend who completed the program and was working as a job readiness instructor for BronxWorks. On his first day at Jobs Plus, George demonstrated his eagerness by arriving in professional attire. George updated his resume, improved his interviewing skills, and learned best practices for job searching. Today he is a Case Manager at Samaritan Daytop Village. George is thrilled to be back providing services to community members in his chosen profession.

Clarisa A. Makes Healthier Choices and Finds a Community

When Clarisa A., a Mott Haven resident, was diagnosed with diabetes, she decided to eat healthier and join a gym. "After only ten days, I began to feel better and more confident in myself. I started to think, 'If ten days makes a difference, what would 25 or 50 or 100 do?'" Clarisa began to enjoy spin classes and visiting local farmers markets. She also attended events hosted by Healthy and Livable Mott Haven, a BronxWorks-led partnership, and stated that its social media pages were helpful resources. With hard work and dedication, she reversed her diabetes diagnosis.

"I relied on the community that I found as a source of inspiration. Connecting to other people and groups looking to create a healthier neighborhood inspired me to give back," Clarisa said.

She now leads a free weekly fitness class at a local community center. "Through my ShapeUp NYC class, I want to help others in my community do the same thing I did, and increase access to healthier choices in Mott Haven."

Click here for more "Stories of Hope" from BronxWorks.

Donations to BronxWorks will help the Agency continue to Lift Lives and Build Futures. Please consider making a contribution today. Thank you in advance!
Cornerstone Director Kiesha Roberts began her career at BronxWorks in 2006, when the Agency was known as the Citizens Advice Bureau. Since then, Kiesha has worked in a variety of roles in both the BronxWorks Workforce Development and the Children and Youth Departments. Kiesha's current role as Cornerstone Director includes the oversight of staff, activities, and programming at the Betances, Classic, St. Mary's and Pyramid Cornerstone Community Centers.

Year-round, the Cornerstones provide services and programs for children, teens, adults, and seniors, many of whom are New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents. Programs for children include summer camp, academic support, recreational activities, and more. The Cornerstones offer a variety of activities for teens, including basketball, dance, fitness, trips to cultural and recreational sites, and open mic and spoken word events. Adults and seniors also enjoy fitness and dance classes. Participants of all ages are welcome to attend community events, town halls and other civic engagements at the Cornerstones. Kiesha strives to always offer top-notch programming to the thousands of community members who visit the Centers each year.

"I'm constantly asking myself how we can enhance our services," she said.

As someone with a strong background in technology, Kiesha hopes to expand computer and technology offerings. Success in cooking and nutrition at Classic, which has a commercial kitchen, has Kiesha planning on offering similar activities at the Pyramid, perhaps with a mobile kitchen.

Kiesha is also very adept at creating partnerships with organizations such as the Girl Scouts, which now offer activities at the Cornerstones. "I look for programs that encourage collaboration," Kiesha said. She has great working relationships with the Tenant Associations as well as the Police Service Areas that cover the neighborhoods. Read below for a recent commendation Kiesha received!

Kiesha also leaves a lasting impact on the youth participants and serves as a mentor to many. She formed a strong bond with a young man named Eimad, who played basketball at Classic. Eimad struggled in school, but Kiesha encouraged him to work hard. After Eimad graduated from high school, she helped him find a job at a restaurant in the Bronx. Today, Eimad is learning to become a chef at an upscale restaurant in Manhattan. "Eimad still checks in with me, after all these years," Kiesha noted.

Kiesha grew up in Harlem and attended the College of New Rochelle, where she honed her computer skills and received her Bachelor's degree in three years. She received a Master's degree in Information Technology and is currently a few credits shy of a PhD in the same field. Kiesha enjoys her job and appreciates its everyday challenges.

"I am very hands-on," she said. "I will do maintenance work, help
to cook in the kitchen, even sew if a child rips a piece of clothing. There is nothing I will ask my staff to do that I won’t do. At the Cornerstones, we do it all."

And she certainly does - with a smile!

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**Did You Know?**

**The 2018 Bronx Cranksgiving Event**

Pictured above are some of the food donations collected at the 2018 Bronx Cranksgiving Event.

Each year, bike riders all over the world take their marks to participate in "Cranksgiving," an event known as "the food drive on two wheels." Enthusiastic cyclists travel from one local grocery store to the next to buy food to donate to those in need in two and a half hours or less. Cranksgiving started in New York City in 1999, and now nearly 100 cities hold similar events.

The Bronx 2018 Cranksgiving Event took place on November 11. Cyclists gathered in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx and navigated the streets to local markets. Food gathered during the event was donated to the BronxWorks Betances Community Center in support of their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, and over forty bags of food were donated to community members on November 19. Organizer Edmundo Martinez launched the event in the Bronx four years ago and partners with BronxWorks each year.

