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### Message from the Executive Director

Trying to decide which CAB programs to feature in the newsletter can be a difficult task. It's like asking a mother to say which child is her favorite. Of course I am proud of all our work to serve people and improve the quality of life in the South Bronx. But since I must choose, what I would like to highlight in this issue is a few of our **community outreach programs**.

In this newsletter you'll read about our Food Stamp outreach effort, which helps low-income families get enough to eat; our many healthcare outreach programs, which make it easier for Bronx residents to understand the confusing world of managed care; and a program called Single Stop, which helps people find solutions to an assortment of problems. People find these services through word of mouth, referral from another agency or CAB program, and our active promotion of these programs throughout the borough.

Mayor Bloomberg's recent announcement of bold new initiatives to eliminate homelessness has gotten much attention. Our feature article provides a "behind the scenes" peek at CAB's involvement in the creation of this plan. The city included us prominently at the design stage. It is certainly rewarding to see how well respected our agency has become in the fields of homelessness and eviction prevention.

These items only scratch the surface of our many activities. I hope you'll enjoy this profile of some of our programs, and join us in future updates of our service to the Bronx.

Best regards,



Carolyn McLaughlin

### Ribbon Cutting for Early Childhood Learning Center



ECLC Director Marcia Lawrence and children

On May 27, CAB celebrated the opening of its new Early Childhood Learning Center, located in our Community Center on the Grand Concourse. The ECLC is a state-of-

the-art childcare facility that consists of three classrooms which can accommodate 58 children between 3 and 5 years old. There is also an enclosed outdoor play area.

The Community Center has been the base of operations for most of our children and family service programs since 1993. This new childcare complex now gives CAB the ability to serve young people from the pre-school through the pre-college years under one roof for the first time. Honored guests and representatives from institutions that supported the ECLC's construction participated in the dedication with remarks and a ribbon cutting ceremony.



From l. to r.: Sean Delany, CAB Board Chair; Charles Lauster, architect; George Matteson, Trustee, Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust; Ade Rasul, Chair, Bronx Community Board 4; José Rodriguez, from the office of Congressman José Serrano; Glenn Alleyne, Director of Youth Services for Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr.; Aurelia Greene, NY State Assemblywoman; and Adele Ursone-Matteson, Trustee, Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust.

# CAB HELPS SHAPE CITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

Currently 38,000 homeless people (including 16,000 children) reside in city shelters daily, with thousands more sleeping on streets, benches, and subways. The ramifications extend far beyond the affected individuals and families.

New York City's Department of Homeless Services recently created a five-year plan to end chronic homelessness and reduce overall homelessness by two-thirds. During the planning process, DHS invited a cross-section of institutions to participate in focus groups and a major conference. CAB was a featured contributor because of our distinguished record of homeless and eviction prevention services.

Executive Director Carolyn McLaughlin co-chaired a DHS work group on homelessness prevention. One of its prominent speakers was Marshall Green, a CAB board member and Attorney-in-Charge of the Legal Aid Society's Civil Division in the Bronx. As a result of his 30-year history, Green is a housing law expert. Many ideas DHS considered about eviction prevention came from him.

Experts agree that there is little early intervention for those facing eviction, which is one way people become homeless. The steps currently taken to prevent eviction – including consulting a lawyer, seeking arrears assistance, and obtaining documents – occur only after one has appeared before a judge.

Green suggested that housing court represents an ideal point to focus on for eviction prevention services because everyone who gets evicted comes through it. The system could be restructured to be the place of first rather than last resort, where agencies would be centrally located and collaborate to serve tenants. If the complexity of navigating the system could be reduced and if people had just one place to go for help, they would be in a better position when they appear before a judge. Accordingly, the Mayor's office recently announced a new initiative that would include preventing evictions in housing court.

Scott Auwarter, CAB's Assistant Executive Director for

Case Management Programs, spoke on a panel about how housing subsidies could be used to prevent homelessness. Subsidies have been available only to those enrolled in the municipal shelter system. Auwarter's recommendation was that families at risk of homelessness should be given subsidies before they enter the shelter system. From a practical standpoint, such a change makes good sense: it costs \$3,000 a month to keep a family in a shelter, whereas housing subsidies would cost around \$800 a month. Living in a shelter is also very painful and disruptive to families – a situation that should generally be avoided. Following this advice, the city has adopted a new strategy to redirect shelter funds into prevention services and supportive housing.



