



neighborhood coalition for shelter

HELPING NEW YORKERS FIND THEIR WAY HOME

NCS Residence Welcomes New Tenants

Sixty-five homeless adults will have a handsome new place to call home in the recently renovated NCS Residence. After a tremendous amount of work and much patience from the 32 residents who stayed throughout construction, the NCS Residence renovation is complete. Two new floors were added—a lower level with a professional kitchen and dining area, a lounge with computers and television, and a laundry room. The roof now includes a glass-walled activities room and a roof garden, where residents can relax in the outdoors or participate in planting and maintaining the gardens.

The new residents were recruited from NCS's multi-service drop-in center or from neighboring shelters and social service providers. Many residents, such as Alan Miller, are moving into long-term housing for the first time in decades. Alan, a 59-year-old Brooklyn native, spent more than 20 years living on the streets, suffering from depression and chemical addiction. In April of 2003, Alan quit using drugs and entered the Damon House recovery program. After successfully completing the rehabilitation program, Alan was accepted into NCS's Transitions Program. Transitions provides interim supportive housing for ten home-



Ronndolyn Black and Alan Miller are two of 33 new tenants moving into the recently renovated NCS Residence.



less adults who have a history of dual diagnosis for both mental illness and substance abuse. Now in recovery for almost four years, Alan is a featured writer for the NCS Correspondent and an intern for NCS's JobWorks program. Alan loves to write and is currently penning his memoirs.

Ronndolyn Black, a mother of two grown children, also recently moved into the NCS Residence. After leaving

an abusive husband in Maryland, Ronndolyn returned to New York with twenty dollars in her pocket and whatever belongings she could carry. For awhile she stayed with friends and eventually came to The Park Avenue Women's Shelter, where she had been for the past year. Ronndolyn holds a BA in Psychology from the College of New Rochelle and is certified in Education and Counseling through Fordham University, yet without an address or telephone number she was not able to substitute teach or obtain temporary work.

Since moving into the NCS Residence, she says she feels alive again and, "It's interesting, the things you take for granted. After living out of a locker and bags for a year, it is so great to have drawers again. And I have a set of keys. I am so excited to have a set of keys." Ronndolyn speaks of her circumstance very matter-of-factly. She is upbeat and optimistic and says confidently, "I was taking care of myself before I met him and I can certainly take care of myself again." Ronndolyn is now in the process of obtaining state certification to teach for the Board of Education. Her goal is to work as an elementary school guidance counselor.

For many formerly homeless adults, the NCS Residence provides long-term housing and supportive services. It is a stepping stone, a home and surrogate family, where they can regain their dignity, achieve stability, and live independently in the community.

SAVE THE DATE

Come celebrate

NCS's 25th Anniversary Gala

June 6, 2007

Honoring Reverend Forrest Church, The Reverend Brenda G. Husson, Rabbi David Posner & Elizabeth Rohatyn

The Pegasus Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza

For tickets, please call: 212-861-0704, opt. 1, ext. 410



Administrative Office
157 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
Phone: (212) 861-0704
Fax: (212) 860-2301
ncs@ncsinc.org
www.ncsinc.org

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NCS PROGRAMS

NCS Residence

Neighborhood Center for
Homeless People (NCHP)

Lester Waldman's Place
at Madison Avenue
Presbyterian Church

New Vistas

Transitions

OPTIONS

Emporium Online

**NEIGHBORHOOD
COALITION FOR SHELTER**

is committed to ending
homelessness by providing
men and women with
housing and support that
can transform their lives.

Executive Director's Message



Anne R. Teicher

On January 29th, several NCS board members, staff and I were among the nearly 3,000 New Yorkers who roamed the City's streets as part of NYC's fifth annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE Count). From midnight to 3 am, I canvassed blocks of the Upper East Side as one of a team of eight volunteers. With the temperature in the low 20's, we encountered only a few homeless people in our rounds. Most do seek protection from the bitter cold at shelters or drop-in centers, or find spaces that provide some respite from the elements. The people we met that night—two older women on benches and a man sleeping on a grate—were extremely fearful of any interaction with us, shunning our attempts to offer services, and one even ran away. These are the chronically homeless, those so guarded they will suffer the coldest of nights rather than accept help.

