May 2018

Celebrating with BronxWorks Seniors

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In this Issue:

Celebrating with BronxWorks Seniors
BronxWorks and the ASPCA: A Special Partnership
Staff Profile: Angel Vazquez
Did You Know?
Financial Literacy Services Offered at BronxWorks
Photo Essay
May is national Older Americans Month. This year’s theme, Engage at Every Age, emphasizes that we are never too old to take part in activities that enrich our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. BronxWorks is dedicated to providing opportunities for Bronx seniors to enrich their lives year-round. May was a particularly special month for BronxWorks senior participants, who celebrated Mother’s Day with delight.

The Mother’s Day event at the BronxWorks Heights Senior Center featured a fashion show. Men wore suits and ties, or traditional native garb, and women wore long, colorful dresses, some of which they made themselves. The seniors chose 70's music to play while they sauntered down the aisle, and their friends clapped and cheered.

The event was attended by Councilmember Fernando Cabrera and Assembly Member Latoya Joyner, who both wished a very Happy Mother's Day to the seniors. Before the fashion show began, a DJ played Salsa music. Many danced, while others swayed in their seats.

Also in honor of Mother’s Day, the seniors at the Morris Innovative Senior Center selected two "Mothers of the Year“ and awarded them with flowers. The BronxWorks E. Roberts Moore Senior Center hosted a raffle and poetry reading.

Celebrations aren't limited to the springtime. The BronxWorks Senior Centers recognize each major holiday with a special event. "Not all of the seniors have the chance to spend holidays with their families," said Maria Rivera, Director of the BronxWorks Department of Senior Services. "So we give them plenty of opportunities to celebrate with each other.” The annual New Year's Eve festivities at East Concourse also include dancing and are "especially memorable," said Solomon Smart, Program Director at East Concourse Senior Center.

BronxWorks takes a holistic approach to providing services for seniors. In addition to celebrations, BronxWorks offers classes, healthy meals, activities, and trips. Classes include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), computer classes, and an array of fitness opportunities, such as line dancing and Zumba. A group of seniors, which calls themselves Los Amigos De Moore, tends to the garden in front of E. Roberts Moore Senior Center and educates the community about the importance of healthy eating (you can read about them in the July 2017 Newsletter). With so many activities, there is undoubtedly something for everyone at the BronxWorks senior centers.
"I take two buses to get here," said Yolanda Rosario, a regular at the Heights Senior Center, "and I come every day to be with my friends. We always sit at the same table."

Yolanda also appreciates the opportunities she has to go on excursions. Recent trips include Broadway shows, the New York Botanical Garden, and Atlantic City. Many of the seniors are looking forward to a trip to City Island in June.

"Why stay at home and do nothing when you could be here?" Yolanda asked with a smile.

**BronxWorks and the ASPCA: A Special Partnership**

Pets require attention, love, and care-sometimes more than we can provide. Recently, BronxWorks has formed a partnership with the ASPCA. It's a natural partnership for the two agencies to work together to help both families and their animals. Oftentimes our Bronx neighbors, especially seniors, need assistance in caring for their pets.

A BronxWorks senior participant at the Heights Senior Center fell ill and was unable to care for her Sphinx cat, Biggie. She was unsure where to turn and brought Biggie to the Heights. Maria Rivera, Director, Department of Senior Services, reached out to the ASPCA and explained the challenge. Isadora Peraza-Martinez, Community Engagement Program Coordinator at the ASPCA, arranged for a vet to do a complete checkup on Biggie and give her the vaccinations she needed. A BronxWorks Case Manager, Natalie Ayala, offered to adopt Biggie, who is now happy in her new home.

The ASPCA has expanded its services in the Bronx over the past year and a half. With two mobile units in the South Bronx, ASPCA staff members provide pets with basic services, such as treatments for minor infections, spay and neutering, micro-chipping, and more.

BronxWorks makes referrals to the ASPCA if a program participant is in need of assistance with his or her pet. Similarly, the ASPCA will reach out to BronxWorks for social services-related referrals within the borough. In addition, BronxWorks has partnered with the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals to offer Trap Neuter Release Workshops (TNR) at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center to help residents care for feral and stray cats. The next workshop is on June 16.

The ASPCA is also helping Bronx residents by bringing its mobile units to community events, such as the monthly Second Saturdays events at St. Mary's Park. Second Saturdays is a free event series of fitness classes, health screenings, food tastings, and other activities for families. At the events, the ASPCA will promote awareness of its services to the community and offer "pet enrichment" - or toys - to families.

"We provide tools to help pet owners keep their pets," said Erin Earley, Director of the ASPCA’s Community Engagement
With two mobile units in the South Bronx, ASPCA staff members travel to community events and provide pets with basic services.}

Many BronxWorks program participants are pet owners who have benefited from the agency's partnership with the ASPCA.

