

2007 Annual Gala and Community Service Awards

On May 24th, the Board of Directors and staff of Hope Community held its 2007 Annual Gala and Community Service Awards on Thursday at Pier 2110 Seafood Restaurant.

As they do every year, the Board honored individuals whose passion and commitment contribute to the revitalization of East Harlem as a vibrant, diverse neighborhood. The East Harlem Community Service Award symbolizes the agency's appreciation for the exemplary efforts of these outstanding community members.



Honoree Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito arrives at Hope Community Gala

This year's theme was "Hope in Partnership" — for East Harlem and for Hope Community itself. Under new leadership, the agency celebrated its



Keynote Speaker Dr. Jeffrey Gardere



Scholarship Recipient Rubina Abdul (left) with Carmen Vasquez and Dr. Shirley Smith

renewed commitment to its mission and to East Harlem residents.

In reflecting on the past year, Hope realized that many recent achievements - newly constructed buildings, murals and mosaics, and renovated gardens - were due in great part not only to its own efforts, but also to the hard work, friendship and support of many community partners.



**Honoree Christopher Bell
Historian/Author
Images of America: East Harlem**

As such, board members thought it appropriate to honor and celebrate some of East Harlem's finest community advocates, artists, and elected officials. Each, in different ways, has provided Hope with support and assistance that has enabled the agency to realize its mission

to create and preserve affordable housing.

Hope believes that working in close partnership with local organizations, elected officials, and constituents is key to effecting lasting community change that will bind residents together in a vibrant, thriving, culturally diverse neighborhood.



Honoree Eli Alvarado (left) with fellow La Casa Board Member

Community Service Award Recipients

- The Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito
- Johnny C. Rivera
- Christopher Bell
- Deputy Inspector David Colon
- Eli Alvarado
- Carmen Villegas
- Susan R. Delvalle



**Honoree Carmen Villegas
Parishioner/Advocate
Our Lady Queen of Angels**

Photos continue on page 2.

More Annual Event Photos



Hope Vice Chairman Miguel Calderon accepts Board Member of the Year award from Hope Chief of Staff Carmen Vasquez



Honoree Johnny C. Rivera Senior Program Director Mount Sinai Medical Center



Property Management Personnel accept Staff of the Year award



Honoree Deputy Inspector David Colon N.Y.P.D. 23rd Precinct

East Harlem Student Receives Hope Scholarship Award

Hope Vice Chair Miguel Calderon recently presented a four-year \$1,000 scholarship to East Harlem student Rubina Abdul during the 2007 Settlement College Readiness Program (SCRP) Awards Ceremony held at Marymount College.

The April 12th ceremony was hosted by SCRП Director Dr. Shirley Smith who welcomed Hope Community and other donor agencies, and congratulated the scholarship recipients on their success. Among the speakers were Congressman Charles B. Rangel and New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vasquez, who both spoke with great admiration of all the students.

After receiving the award, Ms. Abdul said she was honored to receive the scholarship and greatly appreciated the financial support.

Rubina also attended Hope's 2007 Annual Gala at Pier 2110 Restaurant on May 24th where she was again introduced by Miguel Calderon. As he spoke, Mr. Calderon conveyed his pride in being able to bring Ms. Abdul to the annual gathering. Then addressing the audience of more than 300 guests, Rubina expressed her appreciation to Hope Community for their support of her goals.



Hope Vice Chair Miguel Calderon presents four-year \$1,000 scholarship to Rubina Abdul

About Rubina Abdul

Rubina is a graduating senior from A. Philip Randolph High School and has been active in student government since the sixth grade

A born leader, Rubina is also a member of

The East Harlem Youth Council, which meets weekly with the Office of Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito to help improve community and police relations.

Rubina says she is very excited about going to college and experiencing

all aspects of college life. She intends to study criminal justice and law. She hopes to attend Hobart & Smith.