Daniel Farrell, Program Director of CAB's Homeless Outreach Team, made a presentation on how to improve services and assistance for individuals living on the street. He explained that an important part of creating an effective intervention strategy is to recognize different homeless sub-populations. The needs of families are not the same as individuals, who typically have mental illness or substance abuse

problems. People may be chronically, intermittently, seasonally, or temporarily homeless. Each group has its own characteristics, which present special challenges and require different approaches.

There has not been much documentation on the street homeless in New York, as most literature discusses people in shelters. However, CAB has done a great deal of work on this population. DHS has acknowledged the need for such data. Mayor Bloomberg has promised new tools to allow the city to better assess its practices and connect with homeless persons not currently being reached.

While many people are skeptical that homelessness can be substantially reduced in so short a time, it is hoped that the DHS conference and focus groups have helped policymakers produce an effective plan. CAB was honored to contribute to the process.

# Food Cards Stamp Out Hunger

CAB's Food Stamp Outreach Program is now celebrating its first anniversary. The United Way launched the program as part of its Hunger Prevention Initiative and chose CAB to perform these services in the Bronx. The initiative arose from studies which revealed 850,000 New Yorkers were eligible for Food Stamps but had not applied.

CAB's four outreach specialists go out daily to various locations to find potential applicants. There they set up tables, hand out literature, and talk with people about Food Stamps. When someone is interested in applying, workers can prescreen them using computer software to determine eligibility. If they qualify, the worker then prints out an application and schedules an appointment with the local Human Resources Administration office, which handles Food Stamp requests. CAB also does follow-up when problems arise, acting as a liaison to clear obstacles and an advocate to help with appeals.

Although most people are familiar with the term "Food Stamps," today recipients are actually given electronic cards which are used like an ATM card. The cards are a more efficient way to distribute benefits, but their greatest advantage is that it looks like people are paying for

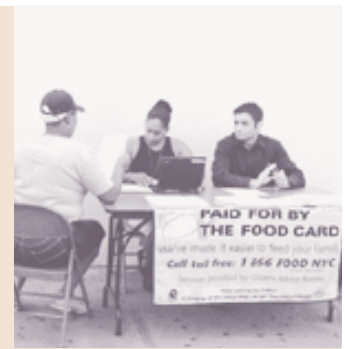
groceries with a credit or debit card, eliminating the embarrassment of paper coupons.

Food Stamps can be especially useful to immigrants who account for a third of the Bronx's population. (Under federal guidelines, legal permanent residents of at least five years are eligible, as are all documented children under 18.) Yet immigrants are often reluctant to register for Food Stamps, either out of cultural pride or resistance to any contact with the government.

Beyond helping families, Food Stamps are an economic boost to the city. Recipients have more money to spend at neighborhood food outlets, so dollars get distributed throughout the local economy. As a result, Food Stamps serve as a macro level stimulus.

Over the past year, the CAB team has prescreened 2,800 people for eligibility. Of that number, 1,200 qualified for Food Stamps, and today receive an average monthly benefit of \$193. Their households now have enough to eat without having to choose between food and other necessities.

Outreach specialist Polly Betancourt (center) with applicant and intern.



# Help Just a Single Stop Away

Single Stop is a new program that builds on CAB's tradition of providing information and referral assistance. As Assistant Executive Director John Weed says, "Single Stop has brought us back to our roots and allowed us to bring back the original service we were founded on into our Community Center."

Single Stop is the brainchild of the Robin Hood Foundation, which funds the program. Its objective is to offer low-income New Yorkers a place where they have immediate access to financial, legal, housing, public benefits, and family service assistance. Because of our track record, CAB was picked to be a site for the South Bronx.

People who come to Single Stop are greeted by a case manager who conducts an initial intake to assess their situation and determine the

best course of action. The case manager is the primary person for the delivery of social services, interfacing with programs that CAB and others offer. When circumstances call for a lawyer, people are directed to the Legal Aid Society. For financial issues, a Citibank representative offers free money management help. In some cases, the three must work together as a team. (Both the attorney and the Citibank representative come to the Community Center on Monday evenings, so that the services are available in one place.)

The Self-Sufficiency Calculator is a software program the case manager uses to assess need. Based on information about the household, it evaluates what a family must earn to cover basic needs and determines eligibility for childcare subsidies, health insurance, food stamps, and tax credits.



The Single Stop Team: Francisco Ortega, Citibank Assistant Vice President; Abigail Corchado, CAB Case Manager; and Marshall Green, CAB Board Member and Attorney-in-Charge, Legal Aid Society, Bronx Civil Division.

