

Hope Celebrates the Life of Its Founder, Rev. George E. Calvert

On Saturday, September 17, Hope Community, Inc. co-sponsored a tribute to honor its founder and former executive director, the late Reverend George Edward Calvert.

Calvert, a vital figure in East Harlem for 46 years, passed away on July 17 at the age of 76. Among his many contributions, he helped found the Church of the Living Hope, Inc. in the early 1960s. A project to rescue an abandoned building on East 104th Street led him and a small group of other local residents to found Hope Community, Inc. in 1968, which he managed until his retirement in 1992.

Held in Mt. Sinai Hospital's Stern Auditorium, the memorial was attended by hundreds of East Harlem residents and Calvert's family—including his wife, Elizabeth, his brother Robert, and his four sons David, Jonathan, Peter, and James.

The tribute began with an invocation by Dr. Lonnie McLeod of the Church of the Living Hope, followed by an address by Hope Community alumni Jose Cintrón, a protégé of Calvert's who led the audience in two hymns, "We Shall Not Be Moved" and "Oh Master Let Me Walk with Thee." A film produced by Calvert's family,



Reverend George Edward Calvert in 1990

Ofenloch and Henderson described how Calvert helped lead the effort to redevelop 103rd Street between Lexington and Third in the late 1970s, at a time when most of the buildings along the block had been abandoned. "George had a genuinely grass-roots vision of community development," Henderson said. "He involved the residents and stakeholders in the process from the very beginning in imagining the future of their housing and community -- not at the end after the buildings were finished. George sincerely respected the board of directors as key to the organization on matters both large and small."

Under Calvert's leadership, the block persevered with the project, and over time -- a long time -- succeeded in transforming it by renovating many of the worst buildings. "The project took 11 years, and we went through 17 contractors before the loan closing," Henderson explained. "We would never have been able to do the project without the support from the residents."

In her remarks, Board member Rubye Wright gave thanks to Calvert's family "for allowing George to give so much of himself to East Harlem."

The ceremony closed with a stirring eulogy by the Rev. George Todd, a rendition of the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and a benediction by the Rev. Bruce McKay. Congressman Charles B. Rangel, whose district includes East Harlem, applauded Calvert's efforts as a "pioneer in community involvement in housing."

Hope Community will unveil a special plaque in honor of Rev. Calvert in the near future.

About the Rev. George Edward Calvert

Born in 1928, Calvert graduated from Amherst College in 1950 with a bachelor's in history. He obtained a master's in divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 1954, and a master's degree in education from City College in 1966.

Before founding Hope Community, Calvert taught at local junior high schools for several years. After retiring in 1977, he moved to Andes, New York where he continued to work on housing issues and in community groups.



Hope director Haydee F. Areizaga at Calvert's memorial service

"Sketches of a Life of Faith and Service," offered a moving portrait of Calvert's life and his service at the East Harlem Protestant Parish, the Church of the Living Hope, and Hope Community, Inc.

The Cántico Nuevo Choir, led by director Jorge Lockwood, sang a few more hymns. Personal testimonials were then offered, including those of Hope Directors Haydee F. Areizaga, Roger Caban, Ann C. Henderson, William Ofenloch and Rubye Wright.



Rev. Calvert at the start of reconstruction work at 157 East 104th Street in 1977.

Hope in the

Jennie A. Clarke Residence Wins DHS' Performance Investment Program Award

On June 28, the Department of Homeless Services released performance ratings of agencies providing shelter and housing services to homeless families. Among those awarded a top rating was Hope's Jennie A. Clarke Residence.

"The success of the Jennie A. Clarke Residence, a Tier II shelter for homeless families located at 179-192 East 100th Street, is a direct result of the working partnership between Hope Community and Women in Need (WIN)," said Hope's Executive Director, Bill Jacoby.

WIN provides residents with a comprehensive range of social service programs designed to help them become self-sufficient, while Hope Community delivers high-quality property management services and carefully tracks expenditures to ensure that project budgets are not exceeded. Hope's maintenance staff keeps the buildings in pristine condition and provides proactive maintenance support to enhance the residents' quality of life.



Hope Community Archive Photo

Hope also plays an important role in assisting families to make the transition from the Jennie A. Clarke Residence to permanent housing. Over the past year, for example, a number of households were moved from the Tier II shelter to Hope's Ortiz-Wittenberg residence to help prepare them to make the final transition to permanent housing. Some of the first to move from Jennie Clark to Ortiz-Wittenberg are now applying for and receiving places in Hope's other East Harlem buildings, thereby making the return journey from homelessness to stable, long-term housing.

Since 2003, the City's Performance Investment Program has ranked facility performances to payment rates. This year, 12 percent of all shelter facilities achieved excellent ratings this year; 41 percent received very good and good ratings, 20 percent received satisfactory ratings; 25 percent need improvement; and 2 percent were deemed unsatisfactory. Hope Community ranked in the "excellent" category, with a score of 8.06 out of 10.

Hope's Board of Directors

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Karate Kids in East Harlem!

