

Affordable Housing Movement Afoot in East Harlem

There is movement afoot in East Harlem as residents and advocates campaign to reform rent regulations, increase shelter allowances, end landlord negligence and harassment of immigrant and low-income tenants, and preserve the neighborhood's much-coveted affordable housing stock.

Last spring, thousands of tenants and housing activists were joined by union leaders and elected officials during rallies at Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village calling for rent stabilization legislation to preserve the city's dwindling stock of subsidized housing for middle-income "Mitchell-Llama" families. As a show of support for local groups such as Community Voices Heard (CVH) and the Lakeview Tenants' Association, Hope Community sponsored a bus to the May 23rd rally to and from East Harlem.

According to reports issued by Housing Here and Now and the Furman Center, between 2002 and 2005 New York City lost more than 200,000 apartments affordable to tenants earning \$35,000 as median rents increased approximately 9 percent citywide — even as the average household income dropped by more than 6 percent. Reports also indicate that more than 250,000 affordable units will be decontrolled over the next 10 years through Mitchell-Lama buyouts, Section 8 opt-outs and inadequate funding for public housing, making it impossible for low- and middle-income families to live in the City.

East Harlem residents, in particular, are not taking the situation lightly. On July 25th, members of Community Voices Heard, Lakeview Tenants' Association, Community Board 11, and Hope Community joined other neighborhood advocates at a City Hall press conference convened by New York Is Our Home. During the event, Council members Melissa Mark-Viverito, Rosie Mendez



Top/bottom: Community Voices Heard member Agnes Rivera and NYCHA youth lead a public tour of Wagner Houses.



and Letitia James appealed to Governor Spitzer to increase state funding for public housing.

The following day, CVH members led a walking tour to highlight longstanding maintenance and repair issues exacerbated by inadequate funding to the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Council members Melissa Mark-Viverito and Rosie Mendez took part in the tour, which began in East Harlem's Wagner Houses and ended at the Drew Hamilton Houses further uptown.

Both campaigns proved successful as Governor Spitzer signed legislation to increase NYCHA's shelter allowance by an \$63 million over the next two years.

Another victory in the affordable housing arena was the passage of the 421a state legislation last August, expanding the affordable housing map to include Upper Manhattan and more outer borough neighborhoods, and requiring affordable units to be located within each certified development site, with no off-site designations allowed in less desirable outer-borough locations.

The public housing movement will continue as CVH returns to City Hall for an October 4th rally to illustrate how NYCHA deficits have increasingly led to rising rents and repair charges — and to publicly warn against the planned sale or demolition of any public housing buildings in the City.

Immigrant-led groups such as Movement for Justice in El Barrio, meanwhile, continue their work with low-income families in efforts to fight displacement by combating the harassment and illegal eviction methods of landlords. Recently, organizers issued "Worst Landlord" awards and cited the City's Housing, Preservation and Development agency for their failure to address gentrification. Organizers are now planning a trip to London, England to confront the British-based Dawnay Day at their corporate headquarters.

Hope Community, meanwhile, continues to keep sight of its mission to maintain housing that is affordable to the residents of East Harlem, and to lend support to this growing coalition of local housing advocates. One of the weapons in this battle has been the agency's "East Harlem Focus" documentary and report on gentrification. With public screenings at El Museo del Barrio and Manhattan Neighborhood Network held over the summer and additional community presentations in the works, Hope and other advocates will continue the dialogue on this important issue.

Movimiento Para Vivienda de Bajo Costo En El Barrio

Los residentes y organizaciones del Este de Harlem están en campaña para la reforma de las regulaciones de alquiler, aumento financiero para residencias públicas de rentas, acabar con las negligencias de propietarios, el hostigamiento de arrendatarios inmigrantes e inquilinos de bajos ingresos, y para preservar y mantener las viviendas de bajo costo en la comunidad.

La primavera antepasada, miles de inquilinos y líderes activistas de la comunidad se reunieron en Stuyvesant Town y Peter Cooper Village para reclamar legislación para estabilizar rentas y preservar unidades bajo subsidio como las residencias de "Mitchell-Lama" que están otorgadas a familias de medio ingreso. Participantes fueron grupos locales como Community Voices Heard (CVH) y Lakeview Tenant's Association, Hope Community también se integró al esfuerzo y patrocinó un autobús para la demostración del 23 de mayo del 2007 desde el este de Harlem hasta City Hall.

Según los informes publicados por Housing Here y el Centro de Furman, desde el 2002 hasta 2005, la ciudad de Nueva York perdió más de 200,000 apartamentos de bajo costo designado para personas ganando \$35,000 anual. Al mismo tiempo las rentas incrementaron un nueve por ciento aun cuando el ingreso anual de las familias ha decaído un seis por ciento. Los informes también indican que más de 250,000 unidades de bajo costo serán descontroladas durante los próximos 10 años con la pérdida de las unidades de "Mitchell-Lama" y de Sección 8. Esto hace imposible que las familias de bajos ingresos puedan vivir en la ciudad.