Single Stop has greatly expanded its client base since it began last October. Most recently it saw 50 new program participants in the space of a month, in addition to returnees whose cases are still ongoing. With funding from the Robin Hood Foundation, legal services from the Legal Aid Society, and financial help from Citibank, Single Stop is a shining example of institutions working together to help people solve problems.

# Insuring Healthcare in the Bronx

A large number of individuals and families in New York City, including the Bronx, carry the burden of living without health insurance. Citywide, 28% of working age adults – more than a million people – are uninsured, which is a rate 50% higher than that for the state or country overall. In the Bronx, the rate is 29%.

Most low-income New Yorkers are eligible for public health care coverage through Medicaid, Child Health Plus, or Family Health Plus. However, the state now requires the people it insures to enroll in managed care plans administered by health maintenance organizations (HMOs). These plans are often confusing to navigate.

To address this, CAB has several healthcare outreach programs that not only help register uninsured Bronx residents into plans, but also teach them how the managed health care system functions. The educational portion of CAB's outreach efforts is very important, for if people don't follow directions and properly choose a provider within 60 days of signing up for health care, they will be automatically enrolled into a managed care network. That is problematic, because someone may have a doctor who is not in the network they are assigned to or a person could be assigned to an HMO not in their service area.

Outreach teams go to places where they can find an audience who need this service like employment centers. CAB also sets up events at schools and health fairs where we answer people's questions about managed care, including scope of coverage, provider selection, doctor or hospital participation, and prescription drug coverage.

CAB also runs a Medicare workshop for senior citizens. Medicare options were already difficult to understand and they recently became more complicated because of the new drug coverage policies which have just gone into

effect. Over 50 different health care providers offer a drug plan, each of which covers different medications. Once you enroll, you are locked into the plan you choose and cannot switch for months.

Along with education and enrollment assistance, advocacy is an important element of CAB's healthcare programs. Many people come to our offices who need help negotiating problems with their managed care. For example, after a hospitalization someone may find that he is

being billed for thousands of dollars because the insurance provider has rejected the claim.

Another concern is recertification. When people receive benefits like Medicaid or Health Plus, they need to recertify a year later to prove that they are still eligible. If the application is not processed on time or correctly (a frequent occurrence) the government will tell the HMO to drop the client. People often fall through the cracks and they need CAB to advocate on their behalf.

Access to Health is CAB's healthcare outreach program specifically aimed at anyone who is HIV-positive. CAB helps register uninsured or underinsured people with HIV/AIDS for New York's AIDS Drug Assistance

Program (ADAP), which covers doctor visits, AIDS-related medications, laboratory tests, mental health visits, and more. This health plan is especially important for people who are HIV-positive but do not qualify for Medicaid.

There is an enormous public cost to the large number of uninsured Bronx inhabitants. People without coverage delay care and have more serious health problems when they finally do go to a publicly-supported hospital emergency room or clinic. So healthcare outreach not only plays a significant role in improving the well-being of individuals and families in need, it also serves the entire community.

## DECODING THE HEALTHCARE ALPHABET

**HMO** – Health Maintenance Organization. People enrolled in *managed care* plans see a selected primary physician who, when necessary, refers patients to specialists within the HMO's network of doctors.

**Medicare** – The federal health insurance program for people 65 years of age or older, as well as certain younger people with disabilities.

**Medicaid** – A joint federal, state, and city program that covers medical costs for people with low incomes and limited resources.

**Family Health Plus** – New York State's public health insurance program for working age adults who do not have health insurance but have incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid.

**Child Health Plus** – A state-funded health insurance program for children 18 and younger from lower-income families.

**HealthStat** – A citywide initiative designed to enroll uninsured New Yorkers in public health insurance programs like Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and Family Health Plus. CAB is a HealthStat service provider.

**MCCAP** – Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program. A New York City program to help consumers with quality information, counseling, and assistance on managed care issues. CAB is a MCCAP service provider.

**MCEP** – Medicaid Choice Education Project. An outreach, education, and enrollment service for New Yorkers eligible for Medicaid. CAB conducts MCEP workshops and provides individual counseling.

**EPIC** – the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage program. A state-sponsored prescription plan for senior citizens who need help paying for their medications.

**ADAP** – AIDS Drug Assistance Program. A public healthcare program that provides drugs and medical services to people infected with HIV. CAB performs outreach and enrollment for ADAP.

## Educating Ourselves About AIDS

This summer our Positive Living Program, which delivers HIV/AIDS services, held its annual AIDS conference for CAB employees. Staff learned about the latest trends for the Bronx and attended seminars that addressed topics such as confidentiality laws, infection among the over-50 population, and disclosure to loved ones.