From left: Dr. Shirley Smith, Hope Chair Roger Cabán, scholarship recipient Rubina Abdul, and Hope Vice Chair Miguel Calderon at 2007 Annual Gala

Settlement College Readiness: Providing Hope and Opportunity

Established in 1964, SCRП has assisted more

than 17,050 students. Over the years, 90 percent of participating students have been accepted to at least one institution and 20 percent have gone on to graduate school. Today, the program helps more than 1,380 students gain access to higher education through a unique program of counseling, academic enrichment, and internships.

For information on SCRП, contact Director Dr. Shirley H. Smith at (212) 828-6138.

Hope Supports Our Lady Queen of Angels Parishioners



Carmen Villegas (left) receives Hope’s letter of support from Roger Cabán, Robin LeBaron and Carmen Vasquez

On Sunday, March 11th, Hope’s Acting Executive Director Robin LeBaron, Board Chair Roger Cabán and Chief of Staff Carmen Vasquez attended a Sunday morning vigil held by parishioners of Our Lady Queen of Angels Roman Catholic Church in wake of the 121-year-old institution’s closing.

Hope also sent a letter to Cardinal Egan regarding the decision by the Archdiocese of New York to close the East Harlem church on February 12th. “We regret the way in which the parishioners, our friends and neighbors, have been treated by the process chosen to implement the closure,” read Hope’s dispatch. “We urge you to establish a meaningful dialogue with the members of the church.”

Led by Carmen Villegas, an active parishioner for over 33 years, the members have organized a campaign to reopen the church. Prior to the closing, Ms. Villegas had staged a 37-hour vigil with six other parishioners and was eventually arrested for refusing to leave her house of worship.

Built in 1886 by German immigrants, the East 113th Street church has served thousands of East Harlem residents

throughout its history. Despite its having the only wheelchair ramp for elderly and disabled worshippers within 10 blocks, the 400-member parish was targeted for closing by the Archdiocese.

After learning about the planned closing in 2006, members of the church convened a working group, the Families of Our Lady Queen of Angels, chaired by Ms. Villegas. The group then created a business plan outlining actions to prevent the closing, but their efforts were overruled.



Our Lady Queen of Angels Roman Catholic Church



Carmen Villegas addresses the media

On February 9th, the church’s door locks were changed. “We realized then, that they wanted to kick us out,” said Villegas. On Sunday, February 11th, Villegas and several other parishioners and supporters, including Peter Borré, co-chairman of the Boston-based Council of Parishes, decided to remain after mass in a peaceful vigil intended to prevent the closing of their beloved church.

In its letter, Hope concluded, “We strongly support neighborhood groups, like the parishioners of Our Lady Queen of Angels, that sustain the traditions and practices which make our neighborhood a living community. The casual destruction of these groups weakens the social fabric that makes East Harlem a village and a home within New York City.

“While we understand that you have reasons for believing that Our Lady Queen of Angels should be closed, we also know that the parishioners have compelling arguments for leaving it open. Again, we call upon you to listen to their statements and make every effort to address their needs and concerns.”

Carmen Villegas was awarded a Community Service Award by Hope’s Board of Directors in May 2007.

New Hire in Property Management Dept.



Assets Management Director Sha-Rall Willis

Sha-Rall Willis has joined Hope Community's Property Management Department as the Director of Assets Management.

The position reflects the reorganization of the department, whereby the management of the department will be handled by two managers instead of one.

Willis comes to Hope from CDC Management Corporation where he served as a Senior Project Manager for over 1,300 residential and commercial units. He has over 26 years of experience in managing multi-family housing, with a particular expertise in subsidized housing, and has worked with the U.S. Department of Housing.

"We are pleased to have Sha-Rall join us and we look forward to his input on improving the department," said Acting Executive Director Robin LeBaron.