Los residentes del este de Harlem, no están tomando la situación ligeramente. El 25 de Julio, miembros de Community Voices Heard, la asociación de Lakeview Tenants, Community Board 11, y Hope Community unieron sus fuerzas y



Above/Below: Movement for Social Justice del Barrio rally in East Harlem.



asistieron la rueda de prensa en City Hall convocada por New York Is Our Home. Durante el evento, la Miembro del concejal la Sra. Melissa Mark-Viverito, Sra. Rosie Mendes, y la Sra. Leticia James abogaron al gobernador Spitzer para conseguir aumento financiero para las residencias públicas (NYCHA).

El día siguiente, miembros de CVH condujo un viaje desde las residencias de Wagner Houses hasta Drew Hamilton Houses para demostrar y destacar como se mantienen estas residencias sin el financiamiento adecuado. La Sra. Mark-Viverito y la Sra. Rosie Mendez participaron en el viaje.

Ambas campañas fueron un triunfo cuando el gobernador Spitzer firmó la legislación para aumentar con \$63 millones para uso del mantenimiento de estas unidades por los dos próximos años.

Otra victoria fue la aprobación de la legislación del estado 421a el pasado

mes de Agosto, ampliando el mapa que cubre los edificios de NYCHA para incluir en norte de Manhattan y vecindades más externas de la ciudad, y requiriendo unidades de bajas rentas en cada residencia de desarrollo certificado.

El movimiento para preservar estas unidades continuará porque CVH vuelve a City Hall el 4 de Octubre para ilustrar como las residencias de NYCHA han conducido al incremento del costo de viviendas – y para abiertamente publicar los planes de demolición de algunas de estas residencias en la ciudad de Nueva York.

Grupos conducidos por inmigrantes como Movement for Justice in El Barrio, continúan sus esfuerzos para que las familias de bajos recursos económicos no se encuentren con el hostigamiento y los métodos ilegales que algunos propietarios hacen para sacarlos de sus propiedades. Recientemente, los organizadores publicaron una ceremonia para otorgar un premio al "Peor Propietario" y el ganador fue la agencia de la ciudad H.P.D. por la falta de tratar de prevenir la desplazamiento de tantas familias. Organizadores de la ciudad están planeando un viaje a Londres, Inglaterra para enfrentarse con Dawnay Day en sus jefaturas corporativas para continuar los esfuerzos de preservar estas unidades.

Mientras tanto, Hope Community continúa el esfuerzo de su misión: mantener y preservar residencias de bajo costo a los residentes del Este de Harlem, y unirse a la lucha. Una de las armas en esta batalla ha sido el documental "East Harlem Focus," producido por Hope Community, para informar a la comunidad del problema de gentrificación en nuestra comunidad. Hemos tenido la oportunidad de presentar el documental en los estudios del El Museo del Barrio y Manhattan Neighborhood Networks durante el verano.

Hope Community Gardens Adorned with Murals

Once again, Hope Community welcomed several dozen local interns from the Summer Youth Employment Program appointed to create outdoor murals under the artistic direction of the Creative Arts Workshop.

They worked steadily over the summer clearing brush and debris and designing and installing colorful outdoor murals in Hope's community garden on Second Avenue (between East 117th & 118th Streets), and two others on East 115th Street (between First and Pleasant Avenues.

Hope Activities Coordinator Jaritza Taveras worked closely with the youth in the gardens and invited them to visit Hope Community for a July 16th presentation of their vision for the outdoor murals, "Home Sweet Home," "Metamorphosis," and "Game of Immigration."

Upon completion of the murals, the teens then organized a walking tour of the outdoor murals.

The August 16th tour included stops at Hope's community, and a barbecue held at Peace Place Park on East 124th, where CAW screened a teen documentary about the creation of the 2007 murals.

"We were pleased to note that the interns had incorporated such important issues in their design, such as immigration and family values," commented Hope Board Chair Roger Cabán.

"This is the second year that Creative Arts Workshop interns have worked in our community gardens, and we look forward to having them return next year," Cabán added.

For more information, visit: www.creativeartsworkshop.org.



Una vez más, Hope Community se honra en tener jóvenes de Summer Youth Employment Program para la creación de tres murales de dos de nuestros jardines con la dirección artística de Creative Arts Workshop.

Estos jóvenes trabajaron durante el verano, usando pinceles para diseñar estas obras de artes con colores vibrantes y con un mensaje dirigido a nuestra comunidad. Los murales ubicadas el en jardín de la Segunda Avenida (entre la calle este de la 117 y 118), y las otras dos obras están en la calle 115 (entre las avenidas de Primera a Pleasant).

La coordinadora de eventos de Hope Community, Jaritza Taveras, trabajó arduamente con los jóvenes durante el verano y ellos fueron invitados a Hope Community para dar una presentación de sus obras. El 16 de Julio la visión de estos murales fue presentada y sus nombres son los siguientes: "Hogar Dulce Hogar," "Metamorfosis," y "El Juego de la Inmigración."

A la culminación del programa, el 16 de agosto del 2007 en el parque llamado Peace Place en la calle 124 este, los jóvenes organizaron una caminata para presentarles a sus padres y a la comunidad sus obras y el significado de ellas. Allí hubo un documental presentado por CAW para mostrar el trabajo y el esfuerzo de estos jóvenes, donde ellos discutieron la importancia del hogar, la inmigración en nuestra comunidad y los cambios percibidos.