## FEP Named Best in Class

The city Administration for Children's Services has given CAB's Family Enrichment Program the highest rating of any program of its kind. FEP topped over 100 other CBOs that provide foster care prevention services.



## Teachers Helping Teachers

The Community Collaborative to Improve District 9 Schools, which CAB belongs to, recently held a rally to celebrate a great victory. The Department of Education has granted \$2 million to fund a new "Lead Teacher" program that CC9 initiated. This program hires veteran

teachers to mentor and support younger, less experienced teachers. Parents, students, teachers, and school officials marked the occasion with speeches and cheers. *Sex & the City* star Cynthia Nixon, pictured here with UFT president Randi Weingarten, also lent her voice.

## HIPPY Class of 2004

On June 12, our Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program held its annual graduation ceremony for 3 to 5 year olds. HIPPY teaches parents to prepare their children for success in school. Jackie Schneider and Nicki Heller of the National Council of Jewish Women, New York Section (which supports the program) attended.

## CAB Acquires New Senior Center

In July, CAB assumed sponsorship of the East Concourse Senior Center, our fourth such facility for seniors. Solomon Smart was named its director.

## Board Member Survives Roast

On June 17, the Bronx Council on the Arts held a roast in honor of their executive director, CAB Board member Bill Aguado. This event celebrated Bill's 25 years of service to arts and culture in the borough. Several hundred were in attendance. Along with humorous remarks, the audience was treated to dramatic readings, musical performances, and a video *Tribute to Bill*.

**Congratulations to CAB Board member Judith Leonard and her husband Deane on their 50th wedding anniversary!**

### CAB BOARD MEMBERS

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Patricia McDonald  
Bruce Phillips  
Norberto Rivera  
Ilda Rosario  
Patricia Sparks  
Lena O. Townsend

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

- Early Childhood Education
- After-School
- Summer Day Camp
- Adolescent Development
- The Community School for Social Justice

## FAMILY SERVICES

- Walk-in Information & Referral
- Family Childcare Network
- Eviction Prevention
- Foster Care Prevention
- Health Insurance Outreach
- Food Stamp Outreach

## SERVICES FOR SENIORS

- Senior Centers
- Housing Assistance & Minor Repairs
- Elder Abuse

## HOMELESS CARE

- Homeless Outreach
- Drop-in Center
- Family Residences
- Relocation Assistance

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Job Readiness Training
- Skills Training
- Job Placement

## POSITIVE LIVING HIV/AIDS SERVICES

- Case Management and Housing Assistance
- Family Support Programs
- Nutritional Assistance
- Prevention Education

## IMMIGRATION

- Legal Assistance
- Immigrant Women Program
- ESL and Citizenship Classes

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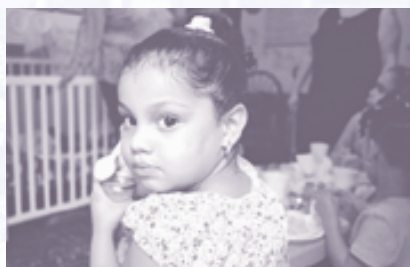
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## The Business of Childcare



For eight years, CAB has been training women to start their own licensed childcare businesses which they run from their homes. A childcare provider can work with 6 children individually, or up to 14 with an assistant. Currently, the Network includes 55 providers throughout the borough who care for over 220 children.

The benefits are threefold. Providers, who are often low-income individuals themselves, achieve financial independence through entrepreneurship. Parents can go to work knowing that

their children are cared for in a safe, comfortable setting. Most importantly, children receive excellent care and education from a licensed professional.

When a prospective provider wants to start her own childcare business, CAB's staff helps her obtain certification from the Department of Health, a process that takes six months. During that time, our team trains potential caregivers in child development, health issues, maintaining a safe environment, and identifying and working with children who have special needs. CAB also gives instruction on the technical aspects of running a business.

The Family Childcare Network office has many resources for providers, including two computers, a lending library, educational toys, and hand games to develop fine motor skills.

When a new provider registers with the Network, CAB arranges for a start-up grant to help with making her home space appropriate for childcare.

The state covers the expense of training providers. It also pays for low-income working parents and workfare recipients to use providers' services. This is a wise investment, since studies show that home-based childcare is more economical than center-based childcare, costing one-third less. It is also especially suitable for infants.

Funding and technical assistance has been supplied by United Neighborhood Houses, Seedco/N-PAC, and St. James' Church. With their help, over 200 Bronx families have access to the childcare resources they need and 55 women are self-sufficient entrepreneurs.