"We are thrilled to be working with such an incredible organization," said Eileen Torres, Executive Director of BronxWorks, "which is helping us reach our program participants and their pets."

To learn more about the ASPCA, please visit their website, https://www.aspca.org/nyc.

Pictured from left to right: Elizabeth "Bessie" Taliaferro, BronxWorks Development Associate, Isadora Peraza-Martinez, ASPCA Community Engagement Coordinator, Dara Ruiz, ASPCA Senior Manager of Community Engagement, and Gianna Dell'Olio, BronxWorks Director of Advancement and Communications.

Staff Profile: Angel Vazquez
After twenty-five years of service to the seniors at the BronxWorks E. Roberts Moore Senior Center, Angel Vazquez, who works in maintenance, is retiring this month. His supervisor Wanda Abeyllez, Program Director at E. Roberts Moore, hosted a goodbye celebration for him on May 24. Born and raised in the Bronx, Angel lives nearby E. Roberts Moore with his wife. He also has a son and two grandchildren, ages 17 and 19.

Angel is known for his hard work and positive attitude. He did not hesitate to come in over the years on weekends to paint walls and do minor repairs.

"Angel always has a smile on his face," said Wanda, who worked with him for thirteen years. "He has a lot of love for the seniors," she added.

Wanda is hoping that Angel might return to E. Roberts Moore as a participant and enjoy the programming and company of the seniors he served for so long. But for now, Angel is looking forward to being outside and relaxing.

Did You Know?
Financial Literacy Services Offered at BronxWorks

BronxWorks is committed to reversing the cycle of poverty in the Bronx. Empowering community members with financial literacy skills is an initiative that is very important to all programs and departments throughout the agency. BronxWorks is very fortunate to collaborate with community partners such as Popular Bank, JP Morgan Chase, and TD Bank to help educate Bronx residents on a myriad of topics, such as budgeting and banking.

Volunteers from BronxWorks community partners regularly host financial literacy workshops. In April, Shane McMahon, Analyst at JP Morgan Chase, hosted two workshops at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center for high school aged after-school program participants. Topics included the basics of income statements, taxes, banking, and building credit.

Year-round, BronxWorks provides New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents with individualized financial coaching through the Jobs-Plus Program. Jobs-Plus helps community
members meet their employment-related goals with career coaching, pre and post-employment support services, job readiness workshops, and more.

For more information on the agency's financial literacy services, please e-mail info@bronxworks.org.

Photo Essay

Gardening with the NYPD

On May 3, two members of the New York City Police Department's Community Division helped BronxWorks senior participants transplant 15 tomato seedlings from the Riverbank State Park Greenhouse in Harlem to the E. Roberts Moore Senior Center garden. Special thanks to the Horticultural Society of New York for donating the tomato seedlings and allowing our participants to use their greenhouse.
BronxWorks Participates in AIDS Walk

On May 20, Barbara Miliano, BronxWorks Program Director for the Brook, accompanied three BronxWorks program participants at AIDS Walk New York. In its over thirty years, AIDS Walk New York raised nearly $150 million to combat HIV and AIDS.
Second Saturdays Kick Off
On May 12, the BronxWorks Healthy & Livable Mott Haven Partnership kicked off the third year of "Second Saturdays in St. Mary’s Park," a series of 6 monthly events. Community members participated in family friendly activities, such as fitness classes, health screenings, arts activities and performances.

Biking for BronxWorks
Yusef Graves, Director of Social Services at the BronxWorks Jackson Avenue Family Residence, participated in the TD 5 Boro Bike Tour. This year, 10 BronxWorks charity riders pedaled over 40 miles and raised over $10,000 to benefit children’s programs at our shelters for homeless families.
Senior Aqua Aerobics

On May 15, BronxWorks senior participants took a dip in the newly renovated indoor pool at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center at 1130 Grand Concourse. The participants enjoyed a morning of aqua aerobics therapy led by Theresa Racine, Aerobics Instructor and Health Coach. For more information about the BronxWorks Aquatics Program, contact: aquatics@bronxworks.org

There's Still Time! Join Us!
The BronxWorks 2018 Annual Gala!
The BronxWorks 2018 Annual Gala takes place on June 11, 2018 at 583 PARK AVENUE, NY, NY at 6:00pm

Click here to join us at

The BronxWorks 2018 Annual Gala

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For more information about the Gala or to purchase tickets, journal ads, or sponsorship opportunities, please visit our website or contact Elizabeth "Bessie" Taliaferro at 646-393-4004 or etaliaferro@bronxworks.org
For the 10th year in a row, BronxWorks is thrilled to be a charity partner in the TCS New York City Marathon on Sunday, November 4.

Our team is making a big difference for Bronx children and youth and will be a part of the excitement in one of the world's most famous marathons!

To find out how to become a BronxWorks charity runner and secure your spot in the TCS New York City Marathon, click below.

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