The BronxWorks October 2019 Newsletter

BronxWorks participants and staff gathered at the Faces of Success II event to celebrate the successful transition of many formerly street homeless participants to permanent housing. Pictured from left to right: Carmela R., BronxWorks program participant; John Betts, Residence Director of the Jerome Avenue Men’s Shelter; Carolyn Pelzer, Case Manager at the Living Room/Safe Haven; and Shirley B., BronxWorks program participant.

In this Issue:

Faces of Success
Staff Profile: Andrea Kepler
Meet the BronxWorks TCS New York City Marathon Team
Did You Know: The 2019 BronxWorks #GivingTuesday Event
Photo Essay
Upcoming Events
The BronxWorks Adult Homeless Services Department hosted Faces of Success II on Friday, October 18, 2019. Modeled after the eponymous 2011 event, Faces of Success II celebrated the successful transition of formerly homeless persons to permanent housing.

The gathering, held at Metropolitan College New York - Bronx Campus, featured a video, heartfelt testimonials by several individuals who once lived on the streets, a buffet lunch and lots of emotion.

The event also served as a testimony to the effectiveness of the Housing First Model which serves as a guiding principal for the BronxWorks Homeless Services Department. Over the past 36 months, almost 300 BronxWorks Program Participants have moved into permanent housing with a 96% retention rate. BronxWorks is also proud to share that street homelessness in the Bronx is down 80% since 2005.

"The Housing First Model is essentially the idea that you provide a street homeless person with a place to live with the understanding that some of their other life issues may resolve now that they have a place to live," stated Noel Concepcion, Department Director, BronxWorks Adult Homeless Services.

Faces of Success II was attended by BronxWorks Program Participants, staff, and loyal supporters. Many of the staff commented that the event felt like a reunion and they were so pleased to see some familiar faces. The camaraderie among the group was inspiring, as men and women who were once homeless embraced one another and enthusiastically caught up with their case managers, outreach workers and other BronxWorks staff.

Brian S., who appears in the video and attended the event reflected on his experience.

"I went through some very bad times, but I never have to do that again," he said. Brian looks to his future and stated, "I want to get back to the things that kept me grounded and I had fun doing."

The event was highlighted by an uplifting song performed by Cassie Dessalines. Cassie, Program Director of the Living Room / Haven, wanted to incorporate some joy into the event.

"I am inspired by my work and by those around me,"
Participants, Guests and Staff enjoyed a catered meal from Salsa Caterers.

All the honorees were invited to have their photo taken and the pictures were framed and shared before they left. All received a standing ovation and extra doses of encouragement as well. Special thanks to all who supported the BronxWorks 2019 Dip Against Homelessness. Faces of Success II was made possible by funds raised from the Dip.

Click here to see the Faces of Success II video

Click here to see the Fox 5 Coverage

Click here to see the News 12 Coverage

Click here to view and download pictures

BronxWorks Staff Members gather at Faces of Success II

Staff Profile: Andrea Kepler
Andrea Kepler joined BronxWorks on July 5, 2016. She remembers the date clearly as she had retired days earlier from her position as CEO at Wemersville State Hospital in Pennsylvania. Andrea struggled to imagine what life would be like after retirement and knew she was not ready to give up a career in social work that spanned 40 years. Upon answering an ad placed by BronxWorks in an industry newsletter, Andrea interviewed with Noel Concepcion, Department Director - Adult Homeless Services. Soon after, Andrea joined the BronxWorks Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) as Clinical Coordinator.

A Queens native, Andrea originally had her sights set on a career as an archeologist. She earned a bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Sociology from Lycoming College in PA. Later, Andrea moved to Philadelphia and earned a master's in Social Work from Temple University. She reflects on her years in Philadelphia during the 70's as being an exciting time for social justice and change. Andrea worked full-time in a residential program for individuals suffering from mental illness and development disabilities through graduate school. Since then her professional career has been dedicated to working with vulnerable populations.