On September 10th, Ultimate Karate USA, a new East Harlem-based martial arts school, opened its doors to the community for a special celebration.

Students from the school — boys and girls ranging from small children to teens — impressed the audience with their kicks and punches, board-breaking, and fighting expertise, while senior black belts demonstrated advanced techniques.

Peace on the Streets, the non-profit educational organization that sponsors Ultimate Karate as well as mediation classes in their school on the corner of Third Avenue and 107th Street, gave out a number of awards and gifts, including scholarships to two residents of Hope buildings.

Scholarship recipients Asia Everett and Rafael Cordero of Hope Community's Ortiz-Wittenberg building, have already begun their free classes.



Karate class at Peace on the Street's 107th Street loft

Community

Hope Students Receive Backpacks and School Supplies from Office Depot at Picnic

The Tenants Association of Hope's Ortiz Wittenberg Residence hosted a back to school picnic for building residents in its spacious rear courtyard on Saturday, September 3.

Tenant Association President Diane Ellison and Hope chair Roger Caban handed out complimentary backpacks filled with school supplies to every child in attendance. The backpacks were obtained from Office Depot's "National Backpack Program."

Festivities began with the traditional firing up of a charcoal barbecue grill with simple hamburgers and hot dogs, which then progressed to chicken and ribs slathered in a spicy sauce. Throughout the gathering, residents also brought down their favorite dishes to share with their neighbors and several building staff and Hope directors in attendance.



Hope chair Roger Caban and Tenant Association President Diane Ellison with children from Ortiz-Wittenberg residence

Now in its fifth year, Office Depot's back-to-school program provides free backpacks and school supplies to low-income children throughout North America. "

Our goal is to make a difference in communities across the nation," explained store manager Robin Lee. "As part of our commitment to 'Taking Care of Kids,' we recognize the importance of starting off the school year on the right foot.

In 2005, 300,000 backpacks will be donated to 'at-risk' kids," Lee said.

"We agree that it's important to help children get started on their way to school in the fall," added Caban. "What a better way to do that than to provide some basic educational supplies and, of course, a full-court party!"

HOPE COMMUNITY'S 2005 ANNUAL MEETING will be held Tuesday, November 15th, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the **Carlos Rios Senior Residence**, 335 East 105th Street (1st & 2nd Aves.)

Tenants of Hope Community buildings who wish to participate and vote in the Board of Directors' election must register as a member of Hope Community, Inc.

To join, please send us your application plus annual dues of \$3. Applications must be postmarked or hand-delivered to Hope's main office at 174 E. 104th Street, New York, NY 10029 no later than Monday, November 1st.

Dues are waived for Hope homeowners and tenants who are current in their rent. Hope's office hours are: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

For more information, contact **Carmen Vasquez**, Community Relations Manager, at (212) 860-8821, Ext. 162.

POETAS, POETAS

Hope Community completed another year of its Poetas con Café poetry series at the Modesto Garden Flores with innovative performances by artists **Américo Casiano**, **Frank Pérez**, **Mariposa**, **Wanda Ortiz**, and **Jesús Papoleto Meléndez**.

Spoken word artist Americo Casiano was joined by his **NuyoRican School Original Poetry Jazz Ensemble** for two performances this summer, the last of which was covered by **NY 1 News** and **Cool New York** website. During each event, residents were also treated to the talents of local poets who'd signed up for the open-mike portion of the program. As always, Hope Community catered each event with fresh fruit and sandwich platters.



New Faces at Hope

Hope's community department is off and running with the arrival of three new hires: **Carmen Arroyo** as Community Relations Associate, **Yolanny Rodriguez** as Tenant Activities Coordinator, and **Marina Ortiz** as Communications Associate. "We are proud to have found such a dedicated team of local talent to expand our work in our buildings and the community," said Hope's Community Relations Manager, **Carmen Vasquez**

"**Marina** (Ortiz) will assist in the redevelopment of Hope's publications and introduce a monthly bulletin highlighting community agencies and businesses that support Hope tenants, while **Carmen** (Arroyo) and **Yolanny** (Rodriguez) will work with tenant and neighborhood groups, developing programs and activities and connecting residents with social services," Vasquez explained.



Carmen Arroyo and Yolanny Rodriguez



Marina Ortiz

"In her very first week, **Carmen** (Arroyo) has shown she has a special knack for acquiring donations — having helped us obtain over 100 free tickets to the Children's Museum of Manhattan for a special Halloween presentation," Vasquez said. "**Yolanny**, meanwhile, is arranging tutoring services, reading groups, and an arts and crafts program, and is helping to form tenants associations.

"Yolanny will also be keeping office hours at Ortiz Wittenberg Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 7:00 pm, and at Carlos Rios on Mondays from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Carmen Arroyo will be making regular appearances in the Old Harlem Road buildings. Both Carmen Arroyo and Yolanny will be available to meet tenants by appointment. We are off to a great start," says Vasquez.

Hope Community's Annual Staff Picnic

The Hope Herald

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TRANSLATION

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Hope's Annual Staff picnic was held September 9, at the Community Garden on East 103rd Street.