Edmundo is particularly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to Bronx neighbors in need. "I've been homeless, I've been hungry, and I know what it's like to need," he said.

*It is not surprising the Cranksgiving has grown each year. "It's an exciting event," said Edmundo. "You get to ride your bike and give back to the community."

Special thanks to News 12 for covering the 2018 Bronx Cranksgiving Event.
**Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaways**

BronxWorks held turkey giveaways for Bronx community members. Thanks to BronxWorks partners and friends, hundreds of families went home with the mainstay of a Thanksgiving dinner. This year, BronxWorks is especially grateful to The Willie Colon Foundation, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Governor Andrew Cuomo, MedAlliance, New York City Councilmembers Ruben Diaz Sr. and Vanessa Gibson, New York State Assembly Member Latoya Joiner, and many others who contributed!

**#TeamBronxWorks runs the NYC Marathon**

For the 10th year in a row, volunteers participated in the TCS NYC Marathon for BronxWorks. This year, BronxWorks had five charity runners commit to raise a minimum of $2,500 each for BronxWorks programs. The volunteers included Annie Abram, Case Manager Supervisor at BronxWorks; Michael Curcio, Housing Coordinator at BronxWorks; Joseph Macaluso, member of the BronxWorks Leadership Council; and BronxWorks supporters Damali Thomas and Jessica Espinosa. A huge and heartfelt congratulations goes out to all the runners of Team BronxWorks for raising over $13,000! Several BronxWorks staff came out to cheer for the runners at mile 21 in the Bronx -- one of the toughest points in the race! [Click here for more pictures.](#)

**Eileen Torres receives award at the Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration**

In spite of the November 15 snowstorm, several honorees of Puerto Rican descent came to Bronx Borough Hall to be presented with recognition awards at the Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration. The event was attended by community leaders and included performances by Puerto Rican dancers and singers. Eileen Torres, BronxWorks Executive Director was honored for contributing to the growth and promotion of the Puerto Rican community and culture.
Children's Hope India / CH3 Gives Holiday Gift Bags to BronxWorks

On November 29, the Bronxchester and Third Avenue after-school program received gift bags filled with gloves, hats and other goodies! These special gift bags were created and delivered by BronxWorks supporter, Children's Hope India / CH3. What a wonderful way to start the winter! Children's Hope India generously supports BronxWorks after-school STEAM lessons and activities at Bronxchester and Third Avenue. This is the second year in a row that CH3, Children's Hope India's group of emerging high school leaders, made holiday donations to the students.

Click here for more pictures.
Street Soldiers taping at BronxWorks

On November 8, the BronxWorks Pyramid Cornerstone Community Center hosted Fox 5 and Hot 97 while they taped a very special episode of their hit series Street Soldiers with Lisa Evers. A celebrity and expert panel passionately discussed the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) heat crisis and what has changed since last winter. The panel included: recording artist Ja Rule; New York State Assembly Member Michael Blake; Honorable Carmen Quinones; and Danny Barber, NYCHA Resident & NYCHA Citywide Council of Presidents Head (CCOP).

Click here to watch the episode.

Family Heritage Luncheon

On November 15, the BronxWorks Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) celebrated the rich cultures within our organization at the Family Heritage Luncheon. Participants had the opportunity to learn about the traditional art, music and food of their classmates and teachers.

Click here for more pictures.
Mayor Bill de Blasio Holds Press Conference at Betances

On November 19, Mayor Bill de Blasio held an important press conference at the BronxWorks Betances Cornerstone Community Center. The Mayor gave an update on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) initiative for select New York City Housing Authority Housing (NYCHA) developments, including Betances.

Plaque Dedication at the Classic Cornerstone Community Center
BronxWorks Cornerstone Director Kiesha Roberts received a ceremonial plaque from Danny Barber, NYCHA Citywide Council of Presidents Head and Police Service Area 7 (PSA7) at the Classic Cornerstone Community Center. The plaque was donated during the New York Police Department (NYPD) Fellowship Breakfast to celebrate the vital services the Center provides to the Bronx. The plaque reads: "BronxWorks Classic Community Center, We celebrate an organization which has renewed and strengthened our great Borough of the Bronx and the great State of New York."

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Upcoming Events

**TAKE A DIP**

**HELP THE HOMELESS**

The 2019 Dip Against Homelessness
February 9, 2019

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**Save the Date!**

BronxNet, BronxWorks and The Bronx Polar Bears invite you to

The 2018 DIP AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Saturday, February 9 at Orchard Beach

For more info contact Allison Gangi at 646-393-4002 or agangi@bronxworks.org
Save the Date
The BronxWorks 2019 Gala
May 14, 2019
Grand Hyatt Midtown
109 E 42nd St
New York, New York

More details to follow

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