Today, Andrea is the Program Director for the BronxWorks Pyramid Safe Haven. The Pyramid provides shelter for 75 men. Andrea's team at the Pyramid includes 32 staff members - case managers, kitchen staff, activity coordinators, housing specialists and security.

"My work is very rewarding. It is humbling to be with people who need so much and are grateful for your help," stated Andrea. "Even the smallest deed is appreciated."

Andrea was especially proud that 9 former Pyramid clients participated in the recent BronxWorks Faces of Success II event. She felt that the event was wonderful for staff and clients alike.

"It is great closure to see individuals who were once homeless to become, and stay, stably housed."

Some days can be very challenging and Andrea admits that there are disappointments along the way. Every client has a unique story. Some face great barriers to permanent housing but she is proud that BronxWorks staff work tirelessly to offer a multitude of opportunities.

When asked what she likes most about BronxWorks, all roads led back to the staff and especially Noel and Juan Rivera, HOT Team Program Director. "I think the world of them. They approach their work with tremendous professionalism and show extreme amounts of care and concern"
Meet the BronxWorks TCS New York City Marathon Team

BronxWorks is honored to have dedicated supporters who are willing to fundraise on behalf of the Agency at various events throughout the year.

Next week, BronxWorks will continue a 11 year tradition of serving as a charity partner of the TCS New York City Marathon. On November 3, #TeamBronxWorks will run through the five boroughs in one of the world's most famous marathons. In addition to dedicating time and energy to training, our five runners are fundraising for programs that support BronxWorks children and youth. Keep reading to learn about the members of #TeamBronxWorks.

Sherrima Queen

Sherrima Queen, a BronxWorks staff member, is thrilled to serve the Agency in a new way. As a part of the BronxWorks Fiscal Team she knows how many programs and participants are helped by individual fundraising and is choosing to do her part to support programs for children and youth.

"When I think of all the people that BronxWorks helps, it inspired me to run in the marathon. Just like helping one person at a time, I will be taking one step at a time for this great organization to victory!"

SUPPORT SHERRIMA

Ben Sweeney

Ben Sweeney, a new member of #TeamBronxWorks is passionate about the Bronx and recently visited the after-school program at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center. When he is not training for the NYC Marathon or the Chicago Triathlon, Ben spends his time working for a start-up company and doing stand up comedy.

"I believe that BronxWorks is a great organization, filled with employees committed to
improving the lives of their community members, and I am honored to be running for the team in the TCS New York City Marathon."

Jonathan Schultz

Jonathan Schultz, former Case Manager Supervisor, BronxWorks Homebase Program, continues to support the Agency by running for #TeamBronxWorks in the 2019 TCS NYC Marathon. Jon had a baby boy in August and spends his days balancing being a new dad with Marathon training.

"Having been a part of the BronxWorks staff, I can testify that the agency provides exceptional support and services to community members in need. I'm proud to be running the marathon for a truly wonderful organization."

Jean Lefevre

Jean Lefevre, a native New Yorker, works as a nurse anesthetist at New York Presbyterian in Queens. Jean has always been an avid runner. In his late teens and early twenties, he would regularly go for a half-hour run in the evenings to unwind and get some exercise.

"A marathon had always been a big 'one-day' dream of
mine, but it seemed unattainable - the distance was more than double my previous longest run. But today I want to run for a greater cause which is why I joined the BronxWorks charity running team to help the children in the Bronx."

SUPPORT JEAN

Justin Stein

Justin Stein, Vice President of Acquisitions at Bronx Pro Group, joined #TeamBronxWorks very recently with no prior marathon running experience. The Bronx Pro Group, a real estate developer and loyal supporter of BronxWorks, frequently participates at other BronxWorks fundraisers like the TD 5 Boro Bike tour.

"Working at Bronx Pro, I've seen the impact of the great work that BronxWorks does in the community I work in. It's a pleasure to help raise money to support their mission."

SUPPORT JUSTIN

BronxWorks is pleased to continue its tradition of cheering on our runners with signs, banners, and shouts of support on November 3. We hope you will consider joining us on this inspiring day! BronxWorks gathers at 138th Street and the Grand Concourse (right near the 4/5 subway station).

