

## New program brings jobs to Bronx residents

By **CRAIG D. FRAZIER**

*Special to the AmNews*

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity announced a \$500,000 grant from Morgan Stanley to support job training and placement services at a new Bronx Jobs-Plus site. The neighborhood-based workforce development program includes public housing residents and Jobs-Plus participants.

Jobs-Plus is one of five New York City pilots replicated with the support of the Social Innovation Fund, a new federal grant program that is championed by the White House and administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Under the terms of the grant, the program will be evaluated over the next five years.

"This is a program that had a very vigorous evaluation in different cities back in the '90s," stated Allegra Blackburn-Dwyer, of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO). "After the program

ended, residents continued to experience earning increases. The program really helped residents get on a path that benefited them in a long-term way."

BronxWorks, formerly known as the Citizens Advice Bureau, helps individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. "This grant clearly puts us in the position where we will be able to greatly increase our capacity to work with the unemployed or under-employed and working-aged adults who live in the Mott Haven area," said Ken Smalls, development director for BronxWorks.

BronxWorks has over 30 locations in the Bronx and makes a difference in the lives of 35,000 low-income people annually. For the past 40 years its broad array of programs has met a host of needs for individuals and families who live in the South Bronx.

"Mott Haven is characterized as an area with a high rate of joblessness. We found, in terms of other work we have done with respect to

people that live in housing complexes, they don't have access to employment opportunities because of education and skill sets," Smalls continued. "We are looking to provide them with the education tools, the skill sets and tools, and tie that to job placement and counseling."

The BronxWorks Jobs-Plus program is available to residents in select NYCHA developments in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx. BronxWorks plans to engage as many as 600 residents annually from Betances Houses IV, Betances Houses V, Betances Houses VI and Moore Houses,

Shelia Stainback of the NYCHA stated, "Over the course of the next five years we expect that hundreds of residents will get jobs, increase their earnings, improve their credit and reduce debt. With access to the tools and resources, residents are able to reach their employment and financial goals." The new Jobs-Plus site will open in the spring of 2011.