Hope Community at the 50th Annual Puerto Rican Day Parade



Hope Chairman Roger Cabán led a contingent of staff at the 50th Annual Puerto Rican Day Parade on June 10th, including Robin LeBaron, Marina Ortiz, Camille Parker, Rogelio Ramirez, Jaritzta Taveras, and Carmen Vasquez. The group was well-received by the more than two million attendees along the Fifth Avenue route.



Interested in contributing to the Hope Herald?

Send articles, reviews and photographs to:
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or email: mortiz@hopeci.org

Questions? Call (212) 860-8821, Ext. 111



'Julia de Burgos Day' on East 106th Street

Hope Community sponsors post-dedication Reception at Taller Boricua

East Harlem residents came out in droves to celebrate Women's History Month during a March 16th tribute to Puerto Rican poet, Julia de Burgos.

On that snowy morning, an initiative pioneered by El Museo's Director Emerita Susana Torruella Leval and supported by New York City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito was finally realized as East 106th Street from Fifth Avenue to the East River was renamed Julia de Burgos Boulevard, reinforcing the poet's cultural legacy and influence on the arts.

Festivities included a street-naming ceremony on the southeast corner of East 106th Street and Lexington Avenue and an evening performance at El Teatro Heckscher of El Museo del Barrio during which Julia de Burgos's poetry was presented in Spanish and English by local poets Carmen D. Lucca and Alma Villegas.

The Julia de Burgos Boulevard street-naming was also endorsed by over 1,100 residents of East Harlem who signed petitions and 45 businesses, schools,

churches, medical offices and arts and entertainment organizations who provided letters of support.

During the festivities, Councilmember Mark-Viverito and El Museo del Barrio also thanked Community Board 11 for approving the street re-naming.

The cultural endeavor was also generously supported by East Harlem writer Nicholasa Mohr, the Staff of Councilmember Mark-Viverito's office, East Harlem Preservation Organization, the East Harlem Board of Tourism, and Hope Community, Inc., which sponsored a mid-morning brunch at Taller Boricua's gallery immediately following the unveiling. "We are honored to support such an important initiative," said Hope Chairman Roger Cabán.

Born in 1914, de Burgos was one of the foremost poets to come out of Puerto Rico in the first half of the 20th century. She moved to New York City in 1940 and died in East Harlem on July 6, 1953, at the age of 39. Her works continue to represent the many artistic and cultural contributions of Latinos in New York City.

Día de Julia de Burgos' en El Barrio

Los residentes del este de Harlem celebraron el mes de la Historia de la Mujer con un tributo a la poeta Puertorriqueña Julia de Burgos. La marcha fue iniciada por la directora Emerita Susana Torruella Leval del Museo del Barrio y apoyada por la Consejal Melissa Mark-Viverito, miembro del consejo de la Ciudad de Nueva York.

La calle 106 desde la quinta avenida hasta East River fue nombrada Julia de Burgos Boulevard para reforzar la herencia cultural y la influencia de la poeta en los artes. Las festividades incluyeron una ceremonia para el nombramiento en la esquina sur oeste de la calle 106 y avenida de Lexington.

Mas tarde, EL Teatro Heckscher de El Museo del Barrio presento poesía de Julia de Burgos por las poetas Carmen D. Lucca y Alma Villegas en español e inglés. El nombramiento del bulevar de Julia de Burgos fue un evento con mas de 1,100 residentes del este de Harlem que confirman el apoyo de mas de 45 negocios, escuelas, iglesias, oficinas médicas y artes de la comunidad del este de Harlem.

Durante las festividades, la Consejal Melissa y El Museo del Barrio agradecieron a los miembros de Community Board 11 por apoyar el evento. Por igual, Nicholasa Mohr, el personal de la oficina de la Sra. Mark-Viverito, East Harlem Preservation, East Harlem Board of Tourism, y Hope Community, Inc. también apoyaron el evento.

"Nos honran por apoyar una iniciativa tan importante," dijo a presidente de la organización Roger Caban. Nacida en el año 1914, Julia de Burgos fue unas de las primeras poetas de salir de Puerto Rico. Julia de Burgos murió aquí el 6 de julio del año 1953. Tenía 39 años de edad.