For more information, please contact Gianna Dell'Olio, Director of Advancement and Communications at gdellolio@bronxworks.org.

Did You Know?
The BronxWorks fifth annual #GivingTuesday Event takes place on Tuesday, December 3 from 6:00pm - 9:00pm at Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium. The BronxWorks #GivingTuesday Networking Event kicks off the year-end giving season and all proceeds will benefit programs that support immigrants and our new Bronx neighbors. We welcome you to join us for an evening of networking, drinks, buffet, live entertainment, and raffles—all for a great cause!

Once again, the event will feature the music of John James, a local guitarist and performer.

"Giving Tuesday brings together BronxWorks friends and supporters to celebrate the Agency's work and raise critical funds in support of our mission," said Eileen Torres, Executive Director. "I hope you will join us!"

Early Bird tickets are $85 each, includes 2 drink tickets and buffet. Special Early Bird price only available until November 4. After November 4 individual tickets will be $95.

Sponsorship opportunities also available beginning at $250.
Poverty Simulation Event
BronxWorks hosted a poverty simulation event presented by Bronx Partners for Healthy Communities. This eye-opening event helped leaders and front line staff from social service organizations understand the challenges faced by individuals and families who live at or below the poverty line.

The Final Second Saturdays of the Season
The BronxWorks-led Healthy and Liveable Mott Haven initiative along with the Partnership for Parks celebrated the last Second Saturdays of 2019. From May to October, the BronxWorks-led Healthy and Livable Mott Haven initiative holds free family activities at St. Mary's Park on every Second Saturday of the month.
The East Concourse Senior Prom

BronxWorks senior participants at the East Concourse Neighborhood Senior Center had a blast at a special Senior Prom event! Men wore suits and ties, while women had the opportunity to choose a new dress provided by Rent The Runway. Seniors embraced the chance to celebrate their prom and danced, socialized and posed at the photo booths. Thank you to Oscar Health Insurance for helping coordinate this special day for our senior participants.

College Application Week at BronxWorks

BronxWorks recently celebrated College Application Week agency-wide and the BronxWorks Center for Achieving Future Education (CAFÉ) program encouraged all students, participants, and staff to “think college” by sponsoring a series of activities and themes.
International Federation of Settlements visits BronxWorks

BronxWorks was thrilled to host members of the International Federation of Settlements at our BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center. BronxWorks leadership discussed housing, immigration, benefits assistance and youth services with colleagues from across the globe.

Halloween Celebration

Friends of BronxWorks from the United Way of New York City and PwC hosted a Halloween celebration for the after-school students at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center at 1130 Grand Concourse. This annual party includes amazing costumes, exciting games, and lots of treats! BronxWorks sends a big thank you to our partners at PwC and the United Way of New York City for
Upcoming Events

For the 11th year in a row, BronxWorks is thrilled to be a charity partner in the TCS New York City Marathon on Sunday, November 3.

*Click below to meet the 2019 #TEAMBRONXWORKS charity runners and help them reach their fundraising goals!*
Join the BronxWorks cheering squad at the TCS NYC Marathon! Come out and see the excitement as we rep the Bronx and show #TeamBronxWorks our support and appreciation!

**Sunday, November 3**  
**At the corner of 138th St. & Grand Concourse**  
*Right off the 4 and 5 train*

**Stop by anytime from**  
1:00PM - 4:00 PM
BronxWorks will once again participate in #GivingTuesday on December 3, 2019 at Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium 6:00pm - 9:00pm

$85 Special Early Bird Ticket price is available until November 4.  
After November 4 individual tickets will be $95

For more information about tickets and sponsorships click below

MORE INFO
SAVE THE DATE - FEBRUARY 2020

The BronxWorks
2020 LIFTING LIVES GALA
May 12, 2020
6:00PM - 9:00PM
THE GRAND HYATT NEW YORK
Manhattan Ballroom

SAVE THE DATE

STAY CONNECTED:
Did you get this e-mail forwarded? Subscribe below to receive BronxWorks updates.

Sign Up Now