A great value of the HOPE Count is in raising awareness about homelessness and bringing a sense of empower-

ment to the community. Participants are often assigned to their own neighborhood, enabling them to reach out to homeless individuals in their community in a way they ordinarily may not feel comfortable doing. NCS was founded on the belief that homelessness affects the entire community and neighbors must work together to create solutions for the men and women living on the streets.

Volunteers do not have to wait for that one night a year to assist the homeless men and women NCS serves. The number of volunteers and the diverse ways people contribute their time and talents has increased exponentially since we began 25 years ago. Individuals can help distribute clothing or assist in the kitchen at NCHP, facilitate resume writing and interviewing workshops for our vocational and job-training programs, spend time at the NCS Residence serving meals and talking with the tenants, or run drives for clothing, toiletries, underwear, or CDs and DVDs at their workplace or school. NCS welcomes community members, corporations, religious and civic groups to participate in daily activities or to create specialized programs for the homeless men and women we serve. This issue of the newsletter highlights the many ways NCS volunteers make a difference.

81st Street Residents Shine in 3rd Annual Talent Show

The NCS Residence on East 81st Street held its Third Annual Talent Show on Tuesday, December 12, 2006. Participants entertained an audience of fellow residents, family members and NCS staff with musical and spoken word performances. Tenant Greg Davis kept the evening lively as MC. The show was the first event to be held in the new rooftop recreation room, which was added in the recently completed renovation. The bright and spacious room served as the perfect performance space.

Ron, another resident, participated in the Talent Show for the first time this year to "join in the friendly competition." His performance, a reading of "My Story" written in first person from the perspective of his mother, won first prize. For Ron, sharing his written work with such a supportive audience is "very therapeutic." He added that the show "gives us a chance to express ourselves. Activities like this really lift our spirits, especially before the holidays." Since moving into the NCS Residence, Ron has returned to school and earned his MFA in Creative Writing from City College. An

avid reader who especially enjoys Toni Morrison, he is currently working on a novel adapted from his thesis.

Ron's performance is indicative of the talent and creativity of many NCS residents. In the spirit of the holiday season, Althea Ifill, who has lived at the NCS Residence for twelve years and has participated in the talent show every year, sang "O Come All Ye Faithful." Althea, whose sister was in the audience, says she loves to perform and looks forward to the show every year. Other performers included Gary Wilson whose rendition of "That's Life," accompanied on guitar by Patrick Kavanaugh, was a highlight of the show. Patrick won second prize, while Gary took third place. Prizes included a TV, DVD player, and CD player. Staff judges Amy Ripley and Rebecca Marriot deliberated while the audience began dancing and performers played on. Larry Hughes, a case manager, joked that "Once they started they couldn't stop!" Thanks to the excellent organizing of NCS Recreational Specialist Mark Kong-Quee, this annual event has become highly anticipated by the entire NCS community.

Emporium Online Graduates Embrace Opportunity

Emporium Online (EO), NCS's on-the-job training program that teaches homeless and formerly homeless men and women to operate an online zShop on amazon.com, just completed its fourth training cycle. All six participants successfully met graduation requirements—learning skills in technology, administrative services and customer service fulfillment—and obtained jobs or enrolled in further vocational training. They are proud of their accomplishments and are thriving in their new roles. Since graduating, Joyce has maintained full-time employment at Central Marketing, Inc. as a tele-researcher and is enjoying stable, independent housing.

Wendy, another participant, began her sales job at Bath & Body Works soon after graduation. "I quickly became the top seller and my supervisor noted my outstanding interpersonal skills," she says, crediting the Emporium Online program for her success. After graduation Wendy also found housing, and is in the process of reconnecting with her children.

Twenty-two participants have completed Emporium Online's formal training cycle since it began in March 2005. Participants are not only encouraged to identify and pursue their unique vocational and educational goals, but they also receive "soft skills" training such as punctuality, proper attire and interpersonal skills, which helps them achieve success in all areas of life.

Much of the program's remarkable success hinges not only on the efforts of the trainees, but also because NCS staff understands the unique employment barriers faced by homeless and formerly homeless individuals. Emporium Online participants are able to overcome these barriers by completing a well-rounded training curriculum, which includes comprehensive computer skills, em-



Graduates from Emporium Online's fourth training cycle: (From left to right) Lena Ramirez, Joyce Sun, Wendy Dupree, David Miner, Charlotte Parish and Jeannette Nieves.

ployment workshops, and hands-on work experience. Each trainee receives customized, one-on-one attention from a dedicated team of vocational specialists.