Roger Cabán de Hope Community dijo, "este es el segundo año que los muchachos de Creative Arts Workshop trabajan en los jardines de Hope Community, y los estaremos esperando para el próximo." Para más información, visite: www.creativeartsworkshop.org.

Welcoming Party for Artist Angelo Romano



On Friday, August 30th, Hope board and staff joined tenants in acknowledging Spanish-American artist Angelo Romano for his donation of approximately 100 pieces currently on display in the community room at Carlos Rios Senior Residence. Also in attendance were local Art Historian Mario Cesar Romeo and Community Board 11 member Brunilda Vega.



On Friday, August 10th, internationally renowned Spanish-American artist Angelo Romano installed over 50 pieces from his private collection along the walls of Hope Community's Carlos Rios Senior Residence. The prolific artist's colorful works contain abstract and spiritual themes, with many pieces created from ordinary household products and other recycled materials.

Poetas Con Cafe Celebrates



In July, Poetas Con Café performers included award-winning playwright & poet Frank Pérez, and playwright Eugene Rodriguez's Puerto Rican Intercultural Drama Ensemble with Rhina Valentin, Angelo Lozada, Mariposa, Andre Rodriguez, MelleSOL, Indio Melendez, Tania Ochoteco, and Anais (pictured below).

The 10th anniversary season of Poetas Con Café kicked off on June 17th, as Hope Board Chairman Roger Cabán hosted a special Father's Day tribute in the Modesto Flores Community Garden featuring Américo Casiano Jr and the Nuyoricano School Original Poetry Jazz Ensemble (pictured above and below).



The June festivities continued with an additional performance by Alma Villegas with percussionists Eddie Conde Perez and Willie Serrano & singer Hector Papote Jimenez (pictured below).



10th Anniversary All Summer!



Roger Cabán (pictured above) then followed up with an August 11th poetry jam session featuring Bobby González with musicians Joe Falcón and Ricardo Stobert, followed by a recital by the dynamic nationalist author, Prisionera (pictured below).



The 10th Anniversary celebration then culminated with a Pedro Pietri-inspired spectacular, which included performances by Speedo Pietri (pictured above), Mariposa, and Jesus Papoleto Melendez (pictured below). The September event also marked the dedication of the rear courtyard of the Modesto Flores Community Garden as the "Pedro Pietri Poetry Yard."



In addition to complimentary snacks and refreshments, guests were treated this year to custom designed lapel pins commemorating the 10th anniversary of Hope's poetry series and specialty coffee from East Harlem Cafe (left).

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Highlights of Hope Community Events



Top/bottom: On June 22nd, students and teachers from Central Park East II visited Hope's Modesto Flores Community Garden after making a \$500 donation from funds collected through the school's Penny Harvest program. During their visit, students were given a personal tour of the fish pond by garden volunteer Yvonne Pacheco.



Top/bottom: Ortiz-Wittenberg tenants and their neighbors took an end-of-summer field trip to Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom. Hope's Activities Coordinator Jaritza Taveras helped tenants raise money for the August 30th outing by organizing sidewalk bake sales and other fundraising activities.



Top/bottom: Activities Coordinator Jaritza Taveras coordinated a June 25th gardening activity with tenants from Carlos Rios Senior Residence who planted spring flowers in the building's rear courtyard. The sprouts should grow over the summer in time for a fall blossom.



Top/bottom: Over the summer, Hope tenants and staff were treated to several field trips to Yankee Stadium courtesy of Con Edison.



Bottom: On September 20th, Carlos Rios Seniors were treated to a tour of Randall's Island Park courtesy of the Randalls Island Sports Foundation. Afterwards, the seniors had lunch while enjoying the view along the Harlem River waterfront.



Top/bottom: On August 7, the 23rd Precinct Community Council held its annual National Night Out, at which Hope's Carmen Vasquez and other local residents were awarded commendations for their community service.



East Harlem Little League Celebrates With BBQ

On August 25th, Hope staff attended a barbecue celebration sponsored by Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito (pictured right) to honor the East Harlem Little League, recent winners of the Section 3 New York State Major League Championship. Throughout the day, the youth were congratulated and given complimentary baseballs, hats, bats, and trophies donated by local agencies such as the Museum of the City of New York.



Little League members were also treated to a tour of the Stickball exhibit on display at Taller Boricua, along with lots of hamburgers and other snacks. The event was sponsored, in part, by Hope Community, Inc.



Outdoor Memorial for Our Lady Queen of Angels Parishioner Carmen González



Hope Community Board Member Haydee Areizaga and Communication Associates Marina Ortiz attended an outdoor memorial service for Our Lady Queen of Angels parishioner, Carmen González. The August 30th ceremony was attended by hundreds of local residents and friends. Dozens of family members were also present, including Mrs. González's four sons - each of whom appealed to the Archdiocese to reopen the 121-year-old church as Mrs. Gonzalez had advocated.

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- The flu shot is recommended for people with a high risk of flu-related complications:
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