Su esfuerzo y trabajo continúa representando las muchas contribuciones artísticas y culturales de los Latinos en la Ciudad de Nueva York.

Highlights of Hope Community Events

“Rolling for Peace” Bike Tour and Street Festival



Ortiz-Wittenberg youth (pictured above and below) led a bike tour through East Harlem on Thursday, June 7th during “Rolling for Peace,” a



youth-led initiative to address violence among young people. Representatives from Transportation Alternatives also participated in the event, which culminated with a street festival on East 109th Street, and included free snacks, raffles, DJ music, face-painting, and other entertainment.

Central Park East II Students Present Hope with “Penny Harvest” Award



Students from Central Park East II presented Hope’s Director of Community Relations, Carmen Vasquez

(pictured above with Principal Naomi Smith), with a \$500 “Penny Harvest” grant organized by youth as a way to support the environment. The donation will be used to beautify and maintain Hope’s Modesto Flores Community Garden, which the students will visit on June 22nd. A matching grant was raised to help preserve the Earth’s polar ice caps.

“East Harlem Focus” Documentary Screening and Panel Discussion on Gentrification



Acting Executive Director Robin LeBaron and Communications Associate Marina Ortiz (pictured above) hosted the screening of Hope’s 30-minute documentary, “East Harlem



JoaAnn Lawson, President of the Lakeview Tenants Association Addresses the Audience

Focus,” which was followed by a panel discussion on gentrification with members of the Lakeview Tenants Association (pictured above), Community Voices Heard, and Esperanza del Barrio. During the event, Hope agreed to sponsor a bus for the May 23rd affordable housing rally.

Women’s History Month Tribute



Hope Community hosted Las Mujeres del Barrio’s 5th Annual Women’s History Month Tribute held Thursday, March 29th at the agency’s Carlos Rios Senior Residence. Hundreds came out to honor Ortiz-Wittenberg tenant and honor student Christina Cordero (pictured above), Hope Communications Associate Marina Ortiz, and housing activist Sylvia Velazquez.

Los Hijos del Barrio Host Mother’s Day Celebration at Carlos Rios



On Saturday, May 12th, Board Chairman Roger Cabán and other members of the fraternal organization, Los Hijos del Barrio (pictured above) hosted a Mother’s Day celebration at Carlos Rios.

After much food and entertainment, certificates of appreciation were presented to Hope’s Acting Chief of Staff Carmen Vasquez, NYPD Deputy Inspector David Colon of the 23rd Precinct and NYPD Captain Edward Cabán of the 25th Precinct.

It's Volunteer Season at Hope's Community Gardens

City Year "Young Heroes" Wrap Up Volunteer Project at Hope Garden



Volunteers from City Year's "Young Heroes" program (pictured above and below), wrapped up months of work in Hope's uptown Lexington Avenue community garden with a farewell party on June 6th. On hand to thank the team



for its work in beautifying the vest pocket park were Hope community relations staffers Carmen Vasquez and Jaritza Taveras, who presented the "Young Heroes" with a certificate of appreciation.

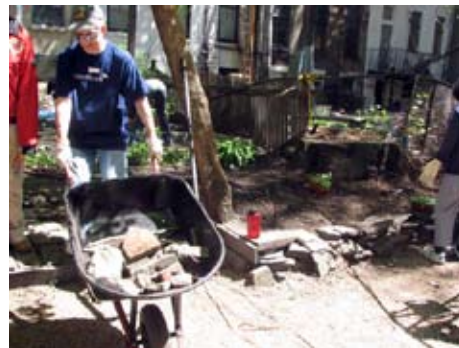
City Year & Credit Suisse Volunteers Refurbish Rear Gardens

Dozens of young volunteers from City Year and Credit Suisse (pictured below) came out to refurbish the rear gardens of Hope properties on East 103rd Street and East 105th Street. The campaign was



coordinated by Activities Coordinator Jaritza Taveras, and volunteers were greeted by Hope's Acting Executive Director Robin LeBaron and Acting Chief of Staff/Community Relations Manager Carmen Vasquez.