Emporium Online begins a new training cycle every four months. NCS is always in need of donations of new and gently used CDs, DVDs, video games, software and books—training "tools" that are key to the operation of this program. Please visit the Emporium Online z-shop at: <http://www.amazon.com/shops/support4homeless>.

Volunteering Outside the Box

Volunteers play an indispensable role in the work of NCS. Some unique ways volunteers are working with NCS to improve the lives of homeless and formerly homeless New Yorkers:

Cooking for a Cause, a cooking club organized by Dave Frieder, comes together once a month to share recipes and cooking techniques. They generously donate the delicious gourmet meals they produce to New Vistas clients.

Mary Boland, owner of October Pictures, ran a drive at her office, collecting 25 gift cards and MetroCards.

Carole Eppley, a perennial volunteer at NCS, worked with a team of City Year Youth Volunteers to create wonderful and practical Thanksgiving centerpieces; when the meal was over, each ear of "corn," piñata-style, held new toothbrushes for our clients.

Calritta Patterson and the The International Facility Management Association (IMFACares) will be hosting a wine tasting and coat drive in support of NCS.

High Rollaz SUV Club volunteers their time and vehicles for donation pickups.

Once a month a guest speaker presents a new employment-related topic to OPTIONS participants. Previous participants include: Merrill Lynch, Mercer Oliver Wyman and members of the Makor/Steinhardt Center.

For information on ways you can become involved with NCS, please contact Millicent Cavanaugh, NCS's Director of Volunteer Services at: 212-861-0704 Option 1, ext. 407.

Donate your gently used CDs, DVD's,
Videos and Video Games to...



We will pick up!!

For more information or to arrange pick-up, call 212-861-0704, option 3, ext 206. Or drop off at 237 East 77th St, NYC

Make your purchase at our amazon.com zShop:
Support4homeless

Volunteers Make the Holidays Special

NCS staff and volunteers generously share their time and energy to make the holiday season festive and meaningful for the men and women who participate in the housing and services provided by NCS.

This season, NCS was aglow with red, green, blue and silver trimmings and lights. Holiday trees and decorations were donated by The Bronx Academy of Letters and a team of Academy volunteers spread holiday joy throughout NCHP and the NCS Residence. Christmas Day featured a traditional, family-style meal shared by clients, staff, volunteers and tenants. Delicious hams were served, courtesy of NCS Board President Stephanie Guest, owner of Punch Restaurant. Marble Collegiate Church made an annual contribution to the organization, and 10 congregation members continued their tradition of spending Thanksgiving and Christmas Day at NCS distributing gifts, serving food and visiting with our clients. To everyone's delight, a jazz band featuring singer Audrey Silver performed and singer/songwriter Joe Elmo also entertained.

The generosity of volunteers, religious groups, community and board members enables NCS to provide every tenant and program participant with a holiday gift. Twenty volunteers helped wrap and personalize over 120 presents. Fran Sarullo, NCS's first female Santa, and the Sarullo family elves distributed gifts, bringing smiles all around.

The dedication of NCS volunteers and the successful donation drives were featured on the NBC evening news, along with an interview with Millicent Cavanaugh, NCS's Director of Volunteer Services.

NCS wishes to express our gratitude to all of the organizations and individuals who coordinated drives or donated food and other items: Temple Shaaray Tefila; Congregation Or Zarua; Eli's Manhattan; Nyack Homeless Project; American Jewish World Service; Marisa Mitchell of Time Warner; Riitta Ronkko and fellow New Rochelle residents; City



Adam Potter, an Upper East Side resident, and nine friends celebrated his birthday by preparing and sharing meals with tenants at the NCS Residence and the homeless men and women at the Neighborhood Center for Homeless People (NCHP). Rather than giving gifts, Adam asked that his friends and family make food or financial contributions to NCS. His generosity is an inspiration to us all.

Year and Team Leader Katie Key; Lakeisha Mitchell of Merrill Lynch; Wai Fon Chin of McKinsey & Company; Harlem Educational Activities Fund Students (HEAF); and The Center for Palliative Care.

We would also like to thank George Chiffrieller of NorthEast Community Bank, long-time friend of NCS, who organized a food drive in November, as well as a clothing drive in December. And thanks to The Church of the Holy Trinity for donating space at their annual Advent Fair, which raised \$250 toward the holiday celebrations.

There are so many individuals who helped make the holidays special. Thank you all for demonstrating the true spirit of these holidays.