City Year "Young Heroes" Refurbish and Paint Hope's Lexington Avenue Garden



Over a dozen volunteers from City Year's "Young Heroes" program (pictured above) came out to Hope's uptown Lexington Avenue garden on Saturday, April 28th to finish refurbishing the vest pocket park. Led by City Year Coordinator Drew Curtis, the volunteers spent months planning and carrying out the project, which included painting bright illustrations along the fences and a "yellow brick road" design along the center pathway.

Central Park Scholars Help Refurbish Modesto Flores Community Garden



On April 14th, youth from the Central Park Scholars program (pictured above) helped refurbish Hope's Modesto Flores Community Garden. Overseen by volunteer Yvonne Pacheco and Hope Activities Coordinator Jaritza Taveras, the teens first cleaned and pruned the

garden, then planted dozens of colorful flowers throughout the park. The service was coordinated by Ethan Cohen of the City College Architectural Center.

Hope Receives Hand-Painted Mural from P.S. 50 Students



On April 4th, Hope received a hand-painted mural from P.S. 50 students (pictured above). The gift was the culmination of City Year's "100 Hours of Power" campaign which involved East Harlem youth performing several hours of community service with a number of local agencies.

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Hope Community Bids Farewell to 2 Staff



Hope staff surprised Associate Project Manager Marina Hanson with an afternoon farewell party to show their appreciation for her service and dedication. The June 8th event included two cakes, plenty of balloons, and lots of kind words.



Tenant Services Coordinator Yolanny Rodriguez (pictured far right), left Hope Community after two years of exemplary service.

As a show of support for her tireless work with Hope tenants, Ms. Rodriguez was treated to a farewell lunch at La Fonda Boricua. Yolanny will continue to work with housing residents in Washington Heights.



Poetas Con Café 10th Anniversary

Join Hope Chairman Roger Cabán as he celebrates the 10th Anniversary of Poetas Con Café all summer with two exciting performances each month. Free and open to the public, the event is held at the Modesto Flores Community Garden on Lexington Avenue near 104th Street. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Open Mic to follow.

2007 SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 17

Américo Casiano Jr. and the NuyoRican School Original Poetry Jazz Ensemble

Plus! Alma Villegas with percussionists Eddie Conde Perez & Willie Serrano and Singer Hector Papote Jimenez



About Poetas Con Café

Poetas Con Café, sponsored by Hope Community, Inc., as a forum for poets and musicians to share their work with the East Harlem community. Performances are held every second Saturday throughout the summer, from June through September in the Modesto Flores Community Garden. The program was founded in 1997 by Board Chair Roger Cabán, who also serves as host each summer.

This year, Mr. Cabán is celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Poetas Con Café with special tributes and surprise guests throughout the summer.

A Touch of the Poet

*De poetas y locos
Todos tenemos un poco
Cada loco con su tema,
y la locura tiene su recordura*

Roger Cabán

Saturday, July 14th

Eugene Rodriguez & the Puerto Rican Intercultural Drama Ensemble
Plus! Playwright & Poet Frank Pérez

Saturday, August 18

Prisionera
Bobby Gonzalez

Saturday, September 8th, Dedication of "Pedro Pietri Poetry Yard"

Maria Teresa Fernandez (Mariposa)
Jesus (Papoletto) Melendez
Speedo Pietri

CALL FOR PERFORMERS

Hope Community seeks local poets and musicians whose work or person is connected to the East Harlem area. A small stipend is generally awarded to each featured artist for their live presentation which is usually matched by a grant from Poets & Writers, Inc.

For more information, contact Marina Ortiz at (212) 860-8821, ext. 111 or mortiz@hopeci.org.